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SYSTIMAX® SCS helps with the refit of Pearl Harbor battleship with 21st Century communications system

An unusual project in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii will soon bring cutting-edge technology to a battleship that will never again see combat.

More than 37 miles of high-speed SYSTIMAX® cabling and equipment will soon transform the World War II ship USS Missouri into one of the world's most high-tech museums with digital information kiosks, comprehensive historic archives and real-time access by Internet from any location in the world.



Mast camera mounted on crow's nest of the Battleship Missouri, right above the main battery director.

picture courtesy USS Missouri Memorial Association

The battleship Missouri became one of the world's most famous names on September 2, 1945, when representatives of 10 nations assembled on her deck in Tokyo Bay to sign the historic surrender document that brought World War II to an end. The ship went on to participate in the Korean War in 1950-1952 and in the Persian Gulf War in 1991 where, as lead ship, she participated in firing the first salvos of Tomahawk missiles.

After her final Navy decommissioning, the ship was brought to Pearl Harbor in 1998 to rest on "Battleship Row" with the USS Arizona, whose sinking marked the entry of the United States into the war. The twin memorials, symbolizing the beginning of the war and its conclusion, have been described as "the bookends of World War II."

The ship's modernization is remarkable not only for its size and scope, but for its unique purpose. No warship has ever been fitted with such sophisticated technology exclusively for non-military use. The massive refit will take several years, and will make the USS Missouri one of the most high-tech ships in the world. But instead of guidance systems and weaponry, the new technology will help provide communications, education and remembrance for visitors both on- and off-site.

When complete, some 200,000 feet of SYSTIMAX GigaSPEED® cabling will be installed throughout the 887-foot-long battleship, nearly every foot of it carefully concealed to preserve the authentic character of the veteran warship. Engineered to transfer data at speeds of more than a gigabit per second, the SYSTIMAX cabling will integrate the entire ship's security, administration, information systems, computer equipment and software donated by Dell, Digital Island, Microsoft, Ultrak and many other companies.

"SYSTIMAX SCS is helping us bring USS Missouri to the world," said Lee Collins, Director of Visitor Operations for the Battleship Missouri Memorial Association. "A SYSTIMAX cabling solution will be the backbone of an on-board communications network with complete voice, data and video systems. The most devastating war in man's history ended here on this ship — and the technology will help to preserve that memory, both for visitors and for others with Internet access who may never be able to visit."

Because installing 37 miles of cabling in an aging 887-foot ship is a job no one wants to do twice, choosing the right cable was critical. The USS Missouri Memorial Association chose SYSTIMAX GigaSPEED cabling, not only for its unprecedented performance, but also to assure compatibility with future technologies so new systems can be added without the need for later recabling. Graybar, a SYSTIMAX distribution partner with local facilities in Honolulu, volunteered to handle the daunting task of delivering nearly three tons of SYSTIMAX cabling and connectivity equipment needed to complete the project.

Installation cable on yardarm of Battleship Missouri high above the hallowed waters of Pearl Harbour.

picture courtesy USS Missouri Memorial Association



Camera mount on mast of the Battleship Missouri

picture courtesy USS Missouri Memorial Association

With 400,000 visitors per year, the USS Missouri is one of the most popular ships in the world according to Captain Channing M. Zucker (USN, Ret.), executive director of the Historic Naval Ships Association. Collins expects the Missouri to attract many more visitors after her high-tech refit. A network of digital cameras throughout the ship will be in service by spring 2002. By the end of the year more than 30 information kiosks throughout the ship will allow visitors to view video scenes of actual combat, tour the ship's compartments, or search for specific information in a comprehensive historic archive. Specially designed kiosks in the ship's Alternative Visitor Center will allow identical access to disabled persons who may have difficulty touring the ship. Additional cabling will link the entire ship's communication and information systems to offices ashore, to enhance security and simplify administration.

Unique to the Missouri will be an onboard oral history library featuring memories and anecdotes of officers and crew who served aboard the Missouri during more than 50 years of service spanning three wars. Collins offered a compelling example in the recollection of a former crewmember who served during World War II.

"During the Battle of Okinawa, the Missouri was attacked by a Japanese kamikaze pilot," Collins said. "After the battle, the ship's captain arranged for the dead Japanese pilot to be buried at sea with full military honors. When some expressed resentment, Captain Callahan addressed the crew. He told them they were not glorifying the enemy, they were instead showing their respect for an individual's sense of honor and duty; the same attributes that he hoped were shared by every man under his command. One of the crewmembers later said, 'The skipper was a good man. He told us this man did for his country what we were doing for ours.' The ceremony was held on April 12, 1945 — the same day President Franklin Roosevelt died."

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Lee Collins, Director of Visitor Operations for the Battleship Missouri Memorial Association

The story emphasizes the international appeal of the USS Missouri, not only as a symbol of victory, but also as a symbol of reconciliation, remembrance and respect.

More than 10 percent of visitors to the USS Missouri are Japanese, Collins said, and the ship hosts thousands of visitors from other Asian and European countries every year.

Within six months, Internet access to the modernized ship will be provided through links on the USS Missouri Web site. The SYSTIMAX connectivity infrastructure on board will allow Web site visitors access to the Missouri’s information archives, video library, and even allow virtual tours as strategically placed video cameras throughout the ship provide real-time views of all main decks and compartments.

According to Collins, a complete physical restoration of the USS Missouri will require the efforts of some 27,000 volunteers, many of whom have already begun work on the historic ship. A local newspaper reported that even Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye, who was instrumental in bringing the USS Missouri to Pearl Harbor, has offered "to help scrape off old paint."

Further information about the USS Missouri may be found at the USS Missouri Web site (www.ussmissouri.com).

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