

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 496

H.P. 375 House of Representatives, February 23, 1987  
Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government  
suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative VOSE of Eastport.

Cosponsored by Representative SCARPINO of St. George and  
Senator CLARK of Cumberland.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Establish Maine Merchant Marine  
Day.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as  
follows:

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §126 is enacted to read:

§126. Maine Merchant Marine Day

The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation  
setting aside May 22nd as Maine Merchant Marine Day.  
The proclamation shall invite and urge the people of  
the State to observe the day in schools and other  
suitable places with appropriate ceremony and study.  
The Maine Maritime Academy and the Department of Edu-  
cational and Cultural Services may make appropriate  
information available to the people and the schools  
within the limits of their budgets.



1 For deeds of heroism, the merchant mariners in  
2 World War II were awarded 145 Distinguished Service  
3 Medals and 426 Meritorius Service Medals. Merchant  
4 seamen were awarded 115,000 Merchant Marine Combat  
5 Bars, indicating that their ships were directly en-  
6 gaged in action with the enemy. Merchant ships in  
7 World War II carried naval guns which were manned by  
8 the men of the Naval Armed Guard assisted by the mer-  
9 chant crew.

10 The United States merchant fleet in World War II  
11 carried over 3/4 of all war material going from the  
12 United States to overseas theaters. They brought to  
13 America the raw materials which sustained our defense  
14 production. They continued their duty after the war,  
15 when the service worked to provide relief to areas  
16 devastated by the war, including a monthly average of  
17 1,500,000 tons of coal, 800,000 tons of grain and  
18 200,000 tons of flour.

19 The first war loss of World War II occurred on  
20 November 8, 1940, and did not end until after the  
21 surrender of Japan. In all of World War II, 673  
22 United States merchant ships were lost and over 130  
23 were damaged. More than 6,700 merchant seamen in  
24 World War II died at sea, including 56 men from  
25 Maine. More than 600 seamen were captured and made  
26 prisoners of war, including 3 from Maine, one of whom  
27 died while a prisoner of the Japanese.

28 The members of the Merchant Marine were all  
29 volunteers, who manned the "bridge of ships" to  
30 transport men and materials through enemy contested  
31 waters. The Merchant Marine stands in heroic stature  
32 with the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the  
33 Coast Guard in the role it played toward the winning  
34 of World War II.

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