

Flagship of the Fleet: Life and Death of the USS *Arizona*

The Arizona Capitol Museum opened **Flagship of the Fleet: Life and Death of the USS *Arizona*** on December 7th, 2006, the 65th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. Over 140 dignitaries, veterans, family members and museum visitors attended.

The collaborative efforts on this project included work with private companies as well as federal and state agencies. Sun Valley Manufacturing, a local steel company, donated the design, materials and fabrication of the platform that supports a section of the *Arizona's* superstructure. The History Channel allowed us, through the NPS Submerged Resources Center, to edit the program "Saving the Arizona" for use in the exhibit. The Agency worked closely with the National Park Service in Hawaii to obtain loaned artifacts from the USS *Arizona* National Memorial. Arizona's Department of Veterans Services donated the micro-environmental exhibit cases which display the silver service and related materials.

The USS *Arizona*

The most common image of the *Arizona* is of the ship in flames, after being attacked in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The **Flagship of the Fleet Exhibit** tells the rest of the story. The exhibit's focus is personal. Using rare artifacts and photographs, the exhibition tells the story of the men on board. It brings the history of the ship up to today with film footage documenting the research work that has been conducted by the National Park Service's Submerged Resources Center since the 1980s.

The USS *Arizona* Silver Service

Individual and business contributions and schoolchildren's pennies were collected to pay for the \$9,000 silver set. The state of Arizona presented it to the ship's Captain in 1919.

Arizona's allegiance to copper inspired the production of several pieces with copper plating over sterling, giving the service an appearance unmatched by other U.S. battleships' formal silver. The silver is as awe-inspiring as the bravery of the *Arizona's* crew.

In November 2006, the USS *Arizona* Silver Service collection was uploaded to the **Arizona Memory Project** to provide public access to these unique pieces of Arizona history. The collection has received 7,408 total hits on AMP from November 2006 through June 2007.

Thousands of visitors to the Capitol have toured the exhibit since its opening in December while thousands more have enjoyed the collection on-line.