

Voyage of Discovery Aboard the USS Intrepid

By Alicia Ellis
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Built in 1943, the Intrepid was commissioned and served proudly in World War II. She went on to become one of the primary recovery vessels for NASA, served three tours of duty off Vietnam and conducted submarine surveillance in the North Atlantic during the Cold War. Since its decommission in 1976, the USS Intrepid has been a landmark of Manhattan's west side and, since 1982, has served as an educational center and museum with more than 750,000 visiting the aircraft carrier every year.

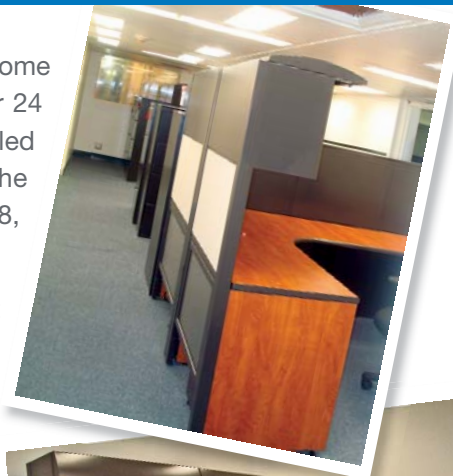
In 2006, the Intrepid was moved from its home on Pier 86 for a two-year total refurbishment which included, among other things, rebuilding of Pier 86, the refurbishment of 16 of the 30 historic aircraft on board, the redesigning and installation of new exhibits within the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, an inside-and-out paint job for the 65-year-old aircraft carrier and new office buildout and furnishings for the more than 90 people who work onboard.

Furnishing the Intrepid's office space was no small undertaking. Ok, it was a small undertaking with low ceilings, confining surroundings, 26-inch wide doorways and narrow staircases that would make moving and installation a nightmare. And, no pressure here, but the project needed to be completed between the

time the Intrepid was moved back to its home on Pier 86 on October 2nd and October 24 when the staff had their move scheduled from their temporary office space. The grand reopening was held on November 8, 2008.

"Not only did you have to consider what furniture would fit, but how were you going to get it on the ship and on to the fourth floor otherwise known as the gallery deck," said Charles Loughery, a partner at Total Office Interiors PA and Barry Dubrow who ultimately won the bid with insightful layout ideas and help from first line manufacturer AIS. Initial planning and design was done by Neil Sedwin of Sedwin Design who took on the task of creating the original design that Total Office & AIS turned into a reality.

Working with Bill Stewich, vice president of product engineering and Scott Pitel, regional vice president of sales at AIS, Total Office Interiors was able to offer a combination of AIS's DiVi panel system to create private spaces in a few of the more open areas and its new Synergy freestanding modular product line for those many cramped areas. AIS was



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able to get a mock up of the Synergy product in the color they picked, within five days after the initial request from the client.

“Once they saw the mockup, they could see how well Synergy would fit without overwhelming the space,” said Loughery, who praised the way Sedwin Design, and AIS worked together to really plan a cohesive working environment.

Given the green light, AIS was able to complete the engineering and manufacture more than 70 workstations within eight days and within two weeks of ordering, it was time to start the installation process.

Tackling the small doorways, narrow hallways and many staircases was a job in itself but Loughery and facilities vice president Matt Woods had a plan. With the ship’s large elevator under renovations, an alternate plan had to be made. Instead of hauling the furnishings from the pier over a plank, into the bottom of the ship and up four flights, Loughery and Woods chose a top down approach. Using a crane, pallets of furniture were hoisted onto the top of the flight deck where a crew of 25-30 people hauled the product down one flight to the fourth floor where they were assembled.

“We couldn’t just haul everything on to the flight deck at one time because space was so tight and there was nowhere to store anything,” Loughery explained. “If it rained, we would be in big trouble.”

Rather than take the risk, small loads were hoisted on deck so that they could be brought onboard and below deck immediately. Once placed in their respective space, a crew of 10-12 installers would put them together in place.

“The project was completed on time and a little more than a week before the grand reopening,” said Loughery proudly. “The entire project start to finish took less than eight weeks and the clients were thrilled.”

“The entire team provided not only a quality product, but accomplished the job in an unusually tight time frame,” said Susan Marenoff, executive director of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. “The architecture of an aircraft carrier is so entirely unique and can pose challenges for mainstream projects. However, it was seamlessly executed and the result is beautiful office space within the framework of the ship.”

