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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### US Navy Offers Two Major Combat Vessels to California Ships-to-Reefs

The Navy this week offered California Ships to Reefs two retired major combat vessels for reefing off of the California Coast. The former *USS David R. Ray*, DD 971, a 9,200 ton *Spruance* class destroyer, and the former *USS Vincennes*, CG 49, an Aegis anti-air cruiser of 9,800 tons. Both of these vessels are approximately 565 feet long and were powered by gas turbine engines, among the cleanest marine power plants available. Both vessels are currently held in the Bremerton, Washington State, Navy Yard for disposal.

*USS David R Ray* is named for a Navy Corpsman who was killed in Vietnam while treating Marines under fire, and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery. *USS Vincennes* anti-air cruiser unfortunately is best remembered for shooting down an Iranian airliner during the early years of conflict in the Persian Gulf.

When properly prepared and sunk in designated spots, these vessels can provide recreational activities for divers and a boost to some of California's overstressed fishing harbors and vessels by allowing them to transition to a sustainable industry, dive tourism.

"Dive tourism is a good money making industry for the boat owners and harbors because it is sustainable and non-consumptive of the ocean's resources," according to Harvey Schmiedeke of the California Ships to Reefs (CS2R) organization. "It has a side benefit of providing living space and shelter for many marine species."

According to a Rand Corporation study published in 2001, and confirmed by new data published in 2004, cleaning and sinking surplus government ships saves millions of dollars for the United States government. The other, less attractive alternatives are:

Foreign scrapping, which involves exorbitant towing costs, leads to extensive pollution and squalid, dangerous working conditions in places like Bangladesh. U. S Law, International Law and treaties prohibit the Navy from exporting vessels containing toxics.

Domestic Scrapping: In addition to there being no shipyards on the West Coast capable of these projects, scrap prices are so low and so volatile that domestic scrapping is not viable.

Continued storage: After paying hundreds of millions of dollars in storage and maintenance charges, in 100 years the result would still be several hundred old ships that must *then* be disposed of.

Both the old (2001) study and the newer 2004 information confirms that sinking these ships as dive tourism sites adds millions of dollars to state and local tourist economies each year. According to the study, confirmed by experience in East/Gulf Coast States and California with the sinking of *HMCS Yukon*, a former Canadian frigate off of San Diego, the entire cost of a sinking can be recouped by local government within 12 years through taxes alone.

All environmental and safety precautions will be observed by the local “sink groups”, as they are called, in each state region as they move forward with their projects, and full studies and Environmental Impact Reports will be prepared for each.

Each ship will be prepared by being environmentally cleaned, to at least the Environmental Protection Agency’s “*Best Practices*” standard, which was adopted in May of 2006. It will then be “diverized” by cutting strategic holes throughout the vessel and removing as many entanglement hazards as possible. Once prepared, the vessel will be towed to the site and sunk under controlled conditions to its final resting place, there to continue to serve the people who will come to admire her or who will make all or part of their livings from her presence.

California Ships to Reefs is a 501(c)(3) Public Benefit Corporation. CS2R is a coalition of local “sink groups” which will handle matters in their zones. These organizations are comprised of scuba divers, business people, professionals, marine biologists, scientists and academics.

CS2R’s goal is to create cultured reefs through the sinking of environmentally cleaned ships in key regions of California, with at least two major sinkings in California within the next three years, each producing measurable tangible economic benefits to the community and incidental environmental benefits to ensure public benefit. Over the next ten years, they anticipate—as has been the case with Florida’s prosperous reefing program—the demand for dozens more ships along California’s coast.