

Ocean Times



Join
SoCal
 on the
**Queen
 Mary!**

On the first Saturday of February, May, August, and November, the Southern California Chapter of the Steamship Historical Society of America (SoCal) meets onboard the legendary *Queen Mary*.

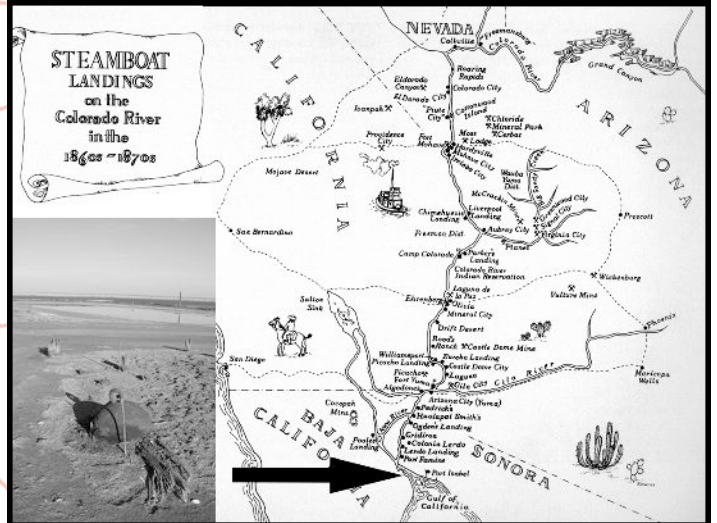
You don't have to be a member to attend, but we'd love it if you were!



Join us February 7 ...

SoCal will be onboard the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach for our quarterly social meeting on February 7. (1 p.m., Pacific)

Join us for Steve Lawson's presentation: *Port Isabel (Mexico) of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company.*



Mark your calendars!

Future dates for 2026 are:
 May 2, August 1, and November 7

Call for Speakers!

If you have a topic you'd like to present to the membership, at our meetings aboard the *Queen Mary*, we'd love to hear it!

for more information:

Kate Vescera
 socialshsa@gmail.com

For members who cannot attend in person, a Zoom link will be sent out in advance. (Meeting details subject to change.)



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EDITOR

Wayne Yanda

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Bill Keene

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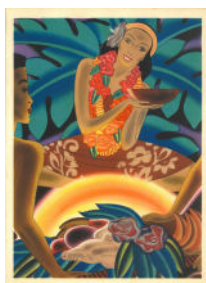
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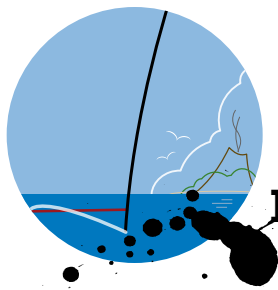
The *Ocean Times* is the Journal of the Southern California Chapter of the Steamship Historical Society of America for the Chapter's membership and friends.

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On the Cover

Detail of one of the menus kept by Miss De Vere Porter as a souvenir of her South Seas cruise on Matson's *Monterey* in January 1941. This design, "Luau," is one of six Hawaiian themes by Frank McIntosh.



from the
**EDITOR'S
MESS**

Happy New Year!

Hoping your holidays were fun, festive, and above all, safe.

Welcome to the 30th year of the *Ocean Times*! It's a new year, and as I teased in the previous issue, it means a new layout! I do think this one will stick around for a bit. In any event, for this issue, we have what we hope is an interesting mix ...

SoCal member Bill Miller relates the World War II chapter of the North German Lloyd's *Europa*.

David Hendrickson provides a look at the variety of troopships in the postwar era, leading up to Vietnam.

Miss DeVere Porter, a "girl farmer" from upstate New York, took a South Seas cruise in January 1941. With the rest of the world at war, the only way to do this was through Matson. We are

ARTICLES WANTED!

**Write for
the OCEAN TIMES**

We enjoy a mix of stories involving Pacific and/or Atlantic liners/lines, first person narratives, military ships, even bios of those with a connection to ships and the sea.

Images need to be at a resolution of at least 300 dpi in JPG/JPEG format.

Please send your completed text and image captions (and sources) in a Word document to:

editor.oceantimes@gmail.com



Wayne Yanda Collection

fortunate that she kept a scrapbook. (If any of you have a scrapbook worth sharing, do reach out!)

Last fall, I had the privilege of presenting at the 12th Maritime Heritage Conference in Buffalo, NY. It was a hectic 3½ days, I saw many, many great presentations, and I'll do my best at a recap.



SoCal Membership

Join, Renew, or Give as a Gift ...

for more information:

TreasurerSSHSAsoCal@gmail.com

SSHSA/SoCal Chapter
65 Pine Ave.
Box 349
Long Beach, CA 90802

What we're working on ...

NYK's Interwar Liners
Miné Okubo
USS *Texas*
Ship Shot: *President Washington*

SoCal member Shawn Dake provides this issue's "Ship Shot" in the form of an optical illusion. Or is it?

If you weren't able to make the November meeting, we have photos, thanks to several members.

We've details on Celebrating the Life of Bruce Vancil; and talks by Dr. Stephen M. Payne, naval architect of the *Queen Mary 2*, the latter sponsored by QMI.

And on the Back Page ... In early 1921, two ships raced from the East Coast to California. Why? Because they could? It all seems a bit silly in hindsight, but that was just the start of the Roaring Twenties ...

Until next time,
Wayne Yanda

Events are closer than they appear!



May 29-31, 2026



CHAPTER Notes

Greetings Everyone,

As many of you know, long-serving former President and Chairman of the Chapter, Bruce Vancil, passed away on October 21, 2025 at the age of 67. He is survived by his wife, Sophia.

Bruce guided the SoCal Chapter for many years, and was also a long-time Editor of the *Ocean Times*. He also had a long involvement with, and great love for, the *Queen Mary*; beginning as a tour guide in the 1970s, and at one point, acting as the ship's Executive Director.

Bruce will forever be remembered as among the most influential and important figures ever to be involved in the Chapter.

A Celebration of Life for Bruce will be Sunday, January 25, 2026 from 2- 4 p.m. in the Mauretania Room aboard the *Queen Mary*. We hope that you can

join us. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to our Treasurer, David Tew, at treasurersshsasocal@gmail.com. We also intend to make this available to watch on Zoom for those who cannot join us in person.

On November 1, 2025 we had our fall social meeting on board the *Queen Mary*. We had a brief tribute to Bruce Vancil, with his friends Bill Keene, Lovetta Kramer, Captain Terry Tilton, and Scott MacDonald sharing their memories of Bruce. Thank you to all who participated, especially Bill, who also organized the tribute and prepared the slide show of photos of Bruce.

We then had a wonderful presentation by Captain Tilton on "Passenger Ship Builder's Plates: A Retrospective." Captain Tilton has a very extensive collection of builders plates from a wide variety of ships and he shared the history of some of the ships that the builder's plates in his collection came from.

We want to sincerely thank Captain Tilton for this beautiful and informative presentation. Thanks to everyone who attended.

We also had our Board elections for the 2026-2028 term. Congratulations to returning Directors Bill Keene and Captain Terry Tilton and new Directors Peter Strand and Mary Rohrer.

We will also be celebrating the 90th anniversary of the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyage next year. The *Queen Mary @ 90 Symposium* will be May 29-31, 2026 aboard the *Queen Mary*. Please send your questions or comments to Board Member and *Ocean Times* Editor Wayne Yanda at editor.oceantimes@gmail.com.

Please also be sure to check out our website at SoCalSSHSA.org. We are accepting Chapter membership renewals and electronic payments through the website. If you have not renewed your membership yet for this year, please do so!

Additionally, we are always looking for people who would like to present at our upcoming meetings in 2026 and beyond. If you are interested or have ideas about possible presenters, please contact me for more information.

We are also continuing our efforts expand our membership and develop new Board of Directors members and new program/project committee members. We are particularly looking for someone to assist with finding and scheduling presenters for our meetings and someone to handle the raffle, so please contact me if you are interested in helping with those roles, or any other leadership position.

Hope to see all of you soon!

Best,
Kate Vescera



Wayne Yanda Collection

Your SoCal Chapter Board

- Kate Vescera
PRESIDENT
- Mary Rohrer
VICE PRESIDENT
- Peter Strand
SECRETARY
- David Tew
TREASURER
- Bill Keene
- Peter Knego
- Scott MacDonald
- Terry Tilton
- Wayne Yanda

Bill Miller Presents ...



Europa's Canceled Voyage

In September 1939, Europe was suddenly at war – or under the threat of war. Liner schedules to and from Northern Europe had suddenly been greatly disrupted, if not canceled or scrapped altogether.

Some liners had been yanked from service and laid-up in the safety of neutral America, in the secure waters of New York harbor; others were called-up to duty, to secretive wartime duties.

In late August, the big Nazi German liner *Europa* was heading for New York from Bremerhaven, when it was suddenly ordered to reverse course and return to home waters. Hitler was about to invade Poland (on September 1) and so the political situation might well escalate. He did not anticipate Britain's declaration of war on the 3rd and so the start of World War II in Europe. The 49,000-ton *Europa* returned to Bremerhaven, offloaded her 2,000 passengers, and itself would not sail again for 5 ½ years.

That December, the *Europa* was joined by its near-sister *Bremen* along the Bremerhaven waterfront. But thereafter, the fate of the two giant liners was unclear. It was rumored that they would be converted to big aircraft carriers,

↑
The *Europa* in New York's Lower Bay.
(author's collection)



↑
 Revived in 1945 for Allied trooping, the then USS *Europa* (left) is seen at New York's Pier 88 – with the battleship *Missouri* and the *Queen Mary* on the right.
 (author's collection)

but more likely become troopships for the intended invasion of Britain (planned for 1940). Huge doors were in fact cut in the sides of the *Europa* and berthing directions for up to 10,000 troops were found drawn on stateroom doors and in companion ways.

Another plan was to use the two liners to transport German Jews to faraway relocation and internment camps in Madagascar and in East Africa.

None of these schemes came about and instead the *Europa* sat out most of the war years unused, other than for accommodation and dockside training, and in the end, to house refugees from the Eastern Front.

Much of her high quality fittings were removed as the war progressed for the Nazis and were replaced by inferior parts.

On May 8, 1945, two US Navy officers and 24 blue jackets boarded and then seized the 936-ft long *Europa*, claiming it as a prize of war and raising the American flag. Just a day before, the last of the Nazi regime ordered the liner be destroyed, but then, as Germany surrendered, the order was rescinded.

Post Script:

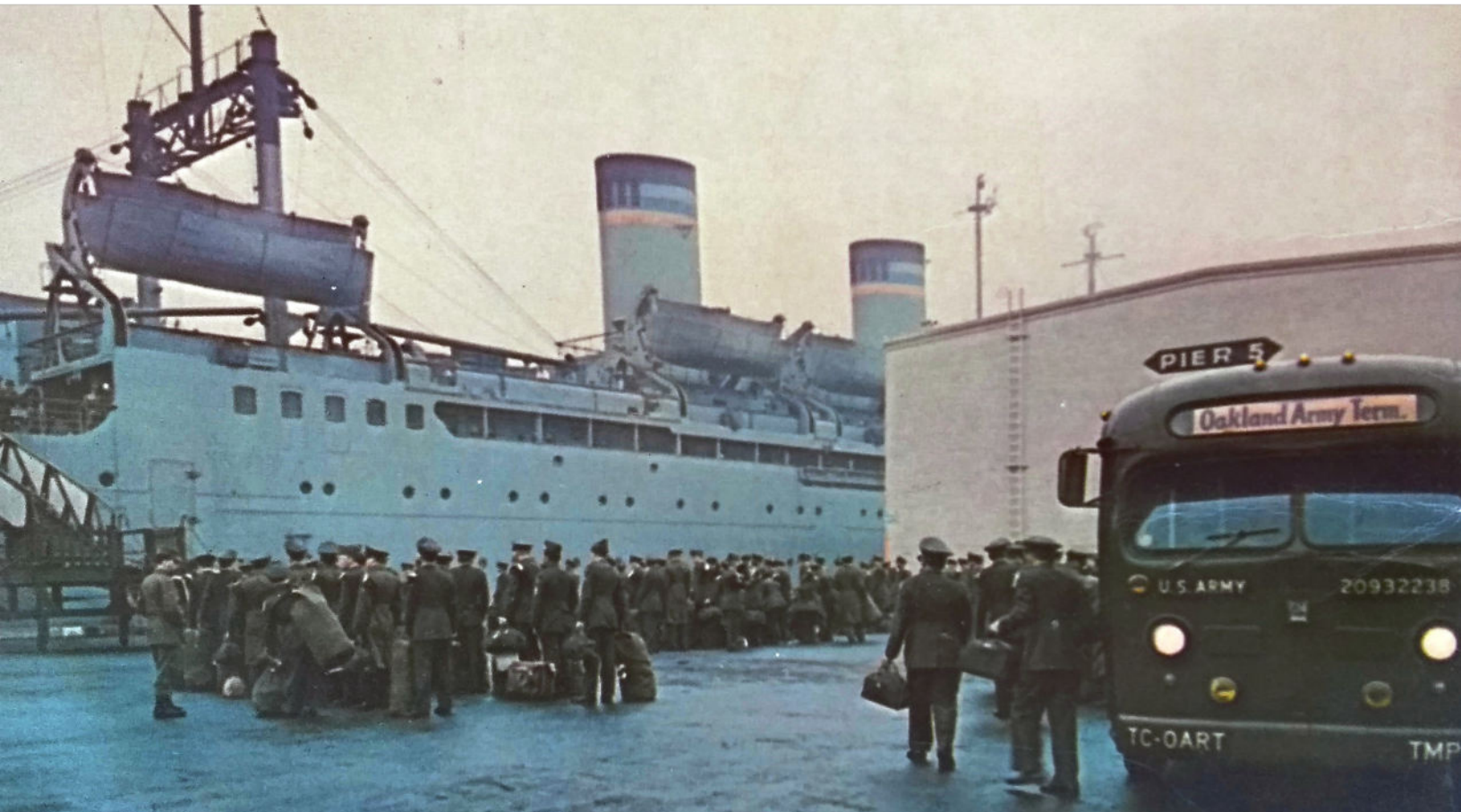
The *Europa* was later awarded to the French, as reparations for the loss of the *Normandie*, and later sailed as the *Liberté* until scrapped in 1962. ●



↑
 The *Europa* in heavy seas, before her stacks were doubled in height.
 (private collection)

by *David Hendrickson*

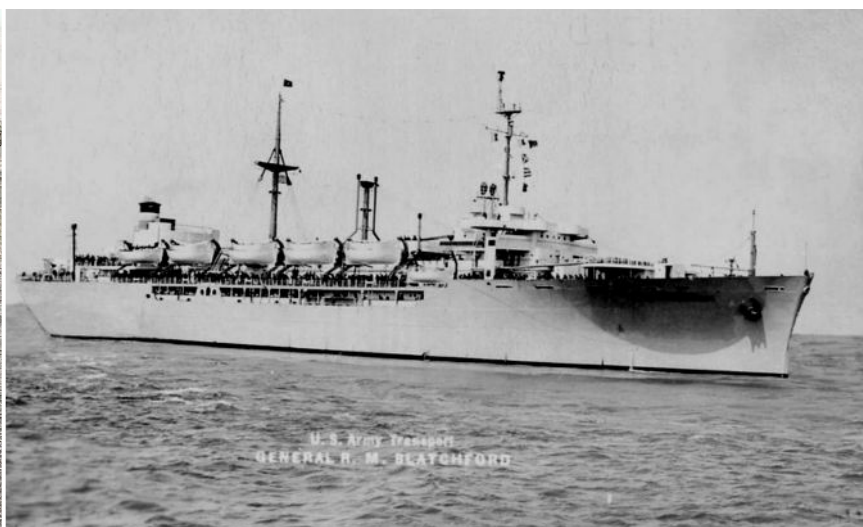
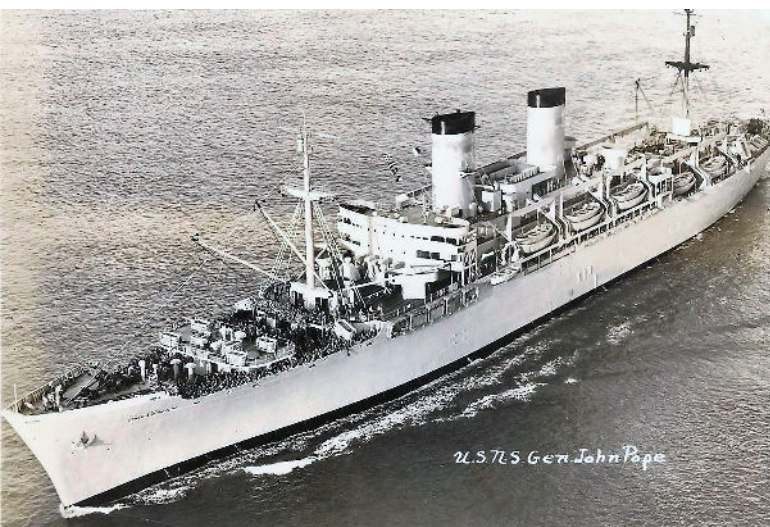
Unless otherwise noted, images were either taken by, or in the collection of, the author.



Voyages to an Uncertain Future Troopships to Vietnam

Post World War II, troop movements didn't have to rely on anything that could float. The Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) had at its disposal a fleet of ships especially tailored for the task.

↑
Army troops mill about Pier 5 at the Military Ocean Terminal in Oakland, before boarding the P2 transport in the background. This picture dates from the mid-1950s, but the scene was repeated many times at Oakland and other ports during the Vietnam War.



*Men carrying duffle bags,
Bulging with
Close possessions,
Trod heavily up a gangplank
And then sail away.
It is with these men –
The men on foot,
The young men.
Where dwells the heart
Of America's strength
And security.*

Those words dominate page one of the booklet “This is the Ship I Sailed On” that was sold aboard the Military Sea Transportation Service troopship USNS *General John Pope*. They date from the early 1950s and the Korean War but could have been written when the “*Big John*” was reactivated from the National Defense Reserve Fleet in 1965 to carry military personnel to Vietnam.

The role that troopships like the *General John Pope* played during the early years of the Vietnam War is often overlooked. Before the *Pope* was reactivated, and for some time afterward, only ordinary military personnel moved to/from South Vietnam by sea. By 1967, however, aircraft had become the preferred mode of transportation and the troopship’s role diminished.

MSTS transports had served in Vietnam previously. During 1954 and 1955 the USNS *Marine Adder*, USNS *Marine Lynx*, USNS *General A.W. Brewster*, USNS *General W. M. Black*, and USNS *General R.L. Howze* were among the merchant, MSTS, and U.S. Navy ships utilized to relocate thousands of Vietnamese from North Vietnam to the south (and sometimes in the other direction) as part of Operation Passage to Freedom.

Now known as the Military Sealift Command, the Military Sea Transportation Service was established in 1949 to bring the U.S.

Department of Defense’s ocean shipping and transportation services under a single operational umbrella. Since its inception MSTS/MSC has operated an extraordinary variety of ships, the best known of which were the troop transports that carried thousands upon thousands of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, their dependents and other government-sponsored passengers; as well as refugees, military personnel from other nations, and cargo and mail.

Occasionally the transports hosted out of the ordinary passengers as happened in February of 1963 when the *General William O. Darby* transported James McNeil Whistler’s painting *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1* (better known as *Portrait of the Artist’s Mother*, or simply as *Whistler’s Mother*) from Bremerhaven to Brooklyn. She and Georges de la Tour’s painting *La Madeleine* were being brought to the United States to be exhibited in Atlanta. No such “special passengers” were carried to Vietnam – only ordinary members of the American Military.

Like all MSTS vessels, the transports were crewed by civilian mariners. Additionally, each carried a Navy Military Department consisting of the Commanding and Executive Officers, a Chaplain, and a medical staff that included one (sometimes two) doctors, nurses, and Navy Hospital Corpsmen. Navy enlisted personnel were responsible for a variety of shipboard administrative duties and staffed the ships’ stores; the operation of which came under the purview of the Military Department.

To quote from the “Welcome Aboard” booklet from the USNS *General William O. Darby*: the Commander of the Military Department, “serves as the direct representative of the Commander, Military Sea Transportation Service and is responsible for the control and administration of all passengers aboard [this ship].” The same booklet goes on to point out that: “A Commanding Officer of Troops will also

↑
Postcard of the *General R. M. Blatchford* as a post World War II U.S. Army Transport. Other than being repainted grey overall, and repainting the stack grey with blue and gold bands, the ship’s appearance differed little after it was transferred to MSTS.

↖
This aerial view of the USNS *General John Pope* offers details not readily apparent from dockside including life rafts stowed on deck and the wood-clad weather decks typical of all P2 troopships.



↑ This aerial view of the USNS *Barrett* shows the ship's distinctive superstructure to good advantage. Note that the blue and gold bands were painted on the uptakes rather than on the dummy funnel as was customary.

be assigned and will be assisted by a Voyage Staff and will have certain jurisdiction over the responsibility for the troop passengers of a particular voyage.” Furthermore: “The Voyage Staff will not have authority over the permanently assigned Military Staff, the civilian crew or cabin passengers unless otherwise directed by C.O. Military” and “Orders pertaining to the troop officers and enlisted personnel will be issued by the Commanding Officer of the Military Department through the Commanding Officer of Troops.”

In the armed forces rank is all important, and an individual's rank had everything to do with what they did and where and when they did it when traveling aboard a MSTS troopship.

During their Vietnam War service, officers, nurses, and higher-ranking enlisted personnel were accommodated in Cabin Class. Other enlisted personnel were assigned to Troop Class. Aboard a troopship, all personnel had ancillary responsibilities including supervisory duties for officers and ranking enlisted personnel, while those lower in the pecking order stood fire watches in troop spaces, were assigned to cleaning details, or performed various tasks in troop messes.

Four types of transports participated in the Vietnam trooplift. The smallest were the last active C4-S-A1's in the MSTS fleet – the USNS *General R.M. Blatchford* and USNS *General Leroy Eltinge*. The largest were the twin-funneled P2-S2-R2's like the aforementioned *General John Pope* and the slightly smaller P2-SE2-R1's such as the *General Nelson M. Walker*. In between were the three ships of the P2-S1-DN3 type – also known as the V-2000 class – which were laid down as passenger cargo liners for American President Lines after World War II but were completed as troopships during the Korean War. By a matter of a few feet they were larger than the C4s.

→ P2 transports like the USNS *General John Pope* with their extensive superstructure and massive stacks looked impressive from the water. A crewman is touching up the paintwork on the aft stack.

To backtrack briefly, C4 transports had been created during World War II by adding additional superstructure to C4 freighters and reconfiguring their cargo holds into berthing, messing, medical, and recreational spaces for approximately 3,000 men. The result was something of a seagoing eyesore; but C4 troopers, like other wartime conversions born out of necessity, got the job done.

By comparison, the P2s, which looked like passenger liners, were designed as troopships from the beginning but with the idea that they could be converted to peacetime passenger ships. The *General John Pope* and sisters were 622 feet 7 inches long (LOA) while a P2-SE2-R1 like the *General Walker* were 608 feet 11 inches long (again LOA).

To place them in context, compared to the largest American passenger ships at that time, the P2s were exceeded in length only by United States Lines' *America*, *Manhattan*, and *Washington*, by APL's *President Coolidge*, and Matson's *Mariposa*, *Monterey*, and *Lurline*. The P2s were a little over 180 feet longer than Liberty ships.

As built, P2s could carry between 4,000 and 5,200 men, though in a pinch they could accommodate more. The V-2000s were 533 feet 3 inches long and normal troop capacity was around 1,500. C4s were 522 feet 10 inches long. (Author's note: capacities vary depending on the source.)

If the C4s were the “ugly ducklings” of the MSTS transport fleet, then the three ex-American President Lines ships were the “swans.” Aesthetics aside, troopships were “safe, comfortable, and dependable [but] were not luxurious” (which was an understatement). By 1965 they were getting long in the tooth as all but the V-2000s dated from the 1940s.

Despite postwar improvements Troop Class spaces in particular were spartan. During the summer, or when in the tropics, the non-air-





←
Waiters and a member of the Steward's Department stand by for the arrival of passengers for the next meal sitting in the Cabin Class Dining Saloon aboard the USNS *Upshur*.

A portrait of General Roy S. Geiger overlooked activities in the Cabin Class Lounge of the ship named in his honor. This room, though austere, offered comfortable and pleasant surroundings.
↓

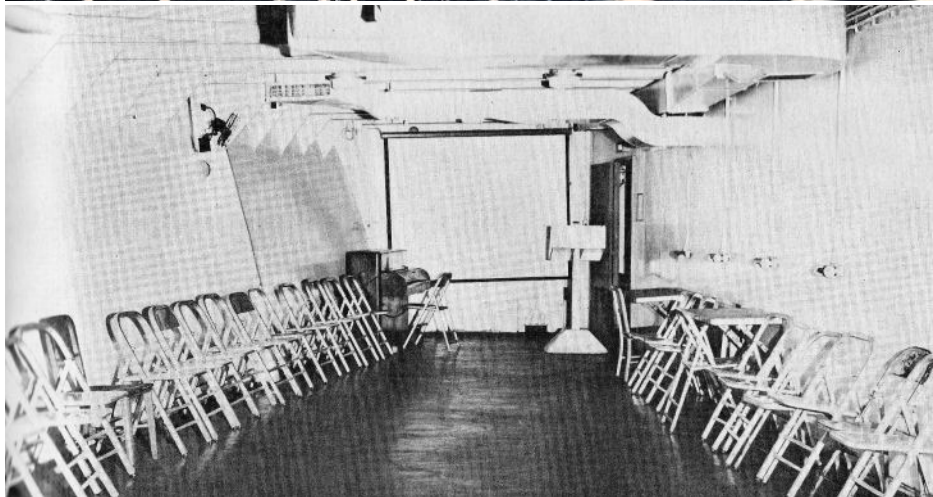
conditioned vessels could be unbearably hot and uncomfortable below decks. Likewise, crowded berthing compartments were unpleasant places in stormy weather when occupied by seasick travelers.

Troop berthing spaces, messes, and common areas were nondescript with painted steel bulkheads, clunky institutional furniture, and linoleum-clad or painted steel decks. Exposed structural frames, light fixtures, wiring, pipes and duct work were common. Be it a C4, a P2, or one of the newer V-2000s, rows of canvas racks with thin mattresses stacked three and four high with narrow passages between them were the norm in troop berthing areas.

While a decided step up from Troop Class, Cabin Class was hardly a sybarite's delight. Cabin Class staterooms had as many as six berths. Public areas and staterooms featured institutional furniture, too, but were spiffed up with colorful upholstery, drapes, and curtains. Some ships had veneer-clad bulkheads and in most P2's art prints or photo murals were employed to brighten lounges and dining rooms. Original artwork could be found in several P2's.

The V-2000 class ships were "the most modern and radical appearing" transports in the MSTS fleet and retained numerous external vestiges of their commercial origins including tall, raked masts, rounded superstructures, large teardrop-shaped dummy funnels, and twin uptakes amidships in lieu of conventional funnels. Only the older and smaller USNS *Private Elden H. Johnson*, USNS *Private William H. Thomas*, and USNS *Sergeant Charles E. Mower* (also George Sharp Company designs) which were laid down as passenger-cargo ships for the Alcoa Steamship Company but acquired by the Navy during the Second World War and afterward reconverted to troop and dependent carriers, were anywhere near as stylish as the V-2000's.

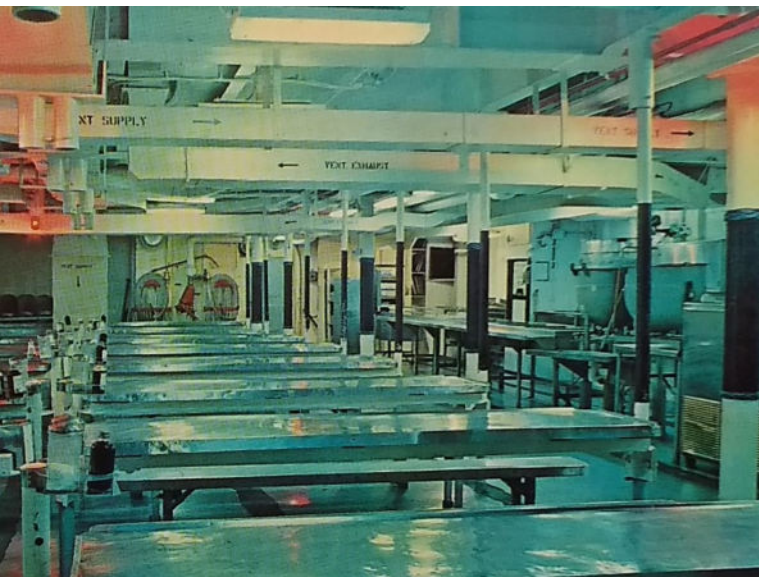
To quote the anonymous (and droll) copywriter in another "This is the Ship I Sailed On" booklet – this one about the USNS *Geiger* – those who sailed in that ship and sisters *Barrett*



and *Upshur* "travel in relative luxury – not real luxury, of course, but upper class austerity." A caption accompanying a photo of the *Barrett* that ran in the San Francisco *Examiner* when that ship was new stressed that so-called "upper class austerity" by emphasizing *Barrett's* "amenities of a luxury liner" like "air conditioned quarters" and "Mess Halls where passengers eat with soft music in the background": as well as "porcelain washbowls" and "individual chrome-framed mirrors in bathrooms."

As the *Examiner* pointed out, the *B-U-G* trio were air conditioned. Not as well known is that P2s like the *Generals Gordon, Pope, and Weigel*

↑
Recreation areas and other spaces aboard C4 transports were multi-functional and spartan. Notice the movie screen, piano, lectern, and tables and folding chairs, and the exposed ductwork and pipes.



↑ Troop Mess aboard the *General W.A. Mann*. Some of the galley and the serving line can be seen at the right. Note the duct work overhead and fire fighting equipment arrayed on the far bulkhead. The red glow is from emergency lighting fixtures.

↗ This photo graphically illustrates the basic and crowded conditions in the Troop Messes of C4 troopships like the *Generals R.M. Blatchford* and *Leroy Eltinge*.

were equipped with air conditioning and as such were among the early ships to boast of that now ubiquitous shipboard feature (note the absence of portholes in photos of the *Pope* and sister vessels – an indication that their interiors were climate controlled).

Meals in Troop Messes were served “cafeteria style on an assembly line basis” on metal trays with “long lines moving quickly and smoothly” and although there was “little elbow room in the Mess Hall on a loaded troopship” there was “plenty of wholesome food.” In Cabin Class waiters served passengers at table on china in the Dining Rooms and stewards looked after their staterooms.

The Vietnam War Years

Beginning in 1965 seventeen troopships would make voyages to South Vietnam. The first

was the USS *General W.A. Mann*, which on March 10, 1965, embarked a reported 1,200 Korean military personnel at Pusan from where it sailed to Cape St. Jacques (Vung Tau), arriving there on March 15. After anchoring, the Koreans disembarked into LSTs that tied up alongside the ship. Once they were offloaded, the *General Mann* got underway for Japan where it embarked Troop and Cabin Class passengers before continuing on to the West Coast via Hawaii. That voyage was the only one undertaken to Vietnam by a commissioned U.S. Navy troop transport. It was not, however, the only time that the transports would carry ROK military personnel.

A few voyages to Vietnam originated or terminated in the Pacific Northwest, Southern California, or on the East Coast but many departed from the Military Ocean Terminal in Oakland. In Vietnam the primary ports of call were Vung Tau, Qui Nhon, Cam Rahn Bay, Nha

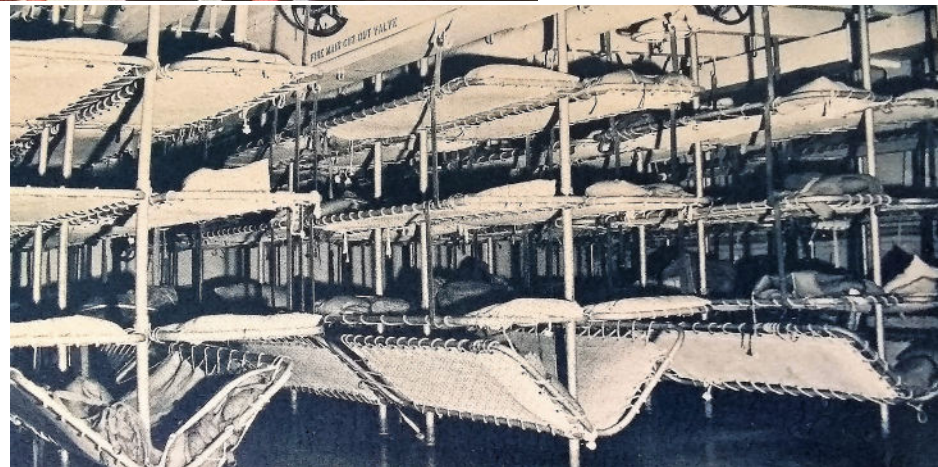
→ In good weather passengers were able to relax on deck. Here men in Troop Class unwind on the forecastle (technically, the Boat Deck) of a P2 like the *General Edwin D. Patrick*.





←
The Troop Class Navy Exchange in a P2 like the *General Simon B. Buckner*. Given their small size, these stores offered an astonishing array of merchandise.

A few men have already staked claims to space in a troop berthing area in one of the V-2000 transports. When fully occupied, this space defined the term "close quarters."
↓



Trang, and Da Nang – all home to or near important American military installations.

Depending on the Vietnamese port's infrastructure, upon arrival a transport would dock or anchor to disembark/embark passengers. The *General Leroy Eltinge* docked at Saigon on an early voyage, but troopships did not normally traverse the Long Tau River to Saigon as they would have been sitting ducks for well-concealed hostile forces on land or for explosive devices in the river.

Up the coast, at Da Nang transports anchored and offloaded personnel and their equipment onto landing craft. After the piers there became operational in October of 1966 the *Barrett*, *Geiger*, and *Upshur* utilized them. Incidentally, Da Nang proved to be an unlucky port for the *Geiger* which ran aground there at least twice. The second time a major salvage effort had to be mounted to free the ship.

Life Aboard

Days at sea were filled with mandatory shipboard drills, inspections and training and orientation meetings. Equipment was inspected and maintained and P.T. sessions were held. Leisure time diversions included lounging on

deck, playing cards and other games, reading, and gambling (prohibited but all but impossible to eliminate). Chess and Checker tournaments were organized; as were others for Bridge, Pinochle, and Cribbage players. Bingo was another diversion and undoubtedly many of those on board spent time ruminating about what the future held.

Each troopship's Military Department published and distributed mimeographed newspapers daily while their ship was at sea. Usually printed on 8x13-inch paper with pages stapled together, they generally included brief summaries of world news, sports reports, often a Chaplain's column, and news from the ship.

Copies of newspapers from the *General Maurice Rose* and *General William Weigel* have survived in the collection of the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Archive at Texas Tech University. They offer glimpses of day-to-day shipboard life during those ships' voyages to the war zone. For example, "The *Rose* Report to the Sky Troopers" published August 20, 1965, when

←
During the Vietnam War years Troop Class capacity of the *Darby* was approximately 1,200 and another 455 persons could be accommodated in Cabin Class. The Navy Military Department numbered 27.





↑ In May of 1965 while en route to Vietnam USNS *General Leroy Eltinge* suffered a major engineering casualty some 450 miles northwest of Midway Island. The ship was able to limp into Midway where after it arrived the troops on board were transferred to the *Barrett* which took them on to Vietnam. In 1968 the *Eltinge* was converted to the freighter *Robert E. Lee* and operated by the Waterman Steamship Corporation.

the *General Maurice Rose* was en route from Charleston to Vietnam included a potted history of the ship; a cross section diagram of the ship, as well as an interesting article titled “Things to Know” written by one Captain John A. Cash that reads like it was written by someone with first hand knowledge about survival in Vietnam and is worth quoting in its entirety.

Wrote Captain Cash: “The hard route is better than the easy one. The enemy guards the easy ones. We use the hard route to get where we can ambush him on the easy route.” That was followed by: “If it rains while you are on patrol, you are going to get wet so forget about trying to stay dry. Keep your mind on your mission.” And then: “Do not become fixed in your manner of doing things. The enemy adapts quickly to our tactics. Keep him off balance.” And finally: “Don’t fight the jungle. Regard it as a friend; a source of food, concealment, shelter, clothing etc.” Sixty years on one cannot help but wonder how many of those who read those words heeded them and returned unscathed.

The December 13, 1967, issue of “The *Weigel Trident*” from the *General William Weigel* carried news of a change to the ship’s destination from Da Nang to Qui Nhon made necessary because of monsoon season weather conditions at Da Nang. The paper from Sunday, December 17 included a message from the Chaplain and notes about the ship’s noon position, distance covered (458 miles), speed (a very respectable 19.08 knots), distance traveled from Hawaii (4,358 miles), and distance remaining until reaching its destination (979 miles). There were announcements of where and when religious services would be held and the names of upcoming movies which in Troop class would be *None but the Brave* on Sunday and *Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte* the following day, while in Cabin Class, scheduled for Sunday was *Across the Bridge* and for Monday *The Man in the White Suit*.

Of the operations carried out by MSTs transports during the Vietnam War, several stand out. In August 1965 the *Generals William O. Darby* and *Alexander M. Patch* which for many years had shuttled between Brooklyn and Northern Europe, were utilized to move U.S. Army personnel from

Charleston, South Carolina, to Qui Nhon, Vietnam, via the Panama Canal and Long Beach – a voyage that lasted a month. Another trip, this one from California to Vietnam by the *General Patch* followed in October after which the ship returned to the United States via the Suez Canal and Bremerhaven from where it arrived at Brooklyn in mid-December. The *Generals Darby* and *Patch* made another long East Coast to Vietnam transit in 1966; sailing from Boston on July 16, 1966, again via Panama, to Vung Tau where they arrived on August 13. More voyages to Vietnam ensued for both ships. The *General Patch* finally returned to the U.S. via the Suez Canal and reached the East Coast in mid-January 1967 at which point it was laid up at Caven Point, New Jersey, with sisters *Buckner, Darby,* and *Rose* and later, the *Walker*.

Meanwhile, in the Pacific, by the end of 1967 the *Generals Eltinge* and *Blatchford* had made their final MSTs voyages. The retirements of the *Eltinge* and *Blatchford* were followed by the withdrawal of the *Generals Gaffey, Patrick,* and *Sultan* which like the two C4s were “placed in reduced operational status” at the Naval Shipyard at Hunters Point in San Francisco. That left the *Generals W.H. Gordon, John Pope,* and *William*

→ Other than the hull and elements of the superstructure there is little in this picture to indicate that the Waterman Steamship Corporation freighter *Stonewall Jackson* was the former troopship *General R.M. Blatchford*. *Stonewall Jackson* was photographed at the Navy Base in Norfolk, Virginia, in August 1973. The Stores Ship *USS Arcturus* (AF-52) is in the foreground.



Weigel, and the *Barrett*, *Geiger*, and *Upshur* to soldier on, as it were. By 1968 the *Weigel* had been deactivated. The *Pope* and *Gordon* followed not long afterward. The *Barrett*, *Geiger*, and *Upshur* would be the last active MSTS troopships with the *Upshur* bringing down the curtain in 1973.

Afterword

The author is a Vietnam Veteran who arrived in country by sea – not in a troopship but rather aboard a U.S. Navy LST. Previously, as a military dependent I had been a Cabin Class passenger in two MSTS transports and I retain positive memories of my time aboard them. My youthful experience aboard those two troopships was in no way equivalent to that of an adult in Troop Class although those five days aboard that crowded, slow, and stiflingly hot LST were in many ways comparable to a voyage in a troopship.

To paraphrase Dylan Thomas, not all of the troopships that served on the Vietnam run went gently into that good night. The *Generals Eltinge* and *Blatchford* were converted into freighters after being acquired by the Waterman Steamship Corporation (as were most other C4 transports laid up in the Reserve Fleet). The *Barrett*, *Geiger*, and *Upshur* would go on to serve as training ships for the state maritime academies of New York, Massachusetts, and Maine; albeit in the case of the ex-*Geiger*; briefly.

Of the others, the *General William O. Darby* and *General Hugh J. Gaffry* would be utilized as barracks ships by the Navy. Minus lifeboats and davits and much of their cargo handling gear and stripped of their names they were given the ignominious designation of “Miscellaneous Auxiliary”. The former *Darby*, now USS *IX-510* was used at Newport News and Portsmouth, Virginia, while the one-time *Gaffey* as USS *IX-507* served at Pearl Harbor.

The rest of the ships spent their dotages deteriorating in National Defense Reserve Fleet anchorages until being sold for scrap, or in the case of the former USNS *Gaffey*: being sunk as part of a Navy weapons exercise in 2000.

2025 marked fifty years since the United States withdrew the last of its diplomatic and military personnel from South Vietnam. Though fading from memory, the troop transports have not been entirely forgotten. Items from them have been preserved and exhibited by several institutions and memorabilia from the ships is prized by collectors. There are sites on the internet and social media platforms devoted to the ships and while the accuracy of the content of some varies widely, each in its own way offers insight into life aboard the ships.

Last, but hardly least, MSTS troopships live on in the memories of the many thousands who crewed or traveled in them whether to Vietnam or to Germany, Guam, Japan, Libya, Hawaii, Italy, or some other corner of the earth. ●



↑ The *General W.H. Gordon* was photographed in the Elizabeth River passing Norfolk, Virginia, in January 1970. Not long after this picture was taken the *General Gordon* was moved to the NDRF anchorage in the James River, never to sail again.



↑ USNS *Barrett* is seen at Da Nang in August 1967 while docked on the north side of Pier Three. The *Barrett* subsequently became the SUNY Maritime Academy Training Ship *Empire State (V)*. It was scrapped in 2007.



↑ Airliners (AKA “Freedom Birds”) like this Continental Airlines jet supplanted troopships as the prime movers of American Military personnel to and from Vietnam. The author returned from Vietnam in a Continental jet like this one and as anyone who endured such a flight can attest, it was not unlike a voyage in a troopship – long, uncomfortable, and tedious.



1941 JAN 7 AM 6 49

S1 9 SC=CROWNPOINT NY
MISS DEVERE PORTER=

=CABIN 226 CARE S S MONTEREY MATSON NAVIGATION CO
LOSA=

EXCITING JOURNEY HAPPY LANDING PLEASANT MEETING SAFE RETURN

LOVE=
MOTHER.



“Girl Farmer” Takes a Cruise

In early 1941, for those Americans wanting to travel abroad for pleasure, or business, war-torn Europe was out of the question. Some lines held out as long as they could, for example Holland America’s *Nieuw Amsterdam* cruised the Caribbean until Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940.

This left American-flag ships. (Though they would start coming under the control of the U.S. Navy in the summer of 1941 – several months before Pearl Harbor.) U.S. Lines sent their *Manhattan*, *Washington*, and new *America* on cruises to the Caribbean and California. Delta’s runs to the east coast of South America were unaffected, as were Matson’s “White Ships” to Hawaii and the South Seas. Of course, they wore neutrality markings in the form of the U.S. flag on the port and starboard sides, as well as the stern, to make sure the Germans would leave them alone.

Matson’s *Monterey* arrived at LA early on the morning of January 8, 1941, for her first South Seas voyage of the year, following a month-long overhaul in San Francisco that saw the addition of several new rooms. The ship would

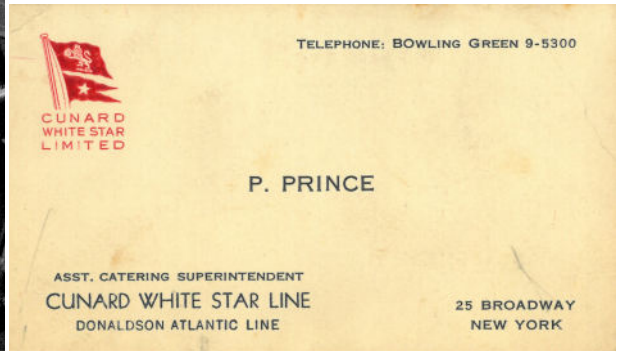
↑
A “bon voyage” telegram from her mother, and a photo of Matson’s *Monterey*, from DeVere Porter’s scrapbook.

All images are from Porter’s scrapbook.



←
Porter indicated this was an accurate depiction of her cabin aboard the *Monterey*.

Percy Prince's business card. Prince shared a dining table with Porter.
↓



depart at 10 p.m. with about 300 passengers, including Commander Louis D. Causey USN, Commander James. P. Olding USN, and Theodore Sizer of the Yale University Art Gallery.

Also sailing was Miss DeVere Porter, of Crown Point, NY. Located in Essex County, in the northeast corner of New York, on the western side of Lake Champlain, the average temperature for January 1941 was about 11.5° F; more than reason enough to hit the South Seas.

Porter was the daughter of former NY Assemblyman Fred Porter, taking over his farming operation when he died unexpectedly in September 1938. And what an operation! At the time of Fred Porter's death, there were 526 acres; 65 devoted to McIntosh and Northern Spy apple orchards. There were 200 head of dairy cattle: Ayrshires and Guernseys; plus almost 400 head of Hampshire-Down sheep. She bragged about having "the finest McIntosh apples in the world." Eight men were on permanent staff, with seasonal workers totaling about 100.

She rode Union Pacific's *City of Los Angeles* from Chicago to LA, arriving with almost half a day to spare before the *Monterey* sailed.

After settling in her first class cabin, number 226 located on the port side of Deck C, she was assigned to the second sitting at table G-7.

One of her dining companions was Percy Prince, an Assistant Catering Superintendent for Cunard White Star. Prior to that, he was an

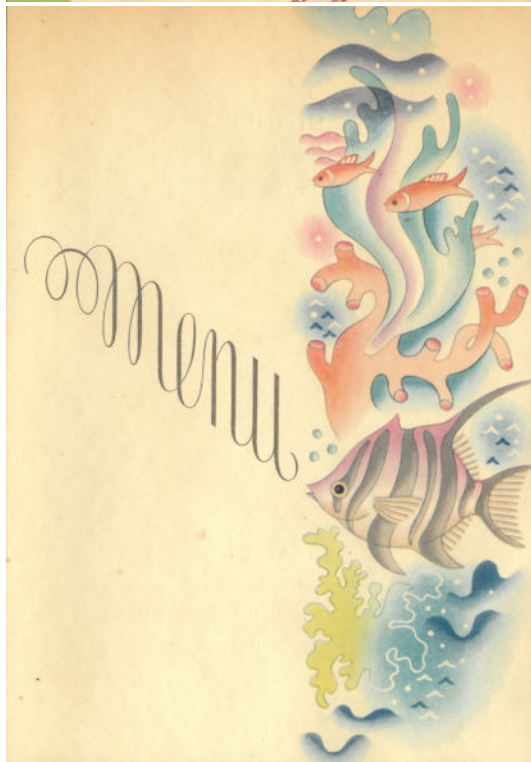
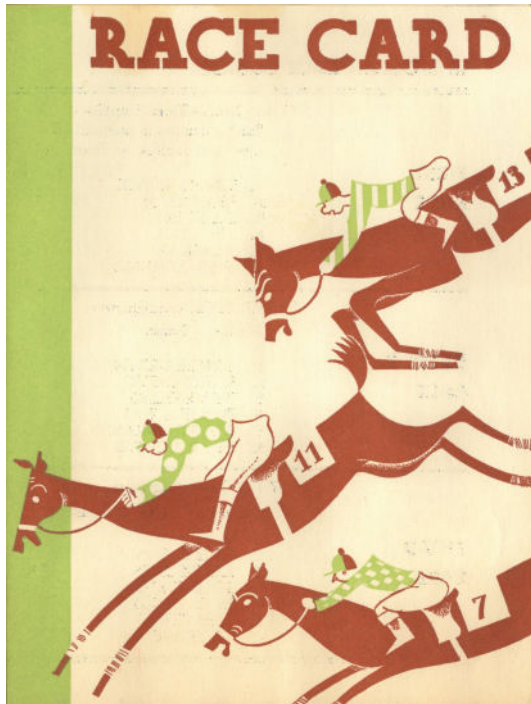


↑
The *Monterey's* passengers could spend the day wandering around Honolulu, or playing on the beach, before continuing on their voyage. Matson's "Pink Palace of the Pacific," the Royal Hawaiian, looms in the background.

←
Porter called this her "alien picture," two of the 129 words she wrote in her scrapbook.

→
 Photo postcard of the Monterey's main lounge showing the ornate ceiling treatment.

The lounge was the site of "races," with "horses" advancing through the roll of the dice. Porter noted that she won \$12.
 ↓



←
 Cover of the menu for the special dinner prepared on January 16, 1941 for Porter and Percy Prince.

amateur footballer, playing center-forward for Southampton, and Boscombe (now AFC Bournemouth); bouncing between the two clubs from 1907-1921. After several years working for Cunard, he moved to New York City in 1930; retiring in 1952. He later moved to New Jersey, passing away in December 1973, aged 86.

While en route to Pago Pago, Porter and Prince had a special dinner on January 16. They dined on:

- Ripe and Green Olives
- Chilled Table Celery
- Malossol Caviar
- Consomme Madrilene
- Grilled Fillet of Perch
- Chateaubriand Garni
- Olivette Potatoes
- Avocado Salad
- French Dressing
- Ice Cream Bomb
- Petits Fours
- Demi Tasse

←
 The *Monterey* crossed the equator twice, January 17 and February 16. Passengers received a certificate upon doing so.

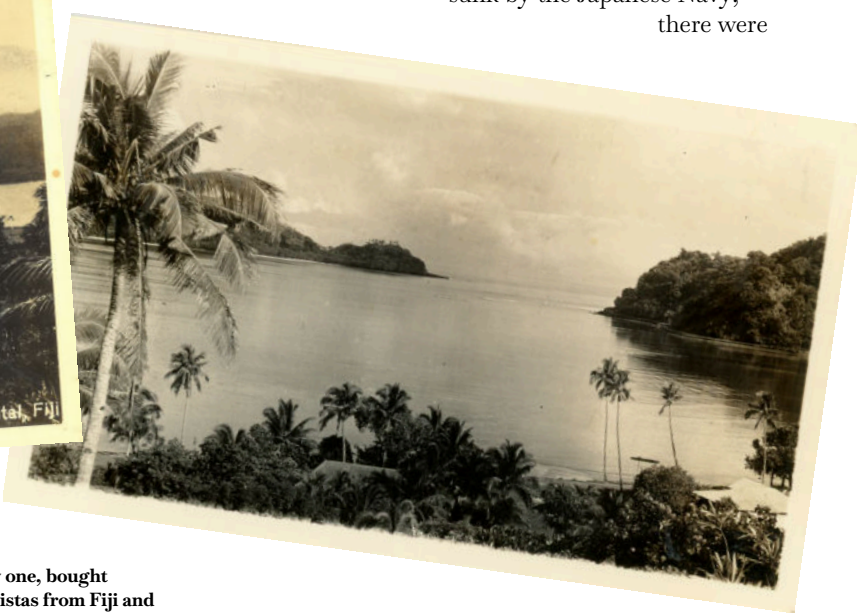


Porter was not a shutterbug, but she did purchase souvenir photos and postcards. A couple had topless native women; in one, three held up a sign saying “Yes. We Have No Bananas To Day” while standing in front of a pile of bananas. Several were of a Matson liner in the South Seas, with and without neutrality markings painted on its hull.

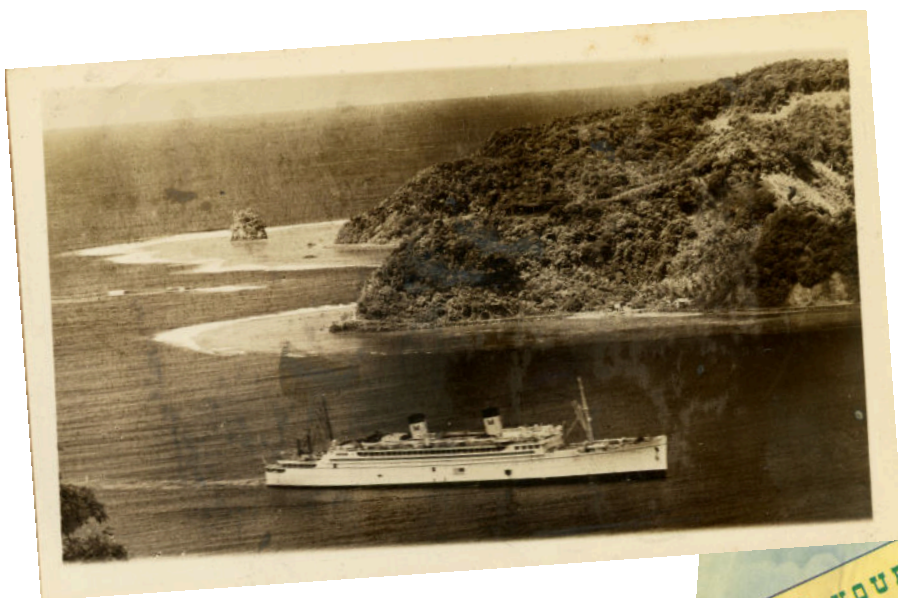
High seas and strong winds prevented the *Monterey* from docking in Auckland, New Zealand on January 24. Winds averaged 30 mph, with gusts up to 50. She was forced to anchor in Rangitoto Channel off Cheltenham Beach for almost 24 hours. After the delay, 60 passengers were finally able to disembark, and 711 bags of mail were offloaded. Before she sailed at 5 p.m., 350 passengers boarded.

The following night, Porter was invited for drinks by W. G. DeGruchy, Chairman of the Oversea Shipping Representatives Association.

She also made the acquaintance of British actress Helen Gilliland, and American film director Aubrey Scotto. Known for her stage work, Gilliland did make an appearance in Universal’s action at sea, *The Storm*, in 1938. Four years later, in November 1942, Gilliland was enroute to perform for British troops in Africa when her ship was sunk by the Japanese Navy; there were



↕
 Porter either didn’t have a camera, or didn’t bring it, and instead of getting a new one, bought several picture postcards, including these vistas from Fiji and Samoa.



← Matson passengers could buy souvenir photos of their ships in their element. Here is a White Ship steaming about Samoa.

Envelope for Porter's airplane ticket from Sydney to Melbourne.



↑ One of the several envelopes inspected by censors during Porter's stay in Australia.

→ Isn't this the cutest little thing?

no survivors. Scotto may have been trying to escape the news of his extramarital affair with an actress.

When the *Monterey* arrived in Sydney, Porter flew to Melbourne for a week. No mention of a reason, but she had contacted a real estate agent for an apartment. The Douglas aircraft covered the 440 miles in 2¾ hours.

Porter was one of several travelers interviewed by local papers upon arriving in Melbourne. Described as a "girl farmer," and "slim, blond, and tanned," she spoke on the average American's interest in the war, saying "They sit glued to their radio, and most of them have the war worked out to the finish. And they are pro-British, too," telling another publication Americans are "three or four jumps ahead of their government;" wanting to do whatever they could to help the British.

The letters sent to Porter while in Australia were opened (and passed) by the censor, as Australia was at war with Germany. When the UK

declared war, they spoke for Australia, for the latter's parliament had yet to ratify the Statute of Westminster, which would have granted Australia independence from the UK's actions.

As a result, Australia was a war zone, underlined by the fact that on the *Monterey's* previous voyage, she brought to the mainland 16 survivors of the *City of Rayville*, an American freighter that had struck a mine several hours out of Melbourne. The ship took a sharp list, was



↑ Another Frank McIntosh menu cover from the Farewell dinner as the *Monterey* left Honolulu on February 19, 1941.

→ A different angle of the scene Matson passengers would take in as they arrived in San Francisco.



quickly engulfed in smoke, and sank in under 45 minutes. Rockets and flares brought local fishermen to their rescue.

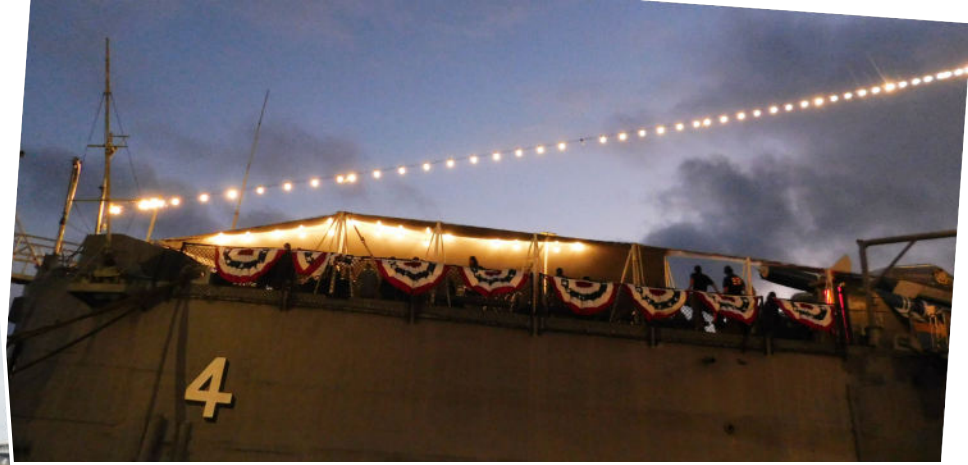
Porter would fly back to Sydney on February 5; staying at The Australia Hotel until the *Monterey* sailed two days later. She just missed the departure of Convoy US 9 which included the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, *Aquitania*, *Mauretania* (II), and *Queen Mary*. There were 194 listed in first class, including a “Radziwell, Princess H.” (sic).

The equator was crossed again on February 16. When the ship reached Honolulu three days later, a letter from Porter’s mother was waiting. She would have lunch and drinks at the Biltmore in LA before disembarking in San Francisco on February 24. On March 2, she would take Southern Pacific’s *Daylight* back to LA, before heading back to Crown Point via Albuquerque, New Orleans, and Florida. ●



↔ Porter saved several pieces of ephemera from California hot spots, including these coasters.





A Hectic 3½ Days in Buffalo

↑
Counter-clockwise from top left ... The three main attractions of the Buffalo Naval and Military Park: the USS *Croaker*, the USS *Little Rock*, and tucked behind the submarine is the USS *The Sullivans*.

The victory markings on the *Croaker's* conning tower.

The *Edward M. Cotter*, the country's oldest operating fireboat, gave us a show during an evening reception on the *Little Rock*.

story & photos
by
Wayne Yanda

I had the pleasure of presenting at the 12th Maritime Heritage Conference and Historic Naval Ships Association Annual Symposium held in Buffalo, NY in late September 2025. The MHC is held every four years, and it was their first gathering since COVID.

The half day prior to the main event dealt with registration, hitting the Buffalo Naval Park, and the welcoming reception at the Buffalo Convention Center. (Sadly, Buffalo wings, carrot sticks, and ranch does not a buffet make.)

Now, the nature of a conference is several venues going at one time, and with over 100 presentations total, a choice had to be made in the event of competing topics.

Lots of good stuff on the first day including the Italian torpedo ram (protected cruiser) *Puglia* by Dr. Bruno Cianci. Fun fact: the *Puglia's* bow section is currently land-locked at the Vittoriale degli Italiani museum.

Stirling Smith, Curator of Navy at the Australian National Maritime Museum, told the fascinating tale of Operation Jaywick, a 1943 raid that saw

over a dozen Australian and British commandos take a motorized fishing boat from Australia to Singapore, sink tons of Japanese shipping, and return safely. Audacious doesn't begin to describe the action, and the boat in question, the *Krait*, is still afloat; part of the museum's fleet.

The day concluded with SS United States Conservancy Members Charles Anderson, William Myhre, and Warren Jones discussing the history of the Big U.

That night's reception was at the Buffalo Naval and Military Park, home to a Gato-class submarine, the USS *Croaker*; a Cleveland-class light cruiser, the USS *Little Rock**; and a Fletcher-class destroyer, USS *The Sullivans*. *The Sullivans* is named in honor of five brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, who served together on the USS *Juneau*, and were killed in action when that ship was sunk on November 13, 1942.

The youngest brother, Al, was the only one who was married, and his granddaughter was on hand to speak during lunch on day two. Later, as I introduced myself as a "fellow Iowegian," I heard someone say, "What is it with all these people from Iowa?" (We're everywhere. *Everywhere.*)

After lunch, Martina Caruso, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, South Street Seaport Museum, covered the restoration of one of the builder's models of the *Queen Mary*, after its return from Long Beach in 2021.

SSHA's Chief Curator of Collections, D. Jordan Benson, gave a most interesting talk on Elmo N. Pickerill. Pickerill studied radio under Marconi, the Wright Brothers taught him how to fly, and he was the Chief Radio Operator on the *Leviathan*. Pickerill's papers are with SSHA.

The final day opened with a roundtable discussion on drydocking historic vessels with representatives from the battleships *Texas*, *Iowa*, and *New Jersey*, the USS *Constitution*, and the submarine USS *Cod*.

I have in my collection a very atmospheric photo of the launch of the *Ville d'Alger*, known as, despite her small size, the "Normandie of the Mediterranean." John H. Perry gave a very thorough history of the *Ville*, and I know he's been asked to speak about her for the World Ship Society - PONY Branch, so watch for that.

My talk was that afternoon, followed by SSHA's Director of Archives and Collections, Astrid Drew, and Stephen Mutty, with their fun and engaging discussion on ocean liner menus.

And though I've watched him on numerous occasions via Zoom, I could not pass up a chance to see Erhard Koehler in person talk about the nuclear ship *Savannah*.

The closing reception was held at the Hofbräuhaus Buffalo, a Bavarian beer hall, complete with an authentic German band. And apparently I'm too old, because it was too loud.

But all in all, it was great fun, and went by much too fast. ●

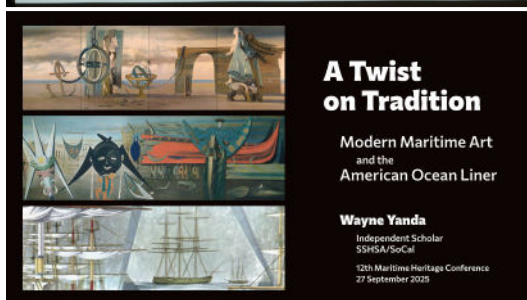
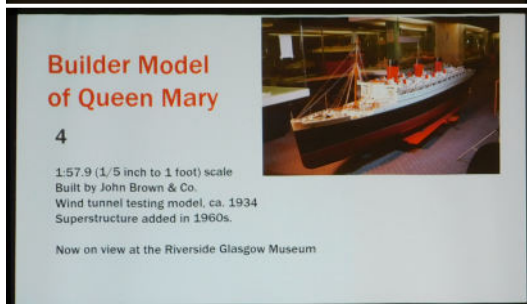


← USS *The Sullivans*, taken from the bow of the USS *Little Rock*.

The Sullivans made news in April 2022, when her hull was breached, taking on water to the point where part of the ship resting on the riverbed. We could only tour the superstructure, as the lower decks are still closed for repairs.



← A couple slides from the many presentations offered.



← My presentation dealt with maritime themes in modern art, and the American liners in which they were installed.

Shown here are works by Willem de Kooning (*President Jackson*), Francesco di Cocco (*Lurline*), and Edmund Lewandowski (*Independence*).



← Proof of life in Buffalo. (I loathe selfies. Looks like I'm wearing one of William Shatner's discarded toupees. And no, I'm not.)

*From 1957-1960, the *Little Rock* was converted to a *Galveston*-class guided missile cruiser.

Celebrating the Life of Bruce Vancil



12/8/1957 - 10/21/2025

The memory of Bruce will continue to inspire us. He was a man of humor and endless good cheer. He was a gentle soul and a good man who had an enduring passion for all things, especially maritime and ocean liner history. He loved his family and friends, was always present, and reminding us of his values. He made a positive impact on all those around him.

As family and friends, let's come together to honor and celebrate his life. By gathering in unity, we pay tribute to Bruce's enduring spirit and ensure that his legacy lives on in our hearts.

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 2-4 p.m.

Mauretania Room on the *Queen Mary*

Please RSVP by 1/20/26 to

treasurerSSHSAocal@gmail.com,

or 310-350-2646 for entry to the ship.

At the family's request ... In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Southern California Chapter of the Steamship Historical Society of America and sent to: SSHSA/SoCal Chapter, 65 Pine Ave, Box 349, Long Beach, CA 90802. Or go to SoCal's website, and click on the donate button on the lower right.



Meet

Dr. Stephen M. Payne OBE RDI
Naval Architect of the *Queen Mary 2*

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

1 pm: "Genesis of a Queen"

Lecture, Queen's Salon

6 pm: Celebration of the Queens

Reception, Queen's Salon

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

1:30 pm: Designer's Tour & Tea

with Dr. Stephen Payne OBE

(limited to 30)

QMI is pleased to offer current and new SSHSA-SoCal members a 50% discount for the 1 pm lecture on February 3.

Details on all events at Qmi.care.

info@qmi.care

951-532-5711





Whew! That Was Close!

story & photo
by
Shawn J. Dake

For many years now I have been photographing passenger ships as they come and go from the Port of Los Angeles. I have watched as the older traditional liners gradually faded from the scene in favor of the first generation of modern cruise ships.

As time passed, those sleek, white vessels continued to evolve into ever larger behemoths packed with every amenity imaginable in what had become floating resorts. They were also packed with more and more passengers as those manifests grew from a few hundred travelers to several thousand guests as the cruise industry grew to maturity.

So it was that on a beautiful, pre-summer day in June 2025, I again found myself on the edge of the Pacific Ocean waiting patiently for two of the largest ships operated by Royal Caribbean International to pass by my vantage point near the giant, 1917-built concrete monolith that is officially known as Los Angeles Municipal Warehouse No. 1.

The primary goal that day was to document the departure of the largest passenger ship that had ever called at L.A. Harbor to date; the 168,666 gross ton Ovation of the Seas. The ship was built in 2016 by the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany. At a length of 1,141 feet, it was also the longest cruise ship to visit the port. In 2025 the passenger count for this ship was 4,180 passengers, based on double

occupancy, increasing to a maximum of 4,905 with all berths filled.

Even with this great size and capacity, it only ranks as the 31st largest cruise ship; a position it has to share with two of its Quantum Class sisters ships. The biggest ship for Los Angeles is far from the biggest in the world these days.

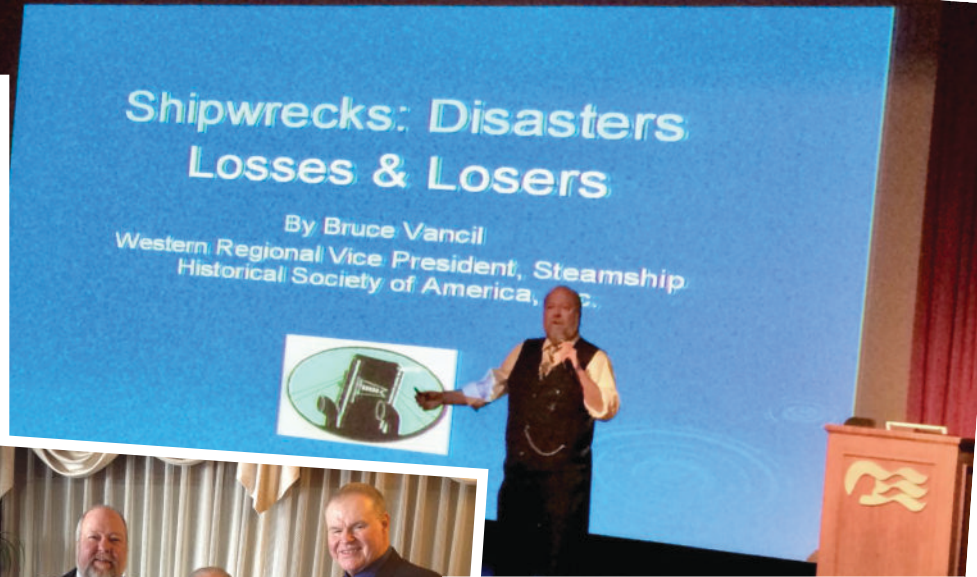
As you can see in the photo, the Ovation of the Seas appears to be about to have a very close encounter with the historic Angel's Gate Lighthouse which has stood at the entrance of the port since 1913.

The unique lighthouse resides at the tip of the 9,250 foot long Los Angeles breakwater, constructed from almost three million tons of large rocks brought across the channel from a quarry on Santa Catalina Island. For well over a hundred years all sorts of ships ranging from sail to steam; then diesels, and soon LNG, have safely passed by this landmark.

The imminent collision was not as close as it might seem. The telephoto lens of my camera compressed the perspective to create the interesting effect of their imagined closeness. Equally interesting is to see the relative size difference between this towering cruise ship, and the 73-foot tall lighthouse.

I hope you enjoy this photo as much as I enjoyed this crystal-clear day. ●





Scenes from our November meeting

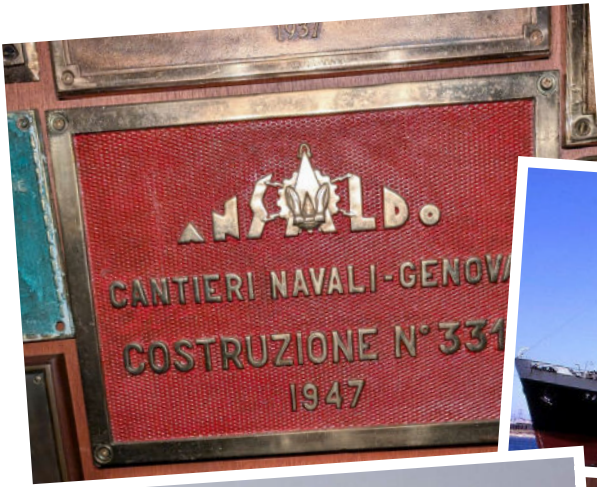
During our fall social meeting on board the *Queen Mary* on November 1, we had a brief tribute to former SoCal President and *Ocean Times* Editor Bruce Vancil. Member Bill Keene organized the tribute, with several other members sharing their photos of Bruce from over the years for the slideshow. Keene, Lovetta Kramer, Captain Terry Tilton, and Scott MacDonald shared their memories of Bruce.

For our main program, Captain Tilton presented “Passenger Ship Builder’s Plates: A Retrospective.” Tilton has a very extensive collection of builders plates from a wide variety of ships, and he shared the history of some of the ships that the builder’s plates in his collection came from.

↑
Bill Keene begins the tribute to Bruce Vancil during SoCal’s Fall Social Meeting in November.

(photo by David Tew)

Several members gave photos for a video tribute, including Gordon Ghareeb, Keene, and Lovetta Kramer.



We want to sincerely thank Captain Tilton for this beautiful and informative presentation. Thanks to everyone who attended.

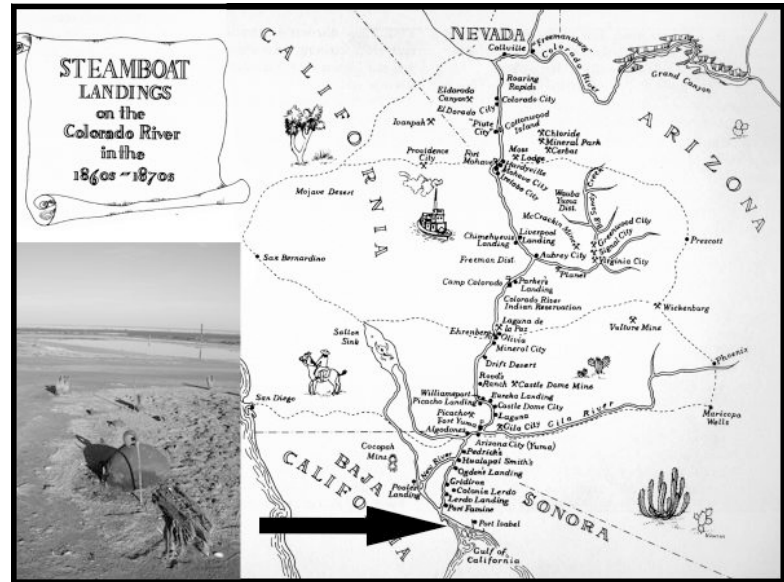
Join us February 7, 2026 for Steve Lawson's presentation: *Port Isabel (Mexico) of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company.*

From 1865 until 1871, Port Isabel was a small, makeshift town with a population ranging from 100 to 300 people. It featured a Wells Fargo office, a Northern Pacific Steamship office, a bank, and a warehouse. Ships from San Francisco regularly called there every 20 days meeting up with some of the 30 steamers that once plied the Colorado River.

Today, very little remains of Port Isabel, with few stories or photographs that still survive. Steve will share the fascinating history of this forgotten town, the riverboats that once navigated the Colorado, and his own adventure to explore the old, long forgotten American port buried in the Mexican mudflats. ●

↑ Just a few of the ships and builder's plates covered in Tilton's presentation on November 1, 2025. (courtesy of Terry Tilton)

↑ Terry Tilton regales the crowd during SoCal's Fall Social Meeting. (photo by David Tew)



The Hawkeye State and the “Great Race of 1921”



Captains Charles Peterson and George Yardley may not have been “those daring young men in their jaunty jalopies,” but on February 15, 1921, they took the *Hawkeye State*, shown here belching smoke in a poor man’s stereoview card, and the *Golden State* out on their maiden voyages; sailing from Baltimore in a “race” to San Francisco.

Built at Bethlehem’s Sparrow’s Point yard and New York Shipbuilding in Camden, respectively, they were the first of the type “535” to enter service. Originally designed to be troopships, World War I ended before any of them were completed.

Switching gears, the United States Shipping Board chose to finish them as passenger-cargo ships. The *Hawkeye State*, and her sister, the *Buckeye State*, went to Matson for a new route: Baltimore to Hawaii, while the *Golden State* was the first of several for Pacific Mail’s San Francisco-Orient run.

According to the USSB’s *Fifth Annual Report*, they could accommodate 260 first class passengers, 300 in steerage, with 466,133 cubic feet of cargo space. While their service speed was 17½ knots, the *Hawkeye State* made over 19 during trials.

Touted as the latest “last word” in shipbuilding, at \$8,500,000, with \$2,000,000 of that slated for outfitting and decoration, the *Hawkeye State* was the world’s most expensive

liner when she entered service. (For comparison, the *Olympic* ran \$7,500,000 just a decade earlier.)

After Havana and the Panama Canal, the Shipping Board instructed them to “take a more moderate pace.” They also ordered the *Golden State* to take on cargo at two Central American ports. And with that, the “race” was done.

On the morning of March 4, the *Hawkeye State* docked at Shed 2, Pier A in Wilmington to much fanfare. According to papers, when she arrived at San Francisco, a “flotilla” of destroyers greeted her; planes circled overhead, and band played. The *Golden State* followed a day later to even more ado, which was fitting as she was basically California’s namesake.

But the Baltimore-Hawaii run was soon found to be unprofitable, and Matson returned the 12,500-ton *Hawkeye State* to the Shipping Board in May 1922. But the ship would soon sail alongside the *Golden State* under the Pacific Mail banner, where they were renamed *President Pierce* and *President Cleveland*, respectively. They were soon bought by the Dollar Line.

As troop transports in World War II, the *Pierce* and *Cleveland* became the USAT *Hugh L. Scott* and USAT *Tasker H. Bliss*. Both were sunk by the *U-130* on November 12, 1942, shortly after Operation Torch. ●



Southern California Chapter members, and *OT* contributors, continue to support *PowerShips* with the Fall 2025 issue.

Member Bill Miller continues his “Lives of Liners” series with “Crossing the Atlantic Onboard American Export Lines.” Miller looks at some of the chicer liners on the “Sun-Lane” route to Europe, including the *Four Aces*, *Independence*, and *Constitution*.

PowerShips Western Rivers editor Charles H. Bogart shares Katharine Wescott’s scrapbook of a fall voyage taken with the Hamburg-American Line in “A 1924 Voyage on *Albert Ballin*.” (Bogart’s “The Sinking of the ss *Kentucky*” appeared in the Summer 2023 issue of the *Ocean Times*.)

In other publications ... SoCal member Wayne Yanda saw his article “Country Clubs at Sea: The Design and Furnishing of a Global Fleet,” about American President Lines’ pre-war *President Jackson*-class, published in 2025’s *Decorative Arts Society Journal*. ●

