



**PORTSMOUTH
NAVAL SHIPYARD**
— MUSEUM —

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum Present

**HAVEN OF SAFETY: THE KAISER 'S COURTEOUS PIRATES
IN HAMPTON ROADS**

The 2017 Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum's Lecture Series will conclude on Thursday, September 14, at 4:00 p.m., at the Churchland Branch of the Portsmouth Public Library (Coleman Room). The Friends are pleased to present Greg Hansard, Instructor of History at John Tyler Community College, speaking about the World War I-era German sailors who found themselves interned at Norfolk Navy Yard in the period when the U.S. was still neutral.

Mr. Hansard worked previously at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, where he discovered a photograph of some German sailors on board a ship in Hampton Roads. The image led him on a research odyssey that introduced him to the German Village, a unique 1915 tourist attraction that manifested itself on Norfolk Navy Yard for more than a year when two German raiding ships chose internment at the yard, rather than a return to the war at sea. Since the U.S. had not yet entered the Great War, the

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Germans found themselves in a neutral port, a “haven of safety” from the war effort.

“This led me down a path at the National Archives and the Library of Virginia,” said Hansard, “where I discovered correspondence between the German captains and the U.S. government, along with endless miscellaneous documents ranging from Pabst Blue Ribbon receipts and family visitation requests to descriptions of missing sailors, including drawings of their tattoos.” In Hampton Roads, the story of the German Village has been explored before in articles and exhibits, but Hansard’s primary research provides a new perspective on the personal experiences of the German sailors themselves.

The lecture will take place at 4:00 p.m. in the Coleman Room of the Churchland Branch of the Portsmouth Public Library, 4934 High Street West, Portsmouth, VA 23703. Admission is free. Free parking is available in the library parking lot.

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum researches, preserves, and promotes the history of the City of Portsmouth, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and the armed forces in Hampton Roads. The museum accomplishes its mission by offering exhibitions, publications, lectures, and educational programs. Three times a year, the Friends of the museum present lectures on relevant topics for the general public.

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