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Last Liberty Ship May Go To Greece *Greeks Hope World War II Ship Will Become Museum*

Piraeus, Greece -- Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton today signed a Memorandum of Understanding with representatives of the Government of Greece to pursue an agreement to transfer the Liberty ship *Arthur M. Huddell* to the Greek government for use as a museum. The World War II-era *Huddell* is the last Liberty ship in the Maritime Administration's fleet. It is currently moored in the James River Reserve Fleet site at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

"It is great to be able to save a bit of history from both our nations," said Connaughton. "This ship is a symbol of the friendship as well as mutual maritime interests linking Greece and the United States."

American shipyards built 2,751 Liberty ships during World War II, in the largest shipbuilding effort in history. Liberty ships crewed by merchant mariners carried troops and military cargo all over the world. The building and sailing of the Liberty ships, and their successors, the Victory Ships, were overseen by the U.S. Maritime Commission and the War Shipping Agency, both predecessor agencies of today's Maritime Administration. After World War II, Greek shipowners purchased many Liberty ships to build up their fleet. The Greek merchant fleet is now the largest in the world.

Two other Liberty ships formerly in the Maritime Administration's National Defense Reserve Fleet, the *John W. Brown* and the *Jeremiah O'Brien*, are currently operating as museum ships. While other redesigned and repurposed Liberty ships remain in service, none remain in service in the form they had in World War II. Nonetheless, their use was once so common that the term "Liberty-size cargo", meaning 10,000 tons, may still be heard in the shipping business.

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