

2024 DECK LOG

A Year in Review by Alan Dean



Angie Kemp Shows Grace Lefcourt How to Use the Scanner in the Digital Archive Lab

Partnership with University of Mary Washington

In Partnership with UMW at the beginning of 2024, the Foundation sponsored student internships to digitize the Base newspaper collection covering the years 1976 through 2014. The effort used the Digital Archiving Lab managed by Digital Resources Librarian Angie Kemp. Grace Lefcourt (UMW, 24) began the effort in January scanning the newspapers and documenting the process for use by the next student intern, Shenandoah lem (UMW, 25). Shenandoah took over the effort when Grace graduated in May and scanned through the Summer and Fall semesters. Over the period, Grace and Shenandoah were able to digitize 799 newspapers covering the years 1976-1999, 2009, 2013, and 2014. The newspapers varied in length from 6-20 pages and the paper quality varied from cardstock weight to almost translucent. The student efforts were funded by generous grants from the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region.

A Mini West Exhibit Installed at University of Mary Washington Simpson Library

Designed and installed by Gillian Both (UMW, 22), the Spring Semester students were treated to a mini exhibit of The Story of the Wests. The exhibit, providing glimpses into the lives and careers of Ira and Dr. Gladys West, was located in the Hurley Convergence Center near the corridor to the Simpson Library. It remained up until the end of the semester. The exhibit's development was funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region.



The Story of the Wests Exhibit in Hurley Convergence Center

Website:
<https://www.dahlgrenmuseum.org>

Two New Museum Exhibits Opened in 2024

Funded by grants from the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region, the Museum was able to develop and install two new exhibits. The first exhibit provides visitors with the little-known stories of Dahlgren's work in Naval Aviation. The exhibit covers the earliest experiments in the 1920s with radio-controlled airplanes, the World War II efforts in testing of the Norden Bombsights in World War II and the Variable Timed (VT) fuse, the programming of the on-board computer of the A6 aircraft, putting a 105mm howitzer on a C130, and the recent efforts involving miniature unmanned aerial vehicles. Designed and installed by Christie Drake, the exhibit is located under the propeller and is scheduled to remain open until June of 2025.



The second exhibit installed this past year was the third in our Pioneers of the 20th Century anthology featuring Dr. Russell Lyddane. The exhibit details the life and career of Dr. Lyddane and displays both personal and career artifacts. In addition, the exhibit features both audio excerpts, via QR codes, from Dr. Lyddane reflecting on his career challenges and his efforts in leading the change in perception of the Base from a Proving Ground to a Modern Research and Development Laboratory in the 1950s. This is the second Pioneers exhibit that also provides a series of Podcasts via the Museum Website with the Pioneer's children and friends talking

about him and Life on the Base. The exhibit was designed and installed by Gillian Both (who also interviewed and recorded the Podcasts) and is scheduled to remain open until July of 2025. A QR code is provided below of Dr. Lyddane talking about the Naval Ordnance Research Calculator (NORC), which was a critical piece of equipment that helped spearhead the change of the Base's image.



Forum of Family and Friends

On July 18th, the Foundation sponsored an exhibit companion Forum featuring the family and friends of Dr. Lyddane. The forum was held at the UMW Dahlgren Campus. It was moderated by Gillian Both and panelists included Ed Jones, Elizabeth (Lydanne) Agnew, and John Lyddane.

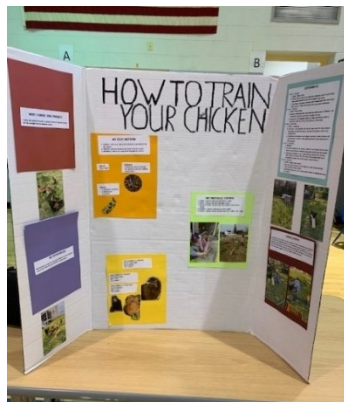


Forum Moderator and Panelists

After some light refreshments, the forum audience welcome was provided via video by Charles Lyddane. The discussion covered the exhibit, family life on the Base, and Dr. Lyddane's career. Time was provided at the end for audience questions. We would like to thank Dr. Michael Hubbard and the staff at UMW Dahlgren for the use of the facility and support in putting on the event.

Partnering with the Dahlgren School

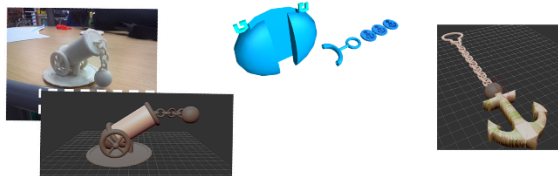
This year was the first collaboration with the Dahlgren Base School to host a Science Fair for Grades 3 through 5 and an Invention Convention for Grade 6 through 8. The Science Fair was an open format allowing the students to explore any field of science that interested them. There were 18 entries ranging from windmills to bone deterioration to how to train your chicken. The Dahlgren Division provided 6 judges to evaluate the experiments, and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners were awarded STEM kits as prizes.



Science Fair Entry

A big shout out goes to Beth Hankins of the School and Sarah Jean Fralich and Stephanie Shand of the Dahlgren Division in their dedication to making this event a success.

The Invention Convention utilized the school's 3D printer to produce a prototype of a museum giveaway that represents the Navy, or the work performed on the Base. Three projects were entered into this competition: a cannon, a disc launcher, and an anchor chain.



Winning Design (courtesy of Dahlgren School)

Prototype Designs

Students had to “sell” their design to the judges by telling them their design strategy, challenges they faced, and how they overcame these challenges. The panel of judges included Dahlgren Heritage Foundation Board members Ed Jones and Dr. Robert Gates and Kelly Morgan from the Dahlgren Division. Prizes were awarded to each of the entries. A big thank you to the judges and Mr. Lee of the school, who guided the students through the development process. A special thanks to Ms. Glynnis Riccio, the Dahlgren School Director, for allowing us to offer this event. The event was such a success, a second one is being planned for the Spring of 2025.

Engaging with the Community

The Foundation members engaged in several events both on the Base and in the community.

This year six STEM events were held at the museum. These events were geared for grades 2-8 and the subjects ranged from exploring Geiger counters to forms of matter to simple electronic circuits to “How Far can your Sneeze Go?” Our thanks to Jon Dachos for coordinating these events, which attracted 69 students.



Participants in the Simple Circuits Event

The tours of the Base were a big hit again this year. With our resident tour guides, Dr. Robert Gates and Ed Jones, we were able to

accommodate 109 curiosity seekers.



Last Tour of the Dahlgren Naval Base for 2024

Saturday, October 19th
11:00-12:30

Join us to learn more about our local history with a view behind the fence.

RESERVE YOUR FREE SPACE NOW

For more information, go to <https://www.dahlgrenmuseum.org/events-calendar>

Fall is the season for community events. In September the museum set up a table at the Northern Neck Land Conservancy’s “Boots and Barbecue” event in Westmoreland County. It was a beautiful day weather wise.



Our Tent at Boots and Barbeque

Also in September, we hosted a Dueling Pianos event at The Estate of White Hall Vineyard. Given the event’s success, with 97 participants joining us for a fun time, the plan is to host it again in the Fall of 2025. A big thanks to the owners Joel and Bethany Cassell at White Hall and to Jeron Hayes and Amanda Genter for coordinating the event.



In October we participated in two events, the Dahlgren Division’s Silk Mill Event, where our Ed Jones was a speaker, and the King George Fall Festival.



In November Rob was a judge at the UMW Innovation Challenge and we hosted a book signing event with local author Sean Gates, who just released his second thriller In the Trackless Wild, where the story’s action takes place in recognizable locations in and about the county.



Sharing the History

A major part of our mission is for members of the Foundation to provide presentations on regional and base history. In February, Dr. Robert Gates presented via ZOOM “The Potomac River: History Flows Through Eastern Virginia” for the Dahlgren Museum membership. This was our first attempt to provide live broadcasts of the presentations via the internet. In addition, the presentation was given at the King George Historical Society and the 66th Missouri Conference on History, along with a companion paper that was published in the Northern Neck of

Virginia Historical Magazine. Rob also presented museum perspectives to the Fredericksburg Region Military Affairs Council and the King George Board of Supervisors. He had papers accepted for publication by the Center for International Maritime Security- "The Life and Legacy of Admiral John Dahlgren" and the Journal of the Air Force Historical Foundation - "Missile Development 1945-1960: A Winding Path". Rob has had another paper accepted at the Missouri Conference for 2025 titled "The Potomac River Bridge: Opening the Gateway to the Northern Neck" which has also been accepted for publication by the Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine.

This year we also made a connection on the Base with an employee group called the Early Career Organization (ECO), which hosts various activities for employees including talks about Base history. I was invited to present three talks, the first was titled "Navigation Myths, Technology and the Science Behind Knowing Where You Are". The second talk was titled "The Evolution of Dahlgren: A Bubbling Cauldron of Technical Curiosity". The third talk was titled "Hidden History of Computers and Software Development at Dahlgren". A final request came in December when I was asked to judge the group's gingerbread building event. The groups that participated built 2 aircraft carriers, a submarine launching missiles, a land-based missile launcher and the winner a stadium with the Army-Navy game. The stadium was made by Hailey Bakker, Jacob Mitchell, Candice Bowler, Trevor Ferares (pictured) and designed by Jason Stewart.



If you have a request for a talk, please submit it via our website under education/requests.

Change In Leadership

After leading the Foundation since its inception, our President Ed Jones decided to step down this year. Ed had served as president for 10 years. His energy and leadership have taken an idea of a museum and made it reality as a beacon keeping the many little-known stories of contributions of Dahlgren and its people alive. He led the Foundation through the many challenges of establishing the museum, from seeking sponsorship, to navigating government regulations, to the novel and innovative partnership with Virginia Tourism for use of the current museum location, which officially opened in 2014 as a Museum/Tourism stop for weary travelers. Since 2019, he has overseen the transformation of the museum to the 21st century as it moves to a goal of becoming a museum without walls. Ed remains on the Board of Directors to provide his sage guidance as we move deeper into the 21st century.

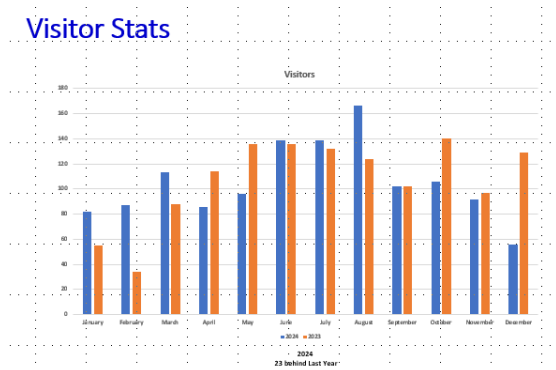
Taking over as President is Dr. Robert Gates, who has served as vice president for 10 years. Michael Purello step into the vice President position and Lora Pierson has stepped into the treasurer position replacing Pete Kolakowski. Thank you Pete for serving as interim treasurer since 2023.



Ed & Rob at Museum Ribbon Cutting-2013

Tourism

To meet our agreement with Virginia Tourism, we track visitor stops by month. Just prior to COVID we were averaging 1,500 visitors per year during the new bridge construction. When COVID hit, we dropped to 1200 per year. After the new bridge opened, visitors' recovery was slow. Below shows the visitors by month for 2023 and 2024. A big thank you to administrative assistant, Amanda Genter, and our dedicated docents, Mike Barker, Harry Black, Linda Baran, Tim Carsola, returning docent Tom Gouldthorpe, and our newest docent, Georgia Warder, for staffing the museum and keeping the lights on for visitors.



Looking Forward to 2025

We are looking forward to an exciting 2025 with more events, new website features and new exhibits. To start off, we are hosting a **Murder Mystery Dinner** at the Estate at White Hall Vineyard on February 21st where our partner, the King George Theater Department, will present “**The Mystery of Loose Strings Murder Mystery Theater**”. We are also supporting the Department’s Fanograms at the remaining two shows, **The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe** showing from January 22nd through the 25th and **Spamalot** showing from April 30th through May 3rd so mark your calendars for some great entertainment. Thank you Jeron for your effort in making this connection. In our march to a “Museum without Walls” we will be launching a new website feature

called “The Science Corner”. Eagle Scout candidate Ayla Zook is developing as her Eagle project the content for this new feature, which will include videos of science experiments being performed blended with kitchen science downloads for experimenting at home with permission of the Naval Undersea Museum and a calendar of STEM events hosted by the museum. Another Eagle scout candidate, Caelan Craley, is building a new outdoor kiosk for the museum property for her project, which will feature a two-door, glass-enclosed panel to display museum information and solar lighting. It will be near the picnic table provided by Tim Carsola, which has attracted many visitors for a quick break from the road.



Working with Dr. Cristina Turdean’s UMW Historic Preservation Department Exhibit class, we will continue telling the story of Dahlgren on 7 panels covering the years 1976 through 2001.

In addition, we are researching the material for the next Pioneers exhibit, exploring a prototype virtual exhibition for the website, continuing the collection scanning process with the UMW Digital Archiving lab, offering internships to students, and many more activities as we move into the future with the stories of the past.

All this would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors, members, and grants we receive. Please consider us in 2025. Wishing all a healthy and joyous New Year.

2024 - 2025 Membership

President

Dr. Robert V. Gates

Vice President

Michael Purello

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Jeron Hayes

Board of Directors

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Alan J. Dean

Ed Jones

Dennis Quick

David Zook

Peter Kolakowski

Dr. Michael Hubbard

Cathy Binder (ex officio)

Thank you for your support of the Dahlgren Heritage Foundation! With your help we are educating the community on the Dahlgren story, running a museum, and working towards hosting more interesting and exciting events. We wouldn't be able to do any of this without you. We look forward to another great year, and we are thankful for your membership. Donate by mailing a check to: P. O. Box 816, Dahlgren, VA 22448 or visit

www.dahlgrenmuseum.org and click the "Support" tab.

Name: _____ Address:

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone:

Email: _____ Individual

Membership \$25.00 _____

Family Membership \$50.00 _____

Corporate Member \$500.00 _____ Corporate

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I would like to make an additional tax deductible donation of \$ _____

_____ I would like to volunteer at Dahlgren Museum and fundraising events.