

USS Albany Exhibit opens

By Linda Underwood

The Record

ALBANY — A decade-long dream of honoring Capital District men and women who served in the Navy has finally come true, according to one of the men involved in the project.

The USS Albany Exhibit in the Urban Cultural Park Visitor's Center at Quackenbush Square was recently dedicated and has opened its door to the public.

The exhibit consists of numerous artifacts from the ships that have been named after the state capital over almost 150 years, said Wayne Van Amburgh, chairman of the USS Albany Exhibit Committee.

"We're very happy and pleased with the exhibit," he said. "We feel it will enhance the Visitor's Center educationally."

A large glass case in the Visitor's Center holds items representative of each of the ships named Albany, including an etching of the first ship and a photograph of the newly commissioned submarine. Small items such as pennants and awards from the other ships named after the state capital are also included.

The centerpiece of the exhibit is the ship's bell from the USS Albany CG10, which is in the courtyard of the Visitor's Center. Weighing about 1,500 pounds, it was placed in the courtyard by crane in April.

"It's from the guided missile cruiser," said Van Amburgh. "It was cut right off the bulkhead, so a part of the ship is incorporated in the bell."

The dedication came in time for the reunion of some of the sailors who served aboard the USS Albany, Van Amburgh said.

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"The first commanding officer of the nuclear submarine, Commander Darl Anderson, was here. Sailors from all over the world that had served on the Albany were on hand.

"There were more than 200 people here. The dedication was the real highlight of the reunion."

Master of Ceremonies was retired Navy Capt. Jay Schorrt, and members of the Melvin Roads American Legion Post served as color guard along with several Naval Sea Cadets, Van Amburgh said.

But while hundreds enjoyed the

reunion, all the work of locating, collecting, refurbishing and cataloging the artifacts was done by the five members of the exhibit committee, Van Amburgh of Castleton; Norman Nilsen of Nassau; Al Malcomson of Clinton Heights; Aldo Bursi of Rotterdam; and Richard Knapp of Colonie.

Both Van Amburgh and Knapp were on ships named USS Albany. Knapp was on the CA-123, the World War II heavy cruiser. Van Amburgh was on the CG-10, a post-Korean War missile cruiser.

The first Albany, a 22-gun sloop of war, was launched in 1846. Van Amburgh said he hopes to be able

to have a special celebration on the 150th anniversary of its commission in 1996.

The second Albany was a 14-gun sloop of war serving from 1868 to 1879, and the third Albany was a protected cruiser purchased from the Brazilian government in 1899.

Van Amburgh said he hopes to continue to collect and refurbish more artifacts, but the money to do so has run out. The current exhibit ran over budget, leaving the committee needing an additional \$5,000.

Donations may be made by contacting Van Amburgh through the Visitor's Center.