

April 14, 2010

Honorable Charles F. Bolden, Jr.  
Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Mail Code S  
300 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20456

Re: Locating a Space Shuttle Orbiter in New York City

Dear Administrator Bolden:

The undersigned, recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, would like to add our voices in support of the call to bring a Space Shuttle to New York City for public display. Although we understand that many locations from throughout the nation have applied for one of the three Shuttles, we feel strongly that New York City offers the greatest opportunity to showcase to the nation and the world this example of American technological achievement, and that the Intrepid Museum presents a truly unique opportunity to present the orbiter as a symbol of American courage and sacrifice in reaching for the stars.

There are substantial advantages to locate a Shuttle in New York, and we are certain that you are already familiar with them, including the sheer numbers of residents and tourists that live in or visit the City; the 1.2 million schoolchildren and hundreds of thousands of college and university students who can avail themselves of the amazing educational value of a Shuttle; the ability of the New York community to provide the funding necessary to bring an orbiter to the City and properly preserve and display it; and many other reasons.

Another advantage to New York, however, holds special importance to us and we believe would as well for all our nation's servicemembers and veterans, and their families: the connection to the history of the aircraft carrier Intrepid and the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. The Shuttle is a symbol not only of American technological achievement and the importance of exploring out into space, but is also a monument to the courage of the men and women who have braved space travel, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice in that noble pursuit. The Intrepid is the most fitting location to convey that important message to the public. A key part of the mission of the Museum is to honor those who have worn our nation's uniform and inspire the public, especially young people, about their sacrifices and those of their families. Further, Intrepid herself is a veteran of combat in two wars in defense of America, and 270 Intrepid Sailors lost their lives aboard that historic ship or flying her aircraft. What better platform from which to celebrate the courage and sacrifice of our pioneering astronauts?

This point is strengthened further by the fact that Intrepid served as recovery vessel for the Mercury and Gemini programs, therefore providing a bridge between Intrepid, which served in the early days of the program, and the Shuttle, representing the latest advancements. We can think of no other place in this country that provides such a strong link between the shuttle and the history of the space program and the courage and sacrifice of those who have pioneered mankind's reach beyond our planet.

For these reasons, we ask that you give the most serious consideration to allocating one of the three retiring Space Shuttles to New York City and the Intrepid. We salute you for your long and dedicated service to our nation in uniform, and for your continued service today to advance our nation's space program.

Sincerely,

H.C. Barney Barnum  
USMC, Vietnam

Robert Ingram  
USN, Vietnam

Paul Bucha  
USA, Vietnam

Thomas G. Kelley  
USN, Vietnam

Hector A. Cafferata Jr.  
USMC, Korea

Bob Kerrey  
USN, Vietnam

Bruce Crandall  
USA, Vietnam

Gary Littrell  
USA, Vietnam

Sammy Davis  
USNG, Vietnam

Allen Lynch  
USA, Vietnam

Drew Dix  
USA, Vietnam

Thomas R. Norris  
USN, Vietnam

Walter D. Ehlers  
USA, WWII

James Taylor  
USA, Vietnam

Michael Fitzmaurice  
USA, Vietnam

Michael Thornton  
USN, Vietnam

Robert F. Foley  
USA, Vietnam

Leo K. Thorsness  
USAF, Vietnam

Charles Hagemeister  
USA, Vietnam