

**COMPANY:**

Military Sealift Command,  
USA

**YARD INFORMATION:**

Rheinstahl Nordseewerke  
Emden (Germany) 431

**DEMOLITION:**



New Orleans 5/9/2011 © S. Wiedner

**BASIC DATA:**

Launched: April 1, 1973  
 Delivered to Sea-Land Services, Inc., Port Elizabeth, N.J.:  
 August 1, 1973  
 Purchased by the Navy: January 5, 1982  
 Conversion started: February 1, 1984  
 Delivered: November 13, 1985  
 Builder: Rheinstahl Nordseewerke, Emden, West Germany  
 Conversion yard: Avondale Shipyards, New Orleans, LA  
 Propulsion system: two Foster-Wheeler boilers, 875 psi  
 (61.6kg/cm<sup>2</sup>); 9500F (5100C) and two GE MST-19 steam  
 turbines; 120,000 hp (89.5 MW)  
 Propellers: two  
 Length: 946.2 feet (288.4 meters)  
 Beam: 105.6 feet (32.2 meters)

Draft: 36.4 feet (11.1 meters)  
 Displacement: approx. 55,355 tons full load  
 Speed: 33 knots  
 Aircraft: helicopter landing area only  
 Armament: none  
 Capacity: more than 700 Army vehicles (including tanks,  
 trucks, and helicopters)  
 Crew: 43 civilians, 12 military technicians (fully operational);  
 18 civilians (reduced operating status)  
 Homeport: Marrerro, LA  
 (<http://navysite.de/akr/akr291.htm>)

**OWNER & FLAG HISTORY:**

**EX-NAMES:**

SEA-LAND FINANCE	1973-82	Sea-Land Services, Inc., USA
ALTAIR	1982-	Military Sealift Command, USA

#### **GENERAL VESSEL INFORMATION:**

**ALTAIR is the fifth ALGOL - class fast sealift ship.** Originally **built** in West Germany **in 1973 as SEA-LAND FINANCE** for Sea-Land Services, Inc., Port Elizabeth, N.J., the ship was **purchased by the Navy in 1982 and converted**. The cargo hold was redesigned into a series of decks connected by ramps so that vehicles can now be driven in and out of storage areas for rapid loading and unloading. Four cranes were installed - twin cranes amidships capable of lifting 35 long tons and twin cranes aft capable of lifting 50 long tons. The **ALTAIR was delivered to the Military Sealift Command in 1985.**

SS ALTAIR was put to the test during Operation Desert Storm. In August 1990, she was the second fast sealift ship (FSS) to reach Saudi Arabia from Savannah, GA with elements of the 24th Infantry Division, responding to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. From the beginning to the end of the operation, ALTAIR made nine round trips. In December 1993, ALTAIR was activated to carry equipment for Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. The SS ALTAIR is the second ship in the Navy to bear the name.

(<http://navysite.de/akr/akr291.htm>)

SS Altair (T-AKR 291) is an Algol class vehicle cargo ship that is currently maintained by the United States Maritime Administration as part of the Ready Reserve Force (RRF). She was built by Rheinstahl Nordseewerke in Emden, West Germany, for Sea-Land Service, Inc. and named SS Sea-Land Finance.[1] Due to her high operating cost, she was sold to the United States Navy on 5 January 1982 as USNS Altair (T-AK-291).[2]

Conversion began on 28 July 1984 at Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her cargo hold was redesigned into a series of decks connected by ramps so vehicles can be driven into and out of the cargo hold for fast loading and unloading. She was also fitted with two sets of two cranes; one set located at midship capable of lifting 35 tons, and another set located aft capable of lifting 50 tons.[1] She was delivered to the Military Sealift Command on 13 November 1985 as USNS Altair (T-AKR 291).[3]

When not active, Altair is kept in reduced operating status due to her high operating cost. If needed, she can be activated and ready to sail in 96 hours.[4] Altair took part in the Persian Gulf War in 1990. Along with the other seven Algol class cargo ships, she transported 14 percent of all cargo delivered between the United States and Saudi Arabia during and after the war.[5]

On 1 October 2007, Altair was transferred to the United States Maritime Administration. On 1 October 2008, she was transferred to the Ready Reserve Force, losing her USNS designation.[5][6] If activated, Altair will report to the Military Sealift Command.[2]

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS\\_Altair\\_\(T-AKR-291\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Altair_(T-AKR-291)))

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