

For Immediate Release:
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Dedication Set For Lake Champlain Navy Memorial 'Lone Sailor' to Honor History, Military Service

Burlington, VT—ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain will be the site of the dedication ceremony for the long awaited Lake Champlain Navy Memorial to be held at 10 am on June 18, 2005. The Memorial will commemorate Lake Champlain's significant naval history and honor all men and women who have served and currently serve the US military. Installation is scheduled for late May on the 2.2 acre Leahy Campus on Lake Champlain's Burlington Waterfront, adjacent to ECHO.

The US Navy Memorial Foundation approved Vermont's Burlington Waterfront as the second site outside the nation's capitol and the first civilian site to be awarded this honor. The Memorial will include a replica of the well known US Navy Memorial's statue recognized as the "Lone Sailor" along with various additions by Vermont granite company, Rock of Ages, crafters of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. US Navy Memorial sculptor and creator of the Lone Sailor, Stanley Bleifeld, will oversee installation at the Waterfront site.

The Memorial will rest on the former site of the US Naval Reserve Center, now the Patrick and Marcelle Leahy Center for Lake Champlain. The campus recognizes Senator Patrick Leahy's lifelong dedication to the stewardship of the Lake Champlain Basin. As the newest addition to the Leahy Campus, the Lake Champlain Navy memorial will join ECHO, lake aquarium and science center, and the University of Vermont's Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory.

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“Lake Champlain is a treasure that has offered us valuable resources, amazing beauty, and a strategic stronghold in defense of our nation,” says Senator Leahy. “It is an honor that the former site of the US Naval Reserve Center will be the home of this memorial commemorating the Lake’s profound role in history, and the role of our local men and women who served and are currently serving our nation.”

Lake Champlain is the site of two critical historic battles. Under the command of Commodore Benedict Arnold, the 1776 Battle of Valcour Island had a profound impact on the outcome of the Revolutionary War. During the War of 1812, the US again defended Lake Champlain against invasion from Great Britain in the Battle of Plattsburg Bay.

“I am always moved by the “Lone Sailor” at the Navy Memorial in Washington DC, as he is, for me, the embodiment of the US Navy,” says Senator James Jeffords, who served in the US Navy from 1956-59 and retired as a Captain from the US Navy Reserve in 1990. “The location of our Lake Champlain Navy Memorial demonstrates the legacy of every sailor who has ever gone to sea, happy to be home, but forever on watch and looking seaward.”

“Together, ECHO and the Lake Champlain Navy Memorial will share the diverse history of the Lake Champlain Basin with visitors from Vermont, across the United States and around the world,” says Phelan Fretz, executive director of ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain.

ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain is Vermont’s world-class lake aquarium and science center on the historic Burlington Waterfront. In ECHO’s first year of the of operation, more than 160,000 guests of all ages experienced the Lake Champlain Basin’s ecology, culture, history and opportunities for stewardship through nearly 100 hands-on exhibits, more than 60 species of live fish, amphibians and reptiles, and national traveling exhibits. For more information about ECHO visit our website at www.echovermont.org, call (802) 864-1848.

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