



**National Park Service On-site Integrity Review - USS Forrest Sherman (DD 931)**

**Reviewer:** Paul Loether, Chief, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks  8/18/10

**Date:** Monday, August 9, 2010

**Location:** NAVSEA Inactive Ship Facility (former Philadelphia Naval Shipyard), Philadelphia

**Background:** Designed by the marine architectural firm Gibbs and Cox, and built by the Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, *USS Forrest Sherman* (DD 931) is the lead ship in a class of 18 destroyers commissioned by the US Navy between 1955 and 1959. One of four of her class still surviving, *Forrest Sherman* was commissioned in November 1955 and decommissioned in November 1982. Her length is 418 feet, her beam 45 feet. As built she drew 20 feet (later increased to 22 feet). At full load, her displacement was eventually rated at 4,600 tons. The ship's propulsion plant includes four, 1200-psi Babcock and Wilcox boilers, two geared GE steam turbines generating 70,000 shaft horsepower, and two propeller shafts. Her rated top speed was 32.5 knots. Her main armament consists of three, fully automatic Mk-42 5-inch/54 caliber guns in single turrets (one fore and two aft). *Forrest Sherman's* were the last U.S. Navy destroyer class designed and originally built entirely as gun (vs. gun-missile or missile only) ships.

**Comments:** The site visit was undertaken to: a) review first-hand the historic integrity of *USS Forrest Sherman*, and b) visually confirm that the ship's physical status remains essentially consistent with the description provided in "Vessel Survey Report 1065," a comprehensive and detailed physical assessment of *Forrest Sherman* that was completed in February, 2004, by Joseph W. Lombardy, Marine Surveyor and Consultant for Ocean Technical Services (OTS) of Manchester Massachusetts (copy attached).

On the date of this site visit one of *Forrest Sherman's* three surviving sister ships, the National Historic Landmark (NHL) *USS Edson* (DD 946), was fortuitously tied up alongside. The presence of *Edson*, the historic exterior features of which appeared to be in very, very good condition, and which as an NHL maintains a high level of historic integrity, provided an excellent basis for a topside comparative visual analysis of both the condition and integrity of *Forrest Sherman*.

Topside, the condition of *Forrest Sherman* generally continues to seem consistent with the descriptions provided 2004 OTS survey. Paint finishes generally range from degraded to deteriorated. However, the continued poor paint conditions still do not appear to significantly impact the basically good integrity of the ship's principal historic hull/armament/weather deck/superstructure/foremast fabric and features. The only truly notable, albeit limited, loss in exterior integrity continues to be related to the ship's main armament. While the turret-like shields for *Forrest Sherman's* single fore and two aft Mk 42 5-inch batteries continue to remain intact, the gun tubes for all three were cut off at a point approximately halfway between muzzle and mount; the cut off portions of each tube currently lay on the deck in front of each mounts shield at the time the ship was "demilitarized," many years ago. (Until fairly recently, it was common for a warship to have its guns disabled in this manner as part of the demilitarization process.)

As with the exterior, the condition and integrity of interior spaces, features, and fabric throughout *Forrest Sherman* generally appear substantially unchanged since completion of the 2004 OTS report – paint is consistently in degraded or deteriorated condition; interior plan, features, and fabric, including major features such as the hull, propulsion equipment, fire-control and navigation systems as well as their control/monitoring screens, all appear to remain substantially intact.

**Conclusion:** While *Forrest Sherman's* overall condition is appears to be fair in comparison with the standard set by *Edson*, despite having her Mark 42 gun barrels cut, the bulk of the *Forrest Sherman's* historic fabric and features remain more than intact enough for the ship for them to clearly "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of construction" of her class. *Forrest Sherman* is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register under *Criterion C*.