

The Long Voyage of

The USS LST Ship Memorial

This ship began her long and illustrious history when she was launched on 27 OCT 1942 at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Named simply USS LST 325, she was commissioned on 1 FEB 1943, with Lt. Ira Ehrensall, USNR, commanding.

On 13 FEB the ship proceeded to Little Creek, VA, for her shakedown cruise. Upon her arrival at Little Creek, Ens. C.E. Mosier reported aboard to relieve Lt. Ehrensall as commanding officer. Following the completion of the two-week shakedown cruise, the ship joined a convoy departing from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. On 19 MAR 1943 she got underway from New York Harbor with a convoy heading for Oran, Africa, carrying army personnel.

For the next three months, LST 325 operated in the North African Area, transporting army personnel and cargo between various ports. On 11 JUL 1943, the ship participated in the successful invasion of Sicily. After this invasion, the ship made several runs from the African Coast to Gela Harbor and Palermo, Sicily.

LST 325 made her second invasion at Salerno, Italy, on 14 SEP 1943. Several men sustained injuries from a strafing attack by enemy fighter-bombers, but there were no fatalities. During the following weeks, the ship made several resupply runs from Palermo, Sicily, to Salerno, Italy, carrying army cargo and personnel reinforcements.

The ship joined a task force on 12 NOV 1943 and made a hazardous passage to Plymouth, England. Enemy aircraft controlling deadly robot bombs attacked the task force, and accounted for the loss of several merchant ships. A few submarine contacts were made, but no torpedoing was experienced and the convoy arrived, by incredible coincidence, in Plymouth Harbor on Thanksgiving Day. From that time up until D-Day, the ship was rehearsed by her crew along the coast of Dartmouth, England, for the upcoming invasion of the European continent.

On D-Day Minus One, the ship got underway as part of the task force invading France. On D-Day, 6 JUN 1944, she beached in the Omaha area and discharged her cargo of army vehicles. She then retracted and anchored to take aboard casualties from the beach and nearby sunken merchant ships before sailing back to England. Including the original invasion, LST 325 made 44 successful resupply lifts from England to the French coast. During one voyage from Weymouth, England, to the beachhead in France, a cargo of army tanks broke loose under the strains of heavy weather, but the ship fortunately found haven in Southampton, England, escaping major damage to herself or her cargo. In OCT 1944, the crew of LST 512 was taken aboard, after the 512 had broken her back during a storm. During a lift from England to Ireland, another severe storm was encountered that wound up rupturing her own main deck and underwater hull. Radar had to be used for navigation for approximately 5 days because of the dense fog and icebergs.

In MAR 1945, the ship sailed from Belfast, Ireland, to the U.S. for a long-awaited overhaul. Since she was in the first LST convoy to reach the European Theater, she was also one of the first to leave the area. She spent two months on this overhaul in New Orleans, and on 2 AUG 1945 departed for Galveston, TX, for her second shakedown cruise. She was now equipped with Brodie Gear enabling her to act as an impromptu aircraft carrier for small planes, and after exercising for several days, she returned to New Orleans on 12 AUG. Due to the recent cessation of hostilities with Japan, LST 325 was then assigned to the 8th Naval District operations. She was subsequently decommissioned on 2 JUL 1946 at Green Cove Springs, FL. She was transferred to the Greek Navy on 1 SEP 1964, where she served as L-144 (*A/G Syros*) until she was acquired by The USS Ship Memorial, Inc., and manned by our group of veteran volunteers.

Departing the Greek island of Crete on 14 NOV 2000, with stops at Athens and Gibraltar, she finally arrived back home in the U.S., pulling into Mobile Bay on 10 JAN 2001. She is now undergoing refurbishment for use as a living museum, and is scheduled for her formal debut at The National LST Convention. That will take place in Mobile from 18-24 SEP 2001.

We hope to see you there!

Please cut at the fold and mail in with your donation. Thank you!

**WILL YOU HELP US TO
KEEP THIS MEMORIAL AFLOAT?**

THE USS LST SHIP MEMORIAL

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