



Intrepid CVS-11
Essex Class Aircraft Carrier

The 900-foot-long Essex-class aircraft carrier *Intrepid* was commissioned by the US Navy in 1943. Known as the "Fighting I" by the US Navy and "the Ghost Ship" by the Japanese, the *Intrepid* survived seven bomb attacks, one torpedo hit, and five kamikaze strikes during World War II. She even played a major role in history's largest combined naval battle—the Battle for Leyte Gulf and the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea.

On October 29, 1944, *Intrepid* was only slightly damaged by a kamikaze attack thanks to the exceptional courage of a 20-man gun crew made up of African-American and Latino mess-cook volunteer gunners, ten of whom lost their lives on that day. Crewmen Alonzo Swann, Robert Jones, and Alfonso Chavarrias received the Navy's highest award, the Navy Cross, for their courage.

During the 1960s, *Intrepid* served as a NASA primary recovery vessel for the Mercury and Gemini space missions. She also served three combat tours of Vietnam between 1966 and 1968. The *Intrepid's* air group was awarded the US Navy's highest group award in 1967: the Navy Unit Commendation. And in July 1968, *Intrepid* was selected as "Best Ship in the Fleet."

The *Intrepid* was decommissioned in 1974. Two years later, she was designated as the Official US Navy and Marine Corps Bicentennial Exposition Vessel, taking part in the celebration of both the nation's and the US Navy's 200th birthday. Destined for the scrap yard a year later, the *Intrepid* was rescued by Zachary Fisher in 1978 when he established the Intrepid Museum Foundation for the sole purpose of "saving the Intrepid for generation to come."

Fisher's vision become reality on August 4, 1982, when the world's largest maritime museum—the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum—first opened to the public on Pier 86 in New York City.