**Form 10-300**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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### 1. NAME

**COMMON:**

Drydock Number One, Norfolk Naval Shipyard

**AND OR HISTORIC:**

Drydock Number One, Norfolk Naval Shipyard

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### 2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Naval Shipyard

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Portsmouth

**STATE:**

Virginia

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### 3. CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY**

(Choose One)

- [ ] District
- [ ] Building
- [ ] Site
- [ ] Structure
- [ ] Object
- [ ] Building

**OWNERSHIP**

- [ ] Public
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Both

**STATUS**

- [ ] Occupied
- [ ] Unoccupied
- [ ] Preservation work in progress

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC**

- [ ] Yes: [ ] Restricted
- [ ] Unrestricted

**PRESENT USE**

(Choose One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Agricultural
- [ ] Commercial
- [ ] Educational
- [ ] Entertainment
- [ ] Government
- [ ] Industrial
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Museum
- [ ] Private Residence
- [ ] Religious
- [ ] Scientific
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Other (Specify)
- [ ] Comments

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### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

**OWNER'S NAME:**

U.S. Department of the Navy

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Naval Shipyard

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Portsmouth

**STATE:**

Virginia

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### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

U.S. Department of the Navy

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**

**STATE:**

**CODE:**

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### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #124-29

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

1969

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Richmond

**STATE:**

Virginia

**CODE:**

45
Drydock Number One is constructed of large blocks of Massachusetts granite. The sides are built up in a series of stepped tiers with two flights of stairs at the land end. The overall length of the drydock is 319½ feet. It survives as originally built except for the replacement of the original caisson.) Drydock Number One is still in daily use.
### Statement of Significance

The Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, established in 1767, is the oldest naval shipyard in the United States. In 1827, in response to "An Act for the Gradual Improvement of the Navy of the United States" passed by Congress, work was begun on Drydock Number One, one of the first two built in the United States. The dock was built of Massachusetts granite at the high cost of $974,365.65 and was completed in 1834. On 17 June 1833, before its completion, it was opened and the Delaware became the first vessel to be drydocked in the United States. Since that time, it has had a long and illustrious history and is still in use. During the War Between the States, the world's first battle-tested ironclad ship, the Virginia, was rebuilt in this dock by the Confederate government from the Union steam frigate, the Merrimac. In 1862 the refurbished Virginia attacked the Union fleet with great success until her triumphs were brought to a standstill by the appearance of the Union Monitor, another ironclad.

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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Approximate acreage of nominated property: 2 acres

### APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME AND TITLE:** Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

**ORGANIZATION:** Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

**CITY OR TOWN:** Richmond

**STATE:** Virginia

**CODE:** 45

### 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [X]
- State [ ]
- Local [ ]

**Name:** Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

**Date:** December 2, 1969

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Signature:**

**Date:** FEB 26 1970

### ATTEST:

**Signature:** Keeper of The National Register

**Date:** FEB 1 1970
8. Statement of Significance

In the early 19th century the professional separation between architecture and engineering was much less marked. Architects such as Benjamin H. Latrobe and Robert Mills were involved in the designs of canals, shipyards, and railroads as well as buildings. In 1827 work was begun on the first drydock in the United States. Drydock Number One at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia, was completed in 1834. It is constructed of slabs of granite quarried in Massachusetts. A living testimonial to the excellence of its design is the fact that it has been in continuous use to this day. Because of the utilitarian nature of these specialized type of structures it is easy for them to be overlooked by the general public and by the usual historical survey. However, with reflection, it can be appreciated that structures such as the Drydock Number One formed the base upon which this country was built.