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Dictionary of  
**American Naval  
Fighting Ships**

VOLUME I—PART A

Historical Sketches—Letter A

JAMES L. MOONEY, Editor

FOREWORD BY

ADMIRAL ARLEIGH BURKE, United States Navy, Retired

NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON: 1991



three months the destroyer tender discharged her duty there until she departed Hawaiian waters on 30 September for the west coast. Pausing briefly at San Diego from 12 to 18 October, the ship pushed south, transited the Panama Canal on 2-3 November 1941, and arrived at her new duty station, Hamilton, Bermuda, on 11 November 1941, to provide support for destroyers operating on patrols in the North Atlantic.

After the Japanese surprise attack upon the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II, *Altair* maintained a routine of carrying out upkeep and repair work on Atlantic Fleet destroyers at Bermuda that continued into the summer of 1942. Underway for San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 3 July 1942, escorted by the destroyers *Bernadou* (DD-153) and *Cole* (DD-155), *Altair* arrived at her destination on the 6th, detaching the two destroyers and picking up another, *Hilary P. Jones* (DD-428), which escorted the tender of Trinidad, where she arrived on 11 July. Except for brief periods at Aruba and Curaçao, in the Dutch West Indies, in early September, *Altair* tended destroyers at Trinidad through mid-July 1943.

Following an availability at the Norfolk Navy Yard, *Altair* reported to Commander, Operational Training Command, Atlantic Fleet, on 21 August 1943 and soon resumed active tender operations at Bermuda, this time in support of the destroyer and destroyer escort shakedown group (Task Group 23.1) until shifted to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where she arrived on 11 March 1945. Providing tender services at "Gitmo" until 3 May 1945, *Altair* then proceeded back to the Norfolk Navy Yard to be prepared for service in the Pacific theater. While the ship proceeded on her voyage, Germany surrendered unconditionally and the European war came to an end.

Prepared for "distant service", *Altair* emerged from the Norfolk Navy Yard on 26 July and set course for the Pacific. Arriving in the Panama Canal Zone on 4 August, the ship remained there for the next eleven days while World War II in the Pacific, hastened to a conclusion by the explosion of two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, came to an end. *Altair* sailed for Pearl Harbor on 15 August 1945.

*Altair* reached Pearl Harbor on 6 September 1945 and provided tender services to small ships and craft into the early

spring of 1946. She departed Hawaiian waters for the last time on 27 April 1946 and reached San Francisco on 8 May, slated for disposal within the 12th Naval District. Decommissioned at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard (formerly the Mare Island Navy Yard) on 21 June 1946, *Altair* was transferred to the Maritime Commission on 8 July 1946 and her name struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 21 July 1946. Laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet's Suisun Bay, Calif., berthing area, the ship remained there until sold on 9 March 1948 to the Basalt Rock Co., who subsequently removed her from government custody and scrapped her.

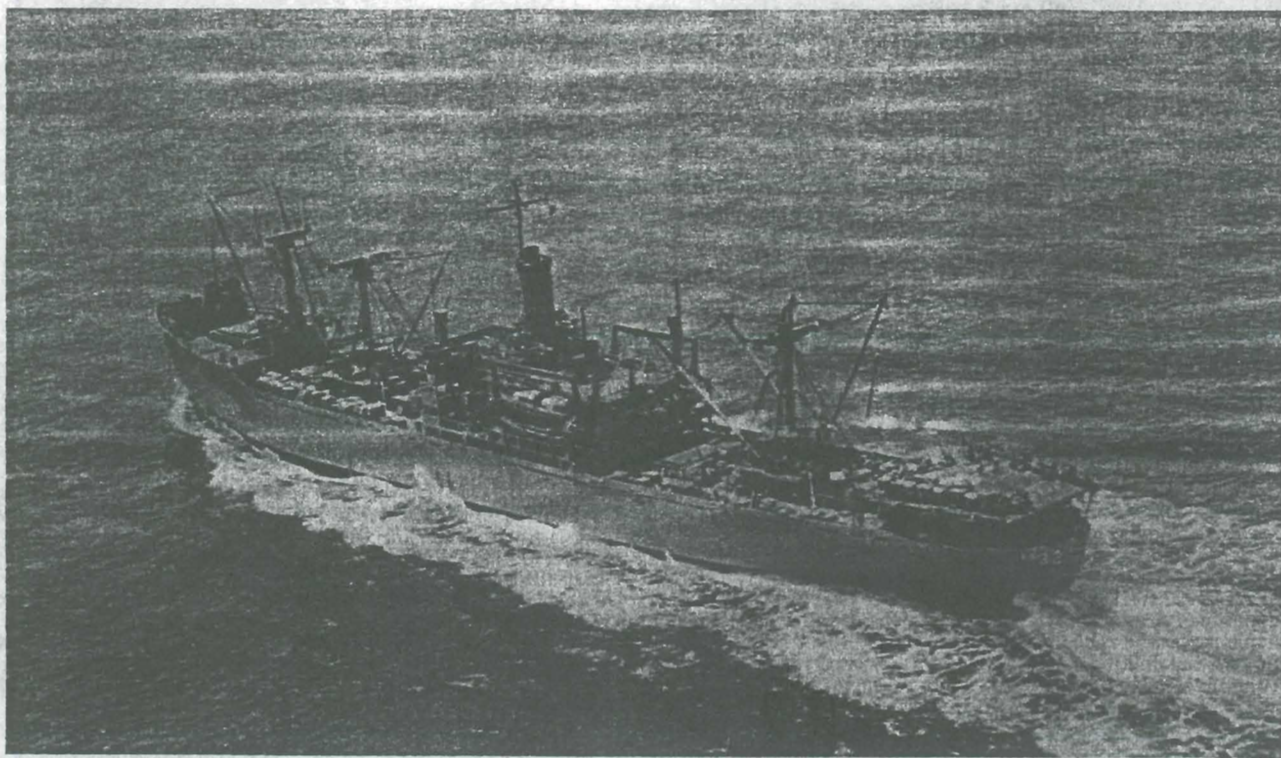
## II

(AK-257; dp. 4,960; l. 255'3"; b. 62'; dr. 28'6"; s. 16.5 k.; cpl. 250; a. 4 40mm.; cl. *Greenville Victory*; T. VC2-S-AP3)

*Aberdeen Victory* was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 110) on 20 April 1944 at Portland, Oreg., by the Oregon Shipbuilding Corp.; launched on 30 May 1944; sponsored by Mrs. A. L. M. Wiggins; completed on 22 June 1944; and entered merchant service under contract with the Waterman Steamship Co., under whose flag she supported operations against Japan and took part in the conquest of Okinawa during May 1945. Following the end of the war, the freighter was assigned to the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) and laid up in the Suisun Bay (Calif.) berthing area.

Transferred to the Navy on 7 July 1951, a little over a year after communist forces invaded the Republic of Korea, the ship was renamed *Altair* on 26 July; classified as a cargo ship and designated AK-257; and commissioned at Baltimore, Md., on 31 January 1952, Comdr. George J. Largess in command.

Assigned to the Atlantic Fleet Service Force, *Altair* was initially based at Norfolk, and visited Annapolis (29 to 31 March) and Guantanamo Bay (26 May to 2 June) during the course of her shakedown. Soon thereafter, she commenced her first deployment to the Mediterranean to support the 6th Fleet, arriving at Gibraltar on 29 June 1952. *Altair* departed that port the following day, and sailed to Golfe Juan, France, arriving there on 2



*Altair* (AKS-32) underway during 1966; from the appearance of her decks and helicopter landing pad, aft, she is ready to commence an underway replenishment. Her "Victory Ship" lines are readily apparent in this aerial oblique view. (NH 96650)



July. She remained there until 12 July, when she sailed for Naples, Italy; she steamed thence to Casablanca, French Morocco.

*Altair* cleared Casablanca for the east coast of the United States on 26 July 1952, and reached Norfolk on 4 August. Anticipating conversion to a stores issue ship, the vessel was redesignated AKS-32 on 12 August 1952. *Altair* was decommissioned at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on 5 January 1953 and taken to Baltimore, where she underwent conversion at the Maryland Drydock Co. to prepare her for her new role.

Recommissioned at Norfolk on 15 December 1953, the ship rejoined the Atlantic Fleet and, following her shakedown, reported for duty on 20 March 1954. A little over two months later, on 24 May, *Altair* sailed for the Mediterranean, and reached the Hyeres Islands, off the southeast coast of France, on 10 June, for a week's stay. She steamed thence to Naples and Cagliari, Italy, and thence to Golfe Juan, before paying a return call at Naples. She then visited Palma de Majorca before reaching Gibraltar on 11 August en route back to the United States. During her second Mediterranean deployment, the ship also conducted two underway replenishments, with Task Force (TF) 63, from 29 June to 2 July, and on 2 August 1954. Arriving back at Norfolk on 23 August, *Altair* operated between that port and New York and Baltimore through the autumn, ultimately sailing from Norfolk on 15 November for Gibraltar and her third deployment with the 6th Fleet. Over the next few months, *Altair* called at Gibraltar, Naples (thrice); Barcelona, Spain; Genoa, Italy; Cartagena, Spain; Mers-el-Kebir, and Algiers, before she closed out that deployment at Gibraltar on 24 February 1955 and sailed for Norfolk.

In May 1955, her home port was changed to Barcelona, and she cleared Norfolk for her permanent station in the Mediterranean on 26 May 1955, bound for Gibraltar. In August 1962, her home port was shifted to Naples. From time to time she returned to the United States for overhaul and modification. In 1959 she received a helicopter landing platform to enable her to carry out early vertical replenishment operations. She also received a complete material handling system which included new elevators, fork lifts, trucks, conveyor belts, and the first electronic accounting system to be placed on board a ship. This greatly facilitated her task of keeping track of the more than 25,000 items on her general stores inventory.

*Altair's* helicopter rescued an Air Force fighter pilot on 8 September 1961 after he had had to bail out off the coast of Spain. On 17 March 1962, *Altair* sent a rescue and assistance detail to aid the distressed Italian passenger ship *Venezuela* off Cannes. While a damage control party operated portable pumps to contain flooding, *Altair's* corpsmen helped over 800 passengers to leave the liner. A few weeks later, she provided emergency medical assistance to a critically ill Greek national on the island of Koso in the southern Aegean Sea; her helicopter flew the patient to Athens for further treatment. On 17 August 1962, the ship took part in relief operations for homeless repatriates in Algeria by taking 1,000 tents to Bone.

*Altair* returned to the United States in October 1962 for overhaul but was abruptly ordered to the Caribbean to replenish American warships enforcing the quarantine of Cuba. After this crisis subsided she proceeded to Boston for an overhaul which lasted into the spring of 1963.

The stores issuing ship departed Norfolk on 18 May and reached Rota, Spain, on the 30th. On 13 June, she assisted in the rescue of an Italian man who had fallen from the seawall while fishing at Naples.

In June 1965, *Altair's* home port was changed to Norfolk; and she operated from that base until reporting to the Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility to Portsmouth, Va., on 31 December 1968. She was decommissioned on 2 May 1969 and transferred to the Maritime Administration (MarAd) on 1 May 1973.

Her name was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 1 June 1973, and the former stores issue ship was laid up in the James River berthing area of the NDRF. She was transferred permanently to MarAd on 1 September 1971; and, on 31 January 1975, she was sold for scrapping to Luria Brothers & Co.

### III

(AKR-291: dp. 55,355 (f.); l. 947'; b. 105'; dr. 37'; s. 33.0 k.; cpl. 44; cl. *Algo*; T. SL-7)

The third *Altair*—a fast sealift ship—was built at Emden, West Germany, by the *Rheinstahl Nordseewerke*, as the SL-7 type containership *Sea-Land Finance*, and entered mercantile service in September 1973. Assigned the name *Altair* and the classification AK-291 on 15 October 1981, the ship was acquired by the Navy on 1 May 1982 to serve the needs of the Rapid Deployment Force (later the Afloat Prepositioning Force). Reclassified as AKR-291 on 1 November 1983, *Altair* underwent conversion at the Avondale Shipbuilding Company's Westwego, La., yard, and was dedicated in ceremonies at the conversion yard by Mrs. Bonnie Livingston, the wife of Congressman Robert L. Livingston, on 9 November 1985.

### Altamaha

A river and a sound in the state of Georgia. *Altamaha* was also the name of a town established in 1540 upon a site located in the present-day state of Georgia. *Altamaha* was mentioned in the journals of Hernando De Soto's expedition.

(AVG-6: dp. 7,886; l. 492'; b. 69'6"; ew. 112'; dr. 25'6"; s. 16 k.; cpl. 970; a. 2 5", 20 40mm.; cl. *Bogue*; T. C3-S-A2)

AVG-6 was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 160) on 15 April 1941 at Pascagoula, Miss., by the Ingalls Shipbuilding Corp.; named *Altamaha* on 7 January 1942 but the name was cancelled on 17 March 1942; launched on 4 April 1942; sponsored by Mrs. Phillip Seymour, wife of Capt. Seymour; redesignated ACV-6 on 20 August 1942; acquired by the Navy on 31 October 1942 and simultaneously transferred to the United Kingdom. That same day, the ship was renamed HMS *Battler* and commissioned by the Royal Navy.

*Battler* served the Royal Navy throughout World War II, operating for the most part on convoy escort and antisubmarine warfare missions in the North Atlantic. In September 1943, she supported the invasion of Italy at Salerno. The ship was redesignated CVE-6 by the American Navy on 15 July 1943. She was returned to the custody of the United States on 12 February 1946. She was struck from the Navy list on 28 March 1946. She was sold on 14 May 1946 to the Patapsco Steel Scrap Co., Bethlehem, Pa., and was subsequently scrapped.

### I

(CVE-18: dp. 15,700; l. 495'8"; b. 69'6"; dr. 26'; s. 17.6 k.; cpl. 1,205; a. 2 5", 16 40mm., 27 20mm.; cl. *Bogue*; T. C3-S-A1)

*Altamaha* (CVE-18) was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 235) on 19 December 1941 at Tacoma, Wash., by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corp.; launched on 25 May 1942; sponsored by Mrs. Thomas S. Combs, the wife of Comdr. Combs who was the commanding officer of seaplane tender *Casco* (AVP-12); and commissioned on 15 September 1942, Capt. J. R. Tate in command.

Following brief sea trials, *Altamaha* got underway for San Diego, Calif., on 27 October in company with *Kendrick* (DD-612). While they were en route, *Kendrick* spotted a submarine and claimed that members of her crew had seen three torpedoes which had been fired at the escort carrier. However, no one on *Altamaha* observed any of the torpedoes. The voyage continued uneventfully, and the ships reached San Diego on the 31st. The carrier then took on aircraft and passengers and sailed in convoy on 3 November for the southwest Pacific.

Upon reaching Espiritu Santo on 24 November, she delivered part of her cargo and continued on to New Caledonia. She reached Noumea on 28 November and commenced a period of flight operations and training exercises. The vessel returned to Espiritu Santo on 30 December, but continued on to the Fiji Islands and touched at Nandi on 13 January 1943 before beginning another period of operational training.

In early February, *Altamaha* paused off Funafuti, Ellice Islands; loaded cargo and personnel on to barges and sent them ashore. The carrier then proceeded to Hawaii and arrived at Pearl Harbor on 10 February. There, the planes and personnel of Air Group 11 came on board; and the ship set a course for the Fiji Islands on the 19th. She reached Nandi on 28 February,



## Oregon Shipbuilding Company, Portland OR

### Record of WWII Shipbuilding

Oregon Shipbuilding was one of the original nine emergency yards, built by Todd and Kaiser with 8 ways, with \$23mm from the USMC. Its 8 ways were increased to 11 in the second wave of shipbuilding expansion. Kaiser bought out Todd's interest in 1941. At its peak, Oregon Shipbuilding employed over 35,000 people, 30% of them women. After the war, the yard was closed and liquidated.

Visit <http://www.armed-guard.com/recbr1.html> to see a reproduction of a post-war booklet with some wonderful photographs of Oregon Shipbuilding.

Visit <http://www.oakgrovedesigns.net/homepage/libships/> to see pictures of the Liberty Ship memorial park at the Oregon Shipbuilding site.

Visit <http://www.beadee.com/kaiser/index.shtml> to see reproductions of the weekly newspaper published by Kaiser for the employees of its three Portland-area shipyards. The photographs are marvelous.

Hull #	Original Name	Type	MC #	Way #	Keel Laid	Launched	Delivered	Days on Ways	Days in Water	Total Days	Disposition
170	Meriwether Lewis	EC2-S-C1	170	8	19-May-41	19-Oct-41	27-Jan-42	153	100	253	Torpedoed and lost in the Nc 1943
171	Star of Oregon	EC2-S-C1	171	7	19-May-41	27-Sep-41	31-Dec-41	131	95	226	Torpedoed and lost off Trinidad
172	William Clark	EC2-S-C1	172	6	31-May-41	26-Oct-41	3-Feb-42	148	100	248	Torpedoed and lost in the Gr Sea 1942
173	Robert Gray	EC2-S-C1	173	5	31-May-41	16-Nov-41	11-Feb-42	169	87	256	Torpedoed and lost in the Nc 1943
174	John Barry	EC2-S-C1	174	4	11-Jul-41	23-Nov-41	17-Feb-42	135	86	221	Torpedoed and lost in the Inc 1944
175	Thomas Jefferson	EC2-S-C1	175	3	18-Jul-41	7-Dec-41	24-Feb-42	142	79	221	Scrapped 1961
176	John Hancock	EC2-S-C1	176	2	18-Jul-41	14-Dec-41	28-Feb-42	149	76	225	Torpedoed and lost off Cuba
177	Philip Livingston	EC2-S-C1	177	1	18-Jul-41	21-Dec-41	7-Mar-42	156	76	232	Sold private 1947, scrapped
178	Stephen A Douglas	EC2-S-C1	231	9	18-Sep-41	21-Jan-42	20-Mar-42	125	58	183	Scrapped 1966

1022	Marshfield Victory	VC2-S-AP3	106							Jun-44					To USN 1968 as Marshfield (AK NDRF 1993)
1023	Nampa Victory	VC2-S-AP3	107							Jun-44					Troopship 1944, to USN 1951 as (AK 258, later AKS 33)
1024	Silverbow Victory	VC2-S-AP3	108							Jun-44					Sold private 1947, converted to unloader, scrapped
1025	Mandan Victory	VC2-S-AP3	109							Jun-44					To USA 1946 as SGT Jack J. P. USN 1950 as AKV 5, later AK 2 1974
1026	Aberdeen Victory	VC2-S-AP3	110							Jun-44					To USN 1951 as Altair (AK 257) 32, NDRF 1974
1027	Beloit Victory	VC2-S-AP3	111							Jul-44					Scrapped 1969
1028	Escanaba Victory	VC2-S-AP3	112							Jun-44					To USN 1952 as Regulus (AF 5 1969 and scrapped
1029	Hibbing Victory	VC2-S-AP3	113							Jun-44					To USN 1952 as Denebola (AF scrapped 1976
1030	Joliet Victory	VC2-S-AP3	114							Jul-44					To USN 1958 as Michelson (AG NDRF 1977
1031	Quinault Victory	VC2-S-AP3	115							Jul-44					Destroyed by explosion in Port C 1944
1032	Skagway Victory	VC2-S-AP3	116							Jul-44					Sold private 1949, wrecked 1961, scrapped



# MARINERS

## THE WEBSITE OF THE MARINERS MAILING LIST.

### VICTORY SHIP DETAILS

#### TYPES

CODE	TYPE	DETAILS
01	VC2-S-AP2	7,612 gross tons, length 455.3ft overall, beam 62ft, depth 38ft. Speed 15 knots.
02	VC2-S-AP3	Identical to AP2 design but about 16 knots.
03	VC2-M-AP4	Experimental Diesel powered ship - only one built.
04	VC2-S-AP5	Attack Transport Ships
05	VC2-S1-AP7	8,500 gross tons. Completed after the war as passenger / cargo ships to owners requirements.

#### Type designations -

First group - V = Victory, C = Cargo, Number = waterline length group (1 = up to 399ft, 2 = 400-449ft, 3 = 450-499ft)

Second group - S = Steam, M = Motor, Number indicates number of screws (only used when 12 or more passengers)

Third group - Hull design letters plus number to indicate any conversions.

#### UNITED STATES NAVY DESIGNATIONS

AF	Refrigerated Stores Ship
AG	Miscellaneous, including Forward Depot Ships
AGM	Missile Range Implementation Ship
AGS	Support Ship to Fleet Ballistic Missile Programme (now Survey Ships)
AGTR	Technical and Scientific Research Ship
AK	Cargo Ship
AKA	Attack Cargo Ship (now designated LKA)
AKS	General Stores Issue Ship
AKV	Cargo Ship and Aircraft Ferry
AO	Navy Tanker
AOG	Navy Tanker (Petrol)
AP	Transport

<b>APA</b>	<b>Attack Transport (now designated LPA)</b>
<b>AW</b>	<b>Water Distilling Ship</b>
<b>CVE</b>	<b>Escort Aircraft Carrier (originally designated AVG, Aug.1942 to ACV, Jul.1943 to CVE)</b>

### ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CTL</b>	<b>Constructive total loss</b>	<b>USMC</b>	<b>United States Maritime Commission</b>
<b>(—)</b>	<b>Managers</b>	<b>USN</b>	<b>United States Navy</b>
<b>MSC</b>	<b>Military Sealift Command</b>	<b>WPB</b>	<b>War Production Board</b>
<b>MSTS</b>	<b>Military Sea Transportation Service</b>	<b>WSA</b>	<b>War Shipping Administration</b>

### BUILDERS

<b>01</b>	<b>Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard Inc, Baltimore, Maryland</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>California Shipbuilding Corporation, Los Angeles, California.</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>Permanente Metals Corporation, Yard No.1, Richmond, California.</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>Permanente Metals Corporation, Yard No.2, Richmond, California.</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation, Portland, Oregon.</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Kaiser Company, Vancouver, Washington.</b>

### ENGINE BUILDERS

<b>General Electric Company</b>
<b>Westinghouse Electric &amp; Manufacturing Company</b>
<b>Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company</b>
<b>DeLaval Steam Turbine Company</b>
<b>Joshua Hendy Iron Works</b>
<b>Falk Corporation</b>
<b>Farrell-Birmingham Company</b>
<b>Koppers Company</b>
<b>Nordberg Manufacturing Company, Milwaukee.</b>

### INDEX

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# NavSource Online: Service Ship Photo Archive



Left Patch Contributed by C Wood Halsey & Charles Brecheisen, Right Patch by Mike Smolinski

## AK-257 / AKS-32 Altair

### SS Aberdeen Victory Awards, Citations and Campaign Ribbons



Precedence of awards is from left to right

American Campaign Medal - Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (1-Okinawa) - World War II Victory Medal

### USS Altair Awards, Citations and Campaign Ribbons



Precedence of awards is from left to right

National Defense Service Medal - Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (1-Cuba)

### Greenville Victory Class Cargo Ship:

- Laid down (date unknown) as **Aberdeen Victory**, a Maritime Commission type (VC2-S-AP3) hull, under Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 110), at Oregon Shipbuilding Corp, Portland, OR.
- Launched, 30 May 1944
- Completed, 22 June 1944
- Contracted to Waterman Steamship Co.
- Returned to the Maritime Commission, circa 1945-1946, for lay up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet, Suisun Bay, Benecia, CA.
- Transferred to the US Navy, 7 July 1951
- Commissioned *Cargo Ship* **USS Altair (AK-257)**, 31 January 1952, at Baltimore, MD.
- Decommissioned, 5 January 1953, at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, VA., for conversion to an

### Antares Class General Stores Issue Ship

- Converted at Maryland Drydock Co., Baltimore, MD.
- Recommissioned, **USS Altair (AKS-32)**, 15 December, 1953, at Norfolk, VA.
- Decommissioned, 2 May 1969, at Portsmouth, VA.
- Custody transferred to MARAD, 1 May 1973, for lay up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet James River, Fort Eustis, VA.
- Struck from the Naval Register, 1 June 1973
- Title transfer to MARAD, 1 September 1971
- Final Disposition, sold for scrapping, 31 January 1975, to Luria Brothers & Co., Philadelphia, PA.

### Specifications:

**Displacement** 4,960 t.

**Length** 255' 3"





## Photograph Collection

There are over 300,000 photographic images of passenger liners, cruise ships, lake and coastal ships, river steamboats, tugboats, cargo vessels, military transports, and work boats. The photographs are arranged in this collection by ship name, and the ships date from the mid-1800's to present.

USA Check/Money OrderRate	Foreign Check/Money Order drawn on US Bank Rate
\$5.50 per ship name	\$10.50 per ship name

Upon receipt of your non-refundable search fee we will undertake a search of our various ship photograph collections. All requests are processed in order of date received. Please allow three to four weeks for a response to your request once payment is received. Due to staff limitations we **cannot** undertake any rush orders.

When requesting ship photographs, identify the ship of interest by name. Additional information such as shipping line, dates of operation, or any particulars on the ship help in providing the correct photograph. The library will search the photographic collections to locate an image. If we are successful, we will respond with a photocopy of the ship image and an order form providing prices for the reproduction of the photograph(s). If we do not have a photograph, we will send an information sheet of other maritime museums that may be helpful.

**All inquiries need to be in writing because payment must be included, therefore no telephone, e-mail or fax requests can be accepted. Send your query, payment, and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:**

**Steamship Historical Society Collection,  
Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore  
1420 Maryland Avenue.  
Baltimore, MD 21201**

All money orders and checks must be payable in U. S. currency and drawn on a U.S. bank. **\*Please note requests sent without a self-addressed stamped envelope allow four to six weeks for a response.**

You can now search some of the holdings of our [Master Print File Online](#):

<a href="#">Passenger Liners</a>	<a href="#">Victory Ships</a>
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## U.S. Merchant Marine Ships whose Naval Armed Guard crews earned "Battle Stars" in World War II - Ships with names "A to F"

A. Frank Lever	14 Jun 44-25 Jun 44	Invasion of Normandy
A. J. Cermak	11 Apr 44-12 Apr 44	Convoy UGS-37
A. S. Dunniway	17 Apr 45-23 Apr 45	Mindanao Island landings
Abangarez	11 May 44	Convoy UGS-40
Abbot L. Mills	15 Aug 44-25 Sept 44	Invasion of Southern France
Abel Stearns	15 Aug 44-25 Sept 44	Invasion of Southern France
Aberdeen Victory	3 May 45-16 May 45	Assault-occupation of Okinawa Gunto
Abiel Foster	13 Jun 44-25 Jun 44	Invasion of Normandy
Abraham Clarke	no date given	Invasion of Normandy
Abraham Lincoln	11 May 44	Convoy UGS-40
Adabelle Lykes	7 Jun 45-14 Jun 45	Assault-occupation of Okinawa Gunto
Adoniram Judson	22 Oct 44-17 Nov 44	Leyte landings
Aedanus Burke	15 Aug 44-25 Sept 44	Invasion of Southern France
Afoundria	10 Apr 45-22 Apr 45	Assault-occupation of Okinawa Gunto



**Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation** (Henry J. Kaiser) - construction of the yard in the St. Johns district began in February 1941 and the first two ship keels were laid on May 19, 1941. Shortly thereafter WWII was declared and more yards were needed. A second yard in Vancouver, Washington was built and its first keel laid on April 15, 1942. The Vancouver yard built 10 Liberty ships, 30 large tank landing ships, and 50 airplane carriers (built in one year!), 36 attack troop transports and C4 troop transports. In March 1942, the Maritime Commission leased Swan Island from the Port of Portland and seemingly overnight another shipyard with eight ways was being constructed by Henry Kaiser. This yard built 147 tankers for the Maritime Commission. At peak employment in the three yards (December 1943) 98,300 people were employed with women comprising 25 percent of the workforce.

"Record Breakers"

Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation"

"Boss's whistle"

## WSA Awards War Service Flags to 107 Operators of American Flag Ships During World War II

In a nation wide celebration of **Victory Fleet Day**, September 27, 1944, the **War Shipping Administration** will present **War Service Flags** to the 107 shipping companies which operate the Victory Fleet of more than 3,400 American flag ships.

American operators who have been under contract to WSA as general agents or on time charter agreements not less than six months will receive in addition a War Service Certificate stating their eligibility to fly the WSA flag on ships under their control.

The WSA pennant is made up with two horizontal bars of red separated by a bar of white. A large, dark blue circle with the letters, WSA in white is superimposed on the three bars at the staff end of the pennant. Stars of the same dark blue will be imposed on the white bar to indicate the number of American flag ships operated by the shipping company, as follows:

No. Vessels Assigned	Stars
75 - 100 Vessels	4 Stars
51- 75 Vessels	3 Stars
26- 50 Vessels	2 Stars
5- 25 Vessels	1 Star



The War Service Certificates bear a message of "recognition of meritorious service to the United States of America in time of war" signed by Vice Admiral E. S. Land, Administrator of War Shipping. Appropriate ceremonies are planned in cities where shipping companies have their home offices, with WSA officials making presentations of the flags.

### Shipping Companies Operating Dry Cargo Vessels

4 Star Companies	
American Export Lines, Inc.	New York City
American Hawaiian SS Co.	New York City
American President Lines	San Francisco
Grace Line Inc.	New York City
Isthmian SS Co.	New York City
Lykes Bros. SS Co., Inc.	New Orleans
Matson Navigation Co.	San Francisco
Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc.	New York City
United Fruit Co.	Boston
United States Lines Co.	New York City
Waterman SS Corp.	Mobile AL



**Beam** 62'**Draft** 28' 6"**Speed** 16.5 kts.**Complement** 250**Armament** two twin 40mm gun mounts**Propulsion** steam turbine, single shaft, 8500shp

Click On Image For Full Size Image	Size	Image Description	Contributed By
	72k	<i>Altair</i> (AKS-32), in the Mediterranean Sea US Navy photo, US Naval Support Activity, Naples Italy, 16 August 1963 edition of station newspaper "Panorama",	Michael F Troiano, BM3, <i>USS Altair</i> 1963-65
	80k	<i>Altair</i> (AKS-32), underway, circa 1959 or later (note the helicopter flight deck on her fantail which was added in 1959) place unknown. US Navy photo from "All Hands" magazine, October 1962	Joe Radigan MACM USN Ret.

View the **Altair (AK-257/AKS-32)**  
[DANFS](#) history entry located at [NavSource](#).

**Crew Contact And Reunion Information**  
[U.S.Navy Memorial Foundation](#)  
[Fleet Reserve Association](#)

**Additional Resources and Web Sites of Interest**  
[USS Altair AKS-32](#)

## Waterman Steamship Corporation Records

### Biographical Note

John Barnett Waterman, son of Thomas Scott and Caroline Louise (Barnett) Waterman, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, December 21, 1865, and died in Mobile, Alabama, April 30, 1937. He received his early education in the private schools of New Orleans, and attended Tulane University, but left at the age of eighteen. Following a short career in civil engineering, he entered the transportation field, serving in the traffic department of the Illinois Central RR, and later, the Texas Pacific RR. He later became export agent with the Missouri Pacific RR. During the war with Spain, Waterman, a member of the Louisiana State Guard, served thirteen months in Cuba as a captain in the 2d Volunteer regiment.



In 1902 Waterman moved to Mobile as manager of the Elder Dempster Steamship Company, a large British steamship firm. In 1919, Waterman, with T.M. Stevens, W.D. Bellingrath and C.W. Hempstead, organized the Waterman Steamship Corporation. Waterman was elected president and director. Starting with one ship, leased from the U.S. Shipping Board, the company continued to increase in size and importance. During World War II, the company operated a fleet of 125 ships, and its affiliate, the Gulf Shipbuilding Corporation, built scores of navy and cargo ships for the war effort.

Active in community affairs, Waterman served as president of the Mobile Maritime Exchange in 1910, president of the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and, at various times as a member of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce, the Mobile Cotton Exchange and the Mobile Rivers and Harbors Committee. He was a member of the Boston Club of New Orleans, the Athelstan Club and the Country Club of Mobile, and was active in carnival organizations. He was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. On November 15, 1905, Waterman married Annie Louise Harrison in Mobile. The couple had one child, Carroll Barnett, born February 26, 1909.

### Waterman Steamship Corporation History

Following World War I, The United States Shipping Board, in an effort to upgrade and strengthen the American Merchant Marine, initiated a program of allocating war-built vessels to American Managing agents assigned to various routes. The Board allocated ships to 135 firms throughout the United States. One vessel, the *Eastern Sun*, went to Waterman for British trade, running from the Gulf to Liverpool and Manchester. A short time later, three additional ships were allocated to the company.

Ryan Stevedoring Company was organized in 1924 as a wholly-owned subsidiary, for the business of loading and discharging vessels. Also, in 1924, in a government consolidation, the company was selected as the only government operator at the port of Mobile.

In 1926, Waterman organized and became president of the Mobile, Miami and Gulf Steamship Company, which became the Waterman Line. This enabled the company to expand its operations from Mobile and other gulf ports to Tampa, Key West, Miami, Puerto Rico and the West Indies.

Continuing its expansion, Waterman, in 1930, purchased from the government the Mobile Oceanic Line, including fourteen ships that were soon refitted and improved for freight and passenger service. The Pan-Atlantic Steamship Corporation, with four vessels, was acquired in 1933. From 1935 to 1937 the management of fifteen vessels of the Anchor Line of Glasgow was taken over, involving a contract to handle all the International Paper Company newsprint exported from Canada.





SS *Pan Crescent*, at Alabama State Docks, ca. 1940.  
Overbey Collection, USA Archives.

From its humble, one-ship beginning, the Waterman Corporation continued to increase in size and importance, eventually owning and operating its own shipbuilding and repair yards, employing thousands of workers, controlling dock and terminal facilities, possessing its own terminal, carrying on airline freight operations and, by World War II, operating a fleet of 125 ships over the seven seas.

On January 21, 1955, McLean Industries, Inc. purchased from Waterman Steamship Corporation all of the capital stock of Pan Atlantic Steamship Corporation and Gulf Florida Terminal Company, Inc. Later, in May 1955, McLean Industries, Inc. purchased the stock of Waterman Steamship Corporation from the stockholders.

### **Scope and Content of the Collection**

The Waterman files, 13 cubic feet, contain some correspondence dated as early as 1910, however, the bulk of the collection covers the period from the founding of the company in 1919 through 1937. The files are arranged alphabetically by subject. Box inventories are available at the archives.

Central to the collection is correspondence relating to the United States government's ocean mail contracts and correspondence between the company and the United States Shipping Board. The early subsidization of the American Merchant Marine was a very important factor in the founding and growth of the Waterman Corporation.

Other important materials in this collection include: 1) Correspondence, by-laws, board minutes, and various financial records relating to the founding of Ryan Stevedoring Company, Waterman's subsidiary for loading and discharging vessels; 2) Materials pertinent to the acquisition of the Mobile, Miami and Gulf Steamship Company in 1926, the purchase of the Mobile Oceanic Line (1930), and the addition of the Pan-Atlantic Steamship Company (1933), along with the operation and future development of these new additions; 3) Waterman financial records - audits, balance sheets, cost reports, and profit and loss statements; 4) Information pertaining to the operation of various Waterman vessels: the purchase of, time trials, refitting, construction and construction loans, investigations, insurance, collisions and damage reports, and various maintenance and cost reports; and 5) Correspondence between Waterman and its operations at Tampa, Miami, Puerto Rico, and other Gulf and Eastern Atlantic ports. Also, correspondence concerning the company's operations in Hamburg, Cuba, England and Scotland, Rotterdam and Antwerp.

Back to [Guide to Manuscript Collections](#)

## U.S.S. Altair AKS-32

(AK-257; dp 4,960; l. 255'3"; b. 62'; dr. 28'6"; \$ 16.5 k.; cpl. 250; a. 4 40mm.; cl  
*Greenville Victory*, T VC2-S-AP3)

*Aberdeen Victory* was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 110) on 20 April 1944 at Portland, Oreg. By the Oregon Shipbuilding Corp.; launched on 30 May 1944, sponsored by Mrs. A. L. M. Wiggins; completed on 23 June 1944, and entered merchant service under contract with the Waterman Steamship Co., under whose flag she supported operations against Japan and took part in the conquest of Okinawa during May 1945. Following the rest of the war, the freighter was assigned to the National defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) and laid up in the Sulsun(?) Bay (Calif.) berthing area.

Transferred to the Navy on 7 July 1951, a little over a year after communist forces invaded the Republic of Korea, the ship was renamed *Altair* on 26 July, classified as a cargo ship and designated AK-257; and commissioned at Baltimore, Md., on 31 January 1952, Comdr. George J. Largess in command.

Assigned to the Atlantic Fleet Service Force, *Altair* was initially based at Norfolk, and visited Annapolis (29 to 31 March) and Guantanamo Bay (26 May to 2 June) during the course of her shakedown. Soon thereafter, she commenced her first deployment to the Mediterranean to support the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, arriving at Gibraltar on 29 June 1952. *Altair* departed that port the following day, and sailed to Golfe Juan, France, arriving there on 2 July. She remained there until 12 July, when she sailed for Naples, Italy; she steamed thence to Casablanca, French Morocco.

*Altair* cleared Casablanca for the east coast of the United States on 26 July 1952, and reached Norfolk on 4 August. Anticipating conversion to a stores issue ship, the vessel was redesignated AKS-32 on 12 August 1952. *Altair* was decommissioned at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on 5 January 1953 and taken to Baltimore, where she underwent conversion at the Maryland Drydock Co. to prepare her for her new role.

Recommissioned at Norfolk on 15 December 1953, the ship rejoined the Atlantic Fleet and, following her shakedown, reported for duty on 20 March 1954. A little over two months later, on 24 May, *Altair* sailed for the Mediterranean, and reached the Hyeres(?) Islands, of the southeast coast of France, on 10 June, for a weeks stay. She steamed thence to Naples and Cagliari, Italy, and thence to Golfo Juan, before paying a return call at Naples. She then visited Palma de Majorca before reaching Gibraltar on 11 August en route back to the United States. During her second Mediterranean deployment, the ship also conducted two underway replenishments, with Task Force (TF) 63, from 29 June to 2 July, and on 2 August 1954. Arriving back at Norfolk on 23 August, *Altair* operated between that port and New York and Baltimore through the autumn, ultimately sailing from Norfolk on 15 November for Gibraltar and her third



deployment with the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet. Over the next few months, *Altair* called at Gibraltar, Naples (thrice), Barcelona, Spain, Genoa, Italy, Cartagena, Spain, Mers-el-Kebir, and Algiers, before she closed out that deployment at Gibraltar on 24 February 1955 and sailed for Norfolk.

In May 1955, her home port was changed to Barcelona, and she cleared Norfolk for her permanent station in the Mediterranean on 26 May 1956, bound for Gibraltar. In August 1962, her home port was shifted to Naples. From time to time she returned to the United States for overhaul and modification. In 1959 she received a helicopter landing platform to enable her to carry out early vertical replenishment operations. She also received a complete material handling system, which included new elevators, fork lifts, trucks, conveyor belts, and the first electronic accounting system to be placed on board a ship. This greatly facilitated her task of keeping track of the more than 25,000 items on her general stores inventory.

*Altair's* helicopter rescued an Air Force fighter pilot on 8 September 1961 after he had to bail out off the coast of Spain. On 17 March 1962, *Altair* sent a rescue and sustenance detail to aid the distressed Italian passenger ship *Venezuela* off Cannes. While a damage control party operated portable pumps to contain flooding, *Altair's* corpsmen helped over 800 passengers to leave the liner. A few weeks later, she provided emergency medical assistance to a critically ill Greek national on the Island of Koao(?) in the southern Aegean Sea; her helicopter flew the patient to Athens for further treatment. On 17 August 1962, the ship took part in relief operations for homeless repatriates in Algeria by taking 1,000 tents to Bono.

*Altair* returned to the United States in October 1962 for overhaul but was abruptly ordered to the Caribbean to replenish American warships enforcing the quarantine of Cuba. After this crisis subsided she proceeded to Boston for an overhaul, which lasted into the spring of 1963.

The stores issuing ship departed Norfolk on 18 May and reached Rota, Spain, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. On 13 June, she assisted in the rescue of an Italian man who had fallen from the seawall while fishing at Naples.

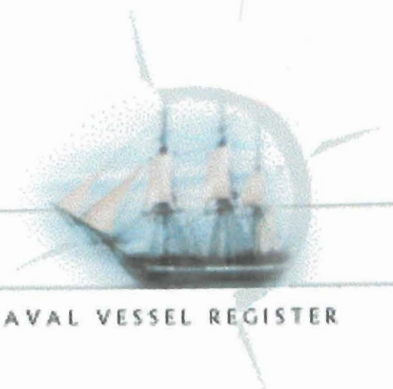
In June 1965, *Altair's* home port was changed to Norfolk, and she operated from that base until reporting to the Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility to Portsmouth, Va., on 31 December 1968. She was decommissioned on 2 May 1969 and transferred to the Maritime Administration (MarAd) on 1 May 1973.

Her name was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 1 June 1973, and the former stores issue ship was laid up in the James River berthing area of the NDRF. She was transferred permanently to MarAd on 1 September 1971; and, on 31 January 1975, she was sold for scrapping to Luria Brothers & Co.

ALTAR

N·V·R

NAVAL VESSEL REGISTER



This information resides on a DOD interest computer.  
Important conditions, restrictions, and disclaimers apply.

## ALTAR (AKS 32) (ex-AK 257)

### STORES ISSUE SHIP

Class:

AKS 32

Status:

Disposed of by  
MARAD sale

Date status  
changed:

11/01/1974

Maintenance

Category:

Force:

UIC:

01907

Fleet:

Homeport:

Berth:

MARAD Type:

Builder:

Award Date:

Keel Date:

Launch Date:

Delivery Date:

Age (since delivery) (At time of  
disposal):

Commission Date:

Decommission Date:

Years from Commission to  
Decommission:

Stricken Date:

06/01/1973

Overall Length:

Extreme Beam:

Maximum Navigational Draft:

Light Displacement:

Dead Weight:

Hull Material:

Waterline Length:

Waterline Beam:

Draft Limit:

Full Displacement:

<http://www.nvr.navy.mil/nvrships/details/AKS32.htm>

11/11/0





Number of Propellers:

Propulsion Type:

Accommodations:

Officers:

Enlisted:

Custodian: MARITIME ADMINISTRATION (NATIONAL DEFENSE  
RESERVE FLEET)

Ships Program  
Manager:

Planning Yard:

*No changes to this information were reported since 08/25/2000*

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