

NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

VESSEL: TS *State of Maine*, ex-USNS *Upshur* (T-AP-198)



TS *State of Maine*, underway in May 1994. The ship served as a training vessel for the Maine Maritime Academy from 1973-1995. Maritime Administration photograph.

Vessel History

The training ship *State of Maine* enjoyed three careers over a span of nearly 60 years. It was originally designed in 1947 as a passenger-cargo ship for the postwar replacement program of American President Lines (APL); a service and career that it was not fated to enter. Instead, at the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. Navy requisitioned the ship while it was still incomplete and converted it into a troop and dependant transport. As the USNS *Upshur*, the vessel served the Military Sea Transportation Service¹ (MSTS) from 1952 to 1973. In 1973 the *Upshur* was decommissioned and immediately transferred to the Maritime Administration (MARAD) (then in the Department of Commerce), who furnished it to the Maine Maritime Academy for use as a merchant marine training ship². The *Upshur* was renamed *State of Maine*, the name it carries today. From 1973 to 1995 the *State of Maine* was in the service of the academy with periodic temporary assignments to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

The *State of Maine's* third and final career began in 1995 when it was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard and relocated to Mobile, AL to be used as a platform for fire-fighting testing.

¹ MSTS was a post-World War II combination of four predecessor government agencies that handled similar sealift functions. These included the Navy's Naval Transportation Service and Fleet Support Service, the Army Transport Service, and the War Shipping Administration of the United States Maritime Commission. In 1970, MSTS was renamed the Military Sealift Command.

² The Maritime Administration furnished federally-owned and maintained training ships to six state maritime academies, located in ME, MA, NY, TX, CA and MI. The academies are allowed the use of the assigned ship and its facilities and typically operate the ship on one or more annual training voyages. This arrangement dates to the 1874 Nautical School Ship Act, and is presently authorized under the Maritime Education and Training Act of 1980.

Original Design and Conversion to Transport

APL operated a successful “round-the-world” service that originated in the post-WWI era by the Dollar Steamship Line. The service was subsidized and initially operated with U.S. Shipping Board passenger-cargo vessels of the “502/522” class³ that were constructed during that war. In the mid-1930s, Dollar Lines defaulted and APL took over the service and ships, which was then a government-owned corporation. In the immediate pre-WWII period, APL took delivery of seven “C3” class passenger-cargo ships from the U.S. Maritime Commission⁴, as replacements for the aging 502s. Several of these C3s were lost during WWII, and after the war’s end APL immediately set out to design and construct a new class of ships for its round-the-world service.

APL engaged the New York naval architectural firm of George G. Sharp, Inc. to design the new class of three ships to be known as the *President Jackson* class. These subsidized vessels were classified as P2-S1-DN1 by the Maritime Commission⁵. The construction contracts for the *President Jackson*, *President Adams* and *President Hayes* were awarded to the New York Shipbuilding Corporation of Camden, New Jersey, in 1948. The ships were launched on about three-month intervals, beginning with the *President Jackson* in June 1950. The *Jackson* was scheduled to enter service in December 1950; however, the outbreak of the Korean War that summer and a shortage of modern troop transports led the U.S. Navy to requisition six passenger vessels that were then under construction for completion as troop transports. Although three of the vessels were later released for commercial completion, the *President Jackson* class was retained and completed for the Navy as its last class of troop transports.

The three ships were renamed in honor of deceased U.S. Marine Corps generals. The *Jackson* became the USNS⁶ *Barrett* (T-AP 196), the *Adams* became the USNS *Geiger* (T-AP 197), and the *Hayes* (the future *State of Maine*), became the USNS *Upshur* (T-AP 198). The ships followed parallel careers, with each eventually becoming training ships assigned to state maritime academies. The *Barrett* was assigned to the State University of New York Maritime College in 1973 as the *Empire State V*, and the *Geiger* to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy as the *Bay State (IV)* in 1980. The *Bay State* became a constructive total loss after a devastating engine room fire in December 1981 and was scrapped soon thereafter. The *Empire State V* served until 1989 and after a number of years in reserve was scrapped in 2007.

3 Seventy percent of the entire fleet of passenger liners under construction for the US Shipping Board (the agency that later became the Federal Maritime Commission and in 1950 the Maritime Administration) were ordered from New York Shipbuilding Corporation, which completed all seven of the 522-foot class. The nomenclature for this class is ambiguous, since some sources call them the 522 class after their Length Overall [LOA] of 522 feet, while others call them the 502 class after their Length between Perpendiculars [LBP] of 502 feet.

4 The United States Maritime Commission was the immediate predecessor agency to the present-day Maritime Administration.

5 The *President Jackson* class ships and the superliner S.S. *United States* were the last four ships constructed by the Maritime Commission in a building program that exceeded 5,000 total ships beginning in 1938.

6 The prefix USNS stands for United States Naval Ship, and signifies a non-combatant vessel. The designation AP is the Navy classification for a transport vessel; the prefix “T” indicates that a vessel is crewed by civilian mariners.

Transport Duties

The *Upshur* was completed in late December 1952 and turned over to MSTS for operation by a crew of 203 civilians and 27 Navy personnel. The Navy contingent acted as a troop liaison and operated the hospital facilities. By 1953 the Korean War ended in a stalemate and an armistice was signed in July of that year. MSTS sent the *Barrett* and *Geiger* to the Pacific but retained the *Upshur* in the Atlantic. *Upshur* spent the majority of the next 15 years rotating American service personnel and their dependents from New York's Brooklyn Army Terminal, to Southampton, England, and Bremerhaven, Germany. It also made voyages to the following ports: the naval base at Guantanamo Bay Cuba; the Panama Canal Zone; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and to ports in Italy, Greece, and Turkey. On the eastbound crossing, additional port calls were made at Quonset Point, Rhode Island and Argentia, Newfoundland, transporting a contingent of U.S. Navy Seabees.

In 1959 the *Upshur* assisted the British cable ship *Ocean Layer* after the ship became engulfed in flames. All but two crew members had been rescued by a German cargo ship. The *Upshur* lowered its lifeboat into the choppy seas to search for the missing men; both were eventually recovered alive.

Lebanon, Berlin, and Cuba

In 1958, responding to internal strife in Lebanon and to the increasing threat posed by the United Arab Republic⁷ *Upshur* transported thousands of Marines between northern Europe and Beirut, Lebanon.

Upshur was also one of six troopships that carried more than 29,000 servicemen from the U.S. to Cherbourg, France, and Bremerhaven, Germany during the 1961 Berlin crisis.

⁷ The United Arab Republic (UAR) was created by the union of Egypt and Syria in 1958. Syria ceded from the union in 1961, but Egypt retained the name until 1971 after the death of its long-time President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970.



USNS *Upshur* returning from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with 1,725 evacuees in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
<http://www.459thsignal.org/photogallery/USNS%20Upshur%20-%20Aerial%20Shot.jpg>

On October 19, 1962 the vessel arrived in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on what had been up to then a routine Caribbean voyage. However, instead of its normal stay of approximately six hours *Upshur* remained in Cuba for several days due to “mechanical problems.” In reality it was standing by to evacuate civilian employees and their dependents from the base due to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Three days later it embarked 1,725 evacuees, primarily women and children, transporting them to Norfolk, Virginia.

Vietnam War

In 1965 the *Upshur* transported personnel from the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division to the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). Over the next few years the *Upshur* made regular calls at the South Vietnamese ports of Da Nang, Quinhon, and Nha Trang, usually anchoring and then disembarking troops into landing craft.

In 1969 it made 34 voyages transporting a total of 85,375 Korean troops between South Korea and South Vietnam. In June of 1971 it assisted in operations to repatriate 570 North Vietnamese prisoners of war. Just 13 former prisoners elected to go ashore in Hanoi while the remaining men were returned to South Vietnam. The *Upshur* made its final trans-Pacific voyage in early 1973 transporting American troops to Sasebo, Japan. It sailed on its return crossing from Yokohama on March 1. On April 2 1973, the Military Sealift Command (MSC), the successor to the MSTs, transferred the ship to MARAD.

USNS *Upshur* becomes the training ship *State of Maine*

MARAD acquired the *Upshur* from MSC to serve as a replacement for its training ship, also named *State of Maine* (ex-*Ancon* of the Panama Railroad Steamship Line) at the Maine Maritime Academy. MSC delivered the *Upshur* to MARAD in Boston, MA, who simultaneously delivered the ship to the academy. The *Upshur* was renamed *State of Maine* effective with the transfer, and became the third Maine Maritime training ship to bear the name. After some shipyard work to prepare it for training service, academy personnel sailed it to its new homeport in the historic village of Castine, Maine on the eastern shore of Penobscot Bay. As a training ship, the *State of Maine* normally made one training voyage per year, usually in the winter to avoid the worst Maine weather, and spent the remainder of the year in Castine continuing to serve as a training facility. Its first cruise was to the east coast of South America, with a stop in Brazil.

In 1974 the ship visited the following northern European ports: Antwerp, Belgium; Glasgow, Scotland; Helsinki, Finland; and Leningrad, the Soviet Union. The call at Leningrad marked the first visit of an American training ship to a Soviet port since World War II.

In 1976 the *State of Maine* participated in events celebrating the nation's bicentennial. The vessel sailed with the international fleet of training vessels from Bermuda to Newport, Rhode Island, and then to New York for the July 4th festivities. Due to increasing fuel costs in the late 1970s the ship remained in the western Atlantic, visiting Bermuda and U.S. east coast ports.

From 1979 to 1985, the *State of Maine*, together with the *Empire State V*, was periodically loaned to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy as a temporary replacement. Two successive Massachusetts training ships, the *Bay State (III)* and *Bay State (IV)* were declared constructive total losses and removed from service in 1979 and 1981 respectively. The *Bay State (IV)* was the *State of Maine's* sister ship *Geiger*, which was severely damaged after suffering a fatal engine room fire in December 1981. The temporary loans ended in 1985 when a permanent replacement, the *Patriot State*, was delivered to the Massachusetts school.

In 1986 the *State of Maine* joined the *Empire State V* in New York harbor at the naval review celebrating the centennial rededication of the Statue of Liberty. The two ships were together for the last time the following year, when they were drydocked at the Pennsylvania Shipbuilding Company (formerly Sun Ship) in Chester. In 1988 Maine Maritime resumed its transatlantic crossings with another voyage to Northern Europe. Port calls included Portsmouth, England and Copenhagen, Denmark, with another visit to Leningrad. The *State of Maine* returned to the Soviet Union in 1989 and to the former Soviet Union, now Russia in 1992. On its 1994 voyage to Europe the ship participated in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the D-Day Normandy landings during World War II. Six days out of Boston on the east bound crossing it rendezvoused at sea with the memorial ship *Jeremiah O'Brien*, which was at Normandy in 1944. It also took part in ceremonies at Southampton, England and a maritime review in the Solent⁸.

⁸ The Solent is a stretch of sea separating the Isle of Wight from the mainland of England.



State of Maine underway in 1994. *State of Maine* traveled to Normandy, France to participate in the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Maritime Administration photographs.

The *State of Maine* made its final training voyage in 1995 and visited the following ports: St. John, New Brunswick; Georgetown, Barbados; New Orleans, Louisiana; Jacksonville, Florida; and Charleston, South Carolina. The *State of Maine* was redelivered to MARAD in Castine in September 1995; its replacement, the former Navy oceanographic research vessel USNS *Tanner* (T-AGS-40) was delivered in June of 1997. In the interim the academy was furnished the Massachusetts training ship *Patriot State*. In late 1995 the former training ship was towed from Castine for delivery to its third operator, the U.S. Coast Guard.



***State of Maine* and the U.S. Coast Guard**

The Research and Development (R&D) Center is the Coast Guard's only facility performing research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) in support of Coast Guard missions. The R&D Center, located in Groton, Connecticut, also operates a Fire and Safety Test Detachment (F&STD) in Mobile, AL. The F&STD is the only facility in the world using actual ships for full-scale fire testing.

For many years the Coast Guard employed two WWII-era merchant ships, the T2 tanker *Albert E. Watts*, and the Victory-class freighter *Mayo Lykes* (depicted from left-to-right in the photograph on page 8, along with the ex-USS *Shreveport* at extreme right) for shipboard fire research and testing. The vessels were on loan from MARAD, and by the late 1980s were in need of replacement. When MARAD accepted redelivery of the *State of Maine* from Maine Maritime Academy, the ship was towed directly to Mobile.

From 1996 to 2008, the *State of Maine* was used as a test platform to study and assess alternative ship/marine platform designs, focusing on both new and alternative construction materials.

They also tested different fire safety measures and compared the results to current codes and design guidelines. To gather the data, controlled fires were set and monitored in different areas of the ship.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused the *State of Maine* to brake free of its moorings and it settled approximately 500 feet aft across the Mobile River on the bank of the MacDuffy Coal Terminal. The vessel suffered further damage after Hurricane Ike raged across the Gulf in 2008. The vessel is now bottomed out and sits at a ten-degree list. It has not been used for testing since sometime in 2008.



Above: Little Sand Island lies just off Mobile, AL. The Coast Guard's Fire and Safety Test Detachment is located here. This picture, taken circa 1980s, shows WW-II era merchant ships anchored there. <http://www.sandia.gov/records/mgmt/ctb18.html>

Right and following page: Recent photographs of the facility. Maritime Administration photographs.





Description / Characteristics of Vessel Type

Type: Passenger / Cargo Ship (orig) and Troop Transport

MARAD Classification: P2-S1-DN1 (orig); P2-S1-DN3 (as converted to transport)

Hull Number: US Maritime Commission Hull 2918; US Navy: T-AP-198

Builder: New York Shipbuilding Corporation, Camden, New Jersey

Length: 533.9'

Beam: 73.3'

Draft: 27.1'

Displacement: 17,630 tons

Propulsion system: Single screw steam turbine

Horsepower: 13,750

Speed: 19 knots

Complement: 203 civilian mariners and 27 Navy personnel; 392 dependents / passengers; 1,500 troops

The *State of Maine* is representative of the common combination passenger-cargo vessel design; a ship type that was extremely popular until the advent of modern international commercial air transport.

The *President Jackson* and its two sister ships had very distinctive profiles; typical of the style employed by naval architect George G. Sharp. Sharp employed a unique design aesthetic; one which eschewed the traditional ship appearance and features. On the *Jackson*, as with his preceding *Del Norte* design for the Mississippi Steamship Company, Sharp eliminated what would have been a single, large smoke stack mounted on the ship's longitudinal centerline top of the ship's superstructure in favor of two thin, streamlined posts, situated to the port and starboard sides. Each stack was the exhaust uptake for one boiler, and they were intended to appear similar to a cargo gear kingpost. The ship's bridge structure was designed to simulate a squat streamlined stack, and the company stack markings were relocated to this structure. The ships had cargo hatches forward and aft of the superstructure served by the standard gear of the period; masts and booms and electric cargo winches. They were single screw vessels powered by steam turbines producing 13,750 shaft horsepower for a service speed of 19-20 knots. Steam was provided by oil-fired boilers manufactured by Babcock & Wilcox.

As with all subsidized passenger vessels of the time, the *President Jackson* design requirements contemplated possible conversion to troopships in wartime. The *Jackson* design included a normal troop complement of 1,500; with emergency augmentation of up to 2,500. These design requirements were put to the test when, in August of 1950 the Department of Defense notified MARAD that it would need to acquire six passenger ships that were then under construction to meet its transportation needs for the Korean War. By November the situation in Korea had improved to the point that conversion plans for the other three vessels, the *Constitution*, *Independence*, and *United States* were canceled.

The conversion contracts were assigned to the New York Shipbuilding Corporation, and were managed by MARAD on behalf of the Navy. When they were completed, the actual capacity of the ships was 392 cabin passengers in 93 staterooms, and 1,500 troops in adapted hold spaces. If

necessary, another 1,000 could be accommodated by converting recreation areas. These were the first American troopships to be fully air-conditioned in their berthing quarters. They were also fated to be the last troopships constructed for the Navy. APL considered building replacements for the *Jackson* class, but instead it acquired three Mariner-class vessels from MARAD in 1955. The intended follow-on plans for four additional ships for the round-the-world service were also not executed.

Characteristics of the *Barrett-Class* transports

When the Navy requisitioned the *Jackson* class ships, they were in advanced, although various states of completion. The *Jackson* was only three months from entry into service, and consequently exhibited fewer structural changes than its two sisters. Nevertheless, the three ships remained substantially alike, and their basic design features were common.

The basic passenger-cargo ship design was retained in the conversion to transports. It consisted of two holds forward of an amidships deckhouse and three holds aft. Two other cargo holds were originally fitted; one hold (number 3) contained large liquid cargo tanks that were converted for potable water storage; another hold (number 4) was transformed into the troop galley and mess area. Cargo handling gear (eight 10-ton booms) and related kingposts and masts for the retained cargo holds remained unchanged. There were cabins for up to 398 civilian passengers and officers aboard the ship and berthing for 1,506 enlisted personnel within the holds. The troop berthing was installed on the upper decks of the four cargo holds (numbers 1 and 2 forward; 6 and 7 aft), with cargo space for equipment and supplies retained on the lowermost decks. Berthing was in the form of typical WWII-style "standee bunks" or "pipe racks" stacked three or four high. Six access trunks were built into the holds, three forward of the amidships house and three aft, so personnel could move freely about and they provided quick access to the outside in the case of an emergency.

The ship could also carry up to 392 passengers, 203 civilian crewmembers, and 27 military crewmembers. These berths mainly consisted of private staterooms located in the ship's superstructure, but the design also had rooms on the "A" deck, located beneath the weather deck. To provide for the larger number of stateroom passengers, the superstructure was extended aft. This resulted in the elimination of the pool, the two-deck Veranda, and various other public spaces. In their place, utilitarian lounges were provided. However, the enclosed promenades were retained.

The Machinery Space was located directly amidships. The ship's propulsion and auxiliary machinery was retained from the *Jackson* design. It featured a relatively simple and proven sectional-header steam boiler of the type used on the P-2 transports during World War II. The two boilers were manufactured by the Babcock and Wilcox Company and provided high-pressure steam to a General Electric cross-compound turbine. The geared turbine turned a single screw at 13,750 shaft-horsepower, which propelled the ship to a normal speed of 19

knots. The fuel tanks carried 13,762 barrels of fuel oil that allowed a cruising distance of 15,000 nautical miles.

The machinery space also housed auxiliary equipment on raised flats. Three turbo generators that provided electrical power for the ship were located on the starboard flat. The opposite flat supported auxiliary equipment for the ship's distilling plant and air conditioning system. An independent ship's service diesel generator was provided in a separate room on the port side, adjacent to the machinery space on B deck.

The bridge deck housed a number of rooms related to the navigation and safety of the vessel. The wheelhouse was in the forward room with an engine order telegraph, gyro repeater, helm, and radar. The helm sent electric signals to the steering flat, where an electric-hydraulic ram, manufactured by C.H.Wheeler, turned the rudder. Two bridge wings extended off each side and were equipped with navigation equipment. Aft of the wheelhouse on the port side were three rooms used for berthing the radar tech, assistant radio operator, and chief radio operator. The starboard side contained the chart room aft of the wheelhouse, a radio office, gyro room, and fan room. Off the centerline, but on the starboard side next to the radio office were two small spaces that contained a battery room and elevator machinery.

The ship contained two sizable galleys and three separate dining areas for the crew, passengers, and troops. The main galley was amidships on the "B" deck along with accompanying preparation rooms that serviced the forward passenger dining room and the aft troop cafeteria. On the same deck, but amidships starboard side there was a small galley and mess for the crew. On the "C" deck beneath the troop cafeteria there was another galley for the troops and accompanying preparation rooms. Beneath the passenger and troop galley there were separate food storage areas comprising both dry stores and cold storage reefers. Elevators in the two separate areas brought the food up to galleys for preparation.

Lounges were provided for the ship's crew and passengers and a recreation area for the troops. The ship's officers had their lounge in the aft section of the sun deck, while the crew's day room was on the "A" deck in the forward section of the ship on the starboard side. A communal library was located in front of the day room. The troops had a recreation room on the same level, but it was on the port side next to hold number two. In the same area, the troops had access to a "PX" store and soda fountain shop. Two more recreation rooms were located near hatches six and seven on the "A" deck. Another slop chest was on the starboard side in front of hatch six. Passengers and officers had a lounge in the aft section of the promenade deck. A small playpen for children was fenced in outside on the sun deck and it was in between the smoke stack masts.

An important aspect in transporting passengers and troops to their destination was proper sanitation. A sufficient number of showers, toilets, and washrooms were located on five decks within the ship, as well as a generous supply of fresh water in holding tanks coupled to the

water treatment plant. Troops shared communal toilets and showers on the "A" deck. First-class passengers retained private bathrooms and showers in their cabins, while ship's officers and crew shared the same amenities through adjoining doors. Laundry equipment and a barbershop on board the ship helped promote good hygiene while underway.

Health was also a concern during the movement of troops or passengers while underway. To treat patients for minor or major maladies and to stop the spread of an epidemic (a major fear due to the proximity and number of people on board an enclosed ship), a large and well-equipped hospital was provided on the upper deck in the aft end of the ship. There was a clinic, doctor's office, nurse's station, and pharmacy. There was also an evaluation room, treatment center, and a recovery area. A nursery for infants was included and it was in front of the clinic. For serious injuries requiring surgery, there was an operating room in the same vicinity. A separate troop ward was located on A deck on the port side.

Six pairs of lifeboats were installed in five pairs of davits (lifeboats 7-8 and 9-10 were nested together in one set of davits). This was an increase of three pairs of lifeboats over the original design. After 1949, the international Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention requirements applied to troop and dependent transports. It was this change that affected many of the WWII transports and left the U.S. short when the Korean War broke out. The *Barrett* class also featured numerous rafts, floats, and personal flotation devices. Structural fire protection, fire suppression and detection systems; and damaged stability standards all met or exceeded domestic and international requirements, resulting in extremely comfortable and safe vessels that served quite well.

Design Characteristics of the training ship *State of Maine*

Few changes were required when the *Upshur* was transferred to MARAD and became the *State of Maine*. Although the academy operated the ship with far fewer personnel than the Navy (250-300 cadets, 100-125 officers, crew and faculty), the excess capacity was simply left idle, rather than removed. An agreement between MARAD and Navy dating back to 1959 ensured that troopships provided for use as training ships would be maintained in a condition that could permit their recall for naval service. Consequently, no significant changes were made to the *State of Maine* in its first decade or more of training ship service. The only major change was the elimination of the nested lifeboats, which reduced the number of lifeboats from 12 to ten.

From 1985 onwards, MARAD was allowed to reduce to two the number of training ships maintained as potential troop ships. These were the two ships assigned to the schools with the largest cadet complements; New York and Massachusetts. Redundant features were slowly eliminated on the other ships at Maine, Texas and California, in an effort to reduce unnecessary maintenance costs. In 1992, the third and fifth pairs of lifeboats were removed from the *State of Maine*, including their davits. These were boats 5 and 6, and 9 and 10 respectively (even numbers on port, odd starboard).

Other minor modifications were made late in the ship's career. During the 1987 drydocking, the number 7 cargo hatch was permanently sealed, and the cargo booms that served it were removed. The cargo booms were also removed from the forward cargo holds. The academy pier in Castine is arranged in such a way that access to these holds with the booms was not possible. Unused interior spaces were closed off and sealed as much as practicable.

No major modifications were made to the ship after it was transferred to the Coast Guard in 1995. Interior offices were used for administrative purposes, but no berthing or feeding was conducted onboard. The after holds were configured to support fire research, and a large external gantry was installed in way of the main mast. The ship operated in this basic configuration until 2005, when Hurricane Katrina drove it off the sandbar and stranded it near the shipping channel. The ship was later salvaged by the U.S. Navy, but it has not been employed in fire tests and research since that time.

Historic Context

Until the advent of international air transportation, the only practical way to move large numbers of troops across bodies of water was by troop ship. Often, troop ships were also employed to move troops between port cities, or on coastal waterways, rather than marching them by land. The use of troop ships in American history dates to the Revolution, and troop ships featured in every conflict since then, until the latter stages of the Vietnam War.

The ships themselves were most often converted merchant ships or passenger liners. The large-scale use of transports to convey troops long distances to remote locations was first tested during the Spanish-American War (1898), when American armies had to be sent to Cuba and the Philippines, using passenger ships acquired and converted by the Army. The next large transfer of American troops occurred during the First World War (1914-1918). Because the United States merchant marine did not feature large express liners, many of the troopships employed were confiscated German vessels, or British liners. This lack of a domestic passenger ship capacity was addressed during the emergency ship construction program, and later through subsidy programs for ship construction and operation.

The vast geographic scope of the Second World War meant that requisitioned and converted passenger ships were not enough to meet the Allied transportation needs alone. The colossal wartime ship construction program of the United States included numerous purpose-designed and built transports, and the austere conversion of hundreds of cargo ships. Most of these vessels survived the war, and the best of them formed the nucleus of the postwar fleet. The vessels were later employed for service in Korea (1950-1953) and Vietnam (1965-1975). However, the same forces that were transforming the traditional passenger ship trades in the late 1960's were also affecting troopships. The advent of rapid, efficient jet airliner service meant that troops could be transported long distances in relatively short periods of time. Just as

the passenger jet eventually eclipsed the superliner, so too did the troopship succumb to airlift. The last active troopships were retired from naval service in 1973. Thereafter, the occasional use of a "troopship" was an unusual event.

American troopships were important because they provided mobility and strategic lift in moving troops and their equipment during times of peace and war that lasted for nearly 75 years. Not only were they economically efficient, but they could carry large numbers of troops ensuring unit integrity. The U.S. Army predominantly utilized the transports for point-to-point transfers as did the Marine Corps, but the Marines also used them for amphibious assaults. From 1898 to 1973, troopships were the primary mode of transportation for the military. Originally, the Army and Navy provided ships and personnel to support their logistical needs and operated them independently. In 1949, the Department of Defense decided to consolidate the logistical capacity of the armed forces and created the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) to be the sole administrator of shipping for the Department of Defense. In 1970, the Navy changed the name of MSTS to Military Sealift Command (MSC), but it operated under the same premise and structure as its predecessor. In 1969, Robert McNamara (Secretary of Defense) ordered a study to determine if any cost-saving measures could be implemented within the military. In one part, the study concluded that air transportation could supplant troopships as a mode for mass transport and as a result, MSC retired the last two remaining troopships in 1973, the USNS *Barrett* and *Upshur*.

Statement of Significance

The *State of Maine* is the last in the long line of U.S. troop transports. A handful of others exist, but are inevitably scheduled for disposal. Its retirement as the USNS *Upshur* in 1973 marked the end of the "troopship" era for the Navy.

The ship was also involved in several notable events in U.S. history that include: transporting troops to Lebanon in 1958; the Berlin crisis in 1961; the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

The *State of Maine* was designed by the noted naval architect George G. Sharp. Sharp was perhaps the foremost American naval architect of the mid-20th Century, and specialized in the design of combination and special purpose vessels. Its original interiors were designed by the famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy. Two other examples of Sharp's passenger vessels remain in the MARAD inventory; the cargo-passenger vessel *Patriot State* (ex *Santa Mercedes* – slated for disposal), and the National Historic Landmark Nuclear Ship *Savannah*.

Integrity of Characteristics/Features

The vessel is currently 57 years of age and its physical integrity is poor and deteriorating. A substantial degradation has occurred since the ship's stranding and subsequent salvage after Hurricane Katrina. The vessel's historic integrity is fair but compromised, owing to salvage actions and interior deterioration.



The *State of Maine* sits near the U.S. Coast Guard's Fire and Safety Test Detachment at Little Sand Island, Mobile Alabama. Hurricane Katrina caused the vessel to break free of its moorings. The vessel is now bottomed out and sits at a 10-degree list. Maritime Administration photographs.

National Register Eligibility Statement

The *State of Maine* has several unique characteristics. It is associated with noted naval architect George G. Sharp as well as with several notable events in U.S. history. However, the vessel represents a common type and its physical integrity is poor. While the vessel does retain its basic design and structure, some modifications were made when it became a training ship. Moreover, the ship has been used as a fire test platform by the Coast Guard for approximately 12 years, which further compromised its physical and historical integrity. Based on its current condition MARAD has determined that the *State of Maine* is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Date: 29 September 2009

Determination: NOT ELIGIBLE

Sources

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