



## **National Liberty Ship Memorial S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien Implements Marketing Plan to Raise Repair Funds**

**Last Surviving Fully Functional WWII Vessel Celebrates 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2008  
"D-Day" Veteran was launched on June 19, 1943**

[www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org)

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**January 11, 2008 – San Francisco, CA:** Most heroes retire at age 65....but not the one named *Jeremiah O'Brien*. In 2008, the *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien* ([www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org)) -- home to the **National Liberty Ship Memorial** -- will celebrate her 65<sup>th</sup> year afloat by opening the hatches to what is hoped will be new generation of people hungry to rent the ship for their next special event and thus secure the World War II veteran's continued life afloat.

"The *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien* is a unique and historically accurate marvel of World War II maritime engineering that needs to be preserved for future generations to come," states retired **Rear Admiral Thomas J. Patterson**, who developed the National Liberty Ship Memorial in the 1970s and spearheaded her restoration. "Fully restored down to her original fittings and cabin appointments the *O'Brien* transports visitors back over half a century to when sailors dared brave the harshest of high seas to convoy food, supplies and troops to Great Britain when that country was under siege during WWII."

For 2008, the National Liberty Ship Memorial is launching a new proactive marketing campaign targeting special event and corporate function planners, film and television location scouts, convention and visitor bureaus, military associations, and the maritime industry. Celebrating the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of her June 19, 1943 launch in 2008, the *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien*, moored at Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf, is the world's oldest, fully functional and most historically accurate World War II vessel still in Coast Guard-approved operation. The marketing campaign is an effort to raise more than 1 million dollars for repair work required in 2009 in order to keep her seaworthy and open to the public.

"Our hope is to attract more cruise and venue leasing opportunities, with an emphasis on attracting more Military, Naval, and Veterans Association events," said **Carl Nolte, Chairman of the Board for the Memorial** and a well-known journalist with the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "We also hope to develop sponsorship and licensing programs with the major players in the Maritime Logistics Industry. Such sponsorship programs would include licensing of the Jeremiah O'Brien's image, use of the ship for corporate meetings, events, and functions, including oceangoing team building programs or leisurely gourmet, employee, and family cruises."

Since the completion of her restoration in the early '90s, the non-profit National Liberty Ship Memorial, *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien*, has been successfully and consistently self-funded through ticket sales, and other special event leasing opportunities. Her San Francisco Bay Cruises for up to 800 passengers, and infrequent longer

cruises to San Diego and Seattle, are considered one of San Francisco's most popular Bay tour attractions. The magnitude of the work required to dry dock the vessel and replace massive hull plating has led to the stepped up effort to innovatively market the ship in order to raise the required funds.

In the scenic landscape that is San Francisco and the Bay Area, event planners and film location scouts are always on the lookout for the next best, and most innovative, venue to bedazzle clients and revelers. In addition, to more aggressively market the *O'Brien* as a special event space, the Memorial staff and board hope to increase their popular Bay Cruises three-fold in 2008, working with leading event producers, restaurant associations, the San Francisco Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and even wedding planners.

The 441 foot *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien* has hosted a wide range of events, such as the premiere of Ken Burns' PBS documentary "The War" and annual San Francisco Brewers Guild's "Brews on the Bay Weekend."

"What is old is new again," continued Nolte. "We think there is a strong retro appeal to the ship's massive, industrialized, metallic cargo holds, in where events of up to 300 can be held. One reveler attending a recent Silicon Valley technology company party lauded the venue and event planner's production skills, stating the modified lighting and decor appear like a 'cross between *The Hunt for Red October* and *Blade Runner*.' That's exactly the crowd we want onboard."

The *O'Brien* offers unprecedented film, television and photography location opportunities, with stunning views of the San Francisco Bay, city skyline, Alcatraz, and Bay Bridges. Her engine room, interiors and exteriors were filmed and recorded extensively for the 1997 Academy Award-winning *Titanic*, and the *O'Brien* makes appearances in the feature films *Sphere* and *Inflammable*.

"A savvy event planner is only limited by their imagination as to what kind of memorable themed events can be hosted aboard the *O'Brien*, whether she's plying the gentle waves of the San Francisco Bay or moored to her home Pier 45," said Nolte. "The *Jeremiah O'Brien* is kept alive by a crew of 300 passionate volunteers who hope to pass her down from generation to generation. We're confident we're going to do just that."

#### **The S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien History in Brief:**

During World War II, 2,751 Liberty Ships, constructed at 18 US ship yards, were meant to be built quicker than German U-Boats could sink them. "Built by the mile and chopped off by the yard," as President Roosevelt said, they were to form a "bridge of ships" across the Atlantic. Winston Churchill wrote, "Without the supply column of Liberty Ships that endlessly plowed the seas between America and England, the war would have been lost."

The *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien* was built in a blisteringly fast 52 days and launched in South Portland, Maine on June 19, 1943. She made four harrowing Atlantic crossings and eleven Normandy D-Day landings during WWII and also served in the Pacific Theater and Indian Ocean. Mothballed in 1946, she was laid up for 33-years in Suisun Bay before possession of the ship was taken over in 1979 to be restored. After countless thousands of hours of restoration work, the ship is now a living National Monument on the National Register as a historic object and museum dedicated to the men and women who both built and sailed the ships of the U.S. Merchant Marine in WWII. The *S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien* proudly returned to Normandy as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Normandy D-Day Celebrations in 1994, as the only large ship left of the original 6,939-ship armada.

NOTE: Individuals interested in booking the *Jeremiah O'Brien* for a special event should contact the offices of David Perry & Associates, Inc. at (415) 693-0583 / [events@davidperry.com](mailto:events@davidperry.com)