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'MIGHTY MO' CELEBRATES 15 YEARS AT HISTORIC PEARL HARBOR

Pearl Harbor, HI – (June 24, 2013) – Fifteen years ago the decommissioned battleship USS *Missouri* – the famed 'Mighty Mo' – arrived at its permanent port in historic Pearl Harbor, rusting badly, its teak decks in disrepair, and in need of extensive cleaning and polishing inside and out and top to bottom.

Today the gleaming Battleship Missouri Memorial stands as one of the nation's great tributes to the men and women of our Armed Forces, a result of the dedication by the USS Missouri Memorial Association and its legion of supporters and volunteers to transform the aging battleship into a beautiful memorial.

"The USS *Missouri* was warmly welcomed to Hawaii 15 years ago and we have received incredible support since then in developing this inspiring memorial and honoring all that this battleship represents to America and our freedom," said Michael A. Carr, President and COO of the Battleship Missouri Memorial. "We're very proud of our success and the impact the *Missouri* has made to the Pearl Harbor experience and being part of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument."

It was Monday, June 22, 1998, when the USS *Missouri* was towed into Pearl Harbor and moored at its new home, Pier Foxtrot-5, bow-to-bow to the sunken USS *Arizona*. The two battleships signifying the start and end of World War II create an indelible image of honor, service, sacrifice, and triumph.

A day earlier, Sunday, June 21, 1998, the Mighty Mo had arrived off Oahu to great fanfare after being towed across the Pacific, greeted by a flotilla of vessels and crowds of people along the shoreline.

The USS Missouri Memorial Association, the volunteer-driven, non-profit organization that had officially taken possession of the Mighty Mo just six weeks earlier, had only a handful of employees, bank loans to repay, and no immediate means to generate revenue.

Hundreds of volunteers immediately came forward to help the Association get the *Missouri* in ship-shape. Seven months later, on January 29, 1999 – the 55th anniversary of the USS *Missouri's* launch from the Brooklyn Navy Yard – the Battleship Missouri Memorial opened for public tours.

Since then, the Association has continuously introduced new exhibits and displays and created new tour experiences to showcase the *Missouri's* legacy and honor of America's active-duty military and veterans. The next major exhibit being unveiled is a striking 8-foot statue of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, on September 2, the 68th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Carr noted, "The commitment of our volunteers and support of our donors has been amazing and we couldn't have come this far without their belief in our mission. Coming aboard the Mighty Mo is a moving experience – standing on the Surrender Deck, looking up at the big guns, and seeing how the ship's crew lived at sea. We are constantly working to improve the educational and historical value of seeing this magnificent battleship first-hand and celebrating its place in our nation's history."

15 Years – 15 Milestones

(Following are 15 major milestones since the USS Missouri's arrival in Hawaii 15 years ago.)

1. **January 29, 1999** – Battleship Missouri Memorial opens to the public.
2. **April 7, 2000** – All nine 16-inch gun barrels are elevated and boots installed.
3. **April 12, 2001** – Family members of the former Japanese kamikaze pilot who crashed his plane into the *Missouri* on April 12, 1945, join with the family of former Captain William Callaghan on the 56th anniversary to pay tribute to the Captain's courage and compassion in having the *Missouri* crew give the pilot a burial at sea. Senator Daniel Inouye is the keynote speaker.
4. **May 25, 2001** – Debut of the feature film, *Pearl Harbor*, starring Ben Affleck, Josh Hartnett, Alec Baldwin, and Cuba Gooding, Jr. Many scenes were filmed on the *Missouri*.
5. **August 20, 2001** – Battleship Missouri Memorial welcomes its one-millionth visitor.
6. **September 2003** – World War II and Korean War crewmembers of the USS Missouri BB-63 Association hold their annual reunion in Hawaii and aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial. More than 200 oral history interviews are recorded during the four-day event.
7. **October 23, 2003** – President George W. Bush visits aboard the Battleship Missouri Memorial.
8. **September 2, 2005** – 60th Anniversary of the End of World War II commemoration. Battleship Missouri Memorial opens "Our World at War" exhibit (Wardroom)
9. **November 2005** – Restoration of Chief's quarters is completed and Chief's Legacy Center opens to the public.
10. **September 3, 2007** – First CPO Legacy Academy begins (CPO – Chief Petty Officer).
11. **October 14, 2009** – *Missouri* goes into her first dry-dock as a Memorial for several weeks of cleaning and upgrades.
12. **October 2010** – Opening of Korean War exhibit and mini-theater on the second deck aft.
13. **September 15, 2011** – Research Center opens to the public.
14. **May 18, 2012** – Premiere of Universal Studios' feature film, *Battleship*. The *Missouri* returns to sea as a star of the movie.
15. **July 12, 2012** – Battleship Missouri Memorial welcomes its five-millionth visitor.

Hours/Rates

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the summer months (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. the rest of the year). General admission, which includes choice of an optional tour, is \$22 per adult and \$11 per child (4-12). Military, *kama'aina* (local resident) and school group pricing is available. For information or reservations, call (toll-free) 1-877-644-4896 or visit USSMissouri.org.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial, located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" and the sinking of the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's unconditional surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Following an astounding career that spans five decades and three wars, from World War II to the Korean conflict to the Liberation of Kuwait, the “Mighty Mo” was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which operates the battleship as a historic attraction and memorial.

The Association oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors.

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Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/xRTpDE6.jpg>
Photo courtesy of [Defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/819zahC.jpg>
Photo courtesy of the USS Missouri Memorial Association

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