

USS *FORREST SHERMAN*
(DD 931)
Forrest Sherman-Class Destroyers
Reserve Basin, Philadelphia Navy Yard
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER PA-648
HAER PA-648

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

USS *Forrest Sherman* (DD 931)

HAER No. PA-648

Location: Reserve Basin, Philadelphia Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Type of Craft: Destroyer

Builder's Hull No.: 324

Navy Designation: DD 931

Principal Measurements:

Length (oa):	418'-6"
Length (bp):	407'-0"
Beam (molded):	44'-11.5"
Draft (full):	15'-3/8"
Depth:	25'-2"
Displacement (light ship):	2,734 long tons
Displacement (full):	4,916 long tons
Deadweight:	2,182 long tons
Shaft horsepower (design):	70,000
Speed (design):	33 knots
Endurance	4,500 nm at 20 knots

(The listed dimensions are as-built, but it should be noted that draft, displacement, and tonnages were subject to alteration over time as well as variations in measurement.)

Propulsion: Geared steam turbines driving twin screws

Dates of Construction:

Laid down:	October 27, 1953
Launched:	February 5, 1955
Delivered:	November 4, 1955
Commissioned:	November 9, 1955

Designer: U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships

Builder: Bath Iron Works Corporation, Bath, Maine

Original Owner: U.S. Navy

Present Owner: U.S. Navy

Disposition: Slated for scrapping, 2012

Significance: USS *Forrest Sherman* was the lead ship in a class of eighteen destroyers commissioned by the U.S. Navy between 1955 and 1959. These vessels were among the first new warships developed by the navy after World War II, and, due to advances in jet and rocket technology, they were the last all-gun destroyers built for the American military. Designed for anti-aircraft and anti-submarine warfare, the *Forrest Sherman* was deployed across the globe until decommissioned in 1982.

Author: Michael R. Harrison, 2012

Project Information: This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the HAER program. The project was sponsored by the U.S. Navy Inactive Ships Program within NAVSEA 21 (Glen A. Clark, Deputy Program Manager). Todd Croteau, HAER Maritime Program Coordinator, directed the project, and historian Michael R. Harrison wrote the historical reports. Jet Lowe prepared the large-format photographs.

**Related
Documentation:**

For additional information about the *Forrest Sherman*-class destroyers, see the following HAER documentation:

Forrest Sherman-class destroyers, HAER DC-69

USS *Barry* (DD 933), HAER DC-68

USS *Turner Joy* (DD 951), HAER WA-210

Description:

The USS *Forrest Sherman* was the lead ship of a class of eighteen destroyers commissioned by the U.S. Navy between 1955 and 1959. It was built with a steel hull and an aluminum-alloy superstructure, and was propelled by two geared turbine engines driving twin screws. The ship's two firerooms, one for each of the two engine rooms, contained two boilers each, producing 1,200 psi steam and giving the vessel a designed 70,000 shaft horsepower and a designed speed of 33 knots.

The vessel's original armament was installed for anti-aircraft and anti-submarine warfare and included:

- Three 5"/54-caliber Mark 42 single-mount automatic rapid-fire guns
- Two 3"/50-caliber twin-mount Mark 22 anti-aircraft guns
- Two ASW projectors (Hedgehogs)
- Four 21" Mark 25 ASW torpedo tubes
- Two triple 12.75" Mark 32 ASW torpedo tubes

The vessel retained this armament for its entire service life, losing only the 21" torpedo tubes and the forward 3" twin gun mount during an overhaul in 1968.

History:

The Bath Iron Works Corporation in Bath, Maine, built the *Forrest Sherman*. It was laid down October 27, 1953, launched February 5, 1955, delivered November 4, 1955, and commissioned November 9, 1955. The ship was named for Adm. Forrest P. Sherman (1896–1951), a decorated World War II veteran and, at the time of his death, the chief of naval operations. His widow sponsored the ship at its launch.

Upon commissioning, the *Forrest Sherman* spent a few months in shake down training in the Caribbean and along the South African coast. In 1957 and 1958, the ship was deployed in the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific, transiting both the Suez and Panama canals. Succeeding years were similar, and the ship took part in training exercises in various waters alternating with goodwill and recreational port calls, periods of repair and overhaul, and the occasional at-sea rescue. The *Forrest Sherman* did not serve in southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, but was deployed to the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and on the Atlantic.

The *Forrest Sherman* took part in numerous ceremonial duties. It sailed to Washington, D.C., in January 1956 to represent the Atlantic fleet at the inauguration of President Eisenhower, and in 1959 it was one of a number of naval vessels present in Montreal for the dedication of the St. Lawrence Seaway. It then visited inland ports along all five of the Great Lakes.

“FORREST SHERMAN is especially well suited for providing off shore Naval gunfire support to assist Marine amphibious landings,” a “Welcome Aboard” booklet now preserved by the Naval History and Heritage Command proclaimed in 1980,

but she is versatile enough to detect and prosecute submarine contacts, act as a search and rescue unit, or provide screening for a task group. Fleetwide inspections have proven FORREST SHERMAN to be one of the best ships in the U.S. Navy, and our officers and crew take pride in keeping her that way. . . .

The booklet also informed visitors that, as the oldest active destroyer in the fleet and one of the few to retain its original guns, the ship was called “the last of the great gunships.” The 5" main guns, it also revealed, were nicknamed Judge, Jury, and Executioner.

During her 24 years of service [the booklet concluded], FORREST SHERMAN has compiled a distinguished record of 18 major overseas deployments, carrying the American flag to countless ports around the world. She has operated with the navies of over twenty allied nations, helping to maintain trust, understanding, and international teamwork. FORREST SHERMAN has previously been homeported in Newport, Rhode Island and Norfolk, Virginia. She is currently based in Charleston, South Carolina, as a member of Destroyer Squadron Four.

The *Forrest Sherman* was decommissioned November 5, 1982, struck from the Naval Vessel Register July 27, 1990, and classified for disposal. In accordance with navy practice at the time, the vessel was stripped of usable equipment and remaining weapons systems were demilitarized; i.e., they were rendered inoperable through destruction, such as the cutting off of gun barrels and the smashing of glass and electronic components. A navy document summarizes what happened next:

“In January 1993, the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service (DRMS) sold five ships, including ex-Forrest Sherman, to Fore River Shipyard of Quincy, MA, for dismantling. Fore River Shipyard completed the dismantling of one ship but was unwilling to complete the other four as the costs exceeded the scrap revenue. On June 20, 1994, DRMS awarded a contract to N.R. Acquisition Corp. for dismantling the four ships in Wilmington, NC, and the ships were then towed from Quincy, MA, to Wilmington, NC. N.R. Acquisition completed the dismantling of the ships except for ex-Forrest Sherman. On October 1, 1996, DRMS defaulted the sales contract, whereupon title reverted back to the government due to non-performance by N.R. Acquisition and because the contractor’s State-issued

environmental permits were not renewed. The Navy then towed the ship back to the Inactive Ships On-site Maintenance Office (INACTSHIPMAINTO) Philadelphia, PA.”¹

In 2000, the USS *Forrest Sherman* DD-931 Foundation was established to bring the ship to Maryland as a museum. In response to the foundation’s interest, the navy cancelled plans to dispose of the ship through sinking. Instead, the navy put the ship on donation hold in June 2001 and advertised for donation applications in the *Federal Register* on September 11, 2001. The foundation submitted an application in June 2004 that the navy did not in the end approve because it did not name a permanent berth and did not demonstrate that sufficient financing was in hand to restore, operate, and maintain the vessel. In other words, the foundation’s application did not meet the navy’s minimum requirements for ship donation. While trying to work with the navy during 2005, the foundation turned to Congressman Wayne Gilchrist of Maryland and had language inserted into the 2006 Defense Authorization Bill directing the Secretary of the Navy to transfer the ship to the foundation, but even this measure required “receipt of a ship donation application for the transfer of that vessel to that foundation that is satisfactory to the Secretary.”²

The foundation did not submit a revised application that met the navy’s donation requirements but tried unsuccessfully for a number of years to secure a permanent berth for the ship, investigating various places in Maryland (Baltimore, Cambridge, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, and Havre de Grace) as well as Lewes and Wilmington, Delaware. The navy, for its part, maintained the ship on donation hold and re-advertised for donation applications in the *Federal Register* on June 15, 2009. No responses were received. In April 2010, the Secretary of the Navy notified Congress that the ship was to be removed from donation hold and sold for scrap, and the service requested dismantling proposals.³

At this point the foundation filed suit against the government, which forced the navy to reevaluate its December 2009 determination that the ship was not an historic property and therefore not subject to further actions to mitigate its potential loss. The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer agreed with the navy, but the Keeper of the National Register

¹ “Alternatives considered by the Navy for ship disposition [of ex-*Forrest Sherman*],” U.S. Navy report, 2010, http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/InactiveShips/Ship_Disposal/pdf/Ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_Alt.pdf, accessed Jan. 26, 2012.

² “Alternatives considered by the Navy for ship disposition”; Kurt Wagemann, “The Sherman Lives!” *Tin Can Sailor* (Oct./Nov./Dec. 2001), 14; “The Campaign for USS *Forrest Sherman* DD-931,” http://www.ussforrestsherman.org/Site_Proposal.htm, accessed Jan. 26, 2012; Public Law 109-163 (119 Stat. 3126), Jan. 6, 2006, sec. 1015.

³ “Alternatives considered by the Navy for ship disposition”; “Ex-SARATOGA and ex-FORREST SHERMAN Available for Dismantling,” SEA 21 Navy Inactive Ships Program News Room, http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/InactiveShips/InactiveShips_News.aspx, accessed Jan. 26, 2012.

did not. This triggered a series of consultation meetings with the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The result was a March 2011 agreement whereby the navy gave the foundation another chance to meet the donation requirements and then agreed to specific mitigation steps should the ship again be put up for scrap. Among these steps was stipulated the production of HAER documentation of the *Forrest Sherman*-class destroyers, of which this report forms a part.⁴

The foundation did not meet the deadlines for funding and berthing stipulated in the agreement, and the navy once again redesignated the ship for dismantling. The *ex-Forrest Sherman* will be scrapped by 2013.

⁴ "NHPA Consultation on Disposal of *ex-Forrest Sherman*," SEA 21 Navy Inactive Ships Program News Release (http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/Ship_Disposal/Forrest_Sherman_09162010.aspx); National Register of Historic Places, Determination of Eligibility Notification, Aug. 19, 2010 ([http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/pdf/10-Ser_NA-Determination_of_Eligibility_Notification_for_ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_\(DD931\)_DTD_19_Aug_2010.pdf](http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/pdf/10-Ser_NA-Determination_of_Eligibility_Notification_for_ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_(DD931)_DTD_19_Aug_2010.pdf)); Minutes of National Historic Preservation Act Consultation related to USS *Forrest Sherman* DD-931 Foundation v. US, et al., Oct. 22, 2010 (http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/Ship_Disposal/pdf/MiniScript_102210_meeting.PDF); Minutes of Section 106 Consultation Meeting No. 2, Nov. 22, 2010 (http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/Ship_Disposal/pdf/Ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_MEETING_MINUTES_05JAN_Final.pdf); Minutes of Section 106 Consultation Meeting No. 3, Jan. 13, 2011 ([http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/pdf/Ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_Consultation_Meeting_13_Jan_2011_\(2\)_2.pdf](http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/pdf/Ex-FORREST_SHERMAN_Consultation_Meeting_13_Jan_2011_(2)_2.pdf)); Memorandum of Agreement, Mar. 2, 2010 (http://www.navsea.navy.mil/teamships/Inactiveships/Ship_Disposal/pdf/pa_navy_disposal_of_ex-forrest_sherman_moa_march_2011.pdf), all accessed Jan. 26, 2012.

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