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NPS History Permanently on Display in New Welcome Center

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Article By: Dale M. Kuska

Visitors to the Naval Postgraduate School campus can often be seen touring the institution's well-known administration building, Herrmann Hall, admiring its distinctive architecture and compelling craftsmanship and public art. And thanks to the efforts of NPS Dudley Knox Library Special Collections Manager John Sanders, the university's dynamic history and that of the former Hotel Del Monte it resides in, will now permanently be on display for all in the new NPS Welcome and Historic Center.

"NPS and Hotel Del Monte have a remarkable and rich history. Their shared legacy and heritage have had a global impact in areas as diverse as sports, recreation, tourism, transportation, art, historic preservation, mathematics, science, engineering, and military and political affairs. This is a compelling story with a global impact and these examples from the past offer a guide star for the present and the future," said Sanders.

The notion for a "welcome center" of sorts had been around for several years. In fact, during fiscal year 2011, the Advanced Education Review Board at the approval of then Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead, earmarked funding for several special projects including a number of improvements to Herrmann Hall, with a welcome center among them.

"The welcome/historic center, now named the NPS Welcome and Historic Center, construction was originally part of the FY11 Herrmann Hall first floor renovation project," noted NPS Director of Facilities, retired Air Force Col. Pete Boerlage. "However, the center was never completed due to changes in leadership."

Believing in the importance of history, and the lessons that can be learned from it, Sanders made the center's completion a top priority.

"I feel that if we preserve, celebrate and honor our history then we make today's NPS stronger and more effective because this remarkable history demonstrates important achievements ... discoveries and contributions; visionary leadership; technological and managerial innovation; and a unique institutional ability to adapt to unknowns and unforeseen circumstances. We can learn valuable lessons and gain important insight from our history and these lessons can help us shape a more vibrant future," Sanders explained.

As the center began to take shape, Sanders partnered with Facilities Director Boerlage and Navy Gateway Inn and Suites (NGIS) Manager David Wolf on ensuring the space supported the needs of the current NPS mission, and the Naval Support Activity Monterey's bustling hotel operation in NGIS. In addition to the dynamic displays on NPS and Hotel Del Monte history, near-term upgrades include two computer workstations for use by guests at the popular Navy lodging facility.

"The recent opening of the Welcome and Historic Center will be able to provide our valued guests with convenience of being able to access computers and print necessary and needed documents, including boarding passes. This welcome and business center adds another convenience by being located adjacent to the front desk. Guests will no longer have to walk across campus to the Dudley Knox Library," said Wolf.

"The center also provides our guests a wonderful visual experience of the famous and world-renowned history of the Hotel Del Monte, including fun memorabilia. It also displays memorabilia and artifacts of the early days of the Naval Postgraduate School and the successes of its prior students. We are pleased to assure our customers have the access they need 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Wolf continued.

With the Welcome and Historic Center now open for business, and garnering very positive reviews from visitors as evidenced by a quick scan through the sign-in log, Sanders says he is very pleased to see NPS history come to life for all to experience.

"I am very proud to be a part of and to contribute to the Naval Postgraduate School," stressed Sanders. "I have had an opportunity through my work here in public affairs and the Dudley Knox Library to meet amazing people, hear their personal stories, and place their experiences into historic context. Many of these stories resonate with sub-themes of courage, dedication, inspiration and innovation. This center enables NPS to present some of these stories to our own campus community as well as to an extended audience of distinguished visitors and guests. For me personally, the visible display helps to create both a foundation and context so that others can understand the true significance and impact of NPS.

"I hope the center will continue to present history in a lively and interesting manner and serve as a springboard to an enriching experience for students, staff, faculty and visitors," Sanders continued. "Immediate next steps include adding more short video content, I have a new set of videos in the works, and enhancing the mobile self-guided tour with historic photos and a new audio product that I have called "The 20-Second Secret.""

For a first-hand look at this new facility, you can visit the Welcome and Historic Center at just about any time – the facility is located just inside the main entrance of Herrmann Hall. And for a larger tour of the campus, check out the Dudley Knox Library's self-guided Historic Hotel Del Monte Tour Guide, available via QR (quick response) codes for both smartphones and tablets on display around campus or through DKL's website.

Posted August 1, 2014



Dudley Knox Library Special Collections Manager John Sanders is pictured inside the Naval Postgraduate School's new Welcome and Historic Center in Herrmann Hall. Through static displays, interactive media and an upcoming business center, visitors can obtain a greater understanding for NPS' historical contributions, as well as its current mission and objectives.