

National Register Eligibility Assessment
Vessel: Tug *TD-66*, ex-*Chilkat* (YTB-510), ex-YTM-773



***Chilkat* (YTB-510), assisting the U.S. Navy prepare for Operation HIGHJUMP in 1946, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Museum/Naval Aviation Museum, Photo No. 1986.056.001.016.**

Vessel History

Commercial Iron Works, in Portland Oregon built *TD-66*, for the U.S. Navy and named the tug *Chilkat* (YTB-510), (ex-YTM-773). *Chilkat* is a Tlingit¹ word translated to “Storehouses of Salmon.”² *Chilkat* was launched in August 1945 and delivered to the U.S. Navy in San Diego, CA in March 1946. It was part of the Cholocco class (Large Yard Tug).

The tug served its entire career at the 11th Naval District in San Diego. Between August 1946 and February 1947, the navy worked to establish an Antarctic research base known as Little America IV. The plan was code named Operation HIGHJUMP, officially titled, the United States Navy Antarctic Developments Program, 1946–1947. The operation included 4,700 men, 13 ships and 33 aircraft.³ *Chilkat* assisted the movement of ships for this operation while at Naval District 11.

¹ The Tlingits are the northernmost nation of the Northwest Coast peoples, who range from southern Alaska to the coast of Oregon.

² Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. *Chilkat*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/c/chilkat.html>. Accessed 6-9-22. <https://www.navsource.org/archives/14/09510.htm>. Accessed 6-9-22.

³ Accessed 6-9-22. <https://www.navsource.org/archives/14/09510.htm>. Accessed 6-9-22.

Chilkat was placed in reserve in August 1947 due to the Nation's overabundance of war materiel. Many tugs were sold to public entities. However, the navy reactivated *Chilkat* in 1961 as part of the navy's two-pronged program to convert previously built tugs and build new ones. Twenty WWII Large Harbor Tug (YTB) tugs, 11 of them of the Cholocco class, including *Chilkat*, were converted and redesignated as District Harbor Tug, Medium (YTM).⁴ In March 1967, the navy redesignated *Chilkat* as YTM-773. The navy removed it from service sometime after that before striking it from the Naval Vessel Register and transferring title to the Maritime Administration (MARAD) on May 1, 1977.⁵



TD-66 at MARAD's Suisan Bay Reserve Fleet in 2022. Maritime Administration photo.

Maritime Administration

On May 1, 1977, the navy transferred title of YTM-773 to the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and MARAD redesignated the tug *TD-66* (Tug Diesel-66). *TD-66* has served MARAD's Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet (SBRF), Benicia, CA since then.

TD-66 was one of three ex-U.S. Navy YTM's that SBRF utilized for intra-fleet ship movements, assisting with ship arrivals and departures, and for ship mooring maintenance. *TD-66* remained in service until 1995, being replaced by a larger, more powerful YTB.⁶

⁴ "Defense Plant Corporation," *Shipbuildinghistory.com*, published June 10, 2013, Accessed November 16, 2021, <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/smallships/armydp.htm>; *Merchant Vessels of the United States* (Washington: United States Coast Guard, 1948), 565.

⁵ <https://www.nvr.navy.mil>

⁶ J. Pecoraro, Fleet Superintendent, SBRF fleet craft inventory records.

Description/Characteristics of Vessel Type

Type:	TD (Tug Diesel)
Hull Number:	241
Previous Names:	<i>Chilkat</i> , YTB-510, YTM-773
Builder:	Commercial Iron Works, Portland, OR
Year:	1946
Sister Ships:	YT-759-764 and YT-774-779 ⁷
Location:	Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, Benicia, CA
Length:	100 ft.
Beam:	28 ft.
Draft:	9 ft. 7 inches
Displacement:	260 LT
Armament:	Two 50-caliber deck guns
Propulsion:	Diesel, single screw
Horsepower:	1250 horsepower
Crew:	10 ⁸

TD-66 is a 100-foot-long steel hulled harbor tug built for the U.S. Navy in 1945. These tugs were designed for use in harbors and inner coastal waters. Each featured two Enterprise J-Series diesel engines driving a single screw through a Morse Train Marine Transmission and clutch, and a single dry smokestack amidship. Auxiliaries include two Detroit 6-71 series diesel engines driving General Electric 220 V DC 60 Kw generators.⁹

This class of tug was navigated from an enclosed pilot house and a centrally mounted helm. The pilot house is located on the upper most level of a double deck superstructure.

The interior ladder aft of the pilot house leads down to the interior main deck level; the engineer's stateroom is located on the port side of the main deck; starboard is the master's stateroom; and aft is the mess area and galley. Next to the ladder leading from the pilot house, another ladder leads down to the crew berthing area. Access to the engine room is down the ladder adjacent to the mess area.

An exterior ladder in front is forward of the pilot house and leads from the upper deck down to the bow. The interior main deck level was accessed through three watertight doors: one aft, one port side and one starboard side. The port and starboard doors featured portholes.

⁷ <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/smallships/yt3.htm>. Accessed 7-7-22. Based on this source there were 11 Cholocco class tugs built and all 11 were converted to YTM's in the Navy's conversion program in the 1960s.

⁸ Email from Joe Pecoraro, Fleet Superintendent, Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet to Barbara Voulgaris, MARAD historian, 6-2-22. <https://www.navsource.org/archives/14/09510.htm>. Accessed 6-9-22.

⁹ Email from Joe Pecoraro, Fleet Superintendent, Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet to Barbara Voulgaris, MARAD historian, 6-2-22.



TB-66 pilot house at MARAD's Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet in 2022. Maritime Administration photo.

Statement of Significance

TD-66 was one of thousands of medium powered harbor tugs built during or immediately after World War II, and one of eleven 100-foot tugs specifically built for the U.S. Navy. While *TD-66* was subject to wartime procurement and construction, it did not serve a noteworthy role in any armed conflict. The tug moved ships from San Diego that were participating in Operation HIGHJUMP, it never traveled in the Antarctic. The bulk of *TD-66's* lifetime was spent at the SBRF where it was used to move vessels entirely within the confines of inner coastal waters.

Historical Integrity

TD-66 is virtually original. MARAD has made no significant changes to the hull and structure; deck winches and deck equipment, the main engines and reduction gear, and the wheelhouse outfit (helm, engine controls and indicators, rudder angle indicator, and binnacle) appear to be original to at least the point of the U.S. Navy's conversion in 1967. The only real changes were internal sometime before 1991, stripping of the crew berths below, and stripping of the mess room table and chairs.



***TD-66* mess area in 2022 at MARAD's Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet. Maritime Administration photo.**

National Register Eligibility Statement

TD-66 was built 77 years-ago but does not possess sufficient historical integrity or importance that would merit listing on the National Register of Historic Places. *TD-66* operated almost exclusively within the 11th Naval District in San Diego, and at MARAD's SBRF where it was used as a tug and launch to service reserve fleet vessels. In addition, the U.S. Navy's Cholocco class tug was not an exceptional or significant design. These tugs were used almost exclusively as domestic harbor tugs for the navy, and many were later sold to private industry. These tugs did not play a significant role in U.S. Navy history and did not contribute to a substantial advancement in maritime technology.

Date: 2 February 2023

Determination: Not Eligible

Sources

Secondary Sources

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