

# SS Jeremiah O'Brien Liberty Ship 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Cruise and MV Display

Likely Dates August 19-20, 2023 at New Location in San Francisco

By John Neuenburg

The only unmodified, fully operational WWII Liberty Ship in the world is turning 80 this June. The National Liberty Ship Memorial is planning a Saturday Bay cruise and static Sunday public open house with engine running at their new location on the west side of Pier 35. We have been invited to display WWII vehicles next to the ship. Those bringing a MV will receive a cruise ticket and another if a co-driver! Those wanting to stay aboard the ship that weekend are welcome in the open berthing area they use for group overnights like for Sea Scouts. No charge, see details below. Lunch is included aboard the ship when cruising. They hope we will stay for the Sunday public open house. I asked if a discount for a future cruise could be given to people who display a MV on Sunday. My contact thinks that is possible. This would include the Fleet Week cruises in October, a very special way to watch the Blue Angels and other aviation acts.

Pier 35 West is an upgrade from their relatively hidden location at Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf. The move was due to the big Pier 45 fire that burned the shed (the building on the pier) next to the ship. The ship was saved by the SFFD fire boat except for some scorched paint. But the shed which blocked much of the prevailing wind is gone and the wind has been causing mooring lines to snap. Pier 35 is a backup cruise ship terminal and on its west side the wind will blow the ship toward the pier, solving the line problem. The ship is in full view of the busy Pier 39 dining and shopping destination because there is no Pier 37. Part of their deal is the Pier 35 shed is available for O'Brien staff parking when there is no cruise ship visiting. This includes us unloading and parking trucks and trailers inside for this weekend. The MVs will park along the pier's apron between ship and shed so the cruising public and Sunday visitors will walk right by us.



*The O'Brien made seven voyages during WWII including 11 trips from England to the Normandy beachhead carrying cargo. She dodged a bullet in the 2020 fire at Pier 45 in San Francisco. Check out this photo in color in our online newsletter*

RSVP to me, space is limited for the cruise and on the apron. Numbers are fuzzy as of this writing. 20 MVs should be OK. All must be U.S. WWII. No RV camping inside the shed. Shed and apron are locked at night and during the cruise. If anyone wants to move a MV into the shed at night that is OK. There will be a procedure for walking in and out of the shed gate to go to breakfast, dinner, or shopping, probably using our own combo lock on the gate.

One of the themes is "Wartime San Francisco" and they encourage the wearing of WWII era Class A, B, or field U.S. uniforms or period civilian clothes. Combat equipment and guns is not what they are looking for. They hope we can provide a variety of MVs, meaning not 20 jeeps. I will ask if they would like to winch a vehicle off the ground for show, maybe even to their deck. That would be great for a Navy or USMC jeep with lifting eyes. Anyone interested

in that? Volunteer docents will talk about the Merchant Marine, Navy Armed Guards, engine, deck equipment, guns, etc. The organizers are seeking warbirds for fly-bys in San Pablo Bay (attacks?). These cruises are really special.

I am POC for this event. Who wants to do it? Let me know year, make, model MV, driver and co-driver name, which days, overnight Friday and/or Saturday or not. Let me know if you want to do a living history impression without MV. The dates will be firmed up later. I can be reached at 8472801 in the area code where San Rafael is, but prefer email to [in\(underscore\)garage\(at\)hotmail.com](mailto:in(underscore)garage(at)hotmail.com) if you know what I mean.



*The open berthing area is very communal, four bunks high. The top ones are only for the athletic. Bedding, pillows, ear plugs not provided. Tables, chairs, refrigerator, microwave, sink are there. There is a head (restroom) close and showers up a deck.*

*Starboard side now faces the Pier 39 shopping and dining hot spot. Great location!*

