

The SS United States Trust

LIBERTY BELL TO BE SOLD FOR SCRAP?

A National Treasure – an icon of American freedom and independence – may soon be forever lost as the value of scrap metal has become seemingly greater than Americans' pride and patriotism.



Philadelphia, PA - An historic national treasure may soon be shipped from the city of brotherly love to an overseas scrap merchant. No, the mammoth metal American symbol at risk is not the famously fractured Liberty Bell but the lamentably less remembered marvel of maritime ingenuity moored moments away on the Delaware River: the luxury ocean liner *SS United States*.

Built in the shipyards of Newport News, Virginia and christened June 23, 1951, "The Big U" continues to hold the title of fastest passenger liner in the world. The *United States* set the world speed record on her maiden crossing of the Atlantic in July 1952. This was not top speed, though, as that information was classified Top Secret! Suffice it say this ocean greyhound could outrun most modern cruise ships in reverse!

America's Ship of State was an instant favorite with travelers from around the globe. The passenger list included such notables as John Wayne, Walt Disney, Cary Grant, Gary Cooper, Bob Hope, Duke Ellington, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Salvador Dali, President Harry Truman and even a young Bill Clinton. But there was more to this luxury liner than speedy service!

Conceived after World War II when the Cold War evoked the specter of a new world conflict, the *SS United States* served not only the Atlantic passenger trade but the American Navy. Mindful of the military roles previously played by Britain's *Queen Mary* & *Queen Elizabeth* the *United States* could be converted into a 15,000 troop transport within a matter of mere days.

Once called to action the *United States* could land 15,000 troops anywhere in the world within ten days. Though never called into military service, President John F. Kennedy ordered her to stand ready to respond to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

In 1969 the *SS United States* went into early retirement, the victim of rising fuel costs and the Jet Age. Designed to be virtually fire proof she was laden with asbestos; state of the art at the time but requiring the removal of her interiors in the 1990's. In 2003 she was purchased for conversion into a cruise ship, plans that have since been abandoned. Her future is now uncertain.

Will patriotic Americans take action in time to rescue this awesome example of the nation's excellence and ingenuity?

How would you react if you saw that headline? Would you take immediate action to save a national historic treasure? The *SS United States* Trust is building an endowment to purchase and maintain in perpetuity this amazing paradigm of American creativity, ingenuity and national pride



SS *United States* model
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