

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Sergeant Floyd  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number Mile marker 730, Missouri River  not for publication  
city, town Sioux City  vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Woodbury code 193 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation-Water RelatedGovernment-Public Works

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Museum

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)N/A

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/Awalls N/AN/Aroof N/Aother N/A

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The former U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey and towboat Sergeant Floyd is a dry-berthed historic museum vessel displayed since 1983 in an excavated and diked boat basin on the banks of the Missouri River at mile marker 730 in Sioux City, Iowa. Owned by Sioux City and operated by the office of the City Manager, Sergeant Floyd is currently undergoing restoration.

**Sergeant Floyd as Built and Maintained**

As built in 1932, Sergeant Floyd is a steel-hulled, twin-screwed boat with a steel and wood superstructure. Originally riveted, the hull later underwent welded repair and replacement. Sergeant Floyd is 138.4 feet in length with a 30-foot beam, a 5.6-foot depth of hold, a draft fully loaded of 3.9 feet, a height of approximately 37 feet and displaces 306 tons. [1] Sergeant Floyd was designed and built as a typical sharp-bowed towboat with a shallow, oblong hull with longitudinal and transverse bulkheads and a hogging frame to strengthen the vessel and reinforce the bottom in the event of grounding on a shoal or sandbar. [2]

The riveted steel decks and lower portions of the superstructure support a large wooden house that covers much of the hull. The house is a three-level structure. The upper level, or boat deck, was divided into two major areas, the high pilothouse with a large house with cabins for the master, pilot, and radio operator were forward; aft was the open deck with the boats slung on davits. The next level, that of the Texas deck, housed an observation room forward, five double-berth staterooms amidships and the officers' mess aft. On the main deck a heavy towing bitt is sited forward near the bow with a capstan in a clear section of deck just behind. The cabin extends quite far forward and housed a crew cabin and storage lockers, the engineroom taking up the middle half of the deckhouse and the crew's quarters, galley, mess, and bath taking up the aft portion. Atop the superstructure, on the hurricane deck, was a single stack emblazoned with the Corps of Engineers insignia and the pilothouse.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

NHL CRITERIA 1,4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture (Naval)  
Maritime History  
Politics/Government

Period of Significance  
1932-1975  
1932-1975  
1932-1975

Significant Dates  
1932

NHL XII-L--Business: Shipping and Transportation

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder  
Howard Shipyards, Inc.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey and towboat Sergeant Floyd is one of only a handful of surviving U.S. Army Corps of Engineers vessels built to control the nation's inland waterways. None of these vessels dates to earlier than the 1920s. One of only two remaining Army inspection boats and the only one originally built specifically for that purpose, though later used as a towboat, Sergeant Floyd is one of the best preserved examples of a nearly vanished form of American transportation that aided in the development of the entire midwest.

Part of a comprehensive plan by the federal government for flood control and improved navigation on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, Sergeant Floyd is a unique structure significant to the 20th century development of the Inland river system.

Floyd carried government supplies, assisted in dredging and flood control work, and carried Army engineers and visiting legislators on inspection tours of the work done on the rivers at a time of considerable federal efforts to improve the river. The importance of the upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and this work to the nation was reflected in a series of Congressional appropriations from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries to provide better navigation and flood control for the entire Mississippi River Basin. This work, assisted by Sergeant Floyd, had an impact far beyond that immediate region's physical, economic, industrial, and commercial environment to affect the entire nation. For her significant role in this program and service on an important part of the nation's system of internal waterways and riverine navigation, Sergeant Floyd is of exceptional national significance.

The preceding statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements which follow.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

SEE FOOTNOTES IN TEXT.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Omaha District, US Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha, Nebraska

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property less than one acre

**UTM References**

A 

1	4
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7	0	7	6	8	0
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4	7	0	8	3	1	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

All that area encompassed by the extreme length and breadth of the vessel.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the entire area of the vessel at her dry berth.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James P. Delgado, Maritime Historian/Kevin J. Foster, Historian  
organization National Park Service (418) date July 15, 1988  
street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone (202) 343-4104  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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Sergeant Floyd was built to accommodate 32 persons, usually operating with a crew of 21 (later 11) aboard. [3] Sergeant Floyd was originally propelled by twin 300-h.p. six cylinder two-cycle Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines with a 12-1/8-inch stroke turning 360 r.p.m. The engines drove Floyds' twin 50-inch screws and provided power to a 40 KW, 110-volt D.C. generator.

The first major alteration of the vessel was made in 1937, when the shaft tunnel arrangement was changed:

As originally designed, the stern of the Sgt. Floyd was constructed with one large tunnel between the two propellers, which made the hull extremely weak and considerable trouble was experienced from vibration and loosening of rivets throughout the bottom of the hull... In the fall of 1937...the single large tunnel was made into 2 tunnels with the center line of the bottom extended back beyond the propellers for protection. During this reconstruction of the stern, the engine beams were strengthened and the hull welded throughout. [4]

The next major alteration was in the winter of 1962-1963 when the vessel's present engines, twin 600-h.p. eight-cylinder Cooper-Bessemer diesels, were installed. Other work during that winter included replating the bottom, particularly the shaft tunnels, and various cosmetic alterations to the interior. [5]

Present Appearance of Sergeant Floyd

Other than minor changes and the periodic repair of her machinery and the replacement of some portions, such as bottom hull plates, Sergeant Floyd remained basically unaltered throughout her active career. In 1975 the vessel, on the verge of being retired, was converted into a traveling Bicentennial exhibit. The Texas deck was gutted of most staterooms and interior fittings, the original wood-sash windows and doors were replaced with picture glass, and exhibits and a small theater were installed. This area is currently being restored by Sioux City; double-hung wood sash windows have been replaced and the cabins and staterooms are being reinstalled along with original fixtures. The pilothouse

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

and cabins on the boatdeck were unaltered after the last apparent remodeling in the early 1970s which added a modern shower stall, head, and acoustical tile ceilings. The bell, telegraphs, and other pilothouse equipment have been temporarily removed and are in storage at the Sioux City Public Museum. The boatdeck retains the original stack with the Army Corps insignia, davits for the boats, and a modern air conditioning unit added prior to the boat's decommissioning.

The weather deck area retains integrity in all areas, save the aft portion where the crew quarters, galley, and mess were located; this area was remodeled in 1986 as a modern carpeted office with a plate glass door. The engineroom retains its 1963 engines and equipment, some of it, such as Fairbanks-Morse gauges and Weston Electrical Instrument Co. panels, dating to the vessel's construction in 1932. The original capstan, manufactured by the American Machine & Engineering Corporation of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is mounted forward. Sergeant Floyd's hull is in good condition, cleanly painted, as is the vessel's superstructure. The maintenance and restoration of Sergeant Floyd has been the subject of considerable effort by the citizens of Sioux City assisted with contributions from the State of Iowa, the city, and local businesses since November 1983. [6] Her restoration continues and is expected to be completed before the vessel opens as a museum in January 1989.

## NOTES

1

David H. Grover U.S. Army Ships and Watercraft of World War II (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1987), p. 179.

2

A.C. Hardy, American Ship Types: A Review of the Work, Characteristics, and Construction of Shhip Types Peculiar to the Waters of the North American Continent (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1927), pp. 241-242.

3

Plans of Sergeant Floyd, (1932), originals on file at the Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

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4  
Potter, op cit.

5  
"Annual Repairs--Towboat Sgt. Floyd, Work Authorization No. (482.20)-1, Gasconade Boatyard," (1963) memorandum on file at the Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

6  
Sioux City Journal, November 19, 1983.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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## Developing the Mississippi River Basin for Safe Navigation

The Missouri and upper Mississippi Rivers have been two of the three most important tributaries in the nation's internal system of navigation since the mid-19th century. Dugout and bark canoes gave way to bateaux, which were in turn supplanted by keelboats. After steamboats came to the river in 1812, a huge number of riverboats helped build up the midwest and paved the way for westward migration. This boom only lasted into the early 1850s when a gradual decline caused by the rise of railroads and difficulties in navigation caused by snags and shoals led to increasing abandonment of river transportation. Realizing the importance of the river as a major link to the nation's agricultural heartland as well as part of the Western River system's tie to the Gulf and intercoastal shipping and the need to control flooding, Congress responded to regional requests for assistance by funding a variety of projects and supporting the important activities of the United States Army Corps of Engineers in the region, which had established districts headquartered at Kansas City and Omaha on the Missouri River and St. Louis and Rock Island on the upper Mississippi River.

The Corps of Engineers was made responsible for river improvement in 1824 when in the first of many River and Harbor Bills Congress first appropriated funds for snag removal on the Ohio and lower Mississippi Rivers. Funds for other such projects and for the maintenance and improvements of channels followed. The first annual Congressional appropriations for river improvement began in 1878 and continued through an economic boom on the Great Plains in the 1880s as agricultural interests lobbied for river improvement to facilitate easier and less expensive grain-hauling downriver. Under the auspices of the Missouri and Mississippi River Commissions, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers planned the first comprehensive work on the rivers. Revetments to control flooding and bank erosion and encourage the currents to dig wider, deeper channels were constructed, but Congressional interest and funding declined after the 1880s. In the next decade 33 to 50 percent of the improvements installed in the 1880s were destroyed by the river. [1]

Increased interest by Congress in navigation between St. Louis and Kansas City resulted in appropriations for that stretch of the Missouri river in 1912 and 1923, but it was not until 1926

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number   8   Page   3  

---

that federal funds were again allocated for improvements upriver from Kansas City. An instrumental figure in the change of heart was Secretary of Commerce and soon-to-be President Herbert C. Hoover. At the Missouri River Improvement Conference at Kansas City, on October 19, 1925, Hoover proposed a 9,900-mile national system of interconnected waterways stretching from Chicago to New Orleans and Pittsburgh to Kansas City. Hoover's plan was accepted by Congress, and in 1927 the River and Harbor Bill was passed to implement it. Specifically included were improvements to the Missouri River from Kansas City north past Omaha to Sioux City, Iowa. Funding to continue this work was regular and consistent (except for 1944 and 1945).

The need for flood control improvements on the rivers was underscored by the disastrous Mississippi River flood of 1927 and the resultant public outcry for flood control on the Mississippi and its tributaries. The passage of the Flood Control Act in 1928 appropriated funds to build reservoirs for flood control and to stockpile water for irrigation during low water on the Missouri and also specifically called for a 200-foot wide, 6-foot deep channel with shaped and stabilized banks from the river mouth to Sioux City. To undertake this work, the Army Corps of Engineers built a number of dredges, inspection steamers, quarter boats and other craft in 1931 and 1932. The work of these vessels and other Corps activities on the river were supported by the River and Harbor acts of 1935 and 1938 and the Flood Control acts of 1936, 1944, and 1946. As a result of these appropriations and the work of the Corps, today an intricate system of dams on the Missouri and its tributaries provide flood control, irrigation, hydroelectric power and safe navigation within a 9-foot deep channel for the entire river basin. A 732-mile stretch of the river from the mouth to Sioux City is open for the 8-month navigation season. Tonnage operating on the river has steadily increased as a result, rising from 300,000 tons in 1954 to 2,600,000 tons in 1972, with grain comprising 40 percent of the traffic serving as the principal downriver freight. [2]

**Construction and Career of Sergeant Floyd**

An important aspect of Corps of Engineers activities on inland rivers included inspection voyages with the engineers to

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

determine work requirements, inspect work in progress or completed tasks, and perhaps most important, offer comfortable tours for visiting dignitaries, notably Congressmen interested in funding continued work. The success of such voyages was obvious given the regular funding of Missouri River improvements. Boats specifically built with comfortable accommodations for this purpose were termed "survey" or inspection boats. Following the passage of the Flood Control Act of 1928 and the authorization for work on the Mississippi River's upper tributaries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expanded it's fleet of dredges and other vessels. Among the new boats was Sergeant Floyd, which was built at a cost of \$131,970 by Howard Shipyards, Inc., in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Launched on May 31, 1932, the boat was named for Sgt. Charles Floyd, the only member of the Lewis and Clark expedition to die during the expedition. Floyd died on August 20, 1804, and was buried on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi near the site of Sioux City; a prominent monument later erected in his memory is a National Historic Landmark.

In August 1932, Sergeant Floyd was delivered to the Kansas City District of the Corps of Engineers. Operated by the Kansas City District on the Missouri and occasionally on the Mississippi River, Sergeant Floyd was employed as a "workhorse" of the District, moving men, equipment and supplies up and down the river, marking navigable channels, doing some towing, and making inspection voyages. [3]

Sergeant Floyd continued work in the Kansas City district until 1975, when on the verge of retirement, Congress authorized her to be remodeled to become a portable Corps of Engineers museum for the United States Bicentennial. Following a \$300,000 conversion Floyd traveled the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers with exhibits depicting the wide range of Corps of Engineers activities in the United States and at the Panama Canal. Sergeant Floyd also pushed a barge equipped with a large canvas cover where local communities could display their own Bicentennial material. During this tour Sergeant Floyd was visited by more than 550,000 people in 250 communities along more than 20,000 miles of America's inland waterways.

After her tour ended in December, 1976, Sergeant Floyd was berthed along the levee on the waterfront of St. Louis, Missouri, where she continued to operate as a Corps museum. [4] Title to

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

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Sergeant Floyd was transferred from the Department of the Army, St. Louis Corps of Engineers district to the City of Sioux City, Missouri, on November 5, 1982. Sergeant Floyd was brought ashore in November 1983; reburial has proceeded since then to meet an expected January 1989 opening for visitation.

NOTES

1

See Henry C. Hart, The Dark Missouri (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957). A significant early steamboat loss on the Missouri just north of Omaha was the 1865 wreck of Bertrand, whose rediscovery and excavation in 1969 has provided one the best archeological insight into the frontier process on the inland rivers and the Montana mining frontier reached by these vessels. Also see "The Missouri River: Its Discovery, Its Region and Resources, Its Navigation, Its Future," Nebraska History VIII (1), January-March 1925, pp. 16-63.

2

See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Rivers and Harbors, Missouri River, H. Ex. D; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri River Division, The Development and Control of the Missouri River. (Omaha: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1947); and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri River Division, Reservoir Control Center: Main Stem Reservoir System (Omaha: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1973).

3

"Surveyboat Sergeant Floyd," (1973) typescript on file at the Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

4

Roald Tweet, A History of the Rock Island District U. S. Corps of Engineers, 1866-1983 (Rock Island, Illinois: U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island, 1984), pp. 425-428.