

The following is the official Escambia County release concerning the Oriskany Reef, including coordinates and safety advice.

The information also is posted at the county Web site:

"The Oriskany Reef was deployed on the morning of May 17, 2006, at a water depth of 212 feet, approximately 22.5 nautical miles southeast of Pensacola Pass. The exact position was selected because it had the needed water depth to allow the ship to be reefed and maintain the 55-foot navigational clearance required by US Army Corps of Engineers permit.

"Because the ship is wider than it is tall, and there was no guarantee that the ship would not land on her side, the ship's 157-foot beam was used to determine the water depth. The Oriskany landed on the exact planned coordinates and is sitting perfectly upright on the seafloor facing due south.

"Because the Oriskany is in deep water and can be affected by strong water currents, divers are strongly encouraged to use extreme caution when diving this reef. Novice divers should gain additional training and experience before attempting to dive Oriskany. All divers should follow the guidelines and safe diving practices provided during their training.

"Because of the complex nature of the ship's interior and the unknown extent of structural damages caused by the reefing process, divers should not enter the ship under any circumstances. Divers should not remove any items from the ship, and there is no reason for anyone to enter the ship's interior. There is nothing inside the ship worth dying for!

"The Oriskany Reef is located at 30 degrees 2 minutes 36 seconds north latitude, 87 degrees 0 minutes 24 seconds west longitude. The uppermost structure is located at 30 degrees 2 minutes 33.3 seconds north latitude, 87 degrees 0 minutes 23.8 seconds west longitude."

## PART TWO OF A SERIES

Each Tuesday in Neighbors, find information and a quiz about the decommissioned aircraft carrier that has become an artificial reef near Pensacola. This series is a joint educational project from pnj.com and the PNJ's Newspapers in Education program.

### Online

Check out our special web site at [pnj.com/oriskany](http://pnj.com/oriskany) to read more articles, watch video and see photo galleries about the ship, its history and its sinking.

(Note: This story is an excerpt from an article originally published on Jan. 16.)

# Oriskany brings divers, money to area



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The Oriskany is reeling in divers from all over and pumping big bucks into the local economy.

A University of West Florida study shows a \$2 million annual economic impact in Escambia County from scuba divers visiting the Oriskany, the world's largest artificial reef. The decommissioned aircraft carrier was sunk on May 17, 2006, in 212 feet of water 22.5 nautical miles from Pensacola Pass.

When the impact to Orange Beach and Gulf Shores in Baldwin County, Ala., is added, the economic impact increases to \$3.6 million, the study by the Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development reports.

Local dive shops said visitors from all over the continental U.S. are diving the site, as are customers from as far away as France and Germany.

The ship generated more than 4,200 dive trips in its first full year and is responsible for creating 37 new jobs that generated \$740,000 in salaries in Escambia County.

Getting the word out hasn't been hard. International press coverage has been extensive for the ship dubbed by former crew members as the "Mighty O."

"It has generated millions of dollars in media coverage, not just here but overseas, and put Pensacola on the map as an international dive site," said Laura Lee, media and communications manager for the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. "Divers from Japan, Australia and Russia have come here because of the stories they have seen."

More than \$1.2 million was spent in dive-related trips to the Oriskany last year in Escambia County and another \$1 million in Baldwin County, according to the study. That doesn't count money spent at local restaurants.

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