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Last World War II-Era Liberty Ship Leaving James River Reserve Fleet
Arthur M. Huddell is bound for Greece

The Department of Transportation today announced that the last of America's famous Liberty ships, the *Arthur M. Huddell*, will be towed from the James River Reserve Fleet site at Fort Eustis, Va., to Norfolk, on July 28, 2008, to prepare the World War II-era vessel for a cross-Atlantic tow to its new homeport in Greece. Greek officials say the ship will become a merchant marine museum of that nation's shipping industry.

While in Norfolk, the *Huddell* will be berthed at the W3 Marine facility while the cross-Atlantic tow-prep is performed by a local Hampton Roads marine services company.

The ship's transfer is the result of Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and the government of Greece, which was signed in June 2008 by Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton and Greece's Minister of Merchant Marine George Voulgarakis.

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 all over the world.

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.

"The Liberty ships served both our countries well in war and peace," said Administrator Connaughton. "They were vital to the Allied victory in World War II, and a cornerstone of postwar prosperity, both for the United States and for Greece. This is an appropriate final chapter."

The Maritime Administration keeps ships in three National Defense Reserve Fleet sites to support Armed Forces movements and to respond to national emergencies. Those sites are the James River Reserve Fleet in Newport News, Virginia; Beaumont Reserve Fleet in Beaumont, Texas; and Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in Benicia, California. When the ships become obsolete, the Maritime Administration arranges for their disposition in an environmentally sensitive manner.

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