

THE

# BIG STICK

Winter 2007/08

## Destination — Mare Island, Vallejo, California!

### Navy Declares HSMPS the Only Remaining Viable Bid for U.S.S. Iowa

After its last decommissioning in 1990, its relocation from Rhode Island to the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in 2001, and its second-time classification to donation status in 2006, *U.S.S. Iowa* is heading for its new role as a museum and memorial!

Following a year-and-a-half long competitive bidding process, Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square ("HSMPS"), whose proposal to the Navy places *U.S.S. Iowa* at Mare Island, Vallejo, California, has been named by the Navy as the sole candidate to acquire the namesake of the most powerful and fastest class of battleships launched by the American people.

"The Navy's declaration of HSMPS's bid as the only remaining viable bid for USS Iowa is a clear signal to complete the funding campaign," states Merylin Wong, President and Founding Director of HSMPS. "We look forward to continuing to work closely with the Navy and the community to accomplish the goal of berthing one of the greatest ships in U.S. naval history at our nation's first Pacific naval installation, Mare Island."

### Order of the Day

#### FEATURES

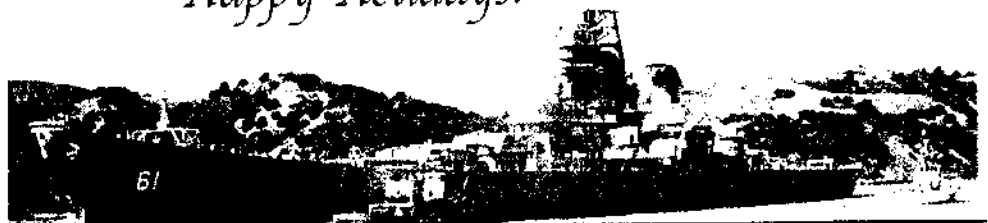
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Federal legislation providing for *U.S.S. Iowa*'s donation as a museum mandates that the ship be berthed within the State of California, and the Navy sought a historic connection between the berthing site and the service. Aside from financial, technical, and curatorial plans, the Navy also sought expressions of support in terms of community development, tourism enhancement, public education, veteran recognition, and recruiting. Official endorsements to berth *U.S.S. Iowa* at Mare Island include the State of Iowa, California legislators, the Solano County Board of Supervisors, the City of Vallejo City Council, County Superintendents of Education, and Mayors, Convention and Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce of over a dozen Bay Area cities. Thousands of citizens and organizations from coast-to-coast also documented their support.

The formal notice of availability of *U.S.S. Iowa* for donation states that it is in the best interests of the Navy to donate *U.S.S. Iowa* (and *U.S.S. Wisconsin*) as soon as possible.

Now, everyone is asked to contribute, whatever they can afford, to bring *U.S.S. Iowa* to her spectacular new home—in the heart of one of the country's largest major metropolitan areas—at Mare Island, Vallejo, California as soon as possible!

*Happy Holidays!*



## What Will It Take to Successfully Berth U.S.S. IOWA at Mare Island ?

Efforts to acquire and maintain historic ships for use as museums are viewed by industry participants as enormous undertakings, gargantuan tasks, costing millions and requiring years of hard work, no matter what size or type of ship, but especially capital ships. An understanding of the Navy's minimum initial requirements that parties must meet in order to be even considered as a custodian of a historic vessel will confirm this. These community-based endeavors generally receive no financial assistance from the government unless the ships enjoy the happy coincidence of being named after a state in which they will ultimately berth, or the host city is in a position to help.

Like many historic ship acquisition efforts and operations, HSMPS seeks donations, pledges, loans and guarantees, gifts-in-kind, services, active participation and other support. Once the ship is acquired, aside from admissions and other sources of revenue, these same resources will continue to be generated. We are fortunate that the berthing site will be in the heart of one of the nation's largest major metropolitan areas, the Bay Area, with about 17 million annual visitors, moments away from San Francisco and minutes from the internationally-acclaimed Napa and Sonoma Wine Country. Situated at Mare Island in "the Bay Area's No. 1 Gateway City"-- Vallejo, California, U.S.S. *Iowa* will benefit from both visibility and accessibility while in a landmark location.

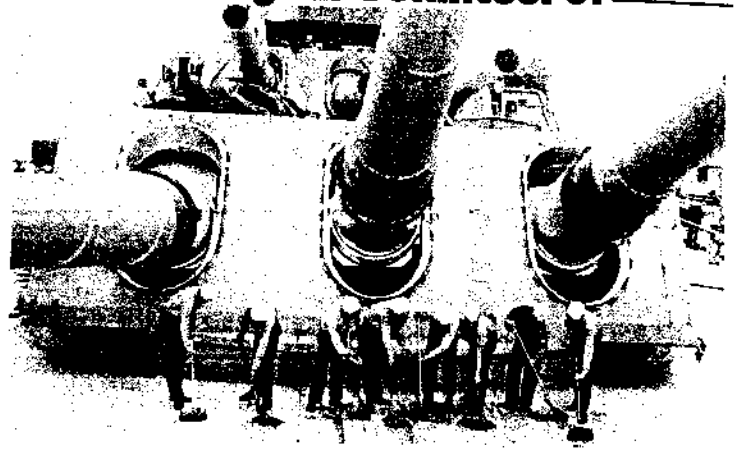
People often ask, what will it take to make this happen? Like U.S.S. *Iowa*'s creation over six decades ago, it will take the will, the dedication, and the commitment of citizens and their institutions to provide for her new role at Mare Island. Their generosity and their quickness to give will factor greatly into how soon this grand ship can serve as a major educational attraction. In financial terms, HSMPS is seeking \$18-20 million--a fraction of the U.S.S. *Iowa*'s inflation-adjusted construction cost of \$120 million sixty-four years ago in 1943.

Among the many tasks that have to be accomplished to operate the battleship as a museum and memorial, both the implementation of a technical plan and the development of a visitor program are essential by Opening Day.

To all those who have contributed and continue to contribute towards preserving U.S.S. *Iowa* as a museum and memorial, we thank you. To all those who have not had a chance to contribute, the time to do so is now!

by Merylin Wong, President & Founding Director, HSMPS

## Calling All Volunteers!



Since Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square's inception in 1996, our quest to acquire U.S.S. *Iowa* has been mainly driven by volunteer help. With the Navy's confirmation that HSMPS is the sole bid with a proposal to berth U.S.S. *Iowa* in a community rich with veterans and former Mare Island Naval Shipyard workers, a list is being developed of people who are willing to volunteer their time, resources, and skills for the repair, restoration, preservation, and preparation of the ship for its new role as a museum.

This effort is of landmark proportions for not only Mare Island and the City of Vallejo, but the entire Bay Area and region. It will become a gleaming example to all Americans as well as other nationals who visit U.S.S. *Iowa* of what history means to us.

Everyone's help and participation is of utmost importance to the future of this historic treasure, and citizens are encouraged to foster additional support through their affiliations with organizations and community groups.

To those who have already furnished contact information and offered their help, we thank you. To those who would like to also be considered for a part in U.S.S. *Iowa*'s volunteer workforce, and this does not have to be limited to shipboard activity, please write us.

**You may be called to duty!**

By Bob Luna, Committee Member

## "Little IOWA"

Whaleboats serve as lifelines for ships. They transport mail to and from the ship's crew, their families, and friends. They move sailors to other ships because of things such as medical emergencies and personnel changes. HSMPS acquired a whaleboat which was actually used in connection with U.S.S. *Iowa*, and following nearly two and a half years of restoration efforts, work is underway to get the craft seaworthy. It's named Little IOWA--stay tuned for her debut!

## OUR MISSION

To deliver the best news and information, quickly and fairly, through integrity and experience.

# Frontlines

www.navytimes.com

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS FROM ALL OVER

# Saving the Iowa

## WWII-era battleship has new home, but needs millions to move

**O**rganizers in Vallejo, Calif., say they think they've cleared all but one roadblock to start a museum for the decommissioned battleship Iowa, the last of the four storied World War II battlewagons with no civilian pier-side retirement home.

The last hurdle is money — raising \$15 million to \$20 million.

Naval Sea Systems Command has chosen Vallejo as the site with the best setup to host a museum for the Iowa, said Merylin Wong, president of Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square. Her group wants to tow the 45,000-ton battleship from its mothball berth in Suisun Bay, Calif., and set up a museum at the former Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

But first they've got to raise money to tow the Iowa, restore the ship and set up the infrastructure and administration for a new museum. Unlike its three sister ships, which found homes around the country comparatively quickly, the Iowa has spent a long time in limbo since it formally left the fleet in 1990. In 2002,

the ship was towed from Rhode Island to California through the Panama Canal.

Backers wanted to set up the Iowa as a museum in San Francisco, but the city's board of supervisors rejected it. So the Navy parked it in a "ghost fleet," with dozens of

other World War II-era ships maintained by the U.S. Maritime Administration.

Wong said several things will separate the Iowa museum from the three other Iowa-class ships: For one, the Iowa was one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's favorite warships, and he had a special stateroom aboard that contains the only bathtub aboard any U.S. warship. Also, the Iowa museum will include a special memorial to the 47 sailors killed in 1989 when the ship's



NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

The battleship Iowa, seen here firing a full broadside in 1984, could become a museum ship at last if a preservation group can raise enough money.

No. 2 gun turret exploded, a "constant reminder to the public," Wong said, "of the dangers faced by our service people even during times of peace."

— Philip Ewing



# Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square

P.O. Box 361 ■ Vallejo, CA 94590 ■ [www.battleshipiowa.org](http://www.battleshipiowa.org)

## REMEMBERING THE IOWA

### Tragic Explosion Aboard Historic Battleship to be Commemorated

For Immediate Release—April 18, 2008  
San Francisco Bay Area

Contact: Merylin Wong  
707 712-8361

It was during a training exercise in Puerto Rico on April 19, 1989 that 47 sailors onboard the historic U.S.S. Iowa lost their lives in a gun turret explosion. This weekend marks the 19th anniversary of that tragic day, and the group working to berth the U.S.S. Iowa as a museum will hold a memorial service in honor of her crewmembers this weekend in Vallejo, California, the battleship's proposed future home.

















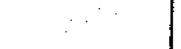
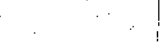
















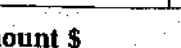
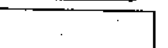
The gun turret explosion onboard U.S.S. Iowa remains one of the worst peacetime accidents in U.S. naval history. Asked what she thought about U.S.S. Iowa becoming a museum, Mary Welden, mother of one of the 47 fallen sailors tearfully expressed, "to this day I would love to have my son back, and so it would be wonderful to be able to visit the ship and Gun Turret 2, the place where he died".

The three-football-field long, 50,000-ton U.S.S. Iowa was built in 1943 at a cost of \$120 million. The ship is the namesake of the world's best known collection of battleships built by the U.S. known as the Navy's illustrious 'Iowa'-class. The ship carried President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Tehran Conference to meet with Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Chiang Kai-Shek. Originally selected to serve as the platform for the surrender ceremony marking the end of World War II, U.S.S. Iowa was present in Tokyo Bay serving to transmit to the world that peace had been achieved. U.S.S. Iowa departed from San Francisco Bay to serve in the Korean Conflict in 1951, and served through the Cold War. The ship was last decommissioned in 1990 and was towed 5,700 miles from Rhode Island to her present location at the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, Benicia, CA in 2001, about ten miles from her proposed future home.

U.S.S. Iowa is expected to attract nearly 400,000 visitors annually, and a \$20 million campaign has started to berth her as a museum attraction. "U.S.S. Iowa stands to be the first museum of its kind on the West Coast--the first battleship memorial, dedicated to all who served our nation both in times of war and peace", states Merylin Wong, President & Director of Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square. The non-profit organization's proposal to place U.S.S. Iowa at the nation's first Pacific naval base, Mare Island, Vallejo was recently selected by the Navy as sole viable bid to preserve the battleship.

HSMPMS will conduct memorial ceremonies along the waterfront behind the Vallejo Ferry Terminal at 289 Mare Island Way, Vallejo on Saturday, April 19, 2008 at 1PM. The press are invited. Donations can be made payable and sent to Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square, P. O. 361, Vallejo, CA 94590.

# Join IOWA 61—a donor membership

Donation Level	Newsletter & Invitations to Events	Plankowner Certificate	Name Recognition In Select Publications	Name Recognition at Site	Website Acknowledgment (with permission)	Welcoming Day Recognition & Special Receptions
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 61 (annual)						
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 161 +						
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 661 +						
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1,061 +						
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 6,161 +						
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 61,000 +						
						<b>Total Donation Amount \$</b>

<b>Name / Title / Organization</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Phone/E-mail</b>	<b>City, State, Zip</b>

Please Make Checks Payable and Send To:  
**Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square**  
 P. O. Box 361, Vallejo, CA 94590  
 and/or request that we contact you.

Donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Subject to Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square receiving custodianship of U.S.S. Iowa and/or approval by the U.S. Navy. Historic Ships Memorial at Pacific Square makes no representation nor guarantees that it will be awarded custodianship of U.S.S. Iowa.

## What IOWA Can Do

- U.S.S. IOWA can be the first museum of her kind on the West Coast, the first battleship memorial dedicated to those who served during times of both war and peace.
- U.S.S. IOWA can serve as an educational platform—disciplines such as math, science, physics, history, chemistry and computer technology can be taught and learned through the U.S.S. Iowa. Educational programs will provide a maturing experience and include activities and work aboard opportunities that will help instill in youth an appreciation for teamwork and responsibility.
- U.S.S. IOWA potentially offers a unique "Marshall Plan" for donations to other nonprofits, social programs or scholarships.
- U.S.S. IOWA can encourage public education, serve as an everlasting reminder of a proud naval heritage, and support recruiting efforts while honoring the past, serving the present, and challenging the future!



George Bisharat;  
 Bill Stephens;  
 Capt. Don Hess,  
 President USS  
 Missouri Memorial;  
 & Merylin Wong

USS Missouri  
 Memorial

## What You Can Do Now

In short, give your time and your financial support today. Your donation will help provide the funds necessary to demonstrate our community's commitment to the United States Navy and provide the infrastructure needed to make ready and maintain a permanent home for U.S.S. Iowa.



Become a Charter Member—donate \$61 and above to receive our newsletter and invitations to upcoming events. Volunteer your time and/or services. Please fill out and send in the form above.

*Join us in the work to save this very important and big piece of history!*

