



Master Sgt. David "Rusty" Strum lives up to his name as he chips away built-up corrosion.



Left, Master Sgt. Olinda Ongay, Det. 419, and Master Sgt. (ret) Stacey Strum diligently clean the "Mighty Mo" for its last mission: USS Missouri Memorial.

'Mighty Mo' prepares for next mission

AIA members get USS Missouri in 'ship-shape' condition

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Recently, the USS Missouri Memorial Association Inc., a non-profit organization, undertook a difficult task of refurbishing a part of history.

In doing so, the association solicited the Hawaiian community for volunteers to assist them with the six-month-long project of cleaning the USS Missouri from bow to stern.

A team of 11 members from Air Force Technical Applications Center's Det. 419 and the 692nd Intelligence Support Squadron, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, answered the call, volunteering their time to work on this massive project to restore the proud lady.

The first order of business was to refurbish her. The exterior needed to be chipped, scraped, and repainted; the decks repaired and shined; the brass polished and the interior spaces cleaned ... no easy task.

The team worked all day on a variety of activities and although the work was extremely arduous in the hot Hawaiian sun, it gave each member a real sense of accomplishment upon completion.

When all is said and done, the long gray lady that was once moored to her temporary home at Pier F5 on

Ford Island, Hawaii, will soon be floating tall and proud again.

Her teak decks and 16-inch guns that now stand empty and silent will be steadfast for all to see and admire.

It was on her deck that Japan's unconditional surrender was accepted with the signing of the Formal Instrument of Surrender, Sept. 2, 1945, officially ending World War II. She later fought in the Korean Conflict and again during the Gulf War.

The USS Missouri's final operational mission occurred Dec. 7, 1991, when the mighty dreadnought sailed into Pearl Harbor and took part in the commemoration ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of the attack that thrust America into World War II.

On June 22, 1998, the USS Missouri, or "Mighty Mo" to those who served on her, entered Pearl Harbor for the last time to prepare for her next mission; becoming a memorial open to the public this month.

Together, with the USS Arizona memorial, "Mighty Mo" represents the beginning and the end of World War II, serving as a fitting tribute to all armed forces veterans. ■