

= USS Freedom (ID @-@ 3024) =

USS Freedom (ID @-@ 3024) was a cargo and transport ship in the United States Navy during World War I. Originally SS Wittekind for the North German Lloyd line , the ship also served as USAT Iroquois and USAT Freedom after being seized by the United States in 1917 .

SS Wittekind was built in Germany for the Bremen ? New York service of the Roland Line service of North German Lloyd , and was the sister ship of SS Willehad . In March 1900 Wittekind was lengthened because her cargo capacity was found lacking . Later that same year , Wittekind was among the first transports to carry German Empire troops as part of the Eight @-@ Nation Alliance intended to put down the Boxer Rebellion in China . In August 1914 , at the start of World War I , the ship was interned at Boston in the neutral United States .

When the U.S. entered that conflict in April 1917 , Wittekind was seized and turned over to the United States Shipping Board . Renamed Iroquois , the ship was chartered to the United States Army as a cargo ship after a refit , and , in 1918 , was renamed Freedom . In January 1919 the ship was commissioned into the United States Navy , and carried almost 5 @,@ 000 troops home from Europe before her decommissioning in September . Held in reserve for transport duty , the ship was laid up for five years before being scrapped in 1924 .

= = SS Wittekind = =

SS Wittekind was built by Blohm & Voss of Hamburg for North German Lloyd ? s Roland Line , which was a fortnightly steamer and freight service from Bremen to New York . Launched on 3 February 1894 , Wittekind ? named for Wittekind (c . 730 ? 808) , the Duke of Saxony ? and sister @-@ ship Willehad were the first twin @-@ screw steamers expressly built for North German Lloyd . The new liner sailed on her maiden voyage to Hoboken , New Jersey on 14 April .

Wittekind and sister @-@ ship Willehad were both quickly found to be deficient in cargo space , and plans were made to lengthen both vessels (though Willehad was never lengthened) . Wittekind ' s bridge was moved forward and a cargo hatch was installed behind it . After this , the ship was cut into two parts forward of the bridge 's new position , and a new 18 @.@ 29 @-@ meter (60 @.@ 0 ft) section was inserted , which greatly increased the cargo capacity . Sources disagree as to where the procedure was performed with one reporting it was performed at the Seebeck Yard in Germany , while another claims it was done by Tyne Pontoons & Drydock Co . , at Newcastle . Wherever the work was performed , it was completed by March 1900 .

On 3 July 1900 , Wittekind sailed from Bremerhaven with Frankfurt as the initial transport ships to depart with troops of Germany ? s contribution to the Eight @-@ Nation Alliance intended to put down the Boxer Rebellion in China . Wittekind remained in naval service as a transport and hospital ship through late October 1901 . After her naval service ended , Wittekind sailed variously to Baltimore , Maryland ; Galveston , Texas ; Montreal ; and ports in South America through mid @-@ 1914 .

At sea and headed for Montreal when the United Kingdom declared war on the German Empire , Wittekind instead headed for Boston and safety in the then @-@ neutral United States . The steamer ? carrying a cargo of lead and coal tar products reportedly worth \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 ? slipped past British cruiser Essex in a dense fog near Sable Island . Wittekind ' s wireless operator calculated that the ship passed fewer than 10 nautical miles (19 km) from Essex . The steamer was interned by the U.S. and her Canadian @-@ bound passengers ? 18 cabin- , and 305 steerage @-@ class who were not allowed to remain in the United States ? were greeted by the Canadian Commissioner of Immigration who was stationed at Boston .

Wittekind was joined in Boston by sister @-@ ship Willehad ; North German Lloyd line @-@ mates Kronprinzessin Cecilie and Köln ; the Hamburg America Line steamers SS Amerika and Cincinnati ; and Hansa Line freighter Ockenfels . In March 1916 , all except Kronprinzessin Cecilie and Ockenfels were moved from their waterfront piers to an anchorage across the harbor from the Boston Navy Yard . Daily " neutrality duty " by United States Coast Guard harbor tug Winnisimmet kept a watchful eye on the ships . Many crew members of the ships eventually went ashore , were

processed through immigration , and found employment , while a contingent of musicians from the vessels toured New England , frequently playing at department stores and restaurants , and drawing the ire of the local musicians ' union .

After the U.S. declared war on Germany , Wittekind and the other interned ships were seized on 6 April 1917 and handed over to the United States Shipping Board (USSB) .

= = United States service in World War I = =

After her seizure and refitting , the former liner was chartered to the United States Army as USAT Iroquois . In 1918 , her name was again changed , this time to Freedom . On 24 January 1919 , Freedom was acquired by the United States Navy and commissioned the same day , with Lieutenant J. C. C. Holier , USNRF , in command .

Freedom was assigned to the Cruiser and Transport Force , and after overhaul at New York , sailed on a voyage to Saint @-@ Nazaire , France , and embarked troops for return to the United States . The cargo ship made two more voyages to France , each to Brest , with a visit to Norfolk , Virginia , between trips . She returned a total of 4 @,@ 983 troops on her voyages from France .

She arrived at Hoboken on 5 September 1919 and was assigned to duty in the 3rd Naval District . Freedom was decommissioned at New York on 23 September and returned to the USSB the same day . The veteran ship was transferred to the United States Army transport reserve , and was laid up for five years . On 24 February 1924 , Freedom arrived at Baltimore for scrapping .