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Sailors, Sea Cadets Help Preserve Massachusetts History

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From Navy Operational Support Center Quincy

QUINCY, Mass. (NNS) -- Reservists from Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) helped preserve a piece of history as they conducted their annual inspection of Quincy's museum ship, ex-USS Salem (CA 139) July 12-13.

This year's inspection was also an educational opportunity as 13 young people from the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps from Quincy and Newburgh, N.Y., joined the Sailors to learn about ship's systems and maintenance activities.

The 12 members from a NAVSEA Reserve unit inspected Salem's hull as well as its electrical, safety and fire alarm systems to ensure that the 50-year old heavy cruiser continues to be safe for the thousands of visitors it receives each year. Built in Quincy between 1947 and 1949, and having served as the flagship of the U.S. 6th Fleet, Salem returned to Quincy as a floating museum in 1995.

Going beyond the inspection routine, NAVSEA invited 13 Sea Cadets and their instructors from Quincy's Seven-Zulu and Newburgh's Yankees Sea Cadet squadrons to participate in the exercise to learn about Navy maintenance procedures and general shipboard practices.

The Sea Cadet Corps is a volunteer youth education program for students ages 11-17 that builds leadership abilities through naval training.

Following the inspection and debrief, Sailors offered hands-on lessons about naval navigation, damage control and engineering systems to the Sea Cadets.

"The future of the Navy is these Sea Cadets. Reserve units have an obligation to help with the Sea Cadet program, and we should do everything in our power that we can to help them," said Chief Hull Technician (SW/SS/SCW) Randy Bowers.

"It was really interesting. I got to go around with the [hazardous material] and safety crews, and learn damage control. I learned about how to control a fire hose, and whether to use [carbon dioxide] or water," said Tyler Thorne, a Sea Cadet seaman apprentice who hopes to join the Navy some day and become a member of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.

The Navy's Ship Donation Inspection Program utilizes engineering duty officers of the Navy Reserve to annually inspect the material condition of donated ships. For more than 60 years, the Navy has donated ships as museums and memorials to give the general public a rare opportunity to experience and imagine shipboard life firsthand, to learn about naval tradition and history and to commemorate the men and women who built and sailed these vessels. There are currently 46 museum ships donated by the U.S. Navy located in 22 states.

For more news from Naval Sea Systems Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/navsea/.