



# Press Release

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## INSURV Brings Unique Skills to Retired Battleship Wisconsin

NORFOLK, Va. – (January 28, 2013) Inspectors from the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) were welcomed by the staff of Battleship Wisconsin (BB 64) prior to conducting a survey as part of a volunteer community relations project Jan. 25 in downtown Norfolk.

After a storied history beginning in World War II, the battleship received its last official INSURV inspection in 1992, before becoming a floating museum on the James River.

John Elliker, Battleship Wisconsin project manager, said the city of Norfolk initially contacted INSURV to ask them about surveying the ship. The conversation progressed into the INSURV team volunteering their off-time to conduct an inspection to assist the museum in developing a plan to open more of the ship and identify potential hazards that could impact visitor's health and safety.

“What we want is for your grandkid's grandkids to enjoy this ship in a meaningful way, and we can't do that if we're constantly battling rust and deterioration. This is the beginning of a unique partnership between the active duty Navy and the city of Norfolk for the preservation of the battleship,” said Elliker.

All of the INSURV inspectors volunteered to take a look at the ship and help the city understand what they are going to have to do in order to keep her in great shape for the long term.

“We, the city, just don't have all the expertise we need to maintain this ship and in an era of shrinking budgets and limited personnel, we welcome the support from volunteers to help us keep her afloat,” said Elliker.

According to Capt. Mark Metzger, INSURV director of craft and auxiliary force inspections, the 15-man team was happy to volunteer to help the museum preserve a major piece of naval history and heritage.

“This ship has so much history and to be able to use our expertise to help preserve that history is very meaningful for us,” said Metzger. “Also, I've come here many times to attend promotion and retirement ceremonies and this affords me the chance to get into areas that haven't been open for years, like the engine rooms and the main galley. So if what we do here allows the city to show the American public how Sailors work and live on a warship, then that is all to the good.”

The team spent the day getting a feel for the ship and looking for obvious safety discrepancies. Elliker said the report on the findings will help them put together a detailed plan for opening up more spaces on the ship.

At the end of the day Elliker said the preliminary results look promising.

“The best thing about the results was there were no big surprises, but there were some manageable surprises. The focus on a few discrete issues that we absolutely need to address will help us in preparing to open more of the ship. The berthing compartments are not ready yet. Rack lamps need attention, both for lighting and for safety. Sharp edges need to be smoothed. Loose racks and lockers need to be secured.”

According to Metzger, this won't be INSURV's last visit to the ship.

“This is a huge ship. There are still areas that haven't been accessed for years and are without power, lighting or active ventilation. So we're excited about making this a long-term partnership,” said Metzger.

Elliker said there are a number of volunteer opportunities on the ship, either for individuals or groups. They even have an 'adopt-a-spot' program for groups who would like to take 'ownership' of a particular space on the ship and bring it back to Navy standards.

For more information go to: <http://www.nauticus.org/get-involved/help-restore-bb-64>

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