1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Nash (Harbor Tug)

Other Name/Site Number: Major Elisha K. Henson (LT-5)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1776 Niagara Street Not for publication:____

City/Town: Buffalo Vicinity:____

State: NY County: Erie Code: 029 Zip Code: 00001

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private:___
Public-local:___
Public-State:___
Public-Federal: X

Category of Property
Building(s):___
District:___
Site:___
Structure: X
Object:___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
1	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
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 _____
____ Determined eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Transportation	Sub:	Water-related
Current:	Transportation	Sub:	Water-related

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:
N/A

Materials:

Foundation:	Steel
Walls:	Steel
Roof:	Steel
Other Description:	Steel

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The harbor tug Nash, formerly Major Elisha K. Henson (LT-5), was until recently an operating vessel of the Buffalo District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Nash is now berthed at the Buffalo District headquarters at 1776 Niagara Street in Buffalo. However, the tug is currently in the process of being excessed, or offered for sale or transfer from Corps of Engineers ownership by the General Services Administration.

MAJOR ELISHA K. HENSON AS BUILT AND MODIFIED

Built in 1943 and designated as LT-5 (Large Tug) by the U.S. Army, Major Elisha K. Henson was and remains a typical Army large harbor tug, with seagoing capability, of the Second World War. The tug's name was changed in 1946 to John F. Nash, and she is now known simply as Nash. This type of vessel, along with the Navy's yard tugs of the same period, inspired the design of the common merchant tugboat type of the post-war period currently in use in the United States. Built entirely of welded steel, Nash is 114.1 feet in length overall, with a 25-foot beam and a 14-foot draft. Nash displaces 306 long tons, and unlike most military vessels, is also registered at 249 gross and 105 net tons.[1] Originally painted Navy grey, the tug is now black with a white superstructure trimmed with red. The decks are painted red. The stack was decorated with a swastika that symbolized the crew's downing of a German Focke Wulf fighter off Omaha Beach, Normandy on June 9, 1944, that remained until painted out in the 1970s. It is now painted black and decorated with a red band that includes the Corps of Engineers' insignia.

The vessel is Diesel powered with her original engine manufactured by the Enterprise Engineering and Foundry Co. of San Francisco. An Enterprise DMQ-38, rated at 1,200 horsepower at 275 revolutions per minute, drives a single three-bladed, 8.4-foot diameter screw with a 4.5-foot pitch. The engine has 16-inch cylinders and a 20-inch stroke. The propulsion of Henson embodied the late 1920s shift in tugboat power plants from steam to Diesel, which by 1943 was the industry standard because of larger fuel capacity, lower fuel consumption, smaller crew requirements, and constant pulling with constant power.[2] A large winch towing gear motor, manufactured by the Electro-Dynamic Works of the Electric Boat Co. and the Berson Electric

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[1] The vessel's statistics and name plate data were provided by the Buffalo District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The standard characteristics of the World War II LTs are also found in David H. Grover, U.S. Army Ships and Watercraft of World War II (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1987), p. 99.

[2] A.C. Hardy, American Ship Types: A Review of the Work, Characteristics, and Construction of Ship Types Peculiar to the Waters of the North American Continent (New York: D. VanNostrand Company, Inc., 1927) p. 158.

Co. of Superior, Wisconsin, below deck feeds to the fantail for towing.

The vessel was built with a single welded steel deckhouse with an elevated steel pilothouse with the master's cabin abaft the pilothouse. The decks on the superstructure are surrounded by a simple pipe rail. The pilothouse rises 46 feet above the waterline. Accommodations in the deckhouse and in the forecastle are for four officers and seven crewmembers. The only modification of note made to the vessel is in the superstructure. In 1946, the master's stateroom, originally two compartments, was made into one space. Two pole masts, one abaft the pilothouse and the other abaft the deckhouse, are rigged with a signal yardarm and running lights. The vessel has a single stack amidships. On the fantail, large towing bitts rise through the deck next to the aft bulkhead of the deckhouse, while a pair of towing bitts rise through the forecastle deck. Bitts are also arranged along the bulwarks, port and starboard, fore and aft. An elevated wooden deck on the fantail covers and protects the steering quadrant.

CURRENT CONDITION AND APPEARANCE OF NASH

Nash is maintained in excellent condition by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Buffalo District personnel. The tug retains an exceptionally high degree of integrity. All original equipment and machinery is in place aboard the ship, including Navy-issue navigational equipment on the bridge. A black plastic engraved builder's plaque in the engineroom identifies the tug as Major Elisha K. Henson and provides the date and place of construction, as well as the manufacturer of the engine. Minor additions such as radar, an RCA Radio Telephone, and lifesaving equipment do not detract from the historic appearance of the vessel. Nash remains readily identifiable as an LT and as Henson, and readily reflects an unheralded class and type of vessel that helped secure the Allied victory in Europe in World War II.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B ___ C X D ___

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

NHL Criteria: 1, 4

NHL Theme(s): VIII. World War II
A. War in Europe, Africa and the Atlantic 1939-1945

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
Military	1943-1945	1944
Architecture (Naval)	1943-1945	1943

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Cox & Stevens, New York City, New York;
Jakobsen Shipyard, Oyster Bay, New York.

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers large harbor tug Major Elisha K. Henson, built in 1943 and now the tug Nash, is typical of hundreds of World War II Army large harbor tugs built during and after 1943 to a standard plan. Towing, hitherto a minor aspect of military logistics, became an important part of moving military cargoes during World War II. In response to the massive movement of cargoes and vessels on both coasts, on the lakes, and in the theaters of World War II, the U.S. Army built a vast fleet of tugs, numbering several thousand, as part of a massive small-craft program. The largest sized vessels, of which several hundred were built, were the large harbor tugs (LT). The LTs were sent to every theater of war under their own power, although the majority were pressed into service to support amphibious landing operations and invasions. In particular, Army towing operations were a significant aspect of the war in Northern Europe, the Southwest Pacific, and Alaska.

One of the first of the LT class built, Major Elisha K. Henson (LT-5) is the only known essentially unmodified example of the LT type left in the United States. As Henson, the tug exemplified the intended service of her type, sailing to Great Britain in February 1944 in anticipation of Operation Overlord, the planned allied invasion of Hitler's "Festung Europa." On June 6, 1944, Henson sailed for Normandy with two barges as part of Operation Mulberry, in support of Overlord. Under fire, the tug ferried supplies to the landing beaches for the next month, in the process shooting down a German fighter aircraft on June 9th. Nash is the only known surviving Army service craft associated with the D-Day landings.

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

THE OPERATION OF ARMY TUGS IN WORLD WAR II

The U.S. Army operated a fleet as large, if not larger, than the U.S. Navy during World War II. Historian David H. Grover, working with numbered and named vessels and craft as well as builder's production figures, counts at least 127,793 "pieces of floating equipment," noting that "while the Navy had significantly more large ships than did the Army, the Army's greater number of harbor craft and amphibious craft produced a grand total of vessels that was almost 50 percent greater than that of the Navy."[1] This vast fleet is for the most part no longer extant, "only a few dredges and support vessels of the Corps of Engineers and Panama Canal Company, plus some tugs, amphibious

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[1] David H. Grover, U.S. Army Ships and Watercraft of World War II (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Press, 1987), p. xi.

craft, and training vessels of the Transportation Corps...."[2] This is because the Army fleet was largely assembled or constructed to meet the extraordinary demand for transporting troops, material, ordnance, and supplies to the far-flung theaters of war between 1942 and 1945. The Army afloat "was primarily a transportation organization."[3] The need was so incredible that at the peak of the war, "the deadweight capacity of dry cargo and passenger ships owned by, chartered to, or allocated to the Army...was 17.3 million tons; the comparable figure for the Navy was 8.0 million tons."[4]

In addition to large transports, troop ships, cargo ships, amphibious craft, minesweepers, and other craft, the Army maintained a fleet of several thousand vessels classified as tugs during World War II, "most of which had been built as part of the massive small craft construction program."[5] These included small motor towing launches (MTL), motor towboats or tractors (MT), small harbor tugs (ST) and large harbor tugs that were capable of ocean navigation (LT). While the Army had first built tugs for its use in docking large transports and troop ships during the Spanish American War, and had afterwards built a small number of these vessels for its own use, it was not until World War II that "towing became an important part of the movement of military cargoes..."[6] Civilian tugboats were not able to handle the volume of military traffic, particularly overseas, and so the Army embarked on a program of purchasing, leasing, and constructing tugs in record numbers for its own use. In particular, by 1943, just as standard designs for tugs were in place, operational planning for the invasion of Europe and amphibious landings in the Pacific compelled the Army to order "hundreds of tugs in each basic size."[7]

The Army's tugs played an important role in the war. Tugs towed landing craft off beachheads, positioned pontoons and breakwaters, and docked and handled troop ships and transports at ports of embarkation in the United States and abroad. Of all these craft, only the LTs sailed to the various theaters of war under their own power, occasionally towing the smaller STs. At the end of the war, there were 167 LTs and STs, 287 MTLs, and 295

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Grover, op. cit., p. xii.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Grover, op. cit., p. 96.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

MTs in the European Theater, and 171 LTs and STs, 260 MTLs, and 180 MTs in the Southwest Pacific.[8]

CONSTRUCTION AND CAREER OF MAJOR ELISHA F. HENSON

The standard design for a 114-foot LT was prepared by the New York naval architectural firm of Cox and Stevens in 1943. One of the first tugs built to the new standard were LTs 1 through 5, ordered from the Jakobsen Shipyard at Oyster Bay on Long Island, New York. The LTs were quickly built and prepared for service. LT-5, Jacobson's hull no. 298, christened Major Elisha K. Henson, was launched on November 22, 1943. The tug sailed for Great Britain on February 3, 1944, as part of the Allied build up in preparation for Operation Overlord, the planned invasion of occupied Europe. "Planning for OVERLORD was perhaps the most complex problem in the history of warfare. The problem had to be attacked...from the standpoint of strategic desirability and from the standpoint of logistical feasibility."[9] Tugs like Henson were critical aspects of the logistical feasibility.

D-Day was originally set for June 5, 1944, but was postponed for 24 hours because of inclement weather. On the morning of June 6, the invasion of occupied Europe, termed "Festung Europa," or Fortress Europe by Adolf Hitler, began as paratroopers dropped from the skies, battleships opened fire on German shore batteries, and waves of landing and amphibious craft relentlessly pressed ashore at five beaches, codenamed "Utah," "Omaha," "Juno," "Sword," and "Gold."[10] For days troops and material poured ashore as the German defenses were battered and then breached. Henson sailed from Exmouth, England, on June 6 as part of Operation Mulberry. As part of Mulberry, a fleet of tugs, barges, aged merchant ships, concrete caissons, and cruciform steel floats were placed "to provide harbors where none existed--one off Omaha Beach, the other off Gold Beach."[11] Henson arrived off the Normandy coast on the morning of June 7, after the convoy of which she was part of was delayed by high winds. After waiting for instructions on June 8, Henson tied up to a sunken LST and moored the barges there. Throughout the day, the

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[8] Grover, op. cit., p. 97.

[9] See Timothy T. Daly, "Building-Structure Inventory (Vessel) Form, Tug Nash," May 4, 1990. Manuscript on file at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Division for Historic Preservation. Mr. Daly relied on now missing World War II logbooks for the tug, as well as the files of the Buffalo District pertaining to the tug. Also see E.B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, The Great Sea War: The Dramatic Story of Naval Action in World War II (New York: Bramhall House, 1960), p. 160.

[10] Potter and Nimitz, op. cit., p. 172.

[11] Ibid., p. 176.

tug was subjected to air attack. The logbook entry for June 9th records that at 20:30 hours, "planes overhead. Everyone shooting at them. Starboard gunner got an F.W."[12] The "F.W." was a Luftwaffe fighter, the Focke Wulf.

For the remainder of the month, Henson towed barges and landing craft, including LSTs, to the artificial harbor of "Mulberry A" at Omaha Beach. The harbor, ready for business on June 17, was destroyed by a severe storm on June 19, but LSTs, assisted by tugs, were able to beach and land troops and supplies. By the end of June, despite the setback caused by the storm, 15,000 tons of supplies and 15,000 men were landing daily on Omaha Beach alone.[13] From the beachheads, Allied Forces began their drive toward the inevitable victory over the Third Reich.

After remaining in service throughout the war in Great Britain, Major Elisha F. Henson returned to the United States. Many of the Army's tugs were decommissioned, sold, or scrapped by the Army Transportation Corps. Henson, however, was assigned to the Buffalo District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in May 1946. At that time the tug was renamed John F. Nash in honor of the Buffalo District's Senior Engineer and Chief Civilian Assistant from 1932 to 1941. From 1946 to 1989, Nash served the lower Great Lakes region by assisting in the maintenance of harbors, and construction projects that included the St. Lawrence Seaway in the 1950s.[14] Retired in 1989, the tug has been declared excess property by the Army Corps of Engineers, and while in their custody, is currently being offered for sale or transfer by the General Services Administration.

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[12] As cited in Daly, op. cit.

[13] Potter and Nimitz, p. 177.

[14] Daly, op. cit.

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: #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
_X_ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other: Specify Repository: US Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one (1) acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 17 671045 4755415

Verbal Boundary Description:

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

Boundary Justification:

The boundary incoporates the entire area of the vessel as she lays at her berth.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: James P. Delgado, Maritime Historian

Organization: National Park Service Date: October 5, 1990

Street & Number: P.O. Box 37127 Telephone: (202) 343-9528

City or Town: Washington State: DC ZIP: 20013-7127