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## Ceremony held for transfer of USS Colorado teak decking to SeaTac Center

**SEATTLE, WA (February 7, 2014)** – The USS Colorado (BB-45), decommissioned and sold for scrap decades ago, has a new home at the USO Northwest SeaTac Center. The new center's entry floor will be the teak decking of the battleship. Donated by Boeing, the flooring arrived at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Friday.

"The Boeing Company has been the guardian of this precious USS Colorado teak decking for the last 54 years. We are overjoyed to transfer the guardianship to the USO for the next 50+ years. We honor the USS Colorado sailors and marines by never forgetting their sacrifice on behalf of our country and our freedom," said Pamela Valdez, Boeing KC-46A Tanker Support & Training IPT and USONW Board Member.

United States Navy Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class William McKenna carried the ceremonial piece of teak decking from the Boeing Development Center to the location of the new USONW SeaTac Center on the airport's mezzanine level.

"We are very excited the Boeing Company has chosen the USO Northwest to be the recipient of this great piece of history," said Executive Director Don Leingang. "Our organization truly understands the significance of this donation and is honored to be the new caretaker of this teakwood planking for as long as the USO exists at SeaTac Airport."

The decking and McKenna was escorted by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Color Guard through a flag line provided by the Patriot Guard Riders, active-duty service members and USONW volunteers.

"I am in awe of the fact thousands of guests every year will be able to stand on the same decking used by WWII sailors fighting for our country on the high seas," said SeaTac Center Manager Bill Baker.

Two years after the USS Colorado had been sold for scrap; Boeing purchased the teak decking, then installed it on cafeteria walls in 1961. Upon completion of the new USO Northwest Center, the decking will cover 1,500 square feet.

Among the spectators at the ceremony were two WWII crewmembers of the USS Colorado, and family members as well: Whittaker 'Moose' Hernion, Larry Clements with his wife Marjory and son Ron, and Sherri Lee daughter of a crewmember. Crewmember Frank Weber was also going to attend, but the icy conditions prevented his travel from Oregon.

## About USO Northwest

USO Northwest serves more than 500,000 active-duty military and their families annually throughout Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington State, and is an important part of the USO (United Service Organizations), a historic non-profit organization lifting the spirits of America's troops and their families millions of times each year at hundreds of places worldwide.

USO Northwest provides a touch of home through its centers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, its USONW Mobile Canteen RV, and innovative programs and services. It also provides critical support to those who need it most, including military deploying overseas and arriving home, military families, wounded warriors and their families, and the families of the fallen.

USO Northwest is not a government agency, but a private, nonprofit organization relying on the generosity of volunteers and donors. USO Northwest also is supported through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC-15348). To join us in this patriotic mission, and to learn more about USO Northwest, please visit [usonw.org](http://usonw.org).

### **About Enduring Support Campaign**

The USO Northwest facilities must be remodeled and expanded to sustain the level of USO service and programs for years to come. The current USONW Sea-Tac Center is less than 3,500 square-feet and serves 10,000 military personnel a month. It has been in use for an extended period of time with little or no renovation or refurbishment. With an increased usage of 400 percent since 2005, it is critical the center be upgraded and maintained.

Through a partnership with the Port of Seattle, the Enduring Support Campaign will build out 7,000 square-feet of vacated space allowing for a larger USONW footprint to address increased service needs as well as greater visibility and access within Sea-Tac International Airport.

Enhancements in the areas of food services, sleeping accommodations, shower facilities and separate family relaxation areas are high priorities. For more information, visit [www.usonw.org/campaign](http://www.usonw.org/campaign).

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