

We have before us, an amazing and rare opportunity. Our first museum exhibit is now scheduled for display, beginning this fall.

We have been given a proposal that includes a basic rough framework of the display. We will be given, over the next few months, the opportunity to suggest additions and enhancements to the display, using items from our private collections, etc. Three such enhancements were proposed and enthusiastically accepted last week in a lengthy discussion with the Executive Director of the Historical Society, who attended our museum meeting during the 2015 Reunion.

The return of our ship's Presentation Silver set to the City for display is intended to become a centerpiece for the display. The security requirements being contractually imposed by the Navy and agreed upon by the City will require implementation of some relatively expensive security measures.

Some State grant funding has been applied for by the Historical Society and while the chances of securing these funds appear excellent, it has been communicated to us that demonstrations of support from the crew will be a determining factor. In short, should the State sense a lack of support from the crew, the State's support will be similarly lacking.

There are a number of ways in which support can be demonstrated. Let's start with one that's relatively easy and potentially fun. We need for you to think of and communicate your ideas for what you would like to see in a USS Duluth exhibit. Your ideas will be collected and forwarded to the Executive Director of the Historical Society. Our museum exhibit(s) will be done in two stages, small scale and large scale. The smaller scale exhibit is to be a display window in a very prominent location in the Historical Society headquarters building, viewed by thousands of people per year. The larger exhibit would be in a room of currently unknown square footage. The smaller exhibit is happening now, the larger one a couple of years down the road. The smaller exhibit is more challenging because of size/area constraints, but it is important that we send a powerful and exciting message in that small area, so that support for the larger one is engendered. We need to convey to the viewer, why the USS Duluth is/was so important. This will be in the City for which the ship was named. We need to convey to the residents, the reasons that they should be proud of the ship that bore the City's name. We need to convey to the viewers, the reasons why that ship made such an impactful and permanent impression on all of us, through our shared experiences aboard, over the ship's 40 years in service. We can have exhibits supported by actual artifacts; we can have exhibits that supplement artifacts through the use of various technologies. While there are a number of ideas already envisioned, we need yours. No idea is too wild or far-fetched. The more ideas we come up with, the more that we convey to the Historical Society and the State that we care about the ship and a quality exhibit. We need ideas, people – lots of them. Remember that the display window will be going on exhibit this fall – we need those ideas now.

Few people will ever have in their lifetime, the chance to help contribute to a museum. This one commemorates our service to America and our great ship (not to mention, each other). In the near future, you will be able to tell your children & grandchildren, etc., that you did something so important that it is commemorated in a museum exhibit and that you actually helped create the exhibit. The importance of this transcends all geographic concerns and affects you, regardless of when you served aboard, or what your rank/rating was. The public needs to gain understanding that it was through each of us doing our individual parts, the ship was able to achieve not only day to day operations, but great feats, as well. Without each of us fulfilling our individual roles, the ship would not have been able to function. Without the Snipes, the ship wouldn't have moved, but without Mess Cooks, the Snipes wouldn't have moved. Moving is good, but without the Quartermasters, we would have moved right into trouble and stayed there and of course, the list goes on and on. Here's your chance, shipmate, to tell your story and our story – how are we going to do it?

The Historical Society and Veterans Memorial Hall in Duluth, MN played a pivotal role in the creation of our Anchor Monument and now we are being given these amazing new opportunities. In the near future, they will be giving us another fantastic opportunity that has been discussed for at least three years – details to be announced soon.