

For Immediate Release:

Celebrate Memorial Day Weekend at the Independence Seaport Museum

PHILADELPHIA, PA, May 7, 2021 – This Memorial Day Weekend, Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) is honoring those who served in the United States Armed Forces with various programs and events in-person and virtually. From a new exhibition featuring unique animations aboard Cruiser *Olympia* to the return of [Paddle Penn's Landing](#), ISM has something for the entire family to enjoy. The museum highly recommends visitors purchase tickets in advance on the official [website](#), where they can also find admission prices and upcoming event information.

On Friday, May 28, ISM will debut a special exhibit on Cruiser *Olympia* that tells the story of the ship's transportation of the Unknown Soldier across the Atlantic Ocean. Titled [Difficult Journey Home](#), the exhibit will feature an 11-panel installation that examines the 16-day treacherous voyage home that Cruiser *Olympia* faced after departing from Le Havre, France in 1921.

The exhibit will also feature animations highlighting the tropical force winds and 20-to-30-foot waves Cruiser *Olympia* encountered during its journey. Animations in the exhibit were made possible by contributing partner [Drexel University Westphal College of Media Arts & Design](#) and Assistant Teaching Professor Dan Rose. *Difficult Journey Home* will be on display aboard Cruiser *Olympia* until Thanksgiving weekend.

In addition to the new exhibit, Cruiser *Olympia* is excited to announce the reopening of the [Quarterdeck](#) on the ship's main deck on May 28, which hasn't been open to the public in over two decades. After fundraising over \$11,000 since October 2020, ISM was able to add the necessary security repairs and upgrades to make the deck safe for visitors. It will now be part of the tour route of Cruiser *Olympia*, and guests will be able to see from a sailor's point of view!

On Monday, May 31, at 10 a.m., ISM will host its annual Memorial Day Ceremony. The private ceremony will be streamed live via the museum's [Facebook page](#) and will include remarks from museum staff and guest speakers, including ISM President & CEO, Peter Seibert; ISM Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Mike Flynn; The Chapel of Four Chaplains' Captain Louis A. Cavaliere, U.S. Navy (Retired); Honorable Patrick F. Dugan, Captain, U.S. Army (Retired); and historian Kara Newcomer.

During the ceremony, ISM will unveil a permanent [historical marker](#) on *Olympia* to commemorate the Unknown Soldier and memorialize his story for future visitors. This marker was created by Seward Johnson Atelier of New Jersey, with Susan Dunsmoor leading the project. Located where the Unknown Soldier's coffin was laid during its transport in 1921, ISM's contribution reflects the previous markers in this newly imagined memorial.

The new marker includes the inscribed message from the original plaque from the 1920s, with particular attention paid to reproduce its original font accurately. The bronze slab represents the dimensions of a casket, recalling the second historical marker installed by the Cruiser *Olympia* Association, which was displayed from the 1960s to 2000. An additional message written on behalf of ISM by Chief Curator Craig Burns honors not only the Unknown Soldier, but the crew and honor guard aboard who so gallantly

protected the Unknown's remains with little thought for their own lives. Lastly, a folded, 1920s period American flag will be placed on the plaque, representing the absence of the Unknown Soldier. The flag remains uncollected to symbolize that the connection between this unidentified soldier and his loved ones has been broken.

At 10:55 a.m., the marker will be unveiled by a team of former Tomb Guards who will represent the [Society of the Honor Guard and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#) during the dedication. The team is comprised of Kevin Donovan (served from 1981-84), Society Secretary Lonny LeGrand (served from 1981-83), and Case Wilson (served from 2004-06). Honored guests and speakers will then have the opportunity to place white roses on the Unknown's marker as tribute.

Following the ceremony, historian Kara Newcomer will lead an in-person presentation inside the museum on the Marines and their relationship with the Unknown Soldier at 1 p.m. Newcomer spent 17 years as a historian with the Historical Reference Branch of the Marine Corps History Division before moving to her current position as an archivist with the Air Force Historical Research Agency. Seating for this presentation will be limited as ISM will space out chairs in accordance with local guidelines.

Additional [programming and events](#) centered around the [Centennial Anniversary of the Return of the Unknown Soldier](#) will take place both virtually and in-person throughout the year, culminating with a ceremony marking the Centennial Anniversary of *Olympia's* departure from Le Havre, France, on October 25, 2021. Currently the oldest steel warship still afloat, *Olympia* was chosen to return the remains of an unknown American soldier to the United States following the end of World War I.

ISM requires all visitors entering the building or boarding Cruiser *Olympia* to wear a face mask and utilize sanitization stations installed in high traffic areas. The museum has also added signage and floor markers reminding guests to maintain a six-foot distance from others. The museum has increased daily cleanings and adjusted certain elements of exhibits based on interactivity. Visitors are encouraged to visit [ISM's website](#) to learn more about the safety procedures.

Photos: **Live [HERE](#).**

About the Independence Seaport Museum

Independence Seaport Museum increases the awareness, knowledge, and experience of our waterways by highlighting the important role of the Delaware River through direct contact with our collections, exhibits, and the water. Our boating programs provide direct access to recreation and the scientific study of the water from the standpoints of biology and physics, while art is used to represent the importance of competing uses of the river. Through our historic ships, Cruiser *Olympia* and Submarine *Becuna*, we provide the ideal platform for examining the interaction of society and water over our nation's history. Our educational student outreach programs ensure generational awareness of the museum's mission. October 25, 2021, marks the Centennial Anniversary of Cruiser *Olympia's* 16-day journey to bring the American Unknown Soldier from World War I from France to the Washington Navy Yard. We will be honoring this significant milestone throughout the year by sharing stories, presenting programming, hosting discussions, and premiering digital content. Learn more about the Independence Seaport Museum at phillyseaport.org.

###