

A History of the USS Calvert: Research notes for the period February 26, 1947 to August 1950, inactive reserve fleet

Year	Month	Day	Location	Historical Details	Sources, Notes
Introduction					
This short document contains research notes covering the USS Calvert's assignment to Inactive Duty in the Atlantic Reserve Fleet, Norfolk Group. Additional research notes are provided regarding the preparation and maintenance of WWII-era ships during inactive duty status in a reserve fleet.					
1947	February	26	Portsmouth/ Norfolk, VA area	<p>The USS Calvert is decommissioned, February 26, 1947</p> <p>1) "On 26 February 1947, the Calvert's commission pennant was hauled down and the remaining crew departed." 2) "USS Calvert placed out of commission at 1045 on this date." Signed C.E. Swenson, LCDR, US Navy, Executive Officer</p>	<p>1) Cullen, page 19 2) USS Calvert personnel diary, February 26, 1947</p>
February 1947 - August 1950			Portsmouth/ Norfolk, VA area (possibly James River Fleet location)	<p>The USS Calvert assigned to Inactive Reserve Status, Norfolk Group, Atlantic Reserve Fleet</p> <p>"The USS Calvert was placed in the Norfolk Group of the Sixteenth Fleet." Note: The Norfolk Group of the Sixteenth Fleet was known later as the Atlantic Reserve Fleet, James River Fleet, aka, Ghost Fleet.</p>	Cullen, page 19

Research notes: Methods of ship preservation for U.S. Naval ships in reserve fleets

Online Video - Mothball Fleet: Readiness and Care of Vessels in Inactive Status

1945 US Navy Training Film MN-5040a
Video at online: <https://vimeo.com/383781896>
Two video stills

Mothball Fleet: "Readiness and Care of Vessels in Inactive Status" 1945 US Navy Training Film MN-5040a
Jeff Quitney Channel, Vimeo.com | Quickfound.net



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"After victory in World War II, the United States Navy initiated a complex process to migrate portions of its massive armada into inactive status. This 1945 documentary explains the proper methodology for preparing a warship for the Reserve Fleet.

Originally a public domain film from the US Navy, slightly cropped to remove uneven edges, with the aspect ratio corrected, and one-pass brightness-contrast-color correction & mild video noise reduction applied.

The soundtrack was also processed with volume normalization, noise reduction, clipping reduction, and/or equalization (the resulting sound, though not perfect, is far less noisy than the original)."

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy_reserve_fleets | Wikipedia license: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/

Mothball Fleet: "Readiness and Care of Vessels in Inactive Status" 1945 US Navy Training Film MN-5040a
 Jeff Quitney Channel, Vimeo.com | Quickfound.net

"The United States Navy maintains a number of its ships as part of a reserve fleet, often called the "Mothball Fleet". While the details of the maintenance activity have changed several times, the basics are constant: keep the ships afloat and sufficiently working as to be reactivated quickly in an emergency.

In some cases (for instance, at the outset of the Korean War), many ships were successfully reactivated at a considerable savings in time and money. The usual fate of ships in the reserve fleet, though, is to become too old and obsolete to be of any use, at which point they are sold for scrapping or are scuttled in weapons tests."

Note: The USS Calvert was re-activated and re-commissioned in October 1950 shortly following the start of the Korean conflict. She escaped the "usual fate" as described above.

Ship preservation methods, further described

The following details are from an issue of The Log, 1946, and provides an explanation of the process of preparing U.S. Naval ships going into reserve status and maintaining low humidity conditions while afloat and exposed to varying weather conditions over an extended period of time.

Placing Our Reserve Navy In Mothballs, The Log, Volume 41, June 1946, p69

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"With the end of World War II preservation measures to implement the US Navy's "Keep the Fleet" program are not only well defined but are already being applied. ... Some 2,204 vessels of the US Navy will be inactivated and kept in readiness for emergencies.

Placing Our Reserve Navy In Mothballs, The Log, Volume 41, June 1946, p69

The same basic principles of dehumidifying the holds of cargo ships to prevent cargo and hull damage, is now being applied to preserve the Navy's inactive fleet from rust below decks, keeping it ready for immediate action. Ships are being protected by employing scientific means of dehumidification, painting, thin film rust preventative compound application, and tight packaging. The speed at which the ship so preserved can be returned to active status has been a primary consideration in the selection of preservation methods. Through these procedures, both quick and inexpensive, it is certain that our Navy will remain in an excellent condition of readiness for many years."

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				"Upon receipt of orders to the Inactive Fleet, the ship proceeds immediately with preservation measures. Upon reporting, all urgent repairs will be accomplished and the ship will be dry docked to apply new anti-fouling paint and to have other essential underwater work undertaken. There is an immediate one third reduction of war time complement by detaching the special radar, communications and gunnery ratings.	
				Preliminary preservation measures, consisting of cleaning and drying the ship's hull and machinery, will be accomplished and thin film rust preventative compounds applied. The equipment is ready for immediate use without the removal of preservatives. Although there are very few vermin, germs and insects on naval vessels, prior to final closure, the ship is completely fumigated. During these initial preparations the dehumidification equipment is installed according to plan and made ready to operate. The last stage before the ships goes under dehumidification is to seal the envelope from the sea and weather and to open doors and hatches as needed for the dry air flow. However, the water tight integrity of the ship is maintained at all times. Although it is desirable to make the topside as tight as practicable, it is not essential that the ship be made pressure tight to secure good economy of operation; water tightness however is absolutely imperative but easy of attainment."	Placing Our Reserve Navy In Mothballs, The Log, Volume 41, June 1946, p77
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				"The problem presented in preservation of a ship contains the following rather elementary factors: 1. Moisture and atmospheric conditions cause corrosion of metals, mold, mildew and general deterioration of equipment and materials aboard. 2. The removal of equipment and materials for storage ashore is expensive and storage offers no protection against deterioration unless adequately treated. 3 Adequately closing a ship's hull provides an excellent vapor and water barrier and quantities of atmospheric moisture admitted by breathing and infiltration can thus be controlled. 4. Preservation by means of coatings alone is not sufficient.	Placing Our Reserve Navy In Mothballs, The Log, Volume 41, June 1946, p77
				The solution most immediately apparent in analyzing these factors is that of using the ship as a storehouse for all its own required equipment. The ship must be made as tight as economically practicable against the admission of outside air and moisture. The atmosphere within should then be sustained at a relative humidity of 30% or less, since at this point it has been determined that general deterioration is inhibited for an indefinite period."	
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				"Mothball ship, rigged against time and wet weather with Cargocaire dehumidification units. Navy ships from tugs to battlewagons will be laid up by a new method using dehumidification machines to stop ruse and general moisture damage. Fire mains will be used as ducts to circulate dry air to the spaces from the dehumidifier. Air returning through the spaces to the Cargocaire unit picks up any moist air pockets and reduces the dew point. Additional flexible tubing covers sections not reached by fire mains. The Recorder-Controller watches over all, averaging humidity in various sections of the ship, and switching dehumidification unit on and off according to humidity levels."	Placing Our Reserve Navy In Mothballs, The Log, Volume 41, June 1946, p77, p90
				"Dehumidification is accomplished both dynamically and statically. The process of dehumidification is divided into two stages, namely: initial drying and maintenance drying."	
				"In conclusion, it can be said that dehumidification as carried out by the above procedure, is an economical means of preserving a costly investment in valuable ships. The installed equipment cost is less than one cent per cubic foot of ships volume in the majority of cases."	
End of research notes for the period February 27, 1947 to August 1950					