



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Maritime  
Administration

Administrator

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Merchant Marine Veteran:

Pursuant to the January 19, 1988, official conferment of veteran status on members of the American merchant marine, who served aboard oceangoing merchant ships in World War II, I am pleased to provide you with your wartime Certificate of Service. This long overdue recognition was well-earned. The officers and crews played a key role in transporting the troops and war material that enabled United States and Allied Forces to turn the tide of victory against the Axis powers.

In providing this vital wartime service, the American merchant marine paid a heavy toll. President George Bush acknowledged the merchant marine's contribution in his 1989 National Maritime Day Proclamation when he stated, "In this century, their support has been crucial--and their sacrifices heroic--in many armed conflicts." During World War II alone, despite enemy attacks which sank more than 700 U.S.-flag merchant ships and claimed the lives of more than 6,000 civilian seafarers, they transported the troops and kept open the supply lines that led ultimately to victory." U.S. merchant seamen died as a result of enemy attacks at a rate that proportionately exceeded all branches of our armed services, with the single exception of the United States Marine Corps. Untold thousands of additional seafarers were wounded or injured in these attacks, and nearly 600 were made prisoners of war.

We in the Department of Transportation and the Maritime Administration staunchly supported the efforts to provide veteran status for World War II seafarers.

The Honorable Discharge and Form DD 214, which you have received from the U.S. Coast Guard or the Department of the Army, may entitle you to certain benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). You should contact your nearest VA office to determine what benefits you may be entitled to receive.

Sincerely,

CAPTAIN WARREN G. LEBACK  
Maritime Administrator

Enclosure