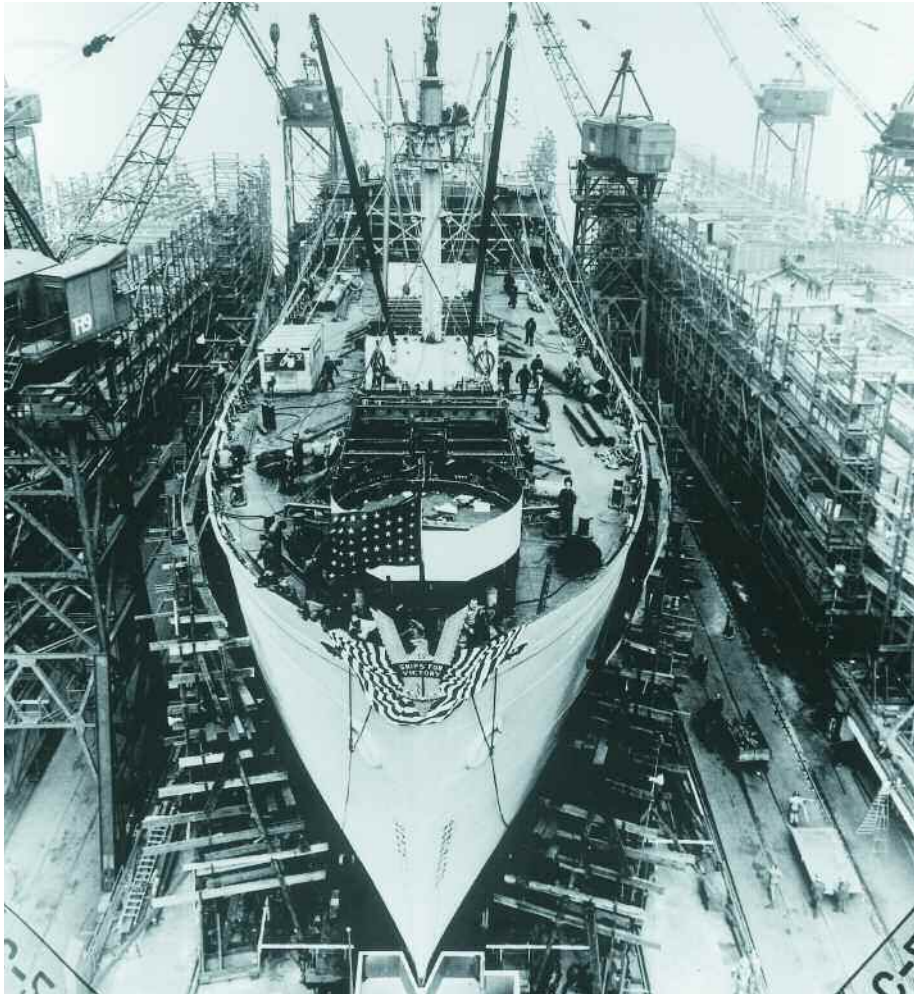


Liberty Ships: Union Built



Marine and Shipbuilding Workers union members (IUMSWA) at Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard in Baltimore, MD, left, built the Liberty Ship John W. Brown in 1942. The IUMSWA merged with the IAM in 1988.

only the SS *John W. Brown* and the SS *Jeremiah O'Brien* remain operational today. Moored in Baltimore Harbor where it was launched on Labor Day, 1942, the *John W. Brown* holds added significance for union members. It bears the name of labor leader *John W. Brown*, who helped organize Local 4 of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA) at Bath Iron Works in Bath, ME.

As a union organizer at the turn of the century, Brown personally witnessed many of labor's early struggles, including the infamous 1914 massacre of striking coal miners in Ludlow, CO. The IUMSWA went on to merge with the IAM in 1988.

History Comes Alive

"Standing on the rail of the *John W. Brown* today and feeling its massive steam engine come to life is to have a taste of what so many servicemen and women felt as they embarked for distant and dangerous shores," said Eastern Territory General Vice President Lynn D. Tucker, Jr., who presented

Labor's handiwork can be found on every page of our nation's history. During World War II, union workers built the great fleet of Liberty ships, cargo freighters turned out at breakneck speed that became an enduring symbol of this country's industrial capacity.

Known as the "cargo-carrying key to the allied victory," Liberty ships carried two-thirds of all supplies leaving U.S. shores during World War II. The 441-foot freighters were a common

sight and a frequent target from the North Atlantic to the South Pacific.

Before the war ended in 1945, more than 200 Liberty ships were sunk by enemy planes, ships, submarines and shore batteries. Nearly 7,000 American Merchant Seamen, all volunteers, lost their lives in addition to 1,801 Naval Armed Guard gunners who manned the ship's slender defensive armaments.

Of the 2,710 Liberty ships built at 18 shipyards between 1941 and 1945,

to Last

Project Liberty Ship with a \$5,000 donation on behalf of the IAM. Project Liberty Ship (www.liberty-ship.com) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the *SS John W. Brown* as a memorial to the men and women who built, sailed and defended the Liberty fleet.

Each year, hundreds of veterans, students and families sign up for one of several educational voyages the historic vessel makes on the Chesapeake Bay. This year, the *Brown* also steamed north to Portland, ME to take part in ceremonies honoring New England's union shipbuilders who built 244 of the legendary Liberty ships between 1941 and 1945.

The speed at which Liberty ships were built remains a testament to the motivation and productivity



The John W. Brown is one of only two World War II Liberty ships still in operation. Named after Shipbuilding Workers' labor leader John W. Brown, the ship conducts several trips each year on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay to keep alive the legacy of those who built and those who sailed these historic ships.

of American workers. Members of IUMSWA Local 43 at Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard in Baltimore completed construction of the *Brown* in 41 days.

The speed record for building a Liberty ship belongs to the men and women who launched the *SS Robert G. Peary* from a Richmond, CA, shipyard in a remarkable four days, 15.5 hours after her keel was laid. The honor belongs to both men

and women shipbuilders. Of the 700,000 U.S. shipbuilders in 1943, thirty percent were women.

The *John W. Brown* made 13 wartime voyages across the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea and took part in the 1944 invasion of Southern France.

After the war, the *Brown* was loaned to the City of New York, where it served as the nation's only floating maritime high school from 1946 to 1982 before being acquired in 1988 by the volunteers of Project Liberty Ship who restored it to its original configuration.



*Eastern Territory GVP Lynn D. Tucker Jr., right, presents a donation to Captain Jeffrey Moore, left, of Project Liberty Ship that will help preserve the union-built Liberty Ship *John W. Brown*.*