

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Celebrates Impending Homecoming of the U.S.S. New Jersey

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed documents officially bringing the battleship USS New Jersey home to the Garden State to be used as a floating museum and memorial.

"The "Big J" provided firepower for freedom and was a catalyst in our nation's continued march toward liberty and prosperity," Gov. Whitman said of the New Jersey which with 16 battle stars is the most decorated battleship in naval history.

"With such a rich history, it seems only fitting that the USS New Jersey should return home in tribute to the thousands of New Jerseyans who so bravely fought for their country," she said.

The USS New Jersey is one of four remaining Iowa class battleships which are the largest, fastest and most powerful battleships ever built in the United States. Launched in 1942 by the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard and commissioned for nearly 50 years, the ship served during World War II, and the Korea, Vietnam, and Beirut wars.

Gov. Whitman has included in the Fiscal Year 2000 budget \$2 million for the cost of towing the ship from its present home in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington. An additional \$7 million is allocated to the New Jersey site that is chosen by the U.S. Navy to serve as the battleship's permanent home. The Navy is considering applications from Bayonne and Camden.

The ship is scheduled to leave Washington state in September and be towed through the Panama Canal in Mid-October. It is expected to arrive in Philadelphia for storage in November while preparations are made for its final home.

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"The Big J"

The USS New Jersey

Launched: December, 1942

Commissioned: May, 1943

Decommissioned: February 1991

Displacement: 45,000 tons

Length: 887 feet, 7 inches

Draft: 28 feet, 11 inches

Speed: 33+ knots

Complement (Crew size): 1,921

Armament: Twenty 5-inch guns

Nine 16-inch guns

Capable of firing torpedoes and Sparrow and Tomahawk
missiles

Battle Stars: 16

