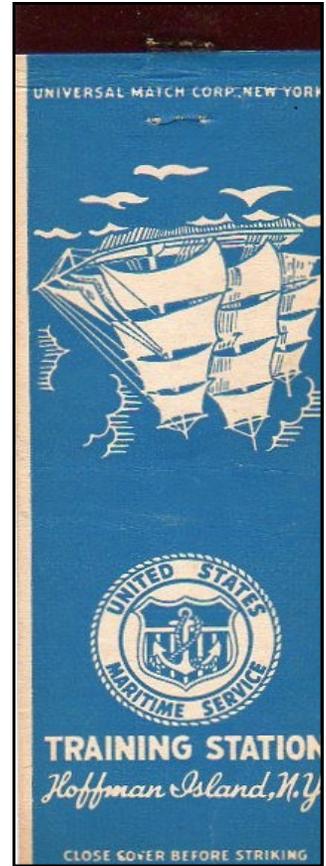
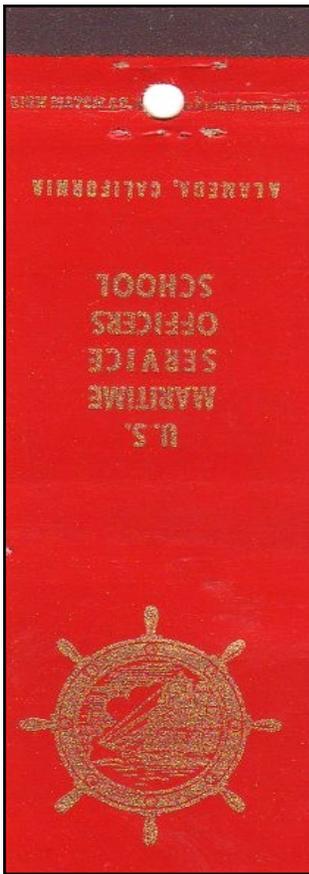


The Forgotten Service

The United States Maritime Service was by law the official training organization for the U.S. Merchant Marine. It trained men for the U.S. Merchant Marine and U.S. Army Transport Service to transport supplies and personnel in the largest fleet of freighters, tankers, and transports in history to bases all over the world for U.S. and Allied forces. Men at the fronts depended on this important service for bombs, gasoline, shells, ammunition, food, guns, vehicles, planes, medicine, and other materials for warfare. When training ended the person was "released from active duty" in the Maritime Service and went to sea in the Merchant Marine. Today the Maritime Service exists only in the Maritime Academies.

The USMC was first established under the Coast Guard and later supervised by U.S. Navy officers. Many of its first recruits in 1938 were from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Men, caught up in the patriotic fervor of the time, came forward to serve in the fledgling U.S. Maritime Service. There were 37 official recruiting centers set up around the country. Radio and newspaper ads brought in the thousands of young patriotic men, some as young as 16, from every state who answered their country's call to serve. Many men were sent to the USMS by Navy and Coast Guard recruiters. The USMC was the only racially integrated service of the time.

Thousands of active and retired mariners, Navy, and Coast Guardsmen were pressed into duty to serve as administrators and instructors. They believed



then, and still believe today, that they joined a uniformed, armed service. Many of these were denied service and retirement time. They are still seeking veteran status from the Air Force Secretary. The USMS was an official U.S. government organization, while the WASPs and most of the other groups that received veteran status were either under contract to the government or unofficial organizations.

The USMS took over 250,000 raw recruits and turned them into fighting mariners., teaching them the operation of anti-aircraft guns and cannon, navigation, engine operation and maintenance, and deck operations aboard training vessels that operated in hazardous waters subject to mines and attack by German and Japanese submarines.

The USMS training bases were disbanded in 1954, the servicemen sent home with a ‘release from duty’ to be all but forgotten by the country they served. Today, federal agencies act as if the branch never existed. [<http://www.usmm.org>]

Currently, there are Maritime Academies in California, Texas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York.

Still, thanks to those little magical pieces of cardboard that we are always seeking, their contributions are recorded for posterity as seen here, so, in that way at least, they’ll always be remembered.

...The United States Maritime Service!

