



## ABOUT THE “MIGHTY MO”

### USS Missouri (BB-63)

Class:	Iowa-class battleship
Length:	887 feet
Height:	209 feet from keel to mast
Beam:	108 feet
Weight:	58,000 tons (full load); 45,000 tons (unloaded)
Speed:	In excess of 30 knots (35 mph)

*Note: Use “USS” only when referring to active-service ship. Use “Missouri,” “battleship Missouri” or “Mighty Mo” when referring to decommissioned ship.*

### Some History

Iowa-class battleships were designed for speed and firepower. Four Iowa-class battleships were built during World War II including the USS Missouri, the keel of which was laid on Jan. 6, 1941, at the New York Naval Shipyard, Brooklyn, NY. Her armament included the main battery of nine 16 inch-barrel guns and twelve 5 inch-barrel anti-aircraft guns.

The Missouri was launched on Jan. 29, 1944, and commissioned on June 11, 1944. She was assigned to the Pacific Third Fleet and steamed into Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1944.

The USS Missouri was part of the force that carried out bombing raids over Tokyo and provided firepower in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. During the war’s final month, the “Mighty Mo” served as Admiral William “Bull” Halsey’s flagship for the Pacific Third Fleet.

The Missouri secured its place in history as the site of Japan’s unconditional surrender to the Allied Forces on Sept. 2, 1945, ending World War II. The ceremony for the signing of the Formal Instrument of Surrender was conducted by Supreme Allied Commander, General Douglas A. MacArthur.

But her story does not end there. The Mighty Mo's main battery firepower became a legend in Korea, with her nine 16 inch-barrel guns hurling 1,800-pound shells as heavy as Volkswagens over 23 miles in defense of U.S. land forces.

In 1955, the Missouri was decommissioned and mothballed at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. But in 1986, the USS Missouri was recommissioned after undergoing an extensive modernization and refurbishment. In 1991, the Mighty Mo was deployed to the Persian Gulf where it fired its 16-inch guns and launched Tomahawk missiles against Iraqi positions during Operation Desert Storm.

The Missouri's final operational mission occurred on Dec. 7, 1991, when the battleship led a contingent of ships into Pearl Harbor as part of the commemoration to mark the 50th anniversary of the attack that thrust America into World War II.

In 1992, the Missouri was decommissioned for the second time. In 1995, it was removed from the Navy's ship registry, clearing the way for the battleship to be donated by the Navy for preservation as a memorial museum.

In August 1996, the Navy selected the non-profit USS Missouri Memorial Association as caretaker for the battleship and Pearl Harbor as its permanent home. On May 4, 1998, the Navy made it official, transferring the Mighty Mo's care to the association.

### **Some Interesting Facts**

Designing the Missouri took 175 tons of blueprint paper. The ship was built in three years and required over 3 million man-days to complete the job.

For comparison's sake, the Missouri is 279 feet longer and 11 feet wider than the USS Arizona. The Mighty Mo is also 5 feet longer and 18 feet wider than the RMS Titanic.

Just how big is the Missouri? If you could stand the ship on end, it would be 332 feet taller than the Washington Monument.

The nine 16-inch guns are the Mighty Mo's trademark feature. Each gun barrel is 65 feet long, weighs an incredible 116 tons, and can fire a 2,700-pound shell 23 miles in 50 seconds — with pinpoint accuracy.

The Missouri was the last battleship ever built. She was also the most formidable. In addition to her massive firepower capabilities, she possessed thick steel armor plating that protected the hull (13.5 inches), the gun turrets (17 inches in front; 13 inches on the sides), the citadel (17 inches), and the conning tower sides (17.3 inches).

### **USS Missouri Memorial Association**

The USS Missouri Memorial Association is a private Hawaii-based 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization designated by the U.S. Navy as caretaker of the battleship Missouri. The association operates the Battleship Missouri Memorial. President George Herbert Walker Bush is the memorial's honorary chairman of the board. The memorial is supported by admissions, retail and concession sales, donations,

grants, and the work of volunteers. It is not supported with government funding. The association was formed in 1994 and includes a cross-section of leaders from Hawaii's business, civic, political, and retired military communities.

The association was founded in March 1994 by retired Honolulu executive Edwin Carter, retired Admiral Ron Hays, and retired Navy veteran Harold Estes. When the three friends sat down for lunch in early 1994, no one could have predicted how their meeting would change the way Pearl Harbor is seen today. At the time, the battleship Missouri — the revered Mighty Mo whose place in history was immortalized as the site of Japan's WWII surrender on Sept. 2, 1945 — had been recently removed from the Navy's ship registry. With the right setting and proper support system, the ship could be eligible for donation. The three agreed, "Why not Pearl Harbor?"

In March 1994, the USS Missouri Memorial Association was officially registered as a non-profit organization, and its volunteer board of directors set out to make the case for Hawaii. Enthusiastic support was received. Individuals and companies offered financial and in-kind donations to help keep the fledgling organization afloat.

Finally, on May 4, 1998, the Navy made it official and entrusted the battleship's care to the association once and for all. Six weeks later, on June 21, 1998, Father's Day, the Missouri received a hero's welcome as it was towed into the waters fronting Honolulu's shoreline.

### **Battleship Missouri Memorial**

The Battleship Missouri Memorial opened on Jan. 29, 1999, at Pier Foxtrot-5 on Ford Island, Pearl Harbor. Much of the ship has been refurbished, with the exterior walls cleaned and repainted, the decks groomed, the brass polished, and numerous interior spaces cleared for visitation.

The Memorial is designed to be a proud tribute to the U.S. Navy, veterans and the historic role the USS Missouri played in World War II. As a part of the visitor experience, guests can walk the decks, stand on the spot where the surrender took place ending WWII, tour the wardroom and officers quarters, see how the crew lived, ate and slept, buy lunch at the famed Truman Line, eat in the crew's mess deck, and gain an understanding of how the Navy operated on the high seas.

Today, 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 that saw the sinking of USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's unconditional surrender aboard USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

The USS Missouri Memorial Association oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors. Those wishing to make a donation or volunteer at the Battleship Missouri Memorial, please call the USS Missouri Memorial Association at (808) 423-2263 or visit [ussmissouri.org](http://ussmissouri.org).