

Basic Detail Report



00009246

Title

Signalman, United States Maritime Service

Date

1939 - 1945

Medium

Cotton

Dimensions

Overall: 120 x 97 mm

Name

Insignia

History

The United States Maritime Service (USMS) formed in 1938 as a result of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. The objective of the USMS was to train personnel of the United States Merchant Marine (USMM) in seaman-ship and shipboard duties. The USMM was, and remains today, made up of vessels that engaged in the transportation of passengers and cargo in foreign and domestic trade. The USMS trained officer candidates and seamen necessary for the manning of a merchant vessel, including radio operators, cooks, firemen, water-tenders and oilers. The USMS was administered by the United States Coast Guard until 1942 when it was turned over to the War Shipping Administration. While the United States Merchant Marines Reserve is part of the US Naval Reserve, the USMS existed as a non-military organisation. During World War II, Allied merchant shipping sustained grievous losses along the North Atlantic, Mediterranean and Murmansk convoy routes as a result of mines, submarine, armed raider and aircraft attacks. In 1941 the arming of American merchant ships was approved, and the USMS set up training stations at gunnery schools in Australia and other Allied nations. By combining Allied mercantile convoys and arming their ships, merchant mariners had a greater chance at delivering the supplies, equipment and troops that were vital to the war effort. Many of the USMM ships acted as auxiliary vessels for the US Navy along with United States Army Transport Service, operating from Australia to the Pacific Islands and the United States of America. In 1954 the United States Maritime Service training bases were disbanded and the mariners released from duty. Today the service remains as a voluntary organisation under the authority of the Maritime Administration of the US Department of Transportation.