A guide to the Marinship Corporation records, 1942-1945

Processed by: Historic Documents Department Staff (Bailey).
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Phone: 415-561-7030
Fax: 415-556-3540
SAFR_Historic_Documents@nps.gov
URL: http://www.nps.gov/safr
2013
A Guide to the Marinship Corporation records

HDC0090

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service
2013, National Park Service

Title: Marinship Corporation records
Date: 1942-1945
Identifier/Call Number: HDC0090 (SAFR 14318)
Physical Description: 4 linear ft.
Repository: San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department
Building E, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
Abstract: The Marinship Corporation records (SAFR 14318, HDC 90) consists of work ledgers, correspondence, memoranda, photographs, reports, scrapbooks, and ephemera which document certain phases of activity of Marinship Corporation between 1942-1945. An additional finding aid that includes arrangement, added entries and vessel name lists is available. This collection has been processed to the collection level and is open for use without restriction.
Physical Location: San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department
Language(s): In English.
Access
This collection is open for use unless otherwise noted.
Publication and Use Rights
Some material may be copyrighted or restricted. It is the researcher’s obligation to determine and satisfy copyright or other case restrictions when publishing or otherwise distributing materials found in the collections.
Processing Note
The descriptions in this collection guide were compiled using the best available sources of information. Such sources include the creator’s annotations or descriptions, collection accession files, primary and secondary source material and subject matter experts. While every effort was made to provide accurate information, in the event that you find any errors in this guide please contact the reference staff in order for us to evaluate and make corrections to this guide.
Please cite the title and collection number in any correspondence with our staff.
Preferred Citation
[Item description], [Location within collection organization identified by Collection Number/Series Number/File Unit Number/Item Number], HDC0090 (SAFR 14318), Marinship Corporation records, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Acquisition Information
SAFR-00001
This collection was transferred from Golden Gate National Recreation Area to San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.
Historical or Biographical Note
In March 1942, W.A. Bechtel Company agreed to set up a Marin Shipbuilding Division at Sausalito; the organization became known as Marinship Corporation in November of 1942. On June 27, 1942 the facility was complete enough for the first keel to be laid. Between then and August 14, 1945 Marinship Corporation delivered fifteen liberty ships to the Maritime Commission.
German submarines launched an offensive against the vulnerable and precious tanker traffic in the Caribbean Sea and off of the North American seaboard during the spring of 1942. Marinship and other American ship yards were notified to convert their facilities to mass-production of T-2 type tankers. Between the laying of the keel of U.S.S. ESCAMBIA on December 10, 1942 and the delivery of the S.S. MISSION LOS ANGELES on September 25, 1945, there were 78 tankers and closely-related fleet oilers built at Marinship.
At its peak of employment, Marinship had almost 19,000 men and women on its rolls. Sausalito had a pre-war population of 40,000, but Marinship attracted so many workers to the area that the Federal Housing Commission constructed housing for 5500 people adjoining the facility. This community, which became known as Marin City, still exists on the hillside above the old yard.

By 1946, the shipyard was no longer in operation, and it was taken over by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for use in their Pacific Island Reconstruction Program. Some of the old shipyard buildings are used by the Corp to this day.

**Collection Scope and Content**

The Marinship Corporation records (SAFR 14318, HDC 90) consists of work ledgers, correspondence, memoranda, photographs, reports, scrapbooks, and ephemera which document certain phases of activity of Marinship Corporation between 1942-1945. An additional finding aid that includes arrangement, added entries and vessel name lists is available. This collection has been processed to the collection level and is open for use without restriction.

Whenever possible, within a series, the original order by hull number has been maintained.

The first series of records consists of handwritten work ledgers, which list the testing procedures carried out on engines, boilers, fuel tanks, and other machinery aboard Marinship tankers from May 1943 to October 1945. These ledgers are arranged by various work shifts.

The second series consists of miscellaneous incoming and outgoing correspondences, and memoranda of a general nature belonging to the files of the Engineering Department. These records are concerned solely with liberty ships, and are arranged by hull number.

The third series, entitled "Testing & Trial Data" is one of the largest series in the collection. It is arranged by hull number, and includes: bridge logs of the builders (i.e. dockside) and official trials (in the bay or ocean) for tankers with hull numbers 76 to 93; rough logs, typescript copies, procedures, and personnel lists for builder's and official trials of tankers with hull number 25 to 93; shipyard inspector's test reports for all Marinship liberty ships; and records of builder's official trial machinery data for all Marinship liberty ships. Although the logs give a straightforward picture of trial activity, much of the remainder of the material included in this series is extremely technical in nature and consists of columns of numbers entered on forms.

The fourth series consists of records concerning the launching ceremonies that occurred before each ship was christened and sent down the ways. This is a fairly lengthy series, which provides an interesting social dimension to the collection. It includes memoranda regarding arrangements for the ceremonies, and correspondences with invitees, as well as a complete set of finely printed invitations and programs.

The fifth series consists of two technical reports on the subjects of launching procedures and deliveries of materials and a set of design drawings for T-2 tankers. Several large graphs and charts, as well as the design drawings, are stored separately in oversize drawers. This series also contains planning reports discussing the local and regional socio-economic circumstances during the initial planning and development of Marinship Corporation.

The sixth series consists of ephemera, largely scrapbooks composed of launching invitations and programs. The contents of the scrapbooks are duplicated in the launching records. A small sample of postmarked envelopes, and a yard pass are included in this series.

**Collection Arrangement**

Arranged into six series as follows: Series 1: Work ledgers of dockside testing performed, May 1943 to October 1945, folders 1-6; Series 2: Correspondence & Memoranda of the Engineering Division, N.D., folders 1-13; Series 3: Testing and Trial Data, Box 1: bridge logs, March 1945 to October 1945, Box 2: logs and ship inspector's test report, September 1942 to October 1945, Box 3: records of builders and official trials, N.D., Box 4: records of builders and official trials, N.D.; Series 4: Launching Records, 1942-1945, Box 1: hulls, N.D., Box 2: hulls, N.D., Box 3: hulls, N.D.; Series 5: Reports, March 1942 to June 1942; Series 6: Ephemera, September 1942 to March 1945 including oversize material, 1943.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Cargo ships
Liberty ships
San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.)