



## Press Release

### **National Museum of the Surface Navy to Host Inaugural Freedom of the Seas Weekend Celebrating the History and Mission of the Surface Navy**

**SAN PEDRO, Calif. – Oct. 16, 2023** – The [National Museum of the Surface Navy](#), founded aboard [Battleship USS IOWA](#) and scheduled to open in 2025, today announced its 2023 Freedom of the Seas Weekend, October 20-21, 2023. Two days of activities designed to raise awareness of the history and mission of the Surface Navy will culminate in the hosting of the third annual [Freedom of the Seas Awards Dinner](#) aboard the historic Battleship USS IOWA on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023.

#### **Navy to Unveil Exhibit Aboard Battleship USS IOWA**

The new U.S. Navy Environmental Exhibit aboard Battleship IOWA will celebrate its grand opening on Friday, October 20, 2023, at 11 a.m. The “Stewards of the Sea” exhibit is an interactive showcase aboard Battleship IOWA that enhances guests’ understanding of the research, initiatives, and outreach the U.S. Navy does to support oceanic sustainability.

The ribbon cutting ceremony will be supplemented with the unveiling of plans and imagery of the showcases and experiences that will open as part of the National Museum of the Surface Navy in October 2025.

#### **Recognition of 75 Years of Desegregation and Integration in the U.S. Navy**

The Freedom of the Seas Reception will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of desegregation and integration in the U.S. Navy. The reception, which will be held at the Jonathan Club in downtown Los Angeles on Friday, October 20, 2023, will honor extraordinary military and dedicated civilian patriots from all racial backgrounds who serve alongside one another in the defense of our country.

#### **Third-Annual Freedom of the Seas Awards Dinner Recognizes Industry Leaders and Trailblazers**

Held annually in honor of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which is considered to be the largest naval battle of World War II and in the history of the world, the **Freedom of the Seas Awards Dinner** will be held on Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023. The award dinner recognizes the trailblazers that are inspiring the next generation through service, innovation, and leadership. Attendance at the premier annual event is by invitation only and will include top leaders from the education, veteran, community, industry, government, and military sectors.

ADM Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy (retired), who served as the 25<sup>th</sup> commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), will receive the **2023 Freedom of the Seas Award**. This award recognizes an accomplished individual who embodies the core principles of America's Surface Navy to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world. ADM Davidson is recognized for his leadership and strategies which helped raise awareness of the tensions in the Indo-Pacific region and deterred enemies from threatening the peace and prosperity of foreign nations.

Stephanie C. Hill, executive vice president, Rotary and Mission Systems at Lockheed Martin, will receive the **2023 VADM Samuel L. Gravely Jr. Award**. This award is given to a leader who exemplifies the courageous service of its namesake, who is broadly recognized for his trailblazing achievements as the first African American naval officer to command a U.S. Navy warship and be promoted to flag rank. Ms. Hill is recognized for her significant contributions to the mission success of the U.S. Navy through her distinguished 36-year career in the defense industry.

The **2023 Humanitarian Service Award** will be presented to California State Treasurer Fiona Ma. The award recognizes those that exemplify the fearless bravery and tenacity necessary to sail through troubled waters to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as a core principle of America's Surface Navy. Treasurer Ma is recognized for her commitment to addressing the homeless and housing crises, expanding access to healthcare facilities, supporting small businesses, and leading initiatives to create a stronger California for future generations.

Dr. Gladys West, a trailblazing mathematician who played an integral role in the development of the Global Positioning System (GPS), is the recipient of the inaugural **Freedom of the Seas Innovation and Exploration Award**. This award is presented to an individual who embodies the spirit to propel society beyond its limits, pioneering research and developing technologies that impact the knowledge and capabilities of people around the world.

“The Freedom of the Seas Weekend, which will bring focus to the critical role that the Surface Navy plays in deterring aggression and preserving freedom of the seas, will be spotlighted by the unveiling of

the Navy Environmental exhibit aboard Battleship IOWA,” explained retired Navy Rear Admiral Mike Shatynski, Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of the Surface Navy. “In addition, we’ll be recognizing some amazing individuals at this year’s awards dinner who epitomize the values, leadership, and accomplishments that have made the Surface Navy the most powerful and capable surface force in the world.”

For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Kyle Aube, Director of Development at [kaube@labattleship.com](mailto:kaube@labattleship.com).

### **About the Freedom of the Seas Awards**

The Freedom of the Seas Awards is the premiere annual event of the National Museum of the Surface Navy at the Battleship IOWA. The event is held in honor of the anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in the history of the world, which occurred during World War II. The Awards honors those that embody the core principles of the American Surface Navy’s mission to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world.

### **About the National Museum of the Surface Navy**

Scheduled to open in 2025 aboard the historic Battleship USS IOWA Museum, the National Museum of the Surface Navy is the museum for America’s Surface Navy. The museum’s mission is to raise America’s awareness of the importance of the United States Surface Naval Forces’ role in international relations, free trade, humanitarian assistance, and technological innovation, not just in the past but today and into the future.

Located in the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, Calif., Battleship USS IOWA Museum is one of the top five museums and attractions in Los Angeles, bringing the ship’s history to life through in-person and virtual tours and educational programs for youth. In addition to providing a natural platform for veterans and patriotic civilians to come together as a community, Battleship USS IOWA Museum provides a wide array of impactful programs and resources that support the critical needs of our military and veterans.

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