

USS LST Memorial, Inc. Awarded Grant

On February 1, 2011, the National Park Service and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced the awarding of \$14.3 million in federal competitive Save Americas Treasures Grants. The monies will help 60 organizations and agencies protect and preserve nationally significant documents and places. The USS LST Memorial, Inc. is one of those organizations and was awarded \$414,444 to be used in the restoration of the USS LST 325. The restoration work will be completed in three years. The USS LST Ship Memorial, Inc. Board of Directors is very appreciative for the assistance given by Paul Diebold and staff of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, the City of Evansville, the National Park Service and the many people who have contributed time and/or monies to the restoration of the USS LST 325. The Board does not anticipate any major disruption in the tours and activities at the ship until the ship is taken to Mobile, Alabama for completion some of the work.

The Save Americas Treasures Grant Program requires the local organization to match the grant with either local monies or in-kind donations of labor or equipment. The value of the in-kind donation is \$423,601.25. The planned improvements include the restoration of nine ballast tanks, the removal of the ice breaker and restoration of the surface of the ship under the ice breaker. This work has been directed by the Coast Guard and necessary to insure that the USS LST 325 can be taken out on tours. Completion of the work will be supported by a significant amount of volunteer help.

The USS LST 325 was one of 1051 LST's built during WWII and was built in a Philadelphia Ship Yard and commissioned on February 1, 1943. During WWII, it participated in the invasion of Sicily, Salerno and Normandy. During the Normandy invasion, it made 40 roundtrips between England and France carrying troops, supplies and wounded. In 1963, the USS LST 325 was given to the Greek Navy which decommissioned it in December, 1999. The USS LST 325 was acquired by the USS LST Ship Memorial, Inc. in 2000, repaired and sailed back to the United States. The awarding of the grant to the USS LST Memorial, Inc. represents the

culmination of efforts made by many people over the last 10 years since the USS LST 325's return to the United States.

The national significance of the USS LST 325 is for the following reasons: (1) the LST is the largest ship designed and built for the Navy with the capability to land and retract off a beach, (2) the USS LST 325 is the only near fully restored and fully operational LST, (3) the USS LST 325 is one of only a few surviving vessels that went ashore on D-Day in 1944, (4) the ship has been maintained according to its original design, (5) the LST is a rare example of a special purpose naval warfare invasion vessel, (6) the deployment of the LST in WWII marked a major change in naval military tactics and (7) the LST represents America's involvement in humanitarian efforts directly after WWII. The awarding of this grant to the USS LST Memorial represents the culmination of efforts made by many people over the last 10 years since the USS LST 325 return to the United States.

The USS LST Memorial, Inc Board of Directors maintains a commitment to restore and maintain the USS LST 325 according to its original design, to keep the ship open to staffed tours and to annually take the ship out of Evansville to participate in events and make the ship available to others, including many schools, veterans and their families.

For additional information, you can call (812) 435 – 8678 or go to <http://www.lstmemorial.org> .