

Port: Commission votes to give Knight a raise

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Jim Paul, assistant director of the state land department's Common School Fund Property Program, said Warrenton Fiber's application is closed.

The Land Board voted in October to initiate a review into the college's proposal. Paul said the new round of due diligence could last at least another nine to

12 months before a decision on whether and how to sell the property to the college.

In other news:

• The Port Commission voted to remove Raichl as chairman and replace him with Commissioner Robert Mushen. Raichl, who abstained from the otherwise unanimous vote, will assume Mushen's post on the

commission as assistant treasurer and secretary. Mushen said the change was not to cast any aspersions toward Raichl, who he said has done a good job. Raichl said there was a "potential for better harmony, having a change."

• The Port Commission voted to raise Knight's \$150,000 salary by 5.3 percent. The increase was stipulated in Knight's contract

with the Port, upon a satisfactory one-year evaluation. Knight started in late October 2014, but the Port Commission has not yet completed his evaluation.

• Property Manager Shane Jensen said he reviewed the Port's obligations surrounding the Pier 3 parking lot and access point to the Astoria Riverwalk. He said the project was primarily funded by the Astor West

Urban Renewal District and the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and that the Port funded less than 2 percent of the project. He said the Port is required to keep access to the Riverwalk open through at least 2025, but could move the parking lot. The Port has closed access to the lot at times because of safety issues between pedestrians, motorists and the Pier 3 log yard.



Robert Mushen

Seaport: Some exhibits pay tribute to America's armed forces

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finish each other's sentences, and keep up a steady stream of good-natured banter — Wallace likes to joke that "It's been a long 15 years."

Asked if she had an official title, she quickly responded, "Pain in the neck!"

Darrah likes to call her the "Chief Keeper."

"That means she can be more bossy than usual — and get away with it!" he joked.

In the mid-1990s, Darrah owned a similar, smaller museum in Gig Harbor, but his wife wanted to relocate. When a friend mentioned Raymond was looking to open a museum, he came to investigate, and decided to move his collection south.

Locals helped to prepare the building, and one of the first exhibits to go in was a mural that students painted in the front room. A collection of brass plaques commemorates the many people who have volunteered and donated, including a stranger who once gave Darrah gas money when he got stranded while moving his family west to Washington.

An early taste for brass

At first, virtually everything in the museum came from Darrah, who developed his passion for collecting while growing up as a "military brat".

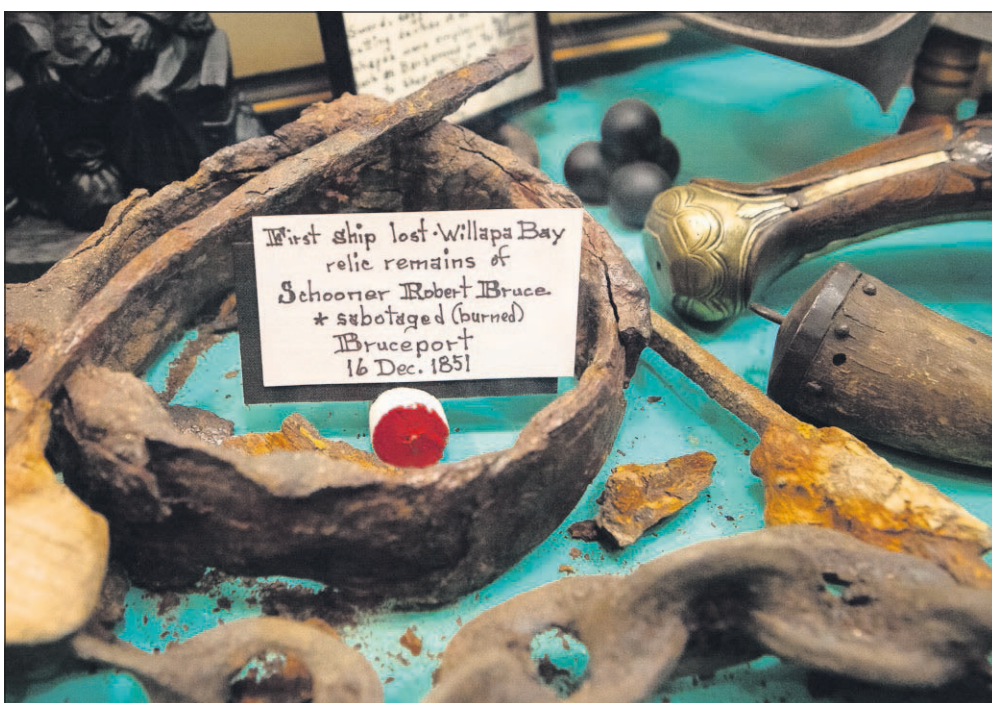
His father graduated from West Point in 1930, and Darrah spent much of his childhood on military bases.

Darrah remembers his early days on Fort Worden in Port Townsend as some of the happiest in his life. He jokes that his parents put him out "like the dog" every day, and he was free to roam the base on his own.

"I got up and went to sleep at bugle calls. I liked the parades, the fanfare, the saluting," Darrah recalled.

He also developed a deep respect for the resourcefulness of the men and women who served between the two world wars. Nowadays, Darrah said, "when something gets dented, the Army surpluses it," but in the 1930s, everything was repaired or repurposed.

"They'd fix stuff up. They'd



Debris from the Robert Bruce, for which Bruceport County Park is named.

Natalie St. John/EO Media Group

sew tents up, hammer a mess kit back into shape. They'd fix uniforms."

As a young boy, Darrah had his own tiny army uniform that someone cut down from a cast-off adult uniform, and a little gun of his own.

"I use to stand inspection every Thursday morning! I just loved it. I was a collector. I started collecting stuff," he said, recalling how he and his friends would hunt for used ammunition cartridges, polish them up with sand, and pack slugs back inside them.

Hiding history in moving boxes

During World War II, his military relatives sent items from abroad that further cemented his passion for collecting — among them, a Japanese bugle that his grandfather sent for his birthday.

The impermanence of military life taught Darrah to value his possessions.

"Every time my dad moved, which was often, he would walk into my bailiwick there and throw an Army footlocker in, with the admonition, "What you can get in that box, we'll haul out of here for you."

However, one box was never enough to contain his prized possessions. Darrah would wait until his mother's boxes were nearly full, then sneak things like cannonballs and

bayonets into them, discreetly marking the boxes so he could sneak the items out later.

"I didn't want my mom to find out!" he laughed. When they arrived at their new home, he'd hear his mother wondering how on earth her curtains had gotten rust on them, or how a plate had gotten cracked.

"Well, a loose cannon ball was rolling around in there with a life of his own. But that's how I managed to hold on to all this stuff!" Darrah laughed. "I never did tell my folks about that, by the way."

A community collection

In Raymond, visitors and locals began to think of the museum as a home for things that were too precious to toss, too impractical to keep.

The collection will especially appeal to military and local history buffs. Included in the exhibits are displays of antique logging and saw-filing equipment, tools from the early days of the oystering industry, baskets woven by the Native American ancestors of locals, and antique fishing equipment donated by the widow of a well-known local fisherman. There are also photographs that show how tugs helped move enormous loads of timber up and down the river, and of a camp east of Raymond where military men cut logs for the war effort.

Exhibits that pay tribute to America's armed forces and military campaigns include vintage dress uniforms, soldiers' personal items, paintings, model battleships, special-issue wartime coins from Germany and France, shrapnel from a Civil War battle, and a document signed the fourth president of the U.S., James Madison.

Recreating the past

Younger visitors will appreciate the exhibits that show how people lived and worked in days gone by. A lovingly recreated ticket office gives visitors a sense of what it was like to live in Pacific County when virtually all travel happened by water.

A vintage medicine kit recalls a time when "liver pills" were a thing, the doctor arrived on horseback, and syringes were truly terrifying. A real, handwritten receipt for the sale of a slave, displayed in a corner that is decorated to look like the interior of a slave-ship, acknowledges a time when shipping brought shame, rather than glory to the U.S.

Tucked into one tiny corner, Darrah has meticulously recreated the sleeping quarters from a World WarII-era Navy ship. In addition to authentically cramped bunks, there are a footlocker and a tiny desk outfitted with a metal "butt-kit" and writing utensils. A ukulele and pin-up girl magazine hint at sailors' limited entertainment options.

"You wouldn't believe how hard it is to find things like that," Darrah said, gesturing at the Navy-issue monogrammed wool blanket on the lower bunk. Those kinds of details reveal the lengths to which he and his volunteers have gone — when he couldn't find an obsolete military flag, Wallace sewed one by hand, embroidering the emblem from nine skeins of embroidery thread.

Reluctant historian, eager volunteer

Even now, Wallace still doesn't think of herself as a historian.

"Pete gives a long-winded tour. He was a teacher — you get the whole book, whether you like it or not. I give one that's a nonhistory one," Wallace said. But she speaks

knowledgeably, with evident reverence for her subject matter.

She first began volunteering shortly after her husband, Jerry Wallace, died. Darrah, who was one of her husband's close friends, encouraged her to start helping out.

"I am not a historian. I questioned Pete's sanity," Wallace recalled. "I told him I really didn't think I'd be a fit there." Darrah told her to bring her needlework and just sit there, saying, "It doesn't matter — we just need volunteers to keep the doors open!" When she finally agreed, she was surprised by how quickly she was drawn into Darrah's world of history and memorabilia.

"The third week, I decided I better learn something, because sooner or later someone was gonna ask a question!" Wallace said. She started researching the history behind one display a week, beginning with the shipbuilding exhibit, because it was one of the first things visitors saw as they walked through the door.

She was especially surprised to learn that during World War I, the town had manufactured enormous wooden battleships.

"I was blown away," Wallace remembered. "Raymond built huge ships for World War I. I just could not believe this." The more she studied, the more excited she got about learning the story behind each item.

"I could hardly wait to get around the corner to see what was in there," Wallace said.

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