



REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR
SIXTY YEARS LATER
 DECEMBER 7, 1941

J02 Jim Williams photo

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Tickets must be purchased at the Bowfin Submarine Museum (adjacent to the Arizona Memorial Visitor's Center).

J02 Jim Williams
 Editor

When Pearl Harbor was attacked 60 years ago, the battleship USS Missouri was still under construction. Years later, the ship now finds a permanent home here, making it one of the most popular sites in Hawaii - with over 1,000,000 visitors since its opening as a museum in 1999.

Sometimes called the "Mighty Mo", the Missouri sits in Pearl Harbor next to the USS Arizona Memorial - the two marking the beginning and the end of World War II.

"She's become an American icon of strength, representing our courage and willingness to sacrifice everything for our freedom," said Lee Collins Sr., a retired Navy senior chief and Visitor Operations Director for the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

Originally launched Jan. 29, 1944, the Missouri was the last and biggest battleship ever built - measuring almost 900 feet long, over 100 feet in beam and more than 200 feet in height.

While it only served the last eight months of World War II, that was enough to give the ship and its crew a distinguished reputation as it played a key role in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, as well as serving as the flagship for famed Adm. William "Bull" Halsey.

Of course, its true claim to fame was serving as the location where General Douglas MacArthur accepted Japan's surrender on Sept. 2, 1945, ending the war.

It also went on to serve in Korea before being decommissioned its first time in 1955.

The "Mighty Mo" was modernized, re-commissioned and put back into service in 1986.

In 1991, it went to the Persian Gulf to protect American-flagged oil tankers. It also launched 28 Tomahawk missiles against Iraqi positions in Baghdad and Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

The Missouri's final mission was to go to Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1991, to take part in the Pearl Harbor 50th anniversary ceremonies. It was then decommissioned for the final time in 1992.

Shortly after, the Navy selected the USS Missouri Memorial Association to care for the "Mighty Mo" and in 1998 the ship's title was transferred to the association. The Missouri was then brought back to Pearl Harbor where volunteers refurbished the ship in time for its grand opening to the public.

Since then, visitors of the Battleship Missouri Memorial have toured it daily - viewing areas like the wardroom, officers quarters, and the spot where

a Japanese attack plane penetrated the USS Missouri's anti-aircraft defenses and crashed into the deck, setting the ship on fire.

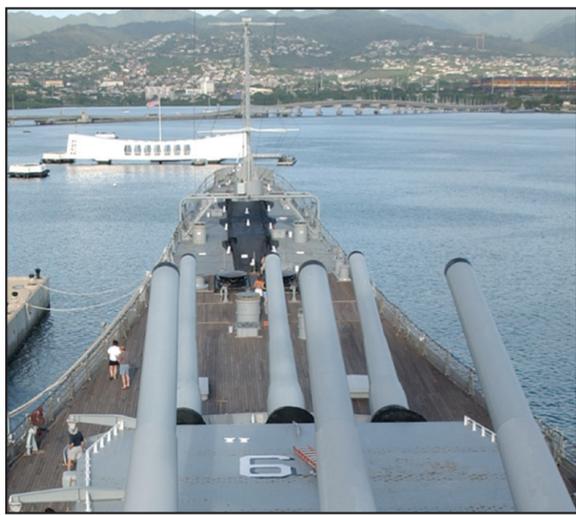
They've been able to get a close up look at its 16-inch - each of which is 65 feet long, weighs 116 tons and can accurately fire a 2,700 pound shell 23 miles in 50 seconds.

And of course they finish their tour on the Surrender Deck of the ship where they can experience history, listening to the voice of Gen. MacArthur and witnessing the exact spot where the historical surrender took place.

"The good thing about our tours is you can tailor them to yourself," said Collins. "Some people are interested in history and they can just really look into the historical side. Others are interested in the capabilities and the equipment of the ship or maybe its Sailors. They can look at whatever they want... there's no other surface memorial like it in the world."

He added they regularly even get Sailors who served aboard the "Mighty Mo" coming back to visit their old ship again.

"It's really their ship, even if it is decommissioned now. They slept on her, cried on her, fought on her, stood watch on her. It's still their ship. So when they come to us and say you're doing a good job, that's what counts. That's when we know we've done it right."



J02 Jim Williams photo

A view of the Arizona Memorial from the Missouri's bridge.

Tour Choices:

"Chief's Guided Tour": Want to see as much as possible in a short time? The Chief's Guided Tour is the way to go. Guests get a one-hour introduction to the layout of the ship, an introduction to the ship's systems and weapons and a narrative of Missouri's exciting history. The tour includes exclusive access to Missouri Combat Engagement Center. Afterwards, guests are free to explore the ship on their own.

"AcoustiGuide Tour": (an electronic information wand with nearly two hours of recorded tour information) With nearly two hours of recorded information, the AcoustiGuide tour is ideal for the technophile. All stations are random access and guests may listen to as much, or as little as they like.

"Captain's Tour": Tickets for this tour may be purchased at the Bowfin, at the Missouri, or through a Hawaiian travel agency. This tour gives exclusive access to the Captain's Inport Cabin. Guests are greeted at the entrance brow like a visiting dignitary visiting the "Mighty Mo" in Bahrain, just before the outbreak of Desert Storm. Travel back in time to 1991 for a secret briefing on Missouri's upcoming mission, Desert Storm. Guests learn of plans to retake Kuwait and about Missouri's expected contribution to this massive allied effort. During the briefing, eat from of authentic naval officer's china. After the briefing, guests are taken on an escorted tour through Missouri's Combat Engagement Center, Flag Bridge, Signal Bridge, Tomahawk Deck, Flying Bridge, Navigational Bridge and finally down to the Surrender Deck. Following the tour, guests are invited to explore the rest of the ship on their own.

"The Explorer's Tour": A brand new tour (officially open to the public after a ribbon cutting ceremony on Jan. 5, 2002). Guests will be given a hard-hat, a glow-in-the-dark vest, a utility belt, military flashlight and water bottle before getting to wander into the depths of ship - depths that have never been open to the public before now. Guests will descend into darkened passageways visiting areas like to the old post office, the brig, the laundry room, the barber-shop, as well as some of the machine and office spaces. Then guests will make their way down to view the fire-room and engine room where they will learn all about the ship's steam cycle before ending the tour on the Surrender Deck. Afterwards, guests are taken to the ship's mess decks where they are invited to enjoy a meal.



Photo courtesy of Battleship Missouri Memorial

A few lucky local children get a sneak peek at the new "Explorer's Tour". This tour will be open to the public Jan. 5, 2002.



J02 Jim Williams photo

Visitor Information:
 1-877-MIGHTY-MO
 1-888-USS-MISSOURI or (808) 423-2263

Hours of Operation: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily (except Christmas) Ticket Sales end at 4 p.m.

General Admission:
 Adult \$14 / Child \$7
 Military and kama'aina (with ID)
 Adults (with ID) \$10 / Child \$ 5

The Chief's Guided Tour
 Adult \$14 / Child \$ 7
 Military and kama'aina (with ID)
 Adults (with ID) \$10 / Child \$ 5.

The Captain's Tour
 \$49 Adult, \$39 Child
 Ask about current military/kama'aina rates.