News Release

Donation Contract Signed to Transfer Historic Battleship Wisconsin

WASHINGTON — Vice Adm. David Architzel, Principal Military Deputy Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, today signed the donation contract officially transferring title and ownership of the historic battleship ex-USS Wisconsin (BB 64) to the city of Norfolk, Va.

“I am pleased that the transfer is complete,” said Architzel. “I am confident that the Wisconsin will be proudly displayed in Norfolk at the Nauticus National Maritime Center as a symbol of her special place in our Nation’s history.”

Wisconsin saw extensive action in the Pacific during the waning days of World War II and was decommissioned in 1948. The ship was recommissioned in 1951, returned to the Pacific where it saw heavy action in the Korean conflict and was decommissioned again in 1958. Wisconsin earned five battle stars during World War II service and one battle star during the Korean War. After many years in storage, the ship was modernized and recommissioned in 1988 and returned to war when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. In February 1991, Wisconsin fired its 16-inch guns at targets just north of Khafji, Saudi Arabia, and the ship assisted shore-based ground units in their tasks. Wisconsin was decommissioned for the final time in 1991.

The Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 109-163, authorized the Secretary of the Navy to strike Wisconsin from the Naval Vessel Register and offer the ship for donation to an eligible entity that would display the ship within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The city of Norfolk was the only entity in Virginia to submit a proposal to obtain Wisconsin via donation.

The Navy donates ships to preserve naval history and tradition, educate the public and commemorate the men and women who built and sailed the vessels. There are 45 other museum ships on public display in 22 states that have been donated by the U.S. Navy. These museums give the general public the rare opportunity to experience and imagine shipboard life first hand; to learn about naval tradition and history; and to commemorate the men and women who built and sailed these vessels.

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