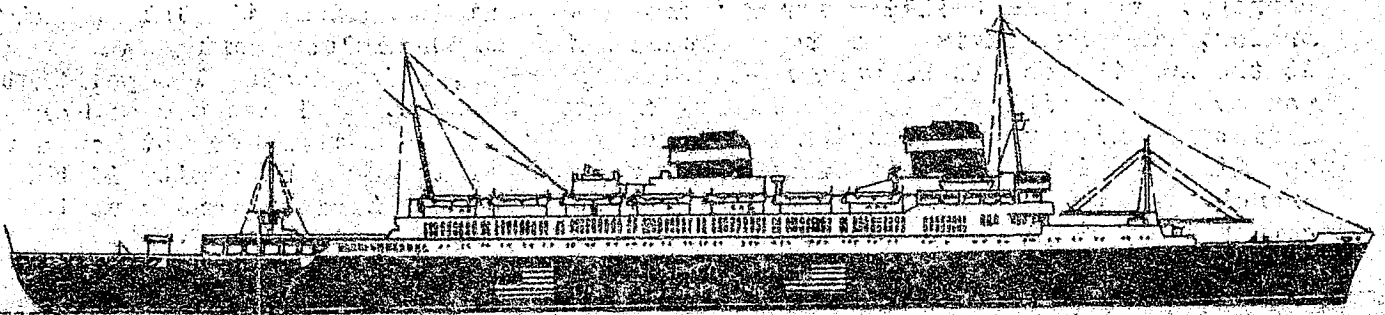
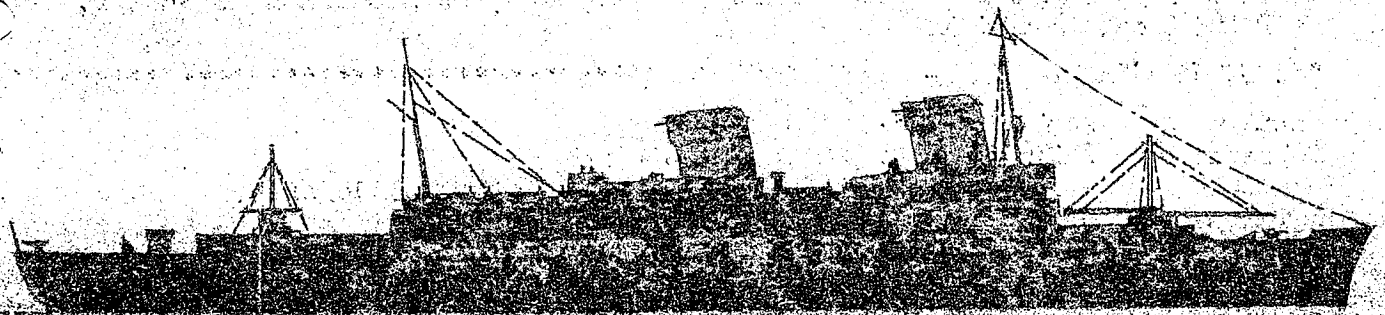
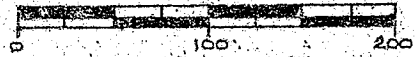


WINTER 1976-77



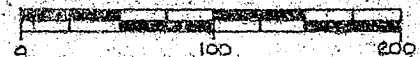
UNITED STATES LINES 'AMERICA' AS COMPLETED & WITH NEUTRALITY MARKINGS

SCALE
Feet



UNITED STATES NAVY TRANSPORT 'WEST POINT'

SCALE
Feet



Published Quarterly by the Southampton Branch of the World Ship Society

Membership of the World Ship Society is £6.00 per year, which includes Southampton Branch membership, the quarterly issues of 'Black Jack' together with the Society's monthly magazine 'Marine News'

'Black Jack' is available on its own at 40p (including postage) for 4 issues

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

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- Projectionist: David F Hutchings

Congratulations to our quiz team - Bernard Ireland, Dave Hutchings, Dave Hornsby, and Frank Phillips for retaining the shield against the Isle of Wight Branch, who have invited us to a return match on the island next year.

At the AGM the committee were re-elected en masse, which means, I hope, that you are happy with the way the Branch is run. However, a plea was made for assistance with the production of 'Black Jack' as the Editors do not now have the time and intend to give up the job next year. It would be a pity if the Branch were to lose a magazine admired throughout the Society. and have to return to a single news sheet.

Mr Streater of Marinart has offered to donate an inscribed tankard to the winner of next year's slide competition, which will probably be held at our November meeting, and has also offered to supply Marinart books (& others) at discounts of up to 25%. Just let the Secretary have your orders and books will be distributed at the meeting following their arrival. Catalogues can also be obtained if required.

To forestall any enquiries, the cost of making special arrangements for the forthcoming Naval Review has been investigated, and the idea abandoned due to the prohibitive cost.

We welcome the following new branch members - Mr J E Bell of Midanbury, Mr J H Brown of Broadstone, Mr W B Laity of Bridport, Mr M O'Brien of Rowner, and Mr R Wall of Thornhill.

****1977 PROGRAMME Jan - April *******

- January 11 Members mini-talks
- February 8 Talk by Mr Swift of Fyffes Group
- March 8 Wellington & its harbour - New Zealand slide show
- April 12 Containerisation at Southampton
- April 23 Annual Branch Dinner - details to follow

ALL MEETINGS 2nd TUESDAY OF MONTH IN Rm 31 LIBRARY BLDG, UNIV OF SOUTHAMPTON

WE WISH A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

+++++
JUST PUBLISHED!!

A history of Portsmouth Harbour & its Ferries by John M Maber - a branch member	A4 size - 50 pages - fleet lists - map & photographs
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available from the author at 24 Littlemead, Ashley, nr Box, Corsham, Wilts,
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WANTED - SEA BREEZES - JAN 1965 to JULY 1965 inclusive, loose or bound, will buy whole year if necessary, reasonable price paid. Nigel V Robinson, 2 Glencarron Way, Bassett, Southampton, Tel: 769497.

COVER ILLUSTRATIONS: America and West Point ex America
drawings by David F Hutchings

2nd in an occasional series on Second Hand Greek Tonnage

AMERICA

By: D.F.Hutchings &
R.P.de Kerbrech

(Drawings by D.F.
Hutchings)

Planned as a replacement for LEVIATHAN (ex-VATERLAND, 1914) and as a running mate for MANHATTAN and WASHINGTON the twin screw AMERICA was the largest ship built in America to that date. The contract was signed on 21st October 1937 and on 22nd August the following year work was started at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company's shipyard in Newport News, Virginia. Designed by the famous firm of naval architects, Gibbs & Cox, the AMERICA was to sport two funnels bearing the firm's distinctive winged top previously fitted to the fore funnels of the SANTA class liners of 1932 and known as "Sampan Tops". These were placed atop two low rakish funnels, giving the liner a sleek streamlined appearance. The actual funnels, the fore one of which was a dummy, were tear-shaped in cross-section and were surmounted by oval bands and these in turn were topped by the sampan tops. Her power plant layout followed the practice of U.S. warships.

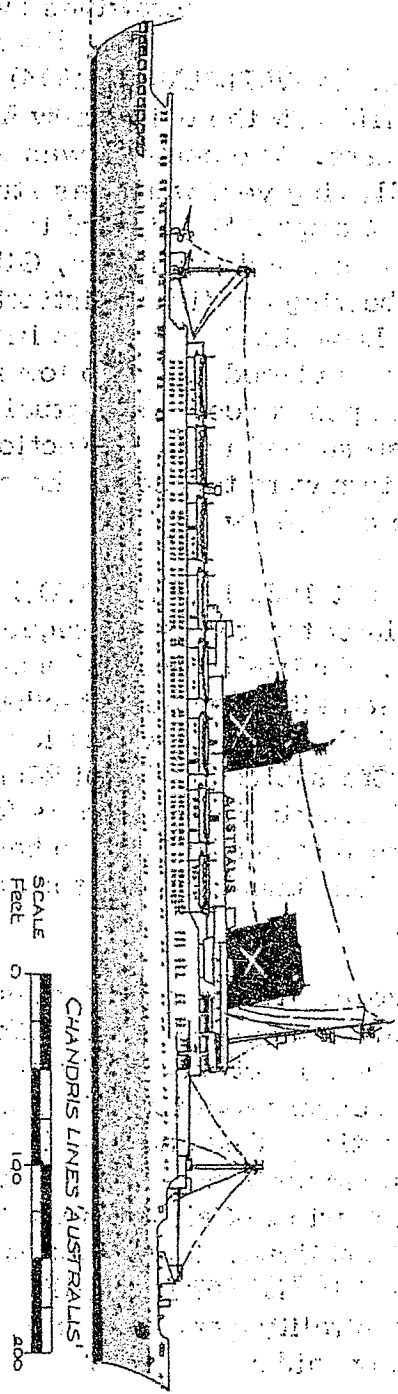
The AMERICA was launched on 31st August 1939 by Mrs. F.D.Roosevelt, the wife of the U.S. President. A few days later the ship's subsequent history was shaped by the outbreak of war in Europe. On trials AMERICA achieved 25 knots but because of the prevailing European situation her intended employment on the North Atlantic was postponed and plans were made to lay her up in the James River. However, these plans were shelved and cruises to the Caribbean were arranged. On a trial run to Maine in 1940 soot was found to be settling on her after decks and she was returned to her builders to have a 15 foot extension added to the height of each of her funnels. This took a lot away from her racy profile but solved the problem.

In August 1940 she began her maiden voyage to the West Indies. The day of her sailing was during a notorious New York heatwave and unfortunately for her passengers her ventilation system ceased functioning. As pleasure boats and tugs gave her a rousing send-off her passengers sweltered in unbearable heat and roamed the vessel in their briefest attire. Once at sea, however, things cooled down; she continued these cruises until mid-1941. Whilst she was employed on cruising, which included one trip to California via the Panama Canal, she had two large "Old Glories" (U.S. national flags) painted on each side of her hull with the legend 'AMERICA - UNITED STATES LINES' in large letters between the flags. These were her neutrality markings which hopefully protected her from any aggressive submarine or raider.

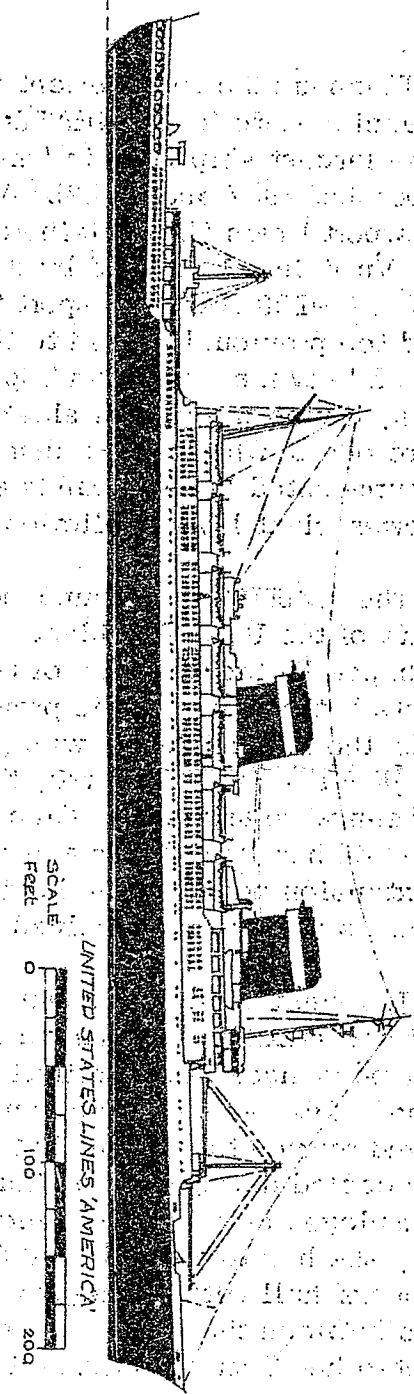
In June 1941 the United States Navy took her over, renamed her WEST POINT and converted her for trooping with the pennant number P23. The 7th December 1941 brought the well planned Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and 4 days later Nazi Germany declared war on the United States. Carley floats lined the Promenade Deck of the WEST POINT and guns were fitted for her own defence. On 28th September 1942 the U.S. Navy bought her outright and between that date and 1946 she carried nearly 400,000 passengers, steamed 500,000 miles and saw service in many oceans.

CHANDRIS LINES AUSTRALIAN

UNITED STATES LINES AMERICA



SCALE Feet 0 100 200 CHANDRIS LINES AUSTRALIS



SCALE Feet 0 100 200 UNITED STATES LINES AMERICA

Early in 1942 the WEST POINT sailed from the Eastern Seaboard to India and the Red Sea and from here she returned to San Francisco via Australia and New Zealand reaching her destination on 23rd April. The following month after completing a voyage to Melbourne, she returned to New York passing again through the Panama Canal arriving at her destination on July 2nd.

On 1st November, following two trips to the U.K., WEST POINT sailed to Bombay via Brazil and the Cape of Good Hope, returning to San Francisco by way of Australia, New Zealand and Noumea, on 31st January. She left San Francisco on 16th February and sailed westwards across the Pacific to Australia and New Zealand and thence on to India, Suez, Massaua, Aden and Rio, finally arriving in New York on 4th May. This marathon journey was followed by two trips to Casablanca and on completion of these she sailed again for Bombay via Brazil and Capetown and then on to San Francisco, calling once more at Melbourne. For the remainder of 1943 three round voyages from San Francisco to Sydney, Honolulu and Milne Bay were completed.

The WEST POINT was not to go without her quota of escapades. When off Singapore Japanese bombs exploded only two hundred feet away and bomb splinters fell on to her decks. The WAKEFIELD (ex MANHATTAN) had small fires started on her during the same raids. Off Brazil a torpedo streaked across her bow and in the North Atlantic, nature tried to achieve what men had failed to do by exposing her to one of the severest storms of the war during which a gunner was killed when the forward gun emplacement was crushed by a huge wave.

In 1944, commencing from San Francisco on 12th January, the WEST POINT sailed to Noumea and Guadalcanal, from San Pedro on 22nd February to Noumea and Milne Bay; from San Francisco on 27th April to Sydney and Milne Bay and from here on to Boston on 12th June through the Panama Canal. This was followed by five successive voyages to the United Kingdom and a voyage to Gibraltar on 6th December terminated at Norfolk, Virginia, on Boxing Day during which trip calls were made at Marseilles and Oran.

In 1945, numerous trooping trips were made from New York, Boston or Hampton Roads to France and Italy with stops usually made at Gibraltar or Oran. On 10th December WEST POINT left Boston on her last trooping duty, through the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbour and on to Manila returning to New York by the same route arriving there on 7th February 1946. On the 22nd of the same month the ship was at Hampton Roads where she was released from troop service. Six days later she was transferred from the Navy to the W.S.A. before being handed back to her owners.

As the WEST POINT the AMERICA was able to carry 8,175 passengers per voyage. She made 35 overseas voyages during her 5 years as a troopship carrying approximately 200,000 troops outbound and half that number inbound, plus prisoners-of-war and "war-brides". She also steamed 500,000 miles without an overhaul to her engines.

On being handed back to her owners she underwent an overhaul and re-conditioning by her builders. This was achieved in a few months at a cost of £1½ million. Her commercial North Atlantic maiden voyage started at New York on 14th November 1946 and ended at Southampton, including a call at Cobh,

after 4 days, 22 hours and 22 minutes at an average speed of $24\frac{1}{2}$ knots - just $\frac{1}{2}$ knot slower than her trial speed. Her later voyages would take a more leisurely seven days and would include calls at Le Havre and Bremerhaven.

Her tonnage, as built, was 26,485 gross (U.S. measurement) but in 1957 this was reassessed to be 33,561 (British measurement). Passenger capacity as built was 543 first, 418 second and 241 third class, but in 1957 these figures were 516 first, 371 second and 159 tourist. Second and tourist classes were combined in 1960 when cruises became part of her itinerary.

In the late fifties a minor diplomatic incident occurred when, in a breach of etiquette, the AMERICA neglected to dip her ensign to the Royal Yacht BRITANNIA which was attending Cowes Week.

The twenty year limit on mail subsidies given by the U.S. Government was fast approaching and no orders had been placed for a replacement vessel. The Blue Riband holder UNITED STATES had joined the AMERICA in the early fifties and it was rumoured that a sister to the STATES would result. But this was not to be. In September 1963 the AMERICA was immobilised during a crew dispute but she continued running the following February only to be placed on the disposal list in October.

D. and A. Chandris made an offer which was accepted and in October 1964 the AMERICA passed to Greek ownership for a reported $\$4\frac{1}{2}$ million (about $\pounds 1\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1964). Conversions were undertaken and these amounted to a further $\pounds 2$ million and took about 7 months to complete. Internally changes in the AUSTRALIS ("Australian Lady") as she was now known, included provision of full air-conditioning, extra bars and swimming pool. Externally she was more built up than previously. The Boat Deck was extended aft and an extra lifeboat was installed on each side, the forward service boat was lowered one deck by removing part of the Bridge Deck. The Promenade Deck was also extended aft and the large open windows were plated in as were the narrower windows on the next lower deck. Later on, during her Chandris ownership, a large "beefle horn" structure was raised on to her after funnel to remove diesel gases. Funnel casings were extended to meet each other. Chandris colouring was employed with the hull being painted white; this was later changed to a light grey. Also, the after mast was later removed.

She was registered in Piraeus in the name of Okeania S.A. (Greek Flag) and she could carry a maximum of 2,300 passengers in one class, the largest liner to do so, in 761 cabins. On 20th August 1965 she made her inaugural Chandris voyage from Piraeus calling at Melbourne and Sydney via Suez, and on 16th October repeated this route but this time starting from Southampton returning via Suva, Panama Canal and Port Everglades. She now runs in conjunction with ELLENIS and BRITANIS from Southampton or Rotterdam but has missed the Piraeus call during the closure of the Suez Canal between 1965 and 1975 but has substituted calls at Cape Town instead. Her registry has also been changed to Panamanian. One can assume that Piraeus and her home country will once again be added to her route now that the Suez Canal has once again re-opened. Let us hope that she will continue sailing during the crises that are besetting world shipping and that she will not join her Greek sisters laid up in Piraeus.

New To The Port

The first in a new series taking a slightly more detailed look at some of the interesting vessels to have called at Southampton for the first time during the last quarter.

OTTO HAHN 16871 grt; 20220 dwt; West German nuclear powered ore carrier
564ft length oa; 77ft beam; 30ft draught; 11000shp 16kts
Completed October 1968 for West German Atom Research Society by
Kieler Howaldtswerke A.G., Kiel;

This streamlined vessel cost about £5m and was launched in 1964. On completion she was the first West European nuclear powered freighter and the third such vessel in the world. Arriving at Southampton on 20 October, she also became only the second nuclear merchant vessel to call at the port following in the wake of the SAVANNAH in July 1964. Whilst navigating officers are accommodated in the narrow five deck amidships bridge, the majority of the 113 crew and research staff are housed in the large aft superstructure.

AVON FOREST 16382 grt; 20220 dwt; British Ro-Ro Newsprint/Car Carrier
683ft oa 75ft beam 30ft dwt; Twin screw Motorship
Completed 1973 by Port Weller Dry Dock Ltd., Canada for Burnett S.S.Co.Ltd.
and managed by Harrisons (Clyde) Ltd.

Following a call for gearbox repairs in June 1976, this red-hulled specialist carrier owned by a subsidiary of Federal Commerce and Navigation (1974) Ltd returned to 35/6 berth on 8 October to load export vehicles for West Africa. Together with her sister LAURENTIAN FOREST, the vessel has two unusual side doors with ro-ro ramps forward and aft over which the ships own straddle carriers load and discharge rolls of newsprint and paper products which are stowed by elevators, whilst when used as a car carrier up to 2200 cars can be carried on 7 decks. Designed to operate with newsprint from the St. Lawrence ports to Avonmouth - where a new £1m building and complex were built - and with export cars in the reverse direction, the service was later switched to Felixstowe.

PACIFIC 23588 grt; 30000dwt; Swedish bulk-carrier;
604ft oa 93ft beam 35ft dwt; 16000bhp single screw Motorship;
Completed July 1971 for Johnson Line by Wartsila, Turku, Finland.

This most interesting car/package timber carrier called at Southampton for the first time on 28 October to load export cars for the USA. Designed to carry up to 2250 cars westwards across the N. Atlantic and 12 million feet of timber eastwards, the vessel together with her sister SUECIA introduced an entirely new cargo handling system. Steel platforms 34ft x 8ft with collapsible corner posts are loaded with cars of timber the "containers" then being stacked two or three high before being loaded into the cellular holds or onto the hatches by one of the ships two 30 ton travelling gantry cranes.

CAR EXPRESS 552 grt; 804 dwt; Dutch Ro-Ro Ferry;
24ft oa 36ft beam 11ft dwt; 1800bhp M.A.N. oil engine 14kts
Completed 1966 by Arnheemsche Sch.Maats., Arnhem as RYNSTROOM for
Holland Steamship Co and renamed 1976 following purchase by Vroon B.V.

Considerably smaller than the previously mentioned new callers, this interesting little vessel arrived at 201 berth linkspar on charter to Algerian National Line (CNAN) on 29 November to load 139 Landrovers for Algiers. Unusual for a ro-ro vessel, the ship has three ramps aft, one to each side and one at the stern. Together with her sister MEDITERRANEAN EXPRESS (553g 748d ex Amstelstroom) which arrived at 49 berth linkspar the following day to load 149 Landrovers, the two vessels operated until March 1974 on the long established routes from Shoreham - Amsterdam and Hull - Amsterdam.

In addition to the car carriers mentioned in "New To The Port", return calls have also been made during the quarter by several of the Nopal car carriers, the Japanese SAGAMI MARU and the Swedish 50000dwt AIDA. First calls have also been made by two vessels managed by Uglands, the ore/car carrier JOHAN U (66/18798g) which can carry up to 1900 export cars loaded through side doors, and the 3200 car capacity TORINITA (70/5356g) which discharged Japanese Datsun cars as a trial shipment in a search for a second U.K. port.

Several new container vessels appeared during September-November including ACE's HONGKONG CONTAINER, the newly completed NEPTUNE PEARL and Franco-Belgians CHEVALIER ROSE, the latter a sister of CHEVALIER PAUL which first called the previous quarter. Also newly completed was the German GULF PIONEER (76/4250g) which was chartered by TRIO for her delivery voyage from Japan to Germany, whilst the 18th vessel on the service KASUGA MARU also arrived for the first time, and next year will be followed by a similar vessel for Mitsui OSK. An unusual and unexpected ACE caller was the ro-ro vessel RODIN (75/13875g) which is chartered from CGM with a sister ROSTAND whilst the four G1 class vessels are lengthened. Several calls have been made by Seatrains' Euro class gas turbine containerships, although most movements have involved the feeder service to and from Havre, which was started by SAGITTA (not on Bugsier service as reported last quarter). A familiar feeder vessel soon took over this service, this being the Sea Containers HUSTLER CHEYENNE (70/1598g) ex Isbrit-76, ex England-74, but she too has recently been replaced by the slightly greater capacity Austrian-flag ATLANTIC KING (72/999g) ex Nad King-75, ex Korneuburg-72.

The general cargo services to the Mediterranean and North Africa have seen the return of several previous callers. In addition to the CAR EXPRESS and MEDITERRANEAN EXPRESS mentioned on the previous page, new callers to load on the CNAN service to Algiers have been the Company's own IBN BATOUTA (73/4813g) and DELLYS (72/1600g) - the latter a sister of COLLO - and the chartered Greek-flag MYRENA (71/3653g) ex Nassau Star-73, ex Lingestroom-72, ex Nassau Star-71. On the DNOL service, new callers have been the Greek-flag WALTER (54/2667g) and the Swedish INGA (58/3859g).

The major items of passenger liner news provided a small dose of good news and a big helping of bad news. Firstly the good news....the Costa Line cruise liner EUGENIO C (66/30567g) is to undertake an old peoples 'Round the World' cruise from So'ton next year....now for the bad news....the Union-Castle/Safmarine passenger mail service to South Africa is to terminate after over a 100 years with the withdrawal of WINDSOR CASTLE and S.A.VAAL in September and October 1977; whilst this sad news was not unexpected in view of the new container service, it is nevertheless a shame to know that two fine liners are being made redundant.

General cargo callers have included....the Portugese BALLUNDO (69/11586g) loading export caravans....Lloyd Brasileiro's LLOYD ANTUERPIA (75/9111g) in the new funnel colours of the Company....the Singapore-flag DONAUTAL (51/2722g) loading for Luanda....Olsens BOURGOGNE (66/1341g) loading a straddle carrier at 110 berth.... and the Russian PORKHOV (67/4676g) re-stowing her slipped timber cargo.

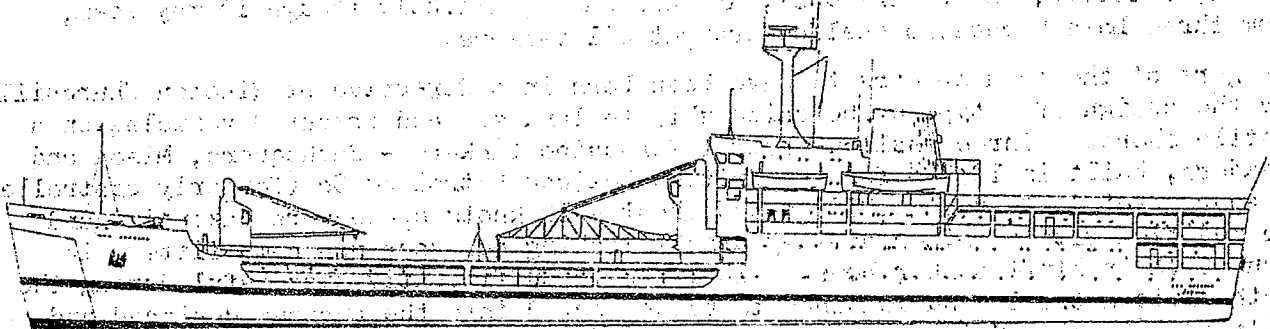
Two grab/suction dredgers have commenced work on dredging the new swinging ground off 206 berth, these being the Danish PROGRESS (62/232g) and SANNA (62/264g) both of which are likely to be at the Port for another 4/5 months, the former having recently completed a three-year contract at Shoreham and the latter a contract in Greenland. Another vessel to call in connection with the new berth was the Stephenson-Clarke master BEEDING (71/1595g) which discharged the first parts of the first new Portainer crane.

Other news in brief....in 7 drydock the latest Sunderland-built 'Panamax' SETJESKA for Yugoslav owners....at 33 berth for repairs RIVER KAROON (48/384g) ex River Avoca-76, ex Stevonia-62 flying the Panamanian flag....discharging wine the French CHIMISTE NANTES (73/1599g)....the JERSEY FISHER impounded at Cherbourg following being towed in with engine trouble....ESSO WARWICKSHIRE and Shells DRUPA to commence a shuttle service to Fawley from the Brent Field in early December (when in full production in 4 years time the field will provide 30% of British crude requirement).

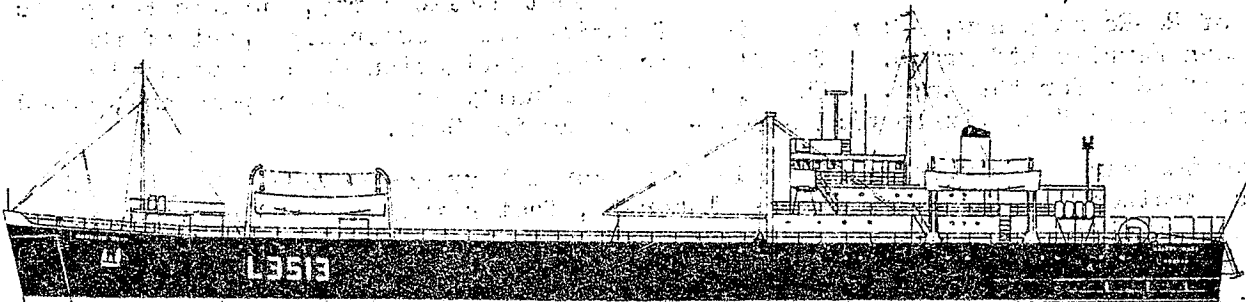
BLACK JACK

WINTER 1976-77

NAVAL SUPPLEMENT



'SIR GERIANT' - one of the 'King Arthur's Knights' logistic ships



EMPIRE GULL - LST

drawings by Nigel V Robinson

BLACK JACK (Series 2)

Supplement No 1

CONTENTS:

King Arthur's Knights
...Early Thornycroft Warships
...An echo from the past
...

Where Jack learned to shoot

The six Marchwood-based LS (L)s, named after King Arthur's knights, plus their elderly relative, the Empire Gull, are descended, unlikely though it may seem, from three Lake Maracaibo shallow-draught oil tankers.

The germ of the idea appears to have been born in a directive of Winston Churchill for the design of a type of beaching ship to land men and armoured vehicles on a hostile shore. Three shallow-draught Maracaibo tankers - Bachaquero, Misoa and Tasajera, built in 1937-8 for the British Mexican Petroleum Co (formerly controlled by Andrew Weir) of about 4,900 gt and about 9-10 knots speed were taken in hand and modified with a rather do-it-yourself looking bow door and ramp fitted, in lieu of their bluff tanker bows. They proved sufficiently successful during the North-African trials and landings to be developed into the purpose designed and built LST (Landing Ship, Tank) constructed in large numbers in the USA and Canada. The Empire Gull, now 30 years old and Canadian built must surely be one of the last, if not the last survivor of these. The great majority were twin screw and diesel-engined, but a few uncompleted ones were engined immediately after the war with surplus reciprocating steam engines (designed) for 'Loch' and 'Castle'-class frigates.

The Atlantic Steam Navigation Co (Col. F Bustard) chartered a number of LSTs

KING ARTHUR'S KNIGHTS-

-by Capt E.E. Sigwart RFA (Ret)

("Empire" - followed by an old White Star name) and started the first Ro-Ro ferry services from the United Kingdom to Eire and the Continent. These, of course, successfully developed into the present Gaelic Ferry, Europic Ferry etc

type of Ro-Ro ship now, after a period of nationalised ownership, part of the European Ferries Ltd group. The Atlantic Steam Navigation Co also managed a group of LSTs for the Army. These, (some originally named after persons), ended up with "Empire" prefix to bird names - hence Empire Gull.

During the war three very special LSTs were Royal Navy designed and built (HMS Boxer, Bruizer and Thruster) - very elaborate, faster than the ordinary LST of 12 knots maximum speed and with mechanically extending gangways out of the bow. They were not very successful owing to their draught and were adapted for other jobs. One survived as a passenger liner conversion - the Ciudad de Santa Fe (Flota Argentina de Navegacion Fluvial) ex Silverstar ex Nilla ex Bruizer.

I remember attending a party (unofficial and extempore) on board Tasajera in Oran after the landing where the ship had a theme song to the tune of a popular song of the time - "She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes, when she comes - She'll be wearing silk pyjamas when she comes etc" - Tasajera's version was "She'll be drawing three feet forward when she bumps, when she bumps, she'll be drawing three feet forward when she bumps". I can't remember the rest, which was probably unprintable anyway!

The LST developed through a number of improved classes and is still used. The British Army version - the "Knights of the Round Table" were built in 1963-68 to a modernised version and have proved successful and popular ships in which to serve. Originally put under British India Line management in lieu of the troopers (which were being replaced by air travel), they were and are based at the Army depot at Marchwood, next to Husband's Shipyard, where they are serviced. In B-I hands they looked very handsome in their troopship colours of white hull and yellow funnel. When it was decided to place the running of Army ships by the Navy (to Army requirements) through the Ministry of Defence, they were placed under Royal Fleet Auxiliary management and operation and painted grey all over. This change took place on Friday 13 March 1970, at a luncheon on board RFA Sir Geraint, attended by representatives of the Army and Navy departments, the Board of Trade (Sea Transport) and officers of Sir Geraint and Sir Tristram, given to members of the British India SN Co in recognition of the more than 100 years service by the B-I SN Co's long association with the Army - initially through the provision of troopships and latterly through the operation and management of the ships now known as LS (L) - Landing Ships, Logistic.

This B-I association had continued since the time of the India Mutiny. As a memento of the occasion, General Sir Anthony Read, Quartermaster General, presented the BLSN Co with a picture of an Indian Mutiny incident. Both the QM General and Mr H.F. Sparton, a BLSN Co director, deputising for the Chairman, recalled highlights in this long association. Mr J. Widdecombe C.B., OBE., MBIM, Director General of Stores and Transport (Navy) welcomed the additions to the RFA fleet and assured the Army that the Navy would continue to provide the same high standard of management as the B-I had done - the aim being to do better. Apart from a few minor difficulties the transfer was effected smoothly.

A number of B-I officers chose to join the RFA service. (This transfer information by courtesy of the RFA News Letter No 18, July 1970).

Details of the ships are - 6,600 tons gross (approx), 2,400 tons deadweight (approx). 412 ft oa x 58.75 ft beam x 13 ft draught. Two diesel engines, twin screw, bow thrust propeller. 9,400 bhp, 17 knots (a great increase on the original LST speed of 12 knots). Beaching trim is arranged by powerful ballast pumps.

Pennant	Name	Builder	Completed
L 3029	Sir Lancelot	Fairfield	1.1964
L 3005	Sir Galahad	Stephen	12.1966
L 3004	Sir Bedivere	Hawthorn Leslie	5.1967
L 3005	Sir Tristram	Hawthorn Leslie	9.1967
L 3027	Sir Geraint	Stephen	7.1967
L 3036	Sir Percivale	Hawthorn Leslie	3.1968

They carry 340 troops with all necessary armoured vehicles. Bow and stern doors are fitted and the main deck hatch lowers down to form a ramp up which the vehicles can drive on to the upper deck. A 25-ton crane is also used for lifting vehicles on to the upper deck and loading and discharging are performed exceedingly rapidly. Accommodation is excellent, both for ships personnel and Army officers, the latter in 4-berth cabins. The troops have a very large and well equipped recreation room and sleep in dormitories at the upper sides of the "garage space". Closed circuit television is fitted in order that the bridge personnel can see what happens at the bow and stern doors. Each ship carries a Military Liaison Officer who organises the Army side.

The ships also work with NATO armies and exercise in all quarters of the world - Far East, Pacific and Europe. Due to their light draught and flat bottomed shape they have a lively motion entirely of their own in rough seas. On a coastal voyage in Sir Percivale (Marchwood-Rosyth-Harwich) I was told by the ship's doctor that on a recent rough trip an Army padre was offering prayers for the safety of the troops - at least, that was how he started. Very shortly indeed he was despairingly attempting to pray for his own - the troops forgotten! Probably apocryphal! The Empire Gull is solely a transport ferry for the Army of the Rhine, mainly via Antwerp and Zeebrugge. She was completed in October 1945 by the Davie SB Co., Levis, Quebec as LST 3523, became HMS Trouncer in 1947 and then Empire Gull with the slightly different pennant No 3513 in 1956. On measurements 347 ft x 55 ft she has a gross tonnage of 4,260.

Early
Thornycroft
Warships

by W.J. Lawes

John Isaac Thornycroft was born on 1 February 1843 in Rome where his parents were studying Italian art. His father was a keen amateur engineer, a factor that no doubt encouraged John.

Thornycroft's first vessel was a steam launch built in 1862. In 1864 the firm of John I Thornycroft started to build launches at Chiswick on the Thames and soon showed that they had the capability and knowledge to build fast vessels. Much of the success of these steam launches lay in the inventive and scientific

mind of John Thornycroft.

The American Civil War had introduced the torpedo as a Naval weapon. Other countries were rather slow to adopt this new weapon, but during the last quarter of the 19th century there was a rush by navies, large and small to acquire small, fast vessels capable of launching torpedo attacks against capital ships. Thornycroft's first torpedo-carrying launch was ironically called No.23 and was built for the Norwegian Government in 1874. From this date the firm of J.I. Thornycroft became one of this country's leading builders of Torpedo Boats and later of Torpedo Boat Destroyers. In the field of Destroyer building they have completed nearly 100 vessels since their first, HMS Daring of 1893. This total is more than any other British company specializing in this type of ship.

In 1904 Thornycroft moved to Woolston and took over the shipyard of Mordey, Carney & Co. They have developed the site into their present day shipbuilding concern of Vosper Thornycroft.

Two of the last vessels to be built at Chiswick were the 'River'-class destroyers HMS Chelmer and Colne of the 1903-4 programme. These ships had a displacement of 560 tons and measurements of 222 ft bp x 23.10¹/₂' and a depth of 15 ft. Propelling machinery consisted of 4 cyl triple expansion driving twin screws. There were four Thornycroft-Schultz coal-fired boilers. The complement was 57 (31 stokers) and the armament 1 x 12 pdr, 5 x 6 pdr (later 4 x 12 pdr) guns and 2 x 18 in torpedo tubes. The Chelmer was launched 8 December 1904. On trials she reached 25.7 knots on 8,024 ihp. Colne's launching date was 21 February 1905 and her trials produced 25.57 knots with 7,992 ihp. The contract price for each ship was £75,500 and yard numbers were 371 and 372 respectively.

Although the ships of this type were referred to as a 'class', they differed considerably in appearance. At the time they were ordered, the Admiralty issued basic specifications for ships, but left it to individual builders to design the vessels they contracted for. Some of the 'River'-class were twin funnelled, others appeared with four funnels. Most builders had their particular features so that the origin of a vessel was easily discernable. The Chelmer and Colne were recognisable because of their large funnels with prominent steam pipes on the foremost one.

The 'River'-class as a whole marked a complete change in Destroyer design. Earlier ships had been built with flush decks and turtle-back forecastles. Largely influenced by the German's 'S.90'-class, the 'River'-class ships introduced the raised fo'c'sle, a bridge built over a chart house and a 12 pdr gun mounted on top of the conning tower. The Chelmer became the first Thornycroft ship to be built from high tensile steel instead of mild steel. These improvements greatly improved the seaworthiness of the ships and increased the accommodation for the crew.

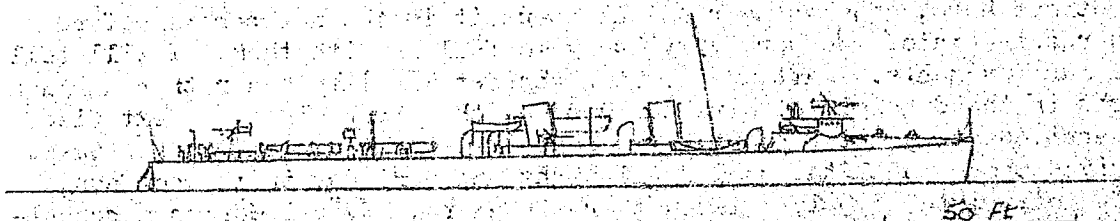
At first the 'Rivers' were criticized by some Flag Officers due to their increased silhouette, cost and apparent lack of speed when compared with some of the earlier 30-knot turtle-backs. In practice it was found that the new ships, with their raised-fo'c'sle could maintain speed in a sea-way much easier than the earlier vessels. Their increased structural strength was shown when Exe and Dee passed through a typhoon while on passage to Hong Kong in August 1905.

The Chelmer and Colne spent most of their time abroad. In 1911 they went to the Mediterranean and in 1913 to China. During the First World War they returned to the Mediterranean. While in this sea the ships would have been painted white, with grey upperworks, for tests had shown that ships painted in Home Fleet grey were 150F hotter in warm conditions. Both Thornycroft destroyers were in the Dardanelles. The Chelmer, in particular, seems to have had a busy time as the rifling in her forward 12 pdr was worn away during bombardments of Turkish positions. When the battleship Ocean was mined the Chelmer went alongside to take off the crew but was also mined. However, by rigging collision mats, including some from the battleship Lord Nelson, she managed to reach her depot ship at Tenedos for repairs.

Battle Honours gained by these ships were:

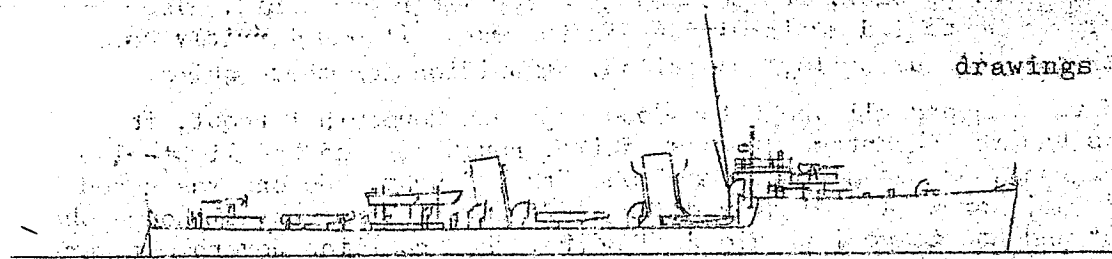
Chelmer	- Dardanelles 1915
Colne	- Tsing-Tao 1914
	- Dardanelles 1915

The Chelmer was sold for scrap in 1920 and the Colne likewise, in 1919.



HMS STAG as in 1899.

HMS Stag was typical of the Thornycroft built 30-knot, turtle-back destroyers that preceded the 'River'-class vessels.



HMS COLNE as in 1909

HMS Colne is shown after being re-armed with an all 12-pdr gun armament. Boats carried by these ships included a whaler and dinghy on davits and two or three Berthon Collapsible Boats handled by a derrick on the foremast.

Note: The 36 ships laid down as the E ('River'-class) can be segregated to four groups.

Nine were built by Palmers SE & Iron Co on the River Tyne were given four funnels in twin sets, the sets being placed quite close:

HMS Cherwell, Dee, Erne, Ettrick, Exe (1903). Rother, Ure (1904).
Swale, Wear (1905)

Six Yarrow, Glasgow-built vessels also had four funnels, but the twin sets were spaced;

HMS Teviot, Usk (1903). Ribble, Welland (1904). Gala, Garry (1905)

Six from Hawthorn Leslie on the Tyne had only two stubby funnels:

HMS Eden, Waveney (1903). Boyne, Derwent, Doon, Kale (1904)

Two, taller funnels, but not standard size were given to the remainder of which Cammell Laird built nine - HMS Arun, Blackwater, Foyle, Itchen (1903). Liffey, Moy (1904). Ouse (1905). Stour, Test (1909); J S White of Cowes built Ness and Nith (1905) and Thornycroft built Kennett (1903). Jed, Chelmer (1904) and Colne.

Now and again treasured possessions come to light. The following letter was written by Band Corporal Fred Jamieson of St Denys, Southampton to his mother in the winter of 1914 - the Great War then being four months old. Corporal Jamieson subsequently lost his life in the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 when HMS Invincible was sunk.

HMS Invincible
Falkland Islands
South America

Dear Mother,

Dec 11th 1914

Just a few lines to say that I am alright and well. We are now allowed the opportunity of writing more as they have dropped the censorship. Of course you know that we have been in action with the German fleet out here, you having read all about it in the newspapers before you receive this. We were very lucky to fall in with them. I will tell you our movements. After we left Devonport Nov 11th had rather a rough night in the Channel but have had good weather ever since. Next place we arrived at was St Vincent, Cape Verde Islands belonging to Portugal. Arrived there the 17th, coaled all night and next day in the hot sun, left again 18th. Only allowed there 24 hours, several German merchantmen in there until the end of the war. We crossed the line equator on the 21st. We held the usual celebrations of Father Neptune, great fun and sport that. On the 26th we reached some rocks off Cape St Roque Brazil. There we joined up with several cruisers, Carnarvon, Cornwall, Kent, Defence, Glasgow, Bristol and an armed liner Macedonia, also colliers. We coaled again all day in the sun. It was terribly hot. We took out with us mails, provisions, ammunition for these ships.

Here we heard all about the Good Hope and Monmouth turnout, the Germans had the advantage of these ships, rough sea and bad light-also heavier guns, it was nearly sunset when they fought. No one was saved out of their crew. The Glasgow cleared off out of harms way although she got hit and had to go into Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian Government were very good to them and allowed them to stop in dock 10 days to do repairs etc. The Glasgow's men that came on board us seemed very pleased to see our two big ships (Invincible and Inflexible). They felt greatly relieved, it put new life into them. They had five men injured in the Coronel action, they reckoned we would not see the Germans off, but that has been done. The Scharnhorst was the best gunnery ship in their navy.

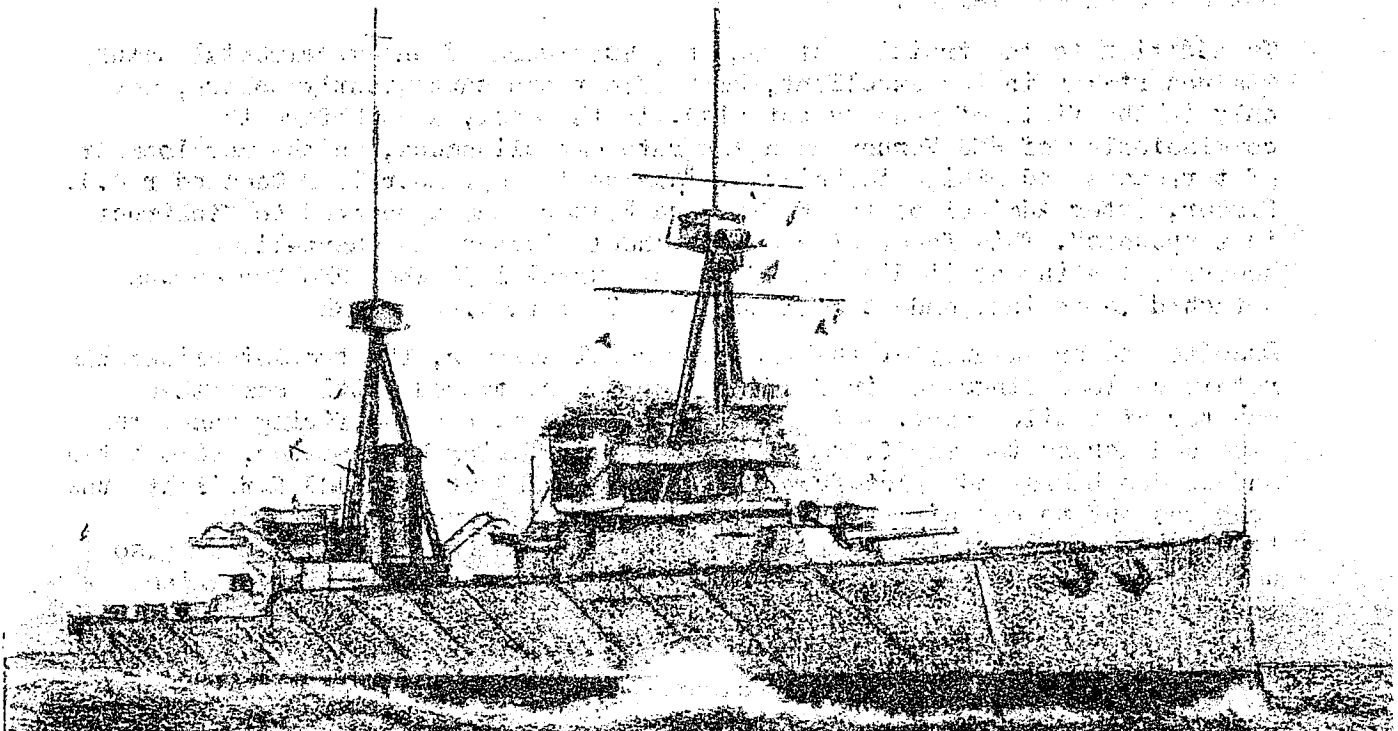
We left here with the fleet except HMS Defence on the 28th. Our next place was port Stanley, Falkland Isles. Arrived December 7th at 10 am. The smaller cruisers started coaling as some of our colliers had arrived. We two big ones started next morning at 6 am. We managed to get in roughly 360 tons when we had the news of two German ships outside, from the Bristol which was patrolling outside at sea. The Scharnhorst and Nurnberg approached within 19,000 yards and the old battleship Canopus opened fire and they turned and ran. We discovered three more ships on the horizon. Then we had to move.

We had just finished breakfast 8.30 am. We fell in and the Commander told us that the Germans were outside. A mighty cheer went up, I shall never forget it. We cast off the collier, stokers went below to raise steam, band and marines cleared away coal bags and barrows, half the seamen got everything clear on the upper deck for action. Next they sounded action stations and we all went to our posts. At 10.15 am we were steaming out after the Germans and when they saw our two big ships which they never dreamed were present they nipped like the devil, but still their speed was no match for ours and we reached 28.3 knots at one period so you can tell how our stokers worked. We were gradually creeping up on them when, at 12.55 the Inflexible fired a round at 17 000 yards.

We started at 1 o'clock exactly. We managed to reach them after a few rounds and kept on peppering them. We set the Leipzig on fire and left her for our smaller ships to finish off, then we went for the German flagship, Scharnhorst. We fought her ourself and sank her about 4 pm. The weather was beautiful all the morning, but later in the afternoon it turned to rain and very cold.

We next turned our attention to the Gneisenau and finished her off after the Inflexible had put a few hits into her, she sank just before 6 pm. Then the worst part of it began. We steamed up to the poor devils in the water, 200 odd, I should imagine. We ceased fire and all hands that could be spared went on deck to assist in lowering boats that were serviceable. We had to leave our picket boats in harbour at Port Stanley. We lowered four boats and picked up 84 men and 7 officers of the Gneisenau - no one was saved from the German flagship, we could not stop for them - our attention was for this one. Fourteen men were buried next day, three died of wounds, cold and exposure. The water was 48°, it was bitter cold with drizzly rain. It was horrible to hear their cries while in the water clinging to wood, hammocks and other wreckage. I saw many a man sink. I hope I never see the like again. If this is what war is like, I hope it will soon be over. We applied artificial respiration and brought a few round that were senseless, but some died, while others were able to walk. Of course, the Band were to the fore carrying injured and dead ones, we were on the job until 1 am. We saved a German surgeon who happened to be unhurt and he assisted our three doctors with the injured.

Our ship had about 35 hits into her, a shell broke a 4-inch gun in halves, shells exploded in the wardroom, canteen and cabins occupied by the Parson and Major of Marines, also in the seamen's heads. We had several holes below the water-line, but nothing serious. Only two of our crew were hurt, these being injured by flying splinters, marvellous considering everything. Great praise is due to Admiral Sturdee for the way he manoeuvred us. This is all this time.....Fred.



The battleship HMS Invincible was completed in 1908 by Armstrong Whitworth & Co on the Tyne. She was 567ft in length, had a displacement tonnage of 17,250 and her quadruple screws with engines developing 41 000hp, gave her 25 knots. Her original armament consisted of 8 x 12 inch, 16 x 4 inch and 1 x 3 inch guns. She was hit and blew up during the Battle of Jutland, 31 May 1916 with a large loss of life. She and her sisterships Indomitable and Inflexible were the first battle cruisers.

drawing by Eric Law

WHERE JACK LEARNED TO SHOOT

by

Lt. Cmdr John M Maber RN.

In Nelson's time the British seaman gunner learned his task afloat, at sea with the fleet. There was no time serving engagement and seamen were recruited, or 'pressed' for a ship's time in commission only, after which they were discharged hopefully to collect wages due by ticket from the Navy Office in Somerset House, London. All too often of course, discharged seamen lost the greater part of any monies due by cashing their tickets at a ruinous discount outside the dockyard gate in Portsmouth, Plymouth or Chatham. Not until 1853 did the Navy turn to a long service form of engagement for seamen but in the meantime, in 1830 a Naval Gunnery School had been established at Portsmouth due chiefly to representations made to the Admiralty by General Sir Howard Douglas, author of "A Treatise on Naval Gunnery" (1819).

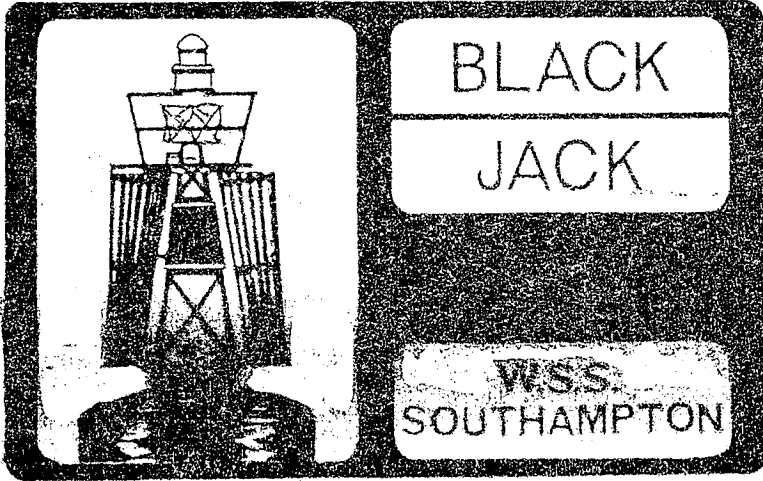
The school was founded in the 47-year old two-decked battleship Excellent, moored in Portsmouth Harbour off the entrance to Fountain Lake to the north of the dockyard. Target practice was carried out north-westwards across the mud flats towards Fareham Creek and in later years a wooden stage mounting three guns was moored abaft the Excellent to serve as a training battery. In addition, a small craft armed with four 9 pounder guns and known as the 'Rolling Motion Boat' served to provide practical instruction in the art of gunnery fire control from a ship rolling in a heavy seaway.

In the 1860s the dockyard was considerably extended, much of the spoil excavated from the present No 3 Basin being used to reclaim that area known today as Whale Island. At this time the gunnery school was accommodated in the former First Rate line of battleship Queen Charlotte (renamed Excellent in 1859), but in the 1880s the training facilities and accommodation were moved progressively ashore as the 'island' expanded and in 1892 the old hulk was sold to J Read of Portsmouth for demolition. Today her figure-head, a bust of Queen Charlotte, graces the wall of one of the training batteries on the island.

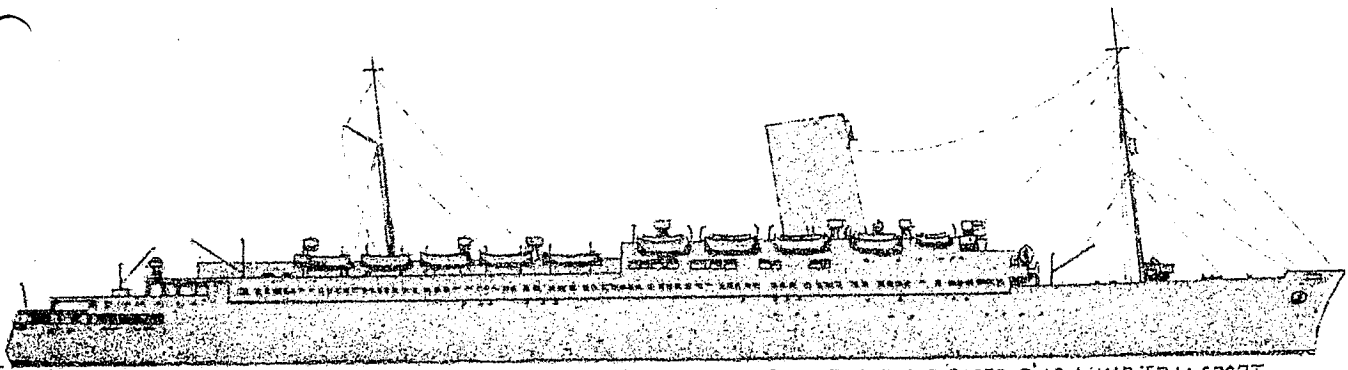
In addition to the training of gunners, much work of an experimental nature was undertaken in the Excellent, both afloat and subsequently ashore, not only in the field of gunnery but also, in the early days before the commissioning of HMS Vernon as a separate establishment, in the development of torpedoes and mining techniques. Thus on 19 September 1872 Commander J.A. Fisher, later Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher, was appointed to "instruct in torpedoes". This facet of gunnery school history was short-lived, however, lasting as it did only from 1872 until 1876 when HMS Vernon was detached as an independent command under Captain W. Arthur RN.

Despite the break away of the torpedo school however, the two establishments retained close links and in fact the hulks were moored little more than a quarter of a mile apart. In particular, both shared the firing range that extended across the mud flats and shallows bordering Portchester, Bomb Ketch and Spider Lakes and apart from live firings conducted by HMS Excellent, the area was put to use as a testing ground for the 'spar' and automotive torpedoes which were then being introduced to the fleet. HMS Vernon also undertook defensive mining trials, putting into practice the developing ideas which were to lead eventually to the controlled mining techniques of the Second World War.

It is now many years since the backwaters of Portsmouth Harbour echoed to the exercise of the great guns and to the explosive blasts accompanying mining trials and early experiments with 'spar' torpedoes but, to this day, quantities of round shot are recovered from the mud flats, as a reminder of the Royal Navy of one hundred years and more ago. The hulks too are long gone although it was not until 1923 that HMS Vernon finally followed the gunnery school by moving ashore to its present quarters on the site of the old Gunwharf near the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. Here, too much has been preserved of the old navy, including figureheads from the hulks which have been made up the Vernon establishment afloat.

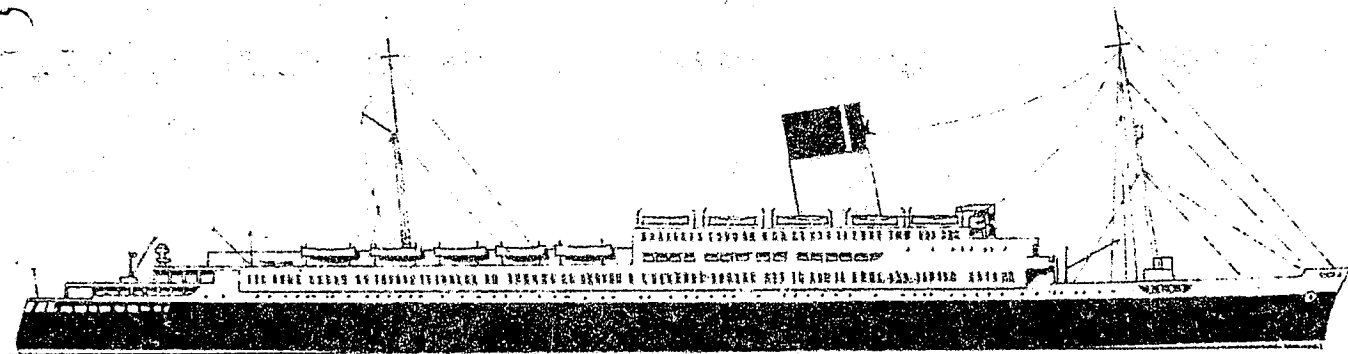


AUTUMN 1976



COMPAGNIE SUD ATLANTIQUE PASTEUR AS A WAR TRANSPORT

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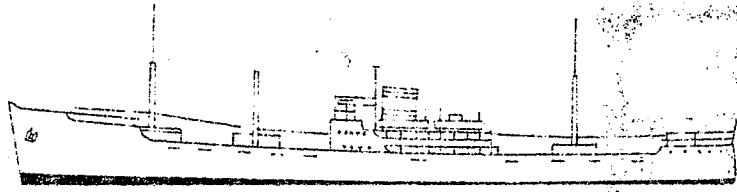


COMPAGNIE SUD ATLANTIQUE PASTEUR PRE-WAR APPEARANCE

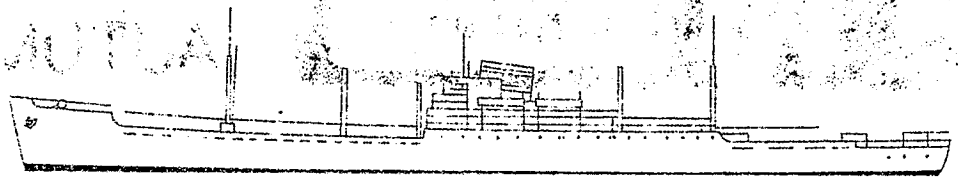
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EDITOR'S NOTE

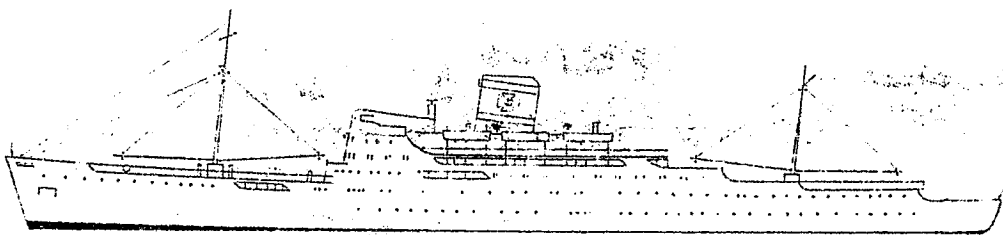
The drawings on this page and on the reverse are those which had to be omitted from the Autumn issue of "Black Jack" due to a mechanical failure, but which were included in the Index to Volume 1.



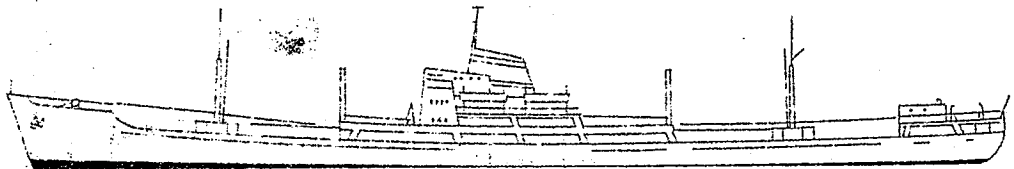
RIO SANTIAGO 1949



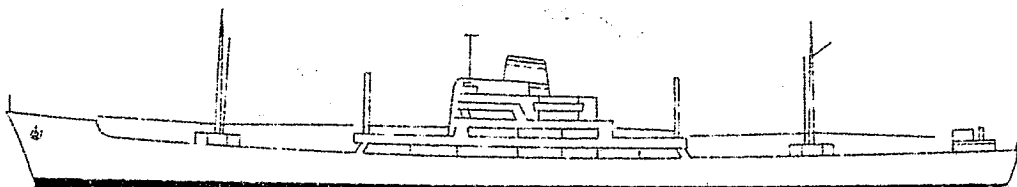
RIO BERMEJO 1950



LIBERTAD 1950



RIO CORRIENTES 1963



LAGO ARGENTINO 1964