

SCDNR Director receives rare recognition in Boston

Dr. Thomas Stowe Mullikin honored aboard the oldest still-serving warship in the United States Navy

COLUMBIA, SC, UNITED STATES, January 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Tom Mullikin, director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), received a rare honor during a break in meetings in Boston, Massachusetts, last week.

While touring Boston's historic Charlestown Navy Yard, Mullikin was piped aboard USS CONSTITUTION, the oldest commissioned warship in the U.S. Navy, where he enjoyed a personal tour of the ship and was ultimately presented a U.S. flag which was officially flown in his honor over the veteran vessel of the War of 1812. Presenting the flag to Mullikin was Constitution's commanding officer Commander Crystal L. Schaefer, the 78th skipper of "Old Ironsides" and the second female to command the frigate in its 229-year history.



SCDNR Director Tom Mullikin aboard the frigate USS CONSTITUTION, January 15, 2026.

"This is truly one of the greatest honors of my life, said Mullikin, a renowned global expedition leader, former U.S. Army officer, and retired commanding general of the S.C. State Guard. "I've sailed aboard and toured many ships in my travels over the years, but none with a history more distinguished – and which still continues – than that of Old Ironsides."

So nicknamed because of its physical resiliency (cannonballs bouncing off its hull) in combat against the Royal Navy's HMS Guerriere on August 19, 1812; "Old Ironsides" not only holds the distinction of being the oldest operational ship in the U.S. Navy, but it is the oldest commissioned warship still afloat in the world.

One of the six original frigates authorized by U.S. President George Washington in the Naval Act of 1794, Constitution saw quite a bit of action against the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean Sea (off the shores of Tripoli) and later in the War of 1812 where she sank or seized several enemy ships.

Over the decades since her combat deployments, Constitution has served in a variety of roles from training to ceremonial duties and public education. She continues to be crewed by active-duty U.S. Navy personnel.

Last week, Mullikin was in Boston for a series of meetings with the Massachusetts-based Yawkey Foundation regarding forthcoming events related to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States with a specific focus on South Carolina in the American Revolution.

SCDNR's Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center in Georgetown, S.C., conducts pioneering waterfowl, wetlands and wildlife management activities supported by natural resources research. The Center, located on the very grounds upon which the Marquis de Lafayette and his traveling companion Johann Baron de Kalb landed in 1777 during the height of the Revolution, provides unique educational opportunities by interpreting the property's diverse cultural and natural history.

Commander Schaefer welcomed Mullikin aboard Constitution and presented the flag to the SCDNR director, Thursday Jan. 15, 2026.

USS Constitution was officially launched on Sept. 20, 1797. Her launch ceremony was attended by U.S. President John Adams.



SCDNR Director Tom Mullikin (center) is flanked by an escorting U.S. Navy sailor (L) and Commander Crystal L. Schaefer (R) aboard USS CONSTITUTION, January 15, 2026.



The American frigate USS CONSTITUTION has never lost an engagement in her illustrious history stretching back to 1797.

– For more information about the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center in Georgetown, S.C., please visit – <https://yawkeywildlifecenter.com/>.

– For more information about the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, headquartered in Columbia, S.C., please visit – <https://www.dnr.sc.gov/>.

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