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INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM TO LAUNCH NEW SHIPBOARD PROGRAMMING FOR SUMMER 2025



Philadelphia, PA (April 21, 2025)—Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) has a new lineup of programming to offer for Summer 2025 aboard its two historic ships, *Olympia* and *Becuna*, which promises to engage, entertain and enlighten visitors. From the return of fan favorites not offered since before the pandemic to a new roster of fascinating speakers in its popular lecture series and more, ISM will be the hub of activity along the Delaware River this season.

“This year, as we commemorate the 250th birthday of the United States Navy and the Marine Corps, we are excited to offer these very special programs on *Olympia* and *Becuna*,” said Peter S. Seibert, ISM’s president and CEO. “Both ships played significant roles in American history, and we are thrilled to be able to provide different ways that the public can engage with their stories.”

Returning for the first time since 2019 will be **Hard Hat Tours on *Olympia***, the largest object in ISM’s vast collection and one of its two historic ships. She is one of the last surviving warships from World War I and the only surviving ship from the Spanish-American War. Beginning on Saturday, May 17, and then offered on select Saturdays throughout the year, visitors who are age 16 and older will be able to join the ship’s historian for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes tour. They will be able to climb and crawl through coal bunkers, navigate narrow passages and pass through dark corridors and compartments while hearing stories of those who worked daily in these spaces to keep the ship afloat. (Guests should come prepared for the possibility that they might get a little dirty recreating the activities of seamen on board.) Hard Hat Tours will be offered also on June 14, June 28, October 11, October 18, October 25 and November 8 from 9:00 A.M. to noon and 2:00 to 3:30 P.M. The cost is \$125 per person for the three-hour tour and \$75 for the 90-minute tour.

Memorial Day Weekend 2025 will also be the start of **summer tours on both *Becuna* and *Olympia*.**

Becuna, a World War II-era submarine, will offer daily tours beginning Friday, May 23, which are approximately 45 minutes long, hourly between 10:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. for visitors who are three years of age and older and will be available through the Submarine Package. (This package includes self-guided access to ISM and *Olympia* plus a guided tour of *Becuna*. Free for ISM members, \$33 for adults ages 18-64 and \$28 for children ages 3-17, college students, active duty and retired military, seniors.) In addition to the Hard Hat Tours on *Olympia*, a new seasonal tour of the ship's engine room will be offered Fridays through Sundays until Labor Day at 11:00 A.M., 2:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. The tours, which will take visitors below deck and into the engine rooms to learn how the cruiser was kept afloat during her time of service, are approximately 45 minutes long. They cost \$25 per person and are available as a separate ticket for visitors who are 10 years of age and older.

On Monday, May 26, ISM will hold its annual **Memorial Day Ceremony aboard *Olympia***, held in partnership with the Chapel of Four Chaplains, at 10:00 A.M.; it is free and open to the public. The ceremony's featured speaker will be Monica Hallman, who serves as the vice president for Homecoming 250, a nonprofit organizing and hosting the events and celebrations commemorating 250 years of the Navy and Marine Corps in Philadelphia in 2025. Ms. Hallman has had a 22-year career serving in the U.S. Navy first as a deck seaman and then as a journalist, broadcast journalist and public affairs specialist both overseas and domestically. After her military service, Ms. Hallman was Lockheed Martin's communicator/spokesperson in Owego, New York, for the Presidential Helicopter Program and Naval Helicopters Program among other impressive positions she has held elsewhere. She has been awarded numerous honors and medals and served as a judge on award panels for the Navy. She also helped to create the Navy's website, Navy.mil. She currently teaches a course in public speaking at Rowan University in New Jersey.

The "**Captain's Corner**" lecture series will return for Summer 2025 with a new roster of monthly speakers on various Saturdays. The first, at 2:00 P.M. on **June 21**, will be Ryan Szimanski, the curator of Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial, to discuss the development of battleships and other large surface warships operated by the United States Navy. Mr. Szimanski will reflect on the development of the gun ship over time, its era of supremacy and argue why *Olympia* deserves to be recognized on the list of capital ships as we celebrate the 130th anniversary of her commissioning. On **July 12** at 11:00 A.M. Steve Rochette, chief of government and public affairs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District, will discuss the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs and projects throughout the Delaware Valley and touch on local Corps history, dredging, coastal storm risk management, environmental topics and other current issues. Jason Smith, associate professor of history at Southern Connecticut State University and author of *To Master the Boundless Sea: The U.S. Navy, the Marine Environment, and the Cartography of Empire* who is currently at work on a new book, will speak on **August 2** at 2:00 P.M. about the heroes of 1898, such as George Dewey, Richmond P. Hobson and Winfield Schley, and how following the Spanish-

American War, these heroes emerged as among the first rank of modern celebrities in American culture. Smith will critically examine the ways the public came to celebrate and sometimes critique or condemn their newfound heroes and how this gave rise to the U.S. Navy, the national's global power and the role of common people in it. "Captain's Corner" will conclude on **September 20** at 2:00 P.M. when Tim Keyser, chief of the Engineering Division at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Marine Design Center, discusses the Army Corps' floating plant fleet and roles, their support in the navigation mission and several exciting new ship construction projects and initiatives, including the replacement of the Philadelphia-based, 1960s-era Hopper Dredge *McFarland*. Keyser has served with the Corps for 22 years, all with the Marine Design Center, which is the center of expertise for the U.S. Army Corps, supporting naval architecture, marine engineering, ship design and construction for over 2,000 boats, vessels, barges and ships. All "Captain's Corner" lectures are included with General Admission and free to ISM members.

To complete ISM's Summer 2025 offerings, the museum again will be offering guests 21 and older the opportunity to enjoy the warmer months aboard *Olympia*. Held from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M., visitors can come on the ship for **Pride Night on Olympia** on June 13 and a **Speakeasy Night on Olympia** on July 18 and again on August 15. All three evenings will feature themed cocktails and mocktails and cost \$35 per person.

Whether it be honoring our veterans through Memorial Day commemorations, touring ISM's historic ships, learning through fascinating lectures or socializing in a unique location in the evening summer breeze, Independence Seaport Museum will have a variety of ways for visitors to experience a bit of Naval history along the Delaware River. And, when the summer's heat gets intense, stopping inside to cool off and enjoy ISM's exhibition spaces, including the newly opened ***Small but Mighty!: Models, Toys, and Miniature Ships***, makes the visit to its Penn's Landing locale complete.

About Independence Seaport Museum

The Independence Seaport Museum (ISM), founded in 1960 as the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, encourages visitors to discover Philadelphia's river of history and world of connections. Stewards of the Olympia, a nineteenth-century cruiser, and the Becuna, a World War II-era submarine, ISM is home to interactive and award-winning exhibitions, one of the largest collections of historic maritime artifacts in the world and a boatbuilding workshop. Accredited by the American Association of Museums since the 1970s, it is a premier, year-round destination adjacent to Spruce Street Harbor Park on Penn's Landing. Visit daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see our full schedule of programs and events at [phillyseaport.org](https://www.phillyseaport.org). Visit <https://www.phillyseaport.org/admissions-hours-of-operation/> to learn about ticket packages and guided tour options.

*Image captions (left to right): A veteran saluting during a Memorial Day ceremony aboard *Olympia* honoring those who have served our country; guests climb aboard *Becuna* for a daily guided tour; guests aboard *Olympia* as part of the summer evening series for those 21 and over. All images are courtesy of Independence Seaport Museum.