



Press Release

National Museum of the Surface Navy Names ILWU Recipient of 2024 Freedom of the Seas Commerce and Communications Award

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – August 12, 2024 – The [National Museum of the Surface Navy](#) (NMSN), founded aboard [Battleship USS IOWA](#) and scheduled to open in 2025, today named the [International Longshore and Warehouse Union \(ILWU\)](#) the recipient of the 2024 [Freedom of the Seas](#) Commerce and Communications Award. The award recognizes leaders in commercial shipping and communications that embody a core principle of the Surface Navy in utilizing the ocean for the benefit of the free world.

ILWU has been selected by the NMSM to receive the annual Freedom of the Seas Commerce and Communications Award for its critical role in keeping the cargo moving throughout the pandemic and for its contributions to the tremendous economic growth that has been experienced across the country.

The ILWU is an international labor union that represents a wide range of workers on the West Coast of the United States, in Hawaii, and in British Columbia, Canada, including dock workers, warehouse workers, tourism and hospitality workers, agricultural workers, miners, and others. The Union is comprised of over 40,000 members and has over 50 local unions and affiliates throughout California, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada.

“The men and women of the ILWU are proud to not only serve as key stakeholders in the global supply chain, but also to play a critical role in our national defense through supporting critical military operations,” explained Gary Herrera, President, ILWU Local 13. “As Americans, we must always remain vigilant to defend the freedoms we enjoy, as well as the freedom of maritime navigation, from those who wish to undermine our way of life and democratic leadership of the world.”

“The vision for the National Museum of the Surface Navy is to inspire global awareness of freedom of the seas,” stated retired Navy Rear Admiral Mike Shatynski, Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of the Surface Navy. “The goods that we rely on, the coffee we drink, and many of the jobs that sustain or livelihoods are dependent upon maintaining the freedom to navigate the oceans. The men and women of

the ILWU are dedicated to keeping commerce moving safely through our ports and are most deserving of this honor.”

The annual Freedom of the Seas Awards event is held in honor of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, considered to be the largest naval battle of World War II. Attendance at the award event, which is by invitation only, includes top leaders from the education, veteran, community, industry, government, and military sectors. For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Kyle Aube, Director of Development at 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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