

U.S.S. Intrepid Moves On Second Try

by Bill Bleyer

The second attempt to move the *USS Intrepid* from its Hudson River pier after 24 years proved to be successful, but it started out as much a nail-biter as the first effort a month earlier. Four high-powered tugboats managed to move the aircraft carrier eight feet back and about five feet out from the dock on December 5 before it got stuck in the mud — the same thing that happened on November 6. Then, after a struggle of more than 30 minutes, the tugs yanked the 29,000-ton ship from the muck alongside Pier 86.



As the vessel was wiggled free of the compacted silt that clung to its four 16-foot propellers and began to clear the end of the pier, Bill White, president of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, urged on the 920-foot vessel.

“Come on, baby! Come on, baby!” he shouted. “We’ll see you in Bayonne,” he yelled to employees watching from the pier, referring to the intended destination five miles down the river and across the harbor in New Jersey where *Intrepid* will begin a two year, \$60 million overhaul project that will

also rebuild Pier 86. When the ship was finally out in the river, White and the tug coordinator, Captain Pat Kinnier, began jumping up and down, whooping and giving each other “high fives.” “We’re excited,” White said. “It’s a great day.”

The same six tugs from McAllister Towing and Transportation Co. of Manhattan that had attempted to budge the ship on November 6 with almost 30,000 combined horsepower began arriving before daylight Tuesday. This time three tugs tried to back the ship out on a slight angle rather than straight back as on November 6. Yet, despite

the dredging of an additional 39,000 cubic yards of mud from around the ship, the same problem surfaced. Kinnier said the propellers were pushing up a gigantic mound of mud that stopped the ship. “We’ve got to break these screws out of the mud,” he said.

When *Intrepid* refused to budge after the initial shift, Kinnier and White looked at each other with grim faces and White asked if more tugs could be called in. “I was very worried,” White said later. But then McAllister executives shifted one tug - the *Robert E.*

McAllister - to the port quarter to wiggle the stern back and forth and then to help pull backwards. That worked.

On board for the highly publicized trip were 20 former crew members, including Marino DiLeo, 70, of Bay Shore. He served on board in 1956 after the Korean War.

Getting *Intrepid* moving again was a relief for DiLeo. “I’m glad because I’m tired of getting calls about, ‘Hey, stuck in the mud,’” DiLeo said. “It’s gotta go; they called in the

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