

USS Nahant again making waves

Gayla Cawley / The Daily Item | Posted: Friday, November 6, 2015 3:00 am

NAHANT — A former U.S. Navy ship, USS Nahant, one of three ships named after the town, will be honored by the American Legion Post 215 in a ceremony Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Nahant Life Saving Station, with a model of the ship unveiled and a former crewmember as the keynote speaker.

A 30 minute ceremony will be followed by a public reception when the permanent memorial, or model, of the ship will be unveiled.

Former USS Nahant crewmember, retired Master Chief Petty Officer Bud Harris, of Greensboro, NC will be honored and will be speaking about his experiences on the ship at the event.

The ship was commissioned in 1945 and served until 1968, serving as a submarine net laying ship. It was the third and, to date, last U.S. Naval Vessel to have Nahant as its name.

Christopher Dent, Commander of American Legion Post 215, said the ship was around for World War II. His research revealed that the ship was commissioned too late for action for World War II, but removed net moorings in the San Francisco bay area and tested experimental nets until Oct. 31, 1945. The ship made its way to Orange, Texas performing services until decommissioning in 1946.

Based on Dent's research, the ship then recommissioned in Feb. 1952 and was assigned to the fifth naval district, where it installed and tended harbor defense nets within the district until 1954. The ship then served as a dual net tender and salvage ship until decommissioning in 1968.

Dent said the USS Nahant was a Cold War ship, and was very much a working ship, but never saw active combat. He said the ship was not on the front lines, but served many vital missions like keeping enemy submarines out of the area with net tending.

“When you look at the U.S. Navy, these types of hard-working ships are the backbone of the fleet,” Dent said. “(The ship is) emblematic of the hard work that goes on every day in the navy.”

Dent said he was also thrilled to have Harris as the guest of honor, as it's a way to “connect with



USS Nahant

Frederick S. Gove, left, the post historian, and Wayne Noonan, senior vice commander of American Legion Post 215 Nahant, cover the bow of a detailed scale model of the USS Nahant.

living history.” He said there’s a special bond that exists between Harris and the ship.

Dent is calling the unveiling of the ship’s model the culminating point of the ceremony. He said it is a museum quality model of the ship that the American Legion requested be built.

“It’s a unique model and we’re excited to unveil it,” Dent said.

Dent said a number of dignitaries have been invited. Rep. Brendan Crighton is confirmed along with the Nahant Board of Selectmen and a number of veterans. The ceremony will occur before the American Legion’s annual dinner, which is a paid event for the group’s normal Veterans’ Day Program. He is hoping for a turnout of 50 to 100 people.

Wayne Noonan, Senior Vice Commander of American Legion Post 215, said the slogan of the ship was “non transibunt,” which translates to “you shall not pass.” It alludes to the ship’s primary function of laying nets to keep enemy submarines out of harbors.

Fred Gove, Post Historian of American Legion Post 215, said the ship’s function as a net tending ship was “extremely important.”

“If you can get inside the harbor, you can get a better shot at the fuel containers,” Gove said. “You wouldn’t want these people to be able to operate inside the harbor to blow up fuel.”

Noonan said the other two ships named after the town served in the Civil War and WWI. He said from what he last heard, the USS Nahant is now a fishing vessel in Uruguay.