

= SS Panaman =

SS Panaman was a cargo ship built in 1913 for the American @-@ Hawaiian Steamship Company . The ship was sometimes incorrectly referred to as SS Panamanian . During World War I she was known as USAT Panaman in service for the United States Army and USS Panaman (ID @-@ 3299) in service for the United States Navy . Late in her career she was known as SS Marcella for the Italian government .

She was built by the Maryland Steel Company as one of eight sister ships for the American @-@ Hawaiian Steamship Company , and was employed in inter @-@ coastal service via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and the Panama Canal after it opened . In World War I , USAT Panaman carried cargo and animals to France under charter to the U.S. Army . When transferred to the U.S. Navy in August 1918 , USS Panaman continued in the same duties , but after the Armistice , was converted to a troop transport and returned over 11 @,@ 000 American troops from France . Returned to American @-@ Hawaiian in 1919 , Panaman resumed inter @-@ coastal cargo service .

During World War II , Panaman was requisitioned by the War Shipping Administration and initially sailed between New York and Caribbean ports , but with two trips to African ports mixed in . Beginning in mid 1943 , Panaman sailed from New York or Boston to ports in the United Kingdom . In late 1946 , she was sailing in the Pacific Ocean . In July 1947 , American @-@ Hawaiian sold Panaman to the Italian government . Renamed Marcella at that time , she was scrapped in September 1954 at Baltimore .

= = Design and construction = =

In November 1911 , the American @-@ Hawaiian Steamship Company placed an order with the Maryland Steel Company of Sparrows Point , Maryland , for two new cargo ships ? Panaman and Washingtonian . The contract cost of the ships was set at the construction cost plus an 8 % profit for Maryland Steel , but with a maximum cost of \$ 640 @,@ 000 each . The construction was financed by Maryland Steel with a credit plan that called for a 5 % down payment in cash with nine monthly installments for the balance . Provisions of the deal allowed that some of the nine installments could be converted into longer @-@ term notes or mortgages . The final cost of Panaman , including financing costs , was \$ 70 @.@ 29 per deadweight ton , which came out to just over \$ 715 @,@ 000 .

Panaman (Maryland Steel yard no . 128) was the first ship built under the contract . The ship was 6 @,@ 535 gross register tons (GRT) , and was 407 feet 7 inches (124 @.@ 23 m) in length (between perpendiculars) and 53 feet 8 inches (16 @.@ 36 m) abeam . She had a deadweight tonnage of 10 @,@ 175 LT DWT , and her cargo holds , which had a storage capacity of 492 @,@ 255 cubic feet (13 @,@ 939 @.@ 1 m³) , were outfitted with a complete refrigeration plant so that she could carry perishable products from the West Coast ? like fresh produce from Southern California farms ? to the East Coast . Panaman had a single steam engine powered by oil @-@ fired boilers that drove a single screw propeller at a speed of 12 knots (22 km / h) .

= = Early career = =

When Panaman began sailing for American @-@ Hawaiian , the company shipped cargo from East Coast ports via the Tehuantepec Route to West Coast ports and Hawaii , and vice versa . Shipments on the Tehuantepec Route would arrive at Mexican ports ? Salina Cruz , Oaxaca , for eastbound cargo , and Coatzacoalcas , Veracruz , for westbound cargo ? and would traverse the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the Tehuantepec National Railway . Eastbound shipments were primarily sugar and pineapple from Hawaii , while westbound cargoes were more general in nature . Panaman sailed in this service on the west side of North America .

After the United States occupation of Veracruz on 21 April 1914 (which found six American @-@ Hawaiian ships in Mexican ports) , the Huerta @-@ led Mexican government closed the Tehuantepec National Railway to American shipping . This loss of access coupled with the fact that

the Panama Canal was not yet open , caused American @-@ Hawaiian to return in late April to its historic route of sailing around South America via the Straits of Magellan . With the opening of the Panama Canal on 15 August , American @-@ Hawaiian ships switched to taking that route .

In October 1915 , landslides closed the Panama Canal and all American @-@ Hawaiian ships , including Panaman , returned to the Straits of Magellan route again . Panaman 's exact movements from this time through early 1917 are unclear . She may have been in the half of the American @-@ Hawaiian fleet that was chartered for transatlantic service . She may also have been in the group of American @-@ Hawaiian ships chartered for service to South America , delivering coal , gasoline , and steel in exchange for coffee , nitrates , cocoa , rubber , and manganese ore .

= = World War I = =

At some point after the United States declared war on Germany , the United States Army chartered Panaman for transporting pack animals to Europe in support of the American Expeditionary Force . Although there is no information about the specific conversion of Panaman , for other ships this typically meant that passenger accommodations had to be ripped out and replaced with ramps and stalls for the horses and mules carried . Details about Panaman 's first two animal transport journeys are not known , but her third trip began 1 April 1918 when she sailed from Newport News , Virginia , with 180 animals for Saint @-@ Nazaire . All 180 animals arrived in good health ; none had died , fallen ill , or been injured during the trip . Further details of Panaman 's Army service are not known .

On 12 August , Panaman was transferred to the United States Navy at New York , and was commissioned into the Naval Overseas Transportation Service (NOTS) the same day . Panaman was loaded with a cargo of general supplies , beef , and a deck @-@ load of trucks and sailed in a convoy from New York on 21 September , arriving at its destination of Saint @-@ Nazaire 6 days later . Back in New York on 7 October , Panaman was outfitted with 821 stalls for horses , and took on a load of horses , general cargo , and 78 officers and men . Sailing in her next convoy on 19 October , she reached Bordeaux on 6 November , five days before the Armistice . After sailing from France on 16 November , she arrived at Newport News eleven days later and underwent repairs .

Panaman sailed on 8 December for New York , where the Board of Survey found her fit for conversion to a troop transport and transferred her from the NOTS to the Cruiser and Transport Force . Though sources do not indicate the specific modifications Panaman underwent , typical conversions for other ships included the installation of berths for troops , and adding greatly expanded cooking and toilet facilities to handle the large numbers of men aboard . Similar modifications on Panaman 's sister ship Minnesotan took three months , but it is not known how long Panaman 's refit took . After her conversion , she made six roundtrip voyages to France and brought home 11 @, @ 393 American personnel . USS Panaman was decommissioned on 18 September 1919 , and returned to American @-@ Hawaiian the same day .

= = Interwar years = =

Panaman resumed cargo service with American @-@ Hawaiian after her return from World War I service . Though the company had abandoned its original Hawaiian sugar routes by this time , Panaman continued inter @-@ coastal service through the Panama Canal in a relatively uneventful career . Hints at cargos she carried during this time can be gleaned from contemporary news reports from the Los Angeles Times . In April 1923 , for example , the newspaper ran a report provided by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce that went into great detail listing the contents of the 2 @, @ 651 @, @ 042 @-@ pound (1 @, @ 202 @, @ 492 kg) cargo that Panaman had unloaded . The items included items such as 90 @, @ 372 pounds (40 @, @ 992 kg) of iron conduit pipe , 73 @, @ 486 pounds (33 @, @ 333 kg) of paper towels and toilet tissue , and 40 @, @ 873 pounds (18 @, @ 540 kg) of canned hominy . In June 1926 , the newspaper ran a photograph that showed the loading of a \$ 1 @, @ 000 prize bull that was beginning its journey from Los Angeles Harbor to Guatemala City aboard Panaman .

In 1940 , Panaman made the news when eleven crewmen mutinied , according to the ship 's captain . The ship was held up in San Diego for 18 hours because the men refused to obey the captain 's orders . When an agreement brokered by Harry Lundeberg of the Sailors ' Union of the Pacific was reached , the men followed orders to get the ship to Los Angeles where the union would attempt to settle the issue . But on arrival in Los Angeles Harbor , the ship was boarded by three FBI agents and two representatives of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation . After interviewing the captain behind closed doors aboard the ship , the FBI turned the investigation over to the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation , whose two investigators conducted a hearing for the eleven men .

= = World War II = =

After the United States entered World War II , Panaman was requisitioned by the War Shipping Administration and frequently sailed in convoys . Though complete records of her sailings are unavailable , partial records indicate some of the ports that Panaman visited during the conflict and some of the cargo . From August 1942 to April 1943 , Panaman sailed primarily between New York and Caribbean ports , calling at Trinidad , Key West , Hampton Roads , and Guantánamo Bay . One exception to this pattern was in November 1942 when Panaman sailed on one roundtrip to Durban , South Africa , returning by way of Bahia .

In late April 1943 , Panaman sailed from Hampton Roads to Algiers and back , returning to the former in late June . Beginning in July , Panaman sailed from either Boston or New York to Halifax and Liverpool for some eight round trips between then and October 1944 . Panaman also visited Belfast Lough in March 1944 , Falmouth and Seine Bay in June , and Southampton and Belfast Lough again in July . In October , Panaman sailed from New York to Guantánamo Bay . Sources do not reveal where or in what capacity Panaman spent the remainder of the war .

= = Later career = =

After the war 's end , American @-@ Hawaiian continued operating Panaman for about two more years . In December 1946 , the Chicago Daily Tribune reported that Panaman was speeding to Manila with two men ill with polio . The news article reported that the ship had one man die in Saigon from the disease two months prior . In July the following year , the company sold the Panaman to the Italian government . The ship operated under her new name of Marcella and remained in Italian hands until she was scrapped on 15 September 1954 at Baltimore .