

U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration

Report on the Assessment of Historic Properties Pursuant to
Executive Order 13287, Preserve America
September 30, 2008

Introduction

On March 3, 2003 President George W. Bush issued Executive Order (EO) 13287 "Preserve America." EO 13287 charges Federal agencies with preserving America's heritage by advancing the protection, development, and contemporary use of historic properties owned by the Federal government. Section 3(c) of EO 13287 requires the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to prepare a report for the President on the state of the Federal government's historic properties and the contributions of federally-controlled historic properties to local economic development. Federal agencies with real property management responsibilities must submit to the ACHP and the Secretary of the Interior a report detailing the progress that the agency has made in identifying, protecting, and using historic properties under their jurisdiction. Consistent with the Maritime Administration's mission and national security requirements, this report discusses the agency's procedures for ensuring that historic properties owned or leased by the agency are identified and preserved in accordance with the objectives of EO 13287.

Mission

The Maritime Administration's mission is to strengthen the U.S. maritime transportation system – including infrastructure, industry and labor - to meet the nation's economic and security needs. To that end, the agency supports the development and maintenance of a sufficient, well-balanced U.S. merchant marine to transport the nation's domestic waterborne commerce and a large portion of its waterborne foreign commerce. Moreover, it should be capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency. Additionally, the agency ensures that the U.S. maintains adequate shipbuilding and repair services, efficient ports, effective intermodal water and land connections, and reserve shipping capacity for use during a national emergency.

The primary legislative authority governing the Maritime Administration's current role in maritime transportation is the Merchant Marine Act of 1936 (46 U.S.C. §57103), as amended. Section 101 of the Act declares that it is U.S. policy to foster the development and encourage the maintenance of a merchant marine that is for the national defense and development of its foreign and domestic commerce. Therefore the United States shall have a merchant marine that is:

(a) sufficient to carry its domestic water-borne commerce and a substantial portion of the water-borne export and import foreign commerce of the United States and to provide shipping service essential for maintaining the flow of such domestic and foreign water-borne commerce at all times,

(b) capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency,

(c) owned and operated under the United States flag by citizens of the United States insofar as may be practicable,

(d) composed of the best-equipped, safest, and most suitable types of vessels, constructed in the United States and manned with a trained and efficient citizen personnel, and

(e) supplemented by efficient facilities for shipbuilding and ship repair.

NHPA Section 110 Compliance/ Identification of Historic Properties

Section 110(a)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 16 U.S.C. §470 (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to assess the current status of its inventory of historic properties. A key element of Section 110 is the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Maritime Administration's Office of Ship Operations is responsible for coordinating agency implementation of Section 110. The Maritime Administration recently hired a program historian who is also designated as the agency's Federal Preservation Officer (FPO).

The majority of the agency's historic properties consist of vessels assigned to the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) and Ready Reserve Force (RRF), which are located at the agency's three fleet sites. These sites are located at the James River Reserve Fleet at Fort Eustis, Virginia; the Beaumont Reserve Fleet in Beaumont, Texas; and the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet at Benicia, California.

The NDRF was established under Section XI of the Merchant Ship Sales Act of 1946 (50 U.S.C. App. 1735-1745) to serve as a reserve of ships for national defense and national emergencies. A RRF component was established in 1976, which consists of vessels that can be activated on short notice to provide rapid deployment of military equipment during an emergency. When activated, the ships are transferred from the Maritime Administration to the Navy's Military Sealift Command. Currently, the total number of vessels in the NDRF is 190. Of this number, 44 are assigned to the Ready Reserve Force; of the remaining 146, 29 are in a retention status and 117 are in a non-retention status. More than 50 of these vessels are 50-years-old or older.

The National Maritime Heritage Act as amended (16 U.S.C. §5405), legally obligates the agency to dispose of all non-retention vessels in the NDRF. When ships are no longer considered useful for defense or aid missions, the agency arranges for their disposal. Additionally, the Maritime Administration is the U.S. government's disposal agent for merchant-type ships that are 1,500 gross tons or more. Prior to the disposal of a non-retention vessel, the agency first evaluates the ship for National Register eligibility and consults with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The Maritime Administration is currently evaluating the historical significance of all of its remaining obsolete vessels for National Register eligibility. Between 2006 and 2008, the agency determined that 24 vessels were eligible for listing on the NRHP. The agency has one National Historic Landmark, which was designated in 1991.

National Historic Landmark, Nuclear Ship *Savannah*

The Maritime Administration has one National Historic Landmark (NHL) which also is the Department of Transportation's (DOT) only NHL. The Nuclear Ship *Savannah*, the world's first nuclear merchant ship, was designed and constructed in the late 1950s as a signature element of President Dwight Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace initiative, and as a prototype to pave the way for subsequent generations of nuclear merchant ships. Although the market for such vessels never materialized, the design, construction, and operation of a new type of pressurized water reactor, utilizing low-enriched uranium, represented a major technological success. *Savannah* was also a success in accomplishing its unique public relations role as a floating exhibit on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The ship sailed 1/2 million miles around the world, and was visited by 1.5 million people. In May 2008, the *Savannah* arrived in Baltimore, MD under tow from Norfolk, Virginia to continue radiological and industrial remediation and facility pre-decommissioning work. The *Savannah* is expected to remain in Baltimore for up to three years under a contract with the Vane Brothers Company at their Canton Marine Terminal facility in the Canton section of Baltimore. *Savannah* is licensed and regulated by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (USNRC). *Savannah* was listed as a NHL in 1991.

Treatment of Historic Properties

SS *Hattiesburg Victory*, *Beaumont Reserve Fleet*, *Beaumont, Texas*

In April 2008, the Maritime Administration entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Texas Historical Commission concerning the National Register eligible vessel, *Hattiesburg Victory*. The *Hattiesburg Victory* is a surviving example of the World War II-era U.S. Maritime Commission Victory Ship design; one of approximately 400 such vessels constructed between 1944 and 1945. It is the last such vessel remaining in the Maritime Administration's Beaumont Reserve Fleet. The vessel will be disposed of in 2008, therefore constituting an adverse effect. The agency listed the ship as available for donation for more than three years; however, it did not receive any donation applications. Artifacts from the ship are preserved at the Beaumont facility and the agency will consult with the Texas Historical Commission on how best to curate and exhibit these artifacts. Several other sister vessels survive in the agency's Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, and three others are preserved as memorials.

Ex-USS *Gage*, *James River Reserve Fleet*, *Ft. Eustis, Virginia*

In July 2008, the Maritime Administration entered into a MOA with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service's National Maritime Heritage Program, and the Historic Naval Ships Association concerning the National Register eligible vessel, the ex-USS *Gage*. *Gage* is the sole remaining example of a *Haskell*-class transport in its original configuration. The *Haskell* class was a variant of the Maritime Commission's Victory Ship design, with 117 vessels constructed between 1944 and 1945. *Gage* is the last remaining substantially unaltered World War II-era troop transport. In its present condition *Gage* has been substantially stripped of outfitting materials and equipment. In 2006, the National Park Service's HAER program completed its recordation and documentation of *Gage* and the report is now complete. Many of the artifacts from *Gage* were transferred to the memorial ships USS *Slater* and USS *Massachusetts*, and to the Baltimore Maritime

Museum for public display and to serve as replacement parts. Additionally, artifacts from Gage's sick bay were removed and transferred to the National Museum of Health and Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for interpretation and exhibit.

Arthur M. Huddell, James River Reserve Fleet, Fort Eustis Virginia

On July 28, 2008 the last of the nation's Liberty ships, the *Arthur M. Huddell*, was towed from the James River Reserve Fleet at Fort Eustis, Va., to Norfolk to prepare the World War II-era vessel for a cross-Atlantic tow to its new homeport in Greece. The ship will become a merchant marine museum to commemorate that nation's shipping industry. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the United States and the government of Greece in June 2008, which officially transferred the ship to Greece. During World War II, American shipyards built 2,751 Liberty ships in the largest shipbuilding effort in history. The Liberty ships were crewed by merchant mariners and carried troops and military cargo around the globe. After World War II ended, Greek ship owners purchased many Liberty ships to build up their fleet. The Greek merchant fleet is now the largest in the world

Mitigation Options for National Register Eligible Vessels

Donation

Options to mitigate adverse effects to National Register eligible vessels are limited. The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 as amended (46 U.S.C. §57103), authorizes the Maritime Administration to afford qualified public and non-profit organizations the opportunity to obtain, via donation, obsolete ships from the NDRF for use as memorials and/or in other non-commercial enterprises. Ships available for donation are listed on the agency's website. There are currently two surviving Liberty ships serving as museums in the U.S.; the SS *John W. Brown* in Baltimore and the SS *Jeremiah O'Brien* in San Francisco. Both ships are operational and offer "living history" cruises to the public. In 1994, the *Jeremiah O'Brien* steamed from San Francisco to Normandy, France to participate in the 50th anniversary of the Normandy invasion and it is the only large vessel remaining from the original flotilla that participated in the 1944 invasion. There are three surviving Victory ships serving as museums in the U.S. They include SS *Lane Victory*, in San Pedro, CA, SS *American Victory* in Tampa, FL, and SS *Red Oak Victory* in Richmond, CA. While the Maritime Administration retains an interest in these vessels and continues to support them with artifacts and equipment from its obsolete vessels, the ships are owned by private organizations and are no longer Federal property.

Documentation

In 2006, the Maritime Administration entered into an interagency agreement with the National Park Service's Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Documentation Project (HAER), to document 22 vessels in the NDRF that met the eligibility requirements for the National Register. In 2006, HAER documented the oiler *Taluga*, the troopship *Private Frederick C. Murphy*, and the tankers *Mission Santa Ynez* and *Saugatuck* all built between 1942 and 1945. The team documented significant design features through measured and interpretive drawings, large format photographs, and written data. When completed, all original documentation will be conveyed to the HAER collection at the Library of Congress. The HAER team is continuing its documentation of

18 of the original 22 vessels. As reports are completed, the Maritime Administration will make them available on its website.

Artificial Reefing

The Artificial Reef Program (16 U.S.C. §1220) authorizes the Maritime Administration to transfer ships to states for use as artificial reefs. In 2007, the *Texas Clipper*, a passenger ship built in 1944 and used as a training ship by Texas A & M University at Galveston, was sunk as an artificial reef in the Gulf of Mexico 17 miles off the Texas coast. While it can be argued that artificial reefing constitutes an adverse effect, with limited options, it is more desirable than selling a vessel for recycling/scrap, or sinking it in a military SINKEX exercise. Recreational divers can visit the sunken vessel, which in turn helps the local economy of the area near where the wreck is located. Moreover, artificial reefs have proven to be beneficial to marine life.

The Ship Disposal Program's emphasis continues to be on the expedited disposal of obsolete ships, which present the greatest environmental risk. While the Maritime Administration's disposal strategy continues to focus on dismantling/recycling as the most expeditious option currently available, all disposal options are continuously being evaluated.

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, N.Y.

The Maritime Administration operates the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in Kings Point, N.Y. Established in 1943, the academy is located on 82-waterfront acres 20 miles from New York City. Its mission is to educate and graduate officers to serve in the nation's merchant marine, maritime and intermodal transportation industries, and in the Armed Forces. There are 34 properties at the school that are more than 50 years old. The agency is in the process of identifying and evaluating these properties for National Register eligibility.

NHPA Section 111 Compliance

NHPA Section 111 directs Federal Agencies to establish and implement alternatives for historic properties that are no longer needed by the agency, which can include adaptive reuse, or to lease properties where the lease will adequately ensure the preservation of the property. At this time, the Maritime Administration has not formally identified or evaluated any properties for the purposes of Sec. 111. It would be difficult to apply Sec. 111 to the agency's obsolete ships slated for disposal; however, it may be possible to identify properties and use donation and artificial reefing as possible alternatives under this section. As mentioned above, the agency plans to evaluate its properties at the Merchant Marine Academy for the purposes of Sec 111.

Historic Preservation Opportunities and Partnerships

The National Maritime Heritage Act 16 U.S.C. §5401 dictates that 25 % of the proceeds from the sale of the NDRF's obsolete vessels go to the National Park Service's National Maritime Heritage Grants Program. This program is a national, competitive matching grants program that provides funds for maritime heritage education and preservation projects designed to reach broad audiences and enhance public awareness and

appreciation for the maritime heritage of the United States. State and local governments and private nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. The Grants Program is administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior and by State Historic Preservation Offices. In 1998, two grant rounds were held under the law, which provided matching funding for a wide variety of preservation and education projects. The program was highly successful, demonstrating a high demand for funding from hundreds of U.S. non-profit and local government organizations. However, due to increased environmental regulation coupled with a reduction in steel prices, the funding source ended. Over the last several years the scrap steel market has rebounded and profitable domestic scrapping has once again resumed. This has resulted in more than \$2 million currently available for National Maritime Heritage grants. The Maritime Administration plans to take a more proactive role in the grant process and is looking for ways to better interpret its own rich maritime history in partnership with the National Park Service's National Maritime Heritage Program.