

= SS Kroonland =

SS Kroonland was an ocean liner for International Mercantile Marine (IMM) from her launch in 1902 until scrapped in 1927 . Kroonland was the sister ship of Finland and a near sister ship of Vaderland and Zeeland of the same company . Kroonland sailed for IMM 's Red Star Line for 15 years , and also sailed for IMM 's American Line and Panama Pacific Line . During World War I , the ship served as United States Army transport USAT Kroonland through April 1918 , and as the Navy auxiliary USS Kroonland (ID @-@ 1541) from April 1918 to October 1919 .

Announced by the Red Star Line in 1899 , Kroonland was completed in 1902 by William Cramp and Sons of Philadelphia . When launched , she was the largest U.S. steamship ever built . Kroonland sailed from New York City to Antwerp on her maiden voyage in June 1902 , beginning service on the route she would sail for the next twelve years . According to The New York Times , Kroonland became the first ship to issue a wireless distress call at sea when she radioed for help during a storm in 1903 . In another radio first , Kroonland heard the " first real broadcast of history " in December 1906 . Kroonland was one of ten ships that came to the aid of the burning liner Volturno in the mid @-@ Atlantic in October 1913 . Despite stormy seas , Kroonland was able to take aboard 89 survivors , for which captain and crew received accolades that included U.S. Congressional Gold Medals .

When the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 disrupted service to Belgium , Kroonland shifted to alternate routes . On a trip to the Mediterranean in October 1914 , Kroonland was detained by British authorities at Gibraltar , and part of her cargo was confiscated amidst diplomatic wrangling between the then @-@ neutral United States and the United Kingdom . During a chartered circumnavigation of South America in February 1915 , Kroonland became the largest passenger ship to date to transit the Panama Canal . Kroonland was placed in New York ? Panama Canal ? San Francisco service until a landslide temporarily closed the canal to navigation . Returned to transatlantic service , Kroonland was one of the first U.S. ships armed by the Navy for defense against German submarine attacks . In May 1917 Kroonland was struck by a torpedo , which failed to detonate and only slightly damaged the ship .

After the United States entered World War I , Kroonland served as a troopship for the U.S. Army and Navy . She made six trips carrying troops to France before the Armistice and eight voyages after , transporting nearly 38 @,@ 000 troops in total . Returned to IMM in late 1919 , Kroonland was scorched in a shipyard fire in January 1920 while she was being refitted for passenger service . The liner resumed North Atlantic service in April , remaining there until returning to New York ? San Francisco service in 1923 . Kroonland inaugurated IMM 's winter New York ? Miami service from December 1925 to March 1926 , but was laid up in Hoboken , New Jersey , when IMM did not resume the Miami service the following year . The ship was sold and scrapped at Genoa in 1927 .

= = Design and construction = =

In July 1899 , the Red Star Line announced plans for the construction of four large ocean liners . Two ships , Kroonland and Finland , were to be built at William Cramp and Sons in Philadelphia , and the others , Vaderland and Zeeland , at John Brown & Company of Clydebank in Scotland . By April 1901 , the two Scottish @-@ built ships were completed and in service for Red Star , with the construction of the American pair well underway .

Kroonland and the virtually identical Finland , at 12 @,@ 760 gross register tons (GRT) each , were slightly larger than Vaderland and Zeeland . The American pair were the largest steamships built in the United States at the time of their launch , and were the highest tonnage civilian ships ever built by William Cramp . Kroonland was 560 feet (170 @.@ 7 m) long (pp) and 60 @-@ foot (18 @.@ 3 m) abeam , with a molded depth of 42 feet (12 @.@ 8 m) . Her hull was steel and nearly all the rivets were set with pneumatic rivet guns .

Kroonland was propelled at up to 17 knots (31 km / h) by twin triple @-@ expansion steam engines . The engines were each rated at 5 @,@ 100 indicated horsepower (3 @,@ 800 kW) and had cylinders of 32 @.@ 5 inches (83 cm) , 54 inches (140 cm) , and 89 @.@ 5 inches (227 cm)

with a 42 @-@ inch (110 cm) stroke . There were nine single @-@ ended coal @-@ fired Scotch boilers with a heating area of 22 @,@ 400 square feet (2 @,@ 080 m²) , a grate area of 643 square feet (59 @.@ 7 m²) , and an operating pressure of 170 pounds per square inch (1 @,@ 200 kPa) . Kroonland had eleven watertight compartments with reinforced bulkheads , and was designed to remain afloat with up to two compartments flooded . Kroonland 's coal bunkers surrounded the boilers , to offer limited protection in case the ship was used in wartime .

The area below the main deck could carry up to 11 @,@ 000 long tons (11 @,@ 000 t) of freight and stores . Kroonland 's water tanks could carry 200 long tons (200 t) of fresh water . Refrigerated storage was provided for meats and other perishables .

Third @-@ class passenger accommodations were located on the main deck : three compartments for men located forward , and a single compartment for families at the rear . The family compartment had state rooms containing either two , four , or six bunks . All compartments had well @-@ lighted dining areas and wide hallways that led to lavatories and sanitary facilities on the upper deck .

The upper deck housed facilities for officers and first- and second @-@ class passengers . A long forecastle contained the accommodations for the crew and petty officers , as well as a hospital and the third @-@ class lavatories . First @-@ class staterooms for 106 passengers were located close to the middle of the ship . To their rear , between the funnels , was the first @-@ class passenger dining room , spanning the width of the ship . With seating for 208 , it featured mahogany furniture and satinwood paneling with inlays , and a glass skylight ceiling that extended up through two decks . Beyond this area were the galleys , sculleries , and pantries that served all passenger classes . Moving further aft , the second @-@ class passenger dining room , which could accommodate 120 diners , was next . It , too , spanned the width of the ship and featured mahogany furniture , but was paneled with tapestry upon a cream @-@ colored ground . Beyond the dining area were cabins for 76 second @-@ class passengers .

A 220 @-@ foot (67 m) long bridge deck amidships contained state rooms for another 204 first @-@ class and 120 second @-@ class passengers . In the rear was a deck house that contained a social room for third @-@ class passengers . A promenade deck was located above and was permanently enclosed by a boat deck , where Kroonland 's 20 steel lifeboats were stowed . The promenade deck housed the library and smoking room for first @-@ class passengers .

Kroonland was launched on the afternoon of 20 February 1902 in a small , informal ceremony . Mrs. Rodman Griscom christened the ship , but Kroonland did not budge on the launching way ; cold weather had frozen the tallow used to grease the timbers . Hydraulic jacks eventually freed the ship for her plunge into the Delaware River .

= = Red Star Line service , 1902 ? 1914 = =

Kroonland sailed on her maiden voyage from New York to Antwerp on 28 June 1902 . Kroonland remained on New York ? Antwerp service for the next twelve years . In these early years of service , she was involved in two radio firsts . After the steering gear failed 130 nautical miles (240 km) west of Fastnet Rock during a moderate gale in early December 1903 , the ship 's crew was able to communicate their predicament via Marconi wireless system , becoming , according to one contemporary news account , the first ship in distress ever to use wireless . Kroonland put in at Queenstown , Ireland , for repairs , and transferred her passengers and freight to ships of the White Star Line , another IMM subsidiary . The other radio first came on 24 December 1906 , when the ship 's wireless operator heard ? rather than the expected dots and dashes of morse code ? the voice of a woman singing . The singing was followed by a recording of Handel 's " Largo " , a poetry reading , and more music played from phonographs . The steamer was on the receiving end of what journalist and author Robert St. John called the " first real broadcast of history " , originated by early radio pioneer Reginald Fessenden from Brant Rock in Massachusetts .

During her time on the New York ? Antwerp route , Kroonland was frequently battered by the storms that were typical in the North Atlantic . In November 1904 , a Brussels news agency reported a rumor that the ship had foundered in a mid @-@ ocean storm . The report ? proved false when Kroonland safely docked in New York ? received wide coverage in the American press . While in a

heavy December gale , the ship was struck by what contemporary news accounts referred to as a " tidal wave " as high as the tops of her funnels . The wave crashed over the deck , and brought the ship to a standstill . A Belgian passenger 's leg was broken when he was thrown into a wall , and a crewman on watch in the crow 's nest was sent tumbling to the deck 40 feet (12 m) below with only minor injuries .

In another December gale in 1907 , one of the two propeller shafts on Kroonland broke while the liner was off the Isles of Scilly . Using the lone remaining propeller , the liner was able to make her way back to Southampton , where two tugs brought her into port . Passengers were transferred to Majestic to continue their transit to New York , while Kroonland entered drydock at Southampton . Fitted with a new shaft , she sailed ? without passengers and cargo ? for New York , where she arrived on 2 January 1908 . In February 1910 , severe winter storms on the North Atlantic extended one of Kroonland 's westbound trips , delaying her arrival in New York by three days . In May , Kroonland broke another propeller shaft , and again headed to Southampton for repairs .

Not all of the ship 's mishaps were storm @-@ related . In late April 1911 , Kroonland hit the breakwater in Dover Harbour , disabling the steering gear and delaying the ship by a day . On 8 January 1913 , Kroonland ran aground in Ambrose Channel during a heavy fog while outbound from New York . It took more than six hours for tugs to free the liner from the soft mud .

The Red Star Line changed Kroonland from American to Belgian registry on 6 November 1908 in Antwerp . One reason given for the change was to allow Red Star to hire non @-@ American crews at lower cost . She made her maiden voyage under the Belgian flag the next day . In May 1911 , Kroonland 's crew , acting on rumors of an impending British mariner 's strike , refused to sign on for the ship 's next voyage , forcing Red Star to hire a replacement crew .

International Mercantile Marine submitted a bid for a ten @-@ year contract for Kroonland and Finland to carry U.S. mail between New York and San Francisco after the opening of the Panama Canal . By law , only U.S.-flagged ships could carry U.S. mail under contract . It was also anticipated that U.S.-flagged vessels would receive preferential treatment for canal tolls . In a short ceremony aboard the liner in New York Harbor on 27 December 1911 , the Belgian flag was lowered and the American flag was raised to the playing of " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " by the steamer 's band , shortly before she sailed for Antwerp .

= = = Volturno rescue = = =

At about 06 : 00 on 9 October 1913 , Volturno , a Royal Line ship under charter to the Uranium Line , caught fire in a gale on the North Atlantic . The crew fought the fire for about two hours , but , realizing the severity of the fire and the limited options for dousing it in the high seas , Captain Francis Inch of Volturno had his wireless operator send out SOS signals . The westbound Kroonland , already beyond Volturno 's location , turned east to aid the burning liner . In the meantime , several of Volturno 's lifeboats with women and children aboard were launched with tragic results : all those aboard the lifeboats were killed as the boats capsized or were smashed by the hull of the heaving ship .

In all , ten ships heeded the distress calls , arriving throughout the day and into the next . Kroonland arrived at about 17 : 00 , and by 20 : 00 had launched a lifeboat with a volunteer crew . The boat was unable to get close to the burning liner . Kroonland 's lifeboat returned at 22 : 30 with an exhausted crew and the one person who had dared to brave the jump into the stormy water . Captain J. C. Barr of Carmania , the first ship to arrive , took command of the rescue effort . Barr had the vessels form a " battle line " of sorts and slowly circle the burning ship , while his ship kept a searchlight on Volturno and another sweeping the ring of rescue ships to help them avoid collisions . Despite Carmania 's efforts , Kroonland and the French Line steamer La Touraine almost collided , coming ? according to one passenger ? within 15 feet (4 @.@ 6 m) of impact .

Kroonland 's lifeboat , manned by a fresh crew , headed back out and returned with 13 steerage passengers . On board Volturno , the crew and some of the male passengers , unable to extinguish the fire , were at least able to keep it from spreading to the aft cargo holds , over which the others on board were gathered . Shortly before dawn , a large explosion ? probably of her boilers ? rocked

Volturno , and the rescuers felt that the ship , which had not been in imminent danger of sinking up to this point , might founder at any time . The tanker Narragansett turned on her pumps and sprayed lubricating oil on the sea to help calm the surface . The combined effect of the oil and the lessening of the storm allowed many more lifeboats to be sent to Volturno 's aid . Kroonland launched two more boats herself and saved 75 more , including Captain Inch , the last person to leave the stricken ship . In all , some 520 passengers and crew were rescued by the ten ships ? 89 on Kroonland alone . The loss of life was limited to around 130 , mostly women and children from the early lifeboat launchings .

With all boats recovered by 09 : 00 , the liners resumed their original courses . Kroonland turned west and continued on to the United States , hampered by a cracked crankshaft that slowed her to 12 knots (22 km / h) . During her slow passage to New York , Kroonland 's cabin passengers drafted a resolution honoring Captain Kreibohm and the crew for their actions during the rescue , and raised \$ 700 for the benefit of the Volturno survivors . Kroonland finally docked in New York on 16 October .

The crew , like those of the other nine ships involved , received many accolades for its rescue efforts . After sending the ship a congratulatory telegram at the time of the rescue , King Albert of Belgium made Capt. Kreibohm a Chevalier (Knight) of the Order of the Crown in January 1914 . At the same time , the Belgian government awarded its Third Class Civic Cross to Kroonland 's third officer , and First Class Civic Medals to six crewmen and a steward . In March , King George V of the United Kingdom , on recommendation of the Board of Trade , awarded 39 of the ship 's crew the Silver Sea Gallantry Medal , along with a £ 3 award . Crewmen from all ten ships received Sea Gallantry Medals , but no other ship had more medals awarded than Kroonland . Later in March , the United States Congress honored Kreibohm with a gold watch , Kroonland 's officers ? including Kreibohm ? with Congressional Gold Medals , and other crewmen with five silver and 25 bronze medals . In April , the Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York awarded its Life Saving Medal to Kreibohm , four officers , and 35 crewmen . In June 1916 , Kreibohm was presented with the American Cross of Honor by Congressman Henry Bruckner .

Kroonland resumed her normal New York ? Antwerp service until 11 August 1914 , when she arrived at New York with passengers that had narrowly escaped the hostilities beginning to engulf the European continent .

= = = Notable passengers = = =

During her pre @-@ war New York ? Antwerp sailings , Kroonland carried some notable and interesting passengers . On 1 August 1904 , one of the ship 's passengers arrived in New York as somewhat of a mystery woman . She recounted that she had gone out for dinner in Antwerp and awakened to find herself at sea with only the white silk evening gown she was wearing . Having no money or luggage , she was barred from entering the United States and was compelled to remain on board the ship . After her predicament was reported in The New York Times , she received letters and telegrams that included marriage proposals . Her background story and a letter of credit eventually verified her identity , but she was deported after a New York doctor pronounced her insane . Later the same month The New York Times reported on first @-@ class passengers ' complaints over privileges for their dogs and the conditions in the kennel aboard the liner . One passenger was determined to have her dog in her state room , and after others joined her in removing canine companions from the kennel , Kroonland 's crew took all the dogs back to the kennel . Many of the dog owners refused to speak to the others involved for the duration of the voyage .

On 27 May 1905 , American author Molly Elliot Seawell sailed for Europe on Kroonland on a day when six liners , with over 1 @,@ 500 passengers , departed New York . In October , Helen Taft returned from Europe on Kroonland and was met by her husband , Secretary of War William Howard Taft . The next August , Henry Yates Satterlee , the first Episcopal Bishop of Washington , returned on Kroonland from a six @-@ week tour of cathedrals of Europe , during which he noted both good and bad design elements of cathedrals in preparation for the building of the Washington National

Cathedral . Also returning on the same voyage were Admiral Charles Sperry and Lieutenant Daniel W. Wurtsbaugh of the U.S. Navy , and Brigadier General Robert O 'Reilly , the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army ; all were American delegates to the Second Geneva Convention . It was not the first trip on Kroonland for either Satterlee and O 'Reilly . Satterlee had traveled on the liner the previous May to visit the spa town of Bad Nauheim in Hesse ; O 'Reilly had been on the November 1904 trip in which Kroonland had been reported as sunk .

Kroonland was the scene of an attempted murder @-@ suicide in October 1908 . Two acquaintances in steerage had an argument over a young female second @-@ class passenger that both men knew . One man threw a knife at the other ? only slightly wounding him ? and then fled and jumped over the railing into the English Channel near Dover . U.S. Senator Benjamin Tillman and his wife were aboard the liner at the time and saw the young man jump overboard . Although the ship lowered a boat to look for him , no trace of him was found , and he was presumed drowned .

American actresses Kitty Cheatham and Isabel Irving ? each married to a different man named " W. H. Thompson " ? traveled on Kroonland in May 1910 . Alerted to each other 's presence when mail addressed to " Mrs. W. H. Thompson " was confused , the actresses ? old friends , having both worked in the theatre company of Augustin Daly ? shared a state room for the voyage . Later that month , the ship was the official " World Missionary Conference Steamship " for delegates and representatives on their way to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh , Scotland . Honda Yoitsu , said to be the only Japanese Methodist Episcopal bishop , was among those on the liner when she sailed on 31 May . News accounts reported on some of the unusual activities aboard Kroonland during this trip . Among them were morning devotional services held daily in the ship 's dining room , and the spontaneous singing of hymns on deck every evening .

Kroonland was tangentially involved in a more sinister affair in July 1910 . American physician Hawley Crippen and his lover , Ethel La Neve , had fled England after the circumstances around his wife 's death were questioned . After a body was found in the basement of Crippen 's North London residence , Scotland Yard Chief Inspector Walter Dew sought the couple for murder charges . One theory had the couple sailing from Dover on Kroonland , but when inspected in New York on arrival , Crippen and Le Neve were not to be found . The fleeing couple had instead sailed from Antwerp on the Canadian Pacific liner Montrose . Crippen , identified during Montrose 's crossing , was arrested , convicted of his wife 's murder , and hanged ; La Neve was acquitted .

The American novelist Theodore Dreiser , returning from an extended European tour in April 1912 , briefly considered returning on RMS Titanic , but instead sailed two days later on the American @-@ flagged ? and less expensive ? Kroonland . Dreiser recounted the gloomy mood of Kroonland 's passengers after hearing the news of Titanic 's sinking , observing that the " terror of the sea had come swiftly and directly home to all " . On Kroonland 's next return trip to New York , Horst von der Goltz , a self @-@ described German secret agent , eluded German authorities by working as a steward in steerage aboard the liner .

= = American Line service , 1914 ? 1915 = =

With the German invasion of Belgium in early August 1914 , Kroonland was switched to New York ? Liverpool service . After two circuits on that route , IMM announced that the ship would be moved to service in the Mediterranean to attract business to offset that lost because of the war . Sailing from New York on 15 October for Gibraltar , Naples , and Piraeus , Kroonland became what IMM called the first large , American @-@ flagged steamer " to engage in trade with the far corners of the Mediterranean " . Along with passengers , the ship carried a cargo of rubber and 1 @,@ 500 long tons (1 @,@ 520 t) of copper destined for Italy .

On 28 October , British authorities detained the ship at Gibraltar . Because neutral Italy did not restrict the shipment of copper (which could be used in war munitions) to Germany or Austria @-@ Hungary , the British claimed the right to detain the ship ? a claim disputed by the U.S. State Department . Kroonland was allowed to resume her journey on 8 November after the copper and rubber were unloaded and taken to a prize court . The ship arrived at Naples on 11 November , then

completed the rest of her Mediterranean trek . Returning to New York , she carried the new minister from Bulgaria to the United States , arriving on 4 December . IMM had advertised that Kroonland would sail the Mediterranean route again in December , but the liner was removed from the route .

In late January 1915 , Kroonland departed on a business tour of South America under charter to the American Trade Tour Company . The tour was designed as a showcase for American companies hoping to expand into South America , and Kroonland circumnavigated that continent , traveling over 15 @, @ 000 nautical miles (28 @, @ 000 km) in 82 days . During the voyage , the liner docked at various ports where businessmen or trade representatives , like the Babson Statistical Organization , made sales pitches and showed films of factories to potential customers aboard Kroonland . During this South American foray , the ship sailed westbound through the Panama Canal on 2 February , becoming the largest passenger ship to transit the canal to that date . Also on the trip , while transiting the Straits of Magellan in late February , Kroonland passed British cruiser Bristol refueling from a collier , and , on 26 February , when entering the harbor of Punta Arenas , Chile , passed the departing HMS Glasgow , on the hunt for the German cruiser Dresden . Kroonland returned to New York on 14 April .

= = Panama Pacific Line service , 1915 = =

In May 1915 , Kroonland and sister ship Finland were chartered to the Panama Pacific Line for the long @-@ planned service between New York and San Francisco via the Panama Canal . Kroonland departed from New York for California on 22 May and counted 50 honeymooning couples and a large cargo of flour from St. Paul , Minnesota , among her payload . The intercoastal trip took about 17 days each way and the ships called at either Los Angeles or San Diego on eastbound and westbound trips . With two ships on the route , one ship departed from either New York or San Francisco about every three weeks . The service was marketed as the ideal manner to visit the Panama @-@ California Exposition in San Diego and the Panama @-@ Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco . At the San Francisco exhibition , a detailed model of Kroonland was one of ten that comprised a part of IMM 's 6 @, @ 500 @-@ square @-@ foot (600 m2) exhibit in the Palace of Transportation .

Frequent and progressively worse landslides in the canal disrupted Kroonland 's and Finland 's service . In August 1915 , Kroonland 's arrival in New York was delayed a day by a Gaillard Cut slide . In early September , both ships were delayed ten days while waiting for the canal to be dredged after another slide . In early October , another landslide in the Gaillard Cut ? this one in excess of 1 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 cubic yards (760 @, @ 000 m3) of mud and dirt ? closed the canal , and it was expected that it might remain closed for as long as ten months . Kroonland was en route to the canal from San Francisco , while Finland was at the canal 's eastern terminus , Colón . After Kroonland arrived at the canal 's western end at Balboa , the two liners exchanged passengers ? including former First Lady Helen Taft and her daughter , Helen ? by rail across the isthmus .

= = American Line service , 1915 ? 1917 = =

The delay caused by the October slide in the Panama Canal created uncertainty for the immediate future of Kroonland . Her sister ship Finland was transferred to a New York ? London route almost immediately after the canal 's closure , but Kroonland was " trapped " on the west side of the continent . By early November , Kroonland ? loaded with cargo destined for the United Kingdom , and sailing under the banner of the American Line ? departed San Francisco for London , via the Straits of Magellan . On 21 December , the liner arrived at Rio de Janeiro after having run aground , but was found to be undamaged . Continuing on to London , Kroonland departed for New York on 30 January 1916 . Although plans were announced in mid 1916 for the two sister ships to return to the Panama Pacific Line , and to add the Hawaiian port of Honolulu to the canal route , both ships remained in North Atlantic service .

On 20 February , Kroonland , continuing to sail for the American Line , returned to New York ? Liverpool service after an absence of 18 months . As a ship of the still @-@ neutral United States

sailing in a war zone , Kroonland had her name painted in large letters on each side of her hull . The name was flanked on either side by large American flags and kept illuminated at night . In June , she carried US \$ 1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 of Argentine gold from London for deposit with the Guaranty Trust Company of New York . On late 1916 , a cook aboard Kroonland was arrested for smuggling feathers , wings , and heads of birds of paradise and crowned pigeons . The man , who was paid \$ 300 for each load of feathers , smuggled in at least three loads of the avian contraband before his arrest . In January 1917 , a jumble sale held in the saloon on Kroonland raised £ 73 15s 11d for The Times Fund , for the benefit of the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John .

While returning from Liverpool in early February 1917 , passengers and crew on Kroonland witnessed the German U @-@ boat UC @-@ 46 sink the Dutch ship Gamma off the Irish coast . On 1 February 1917 , at around 15 : 30 , passengers and crew saw the German submarine overtake and stop the Dutch freighter . At about 16 : 15 , the U @-@ boat , by then on the far side of the Dutch ship and out of view from Kroonland , fired three shots from her deck gun . Gamma immediately began listing to port and sank within five minutes . Kroonland was less than 5 nautical miles (9 @. @ 3 km) away , and was prepared to rescue the crew of the sunken ship , but stopped when the German submarine took Gamma 's lifeboat in tow . Four days later , a suspected submarine was seen 5 nautical miles (9 @. @ 3 km) off Kroonland 's port side , and there were other reports of a ship that passengers took to be a German commerce raider or submarine tender .

Because Germany had resumed unrestricted submarine warfare again on 1 February , Kroonland was laid up for almost two months at the American Line piers in New York , along with sister ship Finland and three other vessels . During this forced downtime , Kroonland was converted from coal burning to oil burning , a long @-@ awaited modification that had been announced in October 1915 . The conversion reduced the number of stokers needed from 75 to 12 , lowering Kroonland 's payroll . Because fuel oil was stored inside the double bottom of her hull , her cargo capacity was increased through the elimination of her coal bunkers . The labor savings and the additional freight revenues from the increased cargo space resulted in a net gain of \$ 25 @, @ 000 income per trip .

= = Troopship duties = =

Kroonland served as a troopship for about the next year . In early March , U.S. Navy ordnance officers inspected Kroonland and took measurements in preparation to arm her for defense against submarine attacks . On 13 March , she was assigned guns by the Navy , becoming one of the first seven ships to be armed . With her arming complete , and carrying an armed naval guard to man the guns , Kroonland sailed for Liverpool on 25 March 1917 . Twelve days later , the United States formally declared war on Germany .

On the morning of 20 May , while the liner steamed toward Liverpool through a heavy fog , a torpedo struck her without exploding . Two minutes later her lookouts spotted a submarine bearing down on Kroonland so close alongside the liner that her guns could not be depressed enough to open fire on the raider . Although the U @-@ boat , apparently also taken by surprise , reversed her screws and tried to turn to avoid a collision , she lightly struck the liner 's hull and scraped along her side before diving out of sight . Meanwhile , two more torpedoes came within some 20 feet (6 m) of hitting Kroonland 's stern . That afternoon the liner sighted another submarine , surfaced some 1 @, @ 000 yards (910 m) off her port quarter . Kroonland immediately began shelling the U @-@ boat , forcing the submarine to dive for safety . In early June , this failed torpedo attack on the ship made front page news in American newspapers .

In September , elements of the U.S. 42nd Infantry Division sailed from New York to Halifax on Kroonland . The ship sailed from Halifax on 30 September in an Allied convoy with the American ship Mongolia and Commonwealth ships Carmania (which had led the Volturno rescue in 1913) , Anchises , Canada , Grampian , Ionican , Themistocles , Victoria , Carpathia , Medic , Miltiades , Mokoia , and Ruahine . Two days out from Halifax , the last five ships split off from the convoy and headed to Scotland ; Kroonland 's group sailed to Liverpool .

On 15 October 1917 , the United States Shipping Board (USSB) requisitioned all American passenger ships over 2 @, @ 500 GT for use by the government in the war effort . Though it is not

clear what immediate impact this had on Kroonland , it is known that the liner was operating as a U.S. Army transport (under the name USAT Kroonland) by February 1918 , when she was loaded with materiel and departed New York for Saint @-@ Nazaire , France .

In February 1918 the USSB assigned Kroonland to the transport fleet as an U.S. Army Chartered Transport (USACT) , and after her return from France on 9 April , she was converted to a troop transport in New York by the William J. Kennedy Company . A typical conversion from passenger liner to troop transport involved having all of the second- and third @-@ class accommodations ripped out and replaced with berths for troops . Cooking and toilet facilities also had to be greatly expanded to handle the large numbers of men aboard .

= = U.S. Navy transport duties = =

After problems with crew discipline aboard Army transports Antilles and Finland when they were torpedoed , the U.S. Navy , led by the recommendations of Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves , insisted that all troop transports be manned entirely by Navy personnel . This was accomplished soon after , to avoid the need for what Gleaves called " ignorant and unreliable men " who were " the sweepings of the docks " . Accordingly , Kroonland was handed over to the Navy on 22 April and commissioned the same day , with Commander Manley H. Simons in command .

= = Transporting troops to France = =

USS Kroonland was assigned to the Cruiser and Transport Force after being commissioned . The ship departed New York on 30 April with the transports Matsonia , Manchuria , and Finland . Martha Washington and Powhatan ? two transports that sailed from Newport News , Virginia ? rendezvoused with Kroonland 's group . South Dakota provided the convoy with protection until its arrival in France on 12 May . Kroonland returned to New York on 1 June .

Kroonland next left New York on 15 June with Finland , DeKalb , George Washington , Covington , Rijndam , the Italian steamer Dante Alighieri , and the British steamer Vauban and met up with the Newport News portion of the convoy ? consisting of Lenape , Wilhelmina , Princess Matoika , Pastores , and the British troopship Czar (another fellow Volturno rescuer) ? the next morning and set out for France . The convoy was escorted by the cruisers North Carolina and Frederick , and the destroyers Stevens and Fairfax ; the battleship Texas and several other destroyers joined in escort duties for the group for a time . The convoy had a false alarm when a floating barrel was mistaken for submarine , but the otherwise uneventful trip concluded at Brest on the afternoon of 27 June .

On 10 July , as Kroonland steamed homeward from France , a lookout spotted a periscope rising from the water about 200 yards (180 m) away . Kroonland opened fire and the fourth shot from her No. 4 gun " burst with a tremendous cloud of dirty blue smoke " exactly on the periscope . The submarine zig @-@ zagged " erratically back and forth until she was directly in the disturbed water " of Kroonland 's wake . The transport continued firing until the submarine disappeared , leaving an oil slick which could be seen for at least 15 minutes . Kroonland arrived safely in New York on 13 July .

On 26 July , Kroonland , loaded with 3 @,@ 248 officers and men , departed on her next trip to France . In the company of Finland and the Italian steamer Taormina , she met up with Pocahontas , Susquehanna , and the Italian steamers Duca d 'Aosta and Caserta from Newport News . The cruisers Pueblo , Huntington , and destroyers Rathburne and Colhoun escorted the transports . Gordon Van Kleeck , a private in Company F of the U.S. 51st Pioneer Infantry , one of the units aboard Kroonland on this trip , recorded his day @-@ to @-@ day activities in a journal . He stated that the soldiers wore overalls rather than uniforms , and were required to wear life jackets at all times . During the early mornings , the most dangerous time for submarines according to Van Kleeck , the soldiers had to stand by their life rafts until the sun was completely up . Bathing facilities were too small , so several times during the trip the soldiers gathered on deck for salt water baths , which consisted of a hose turned on them by the ship 's crew . On 2 August , Finland developed engine trouble and fell back from the convoy , but by the next day , she and a destroyer that stayed with her had rejoined the convoy . The convoy arrived in Brest on 7 August , and Kroonland arrived

back in the United States on 19 August .

After embarking 3 @, @ 334 soldiers , Kroonland began her next crossing on 30 August when she sailed from New York with Susquehanna , Harrisburg and Plattsburg to join the Newport News contingent of Duca d 'Aosta , Caserta , and America . Kroonland 's convoy was escorted by Frederick and Colhoun . As with other Navy ships throughout 1918 , Kroonland was not immune to the worldwide Spanish flu pandemic . On this particular crossing , two of her crewmen were felled by the disease as her convoy reached France on 12 September . Kroonland returned to New York on 27 September .

At 20 : 00 on 7 October , Kroonland departed New York on her fifth Navy voyage with 2 @, @ 567 men . She joined Caserta and the British steamer Euripides in rendezvousing with Tenadores , Susquehanna , America , and Czar from Newport News . The cruisers Seattle and Rochester and the destroyers Murray and Fairfax served as convoy escorts for the group , which arrived in France on 20 October . Kroonland arrived in New York on 3 November , and was in port when the Armistice was signed on 11 November . In total , Kroonland carried 14 @, @ 125 troops to France during the five trips of her Navy career .

= = = Returning troops home = = =

At war 's end , the task of bringing home American soldiers began almost immediately . Kroonland did her part by carrying home 26 @, @ 152 passengers in eight trips . The ship departed from Brest in late November with her first load of nearly 2 @, @ 000 wounded and convalescing soldiers , many of whom were from the U.S. 76th Infantry Division . The former liner arrived at the Quarantine Station on 10 December 1918 , and docked in New York the next day . One of the men aboard was Captain Walter Camp who had been wounded and gassed in the Meuse @-@ Argonne Offensive ; Camp was the son of the Yale University football coach of the same name . Another passenger on board was Sarah Wilmer , an American YWCA front @-@ line worker who had become lost in the Argonne forest and gassed when a German shell exploded nearby . Before departing on her next voyage , Kroonland hosted a party for 150 newsboys from New Jersey at her Hoboken , New Jersey , pier on Christmas Day . With a Christmas tree in the troops ' mess , the newsboys were treated to a dinner and entertainment by the ship 's band , and all received presents .

Kroonland arrived at Newport News on 18 February with 2 @, @ 805 passengers , including units from the U.S. 36th Infantry Division , after a rough trip from Saint @-@ Nazaire . On her next voyage , she carried another 2 @, @ 943 officers and men from Saint @-@ Nazaire to Newport News , arriving there on 24 March . The 132nd Regiment of the 61st Field Artillery Brigade returned on the ship , and brigade historian Rex F. Harlow called Kroonland " probably the best vessel on which any units of the brigade returned to America " .

On 18 April , Kroonland began her next homeward journey , embarking several companies of the 111th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 28th Infantry Division among the 3 @, @ 100 troops carried . Though the fighting was over , the men still wore life jackets for the first three days at sea amidst fears of striking floating mines . George W. Cooper , historian of the 2nd Battalion of the 111th Infantry , reported that some of the men had to serve as stokers during the trip because of a " shortage of help " . In the middle of the crossing , the ship " sprung a leak " and took on 10 feet (3 @. @ 0 m) of water ; she had a list for a day or so , until repairs were made . The troops later disembarked at New York on 29 April .

Kroonland returned to Saint @-@ Nazaire in May and loaded Major General Joseph E. Kuhn and some 3 @, @ 000 men of his U.S. 79th Infantry Division , which included the 304th Engineer Regiment , and departed France on 18 May . The band of the 304th Engineers gave concerts on deck every evening on the voyage home to entertain the men . Though initially bound for Newport News , Kroonland 's crew received orders in mid ocean to head instead to New York , where they arrived on 29 May . After completing another passage to Newport News in late June , Kroonland sailed on 19 July with 3 @, @ 642 passengers ? including officers , men , thirteen war brides , and one war baby ? from Saint @-@ Nazaire , in the final transport departure from that port before it was closed as a port of embarkation by U.S. military authorities . Among the passengers was Brigadier

General Samuel D. Rockenbach , the founder of the United States Tank Corps .

On 21 August , the USSB announced that Kroonland would be released from government service after surveys for repairs had been completed . After leaving New York on 10 August , the ship was in the middle of what would be her final trip returning soldiers . After arriving at Brest , 1 @, @ 532 officers and men boarded Kroonland for New York , where the transport arrived on 10 September . Also on board was Michael Gilhooley , a 15 @-@ year @-@ old stowaway making his fourth unsuccessful attempt to sneak into the United States aboard a Navy transport .

The ship was decommissioned and returned to the USSB on 13 September , and returned to International Mercantile Marine shortly thereafter . In her eight trips returning troops , Kroonland ? affectionately called the " Empress of the Seas " by her crew ? averaged just under 39 days per turnaround , beating the overall average of all ships by almost a full day , and edging out sister ship Finland by less than that .

= = Red Star Line service , 1920 ? 1923 = =

After her return to International Mercantile Marine (IMM) , the ship underwent a refit at the W. & A. Fletcher Marine Works yard in Hoboken that outfitted her for 242 first- , 310 second- , and 876 third @-@ class passengers . On 8 January 1920 , while Kroonland was still under repair , the American Line ship St. Louis , berthed next to her at the Fletcher yard , caught fire . In the multi @-@ alarm fire , firefighters believed that St. Louis was a lost cause , and so focused their efforts on saving Kroonland . At one point , St. Louis heeled over and leaned on Kroonland but the only resulting damages were scorch marks on her side .

Kroonland resumed her civilian career in April 1920 , sailing once again for the Red Star Line on the New York ? Antwerp route . She sailed from Pier 61 on the North River opposite sister ships Finland and Zeeland and the newer Lapland until early 1923 . Rough weather on the North Atlantic took its toll on Kroonland while sailing this route . A storm off Sable Island in December 1920 was so intense that the liner was only able to travel 126 nautical miles (233 km) during one 24 @-@ hour stretch and nearly exhausted her fuel supply . When the liner arrived in New York , tugs were required to tow her from the quarantine station to the pier . Heavy seas in another storm in October 1921 broke Kroonland 's port propeller shaft 350 nautical miles (650 km) past Sandy Hook . She returned to New York at 8 knots (15 km / h) and transferred most of the passengers to Lapland . Another eastbound crossing four months later was marked by almost continuous gales with winds up to 90 miles per hour (140 km / h) ; the liner arrived at Plymouth covered in ice and snow .

Kroonland was also involved in several non @-@ weather @-@ related events . On 12 November 1920 , after departing Antwerp for New York , she collided with a Dutch tug in the Scheldt , killing two of the tug 's crew . In March 1921 , a Czechoslovakian woman gave birth to fraternal twins on board the liner shortly after she and her husband sailed from Antwerp . Because the twins were born on a U.S.-flagged vessel , they were automatically American citizens . On 10 June 1922 , The New York Times reported that Charles Simmons , Kroonland 's Chief Steward , was found dead in his bunk . Crewmen aboard the ship , which had been docked in New York since 4 June , said Simmons had been seen on deck in apparently good health the day before . The medical examiner nevertheless asked police to investigate , because it appeared to him that Simmons had been dead for three to four days . During an August eastbound crossing , Kroonland stood by for two hours after receiving a report of an explosion and fire on RMS Adriatic , some 70 nautical miles (130 km) behind . The gas explosion in one of Adriatic 's forward cargo holds killed five crewmen and seriously wounded three others . It also spawned a fire that was quickly extinguished and left little damage . Offers of help from ten liners (including Kroonland) were politely declined and Adriatic arrived in New York three days later . In October , U.S. Federal judge Learned Hand issued a restraining order preventing the Prohibition @-@ related seizure of alcohol aboard Kroonland , Finland , and St. Paul . IMM had sought the order to enable her to continue to carry Italian third @-@ class passengers ; Italian law required a minimum number of a ship 's crew to be Italian , with Italian wine of at least 12 % alcohol provided for them .

Kroonland also carried some notable passengers during her time on this route including a majority

of the U.S. delegates to the International Chamber of Commerce for its meeting in Paris in June 1920 . Among those on board were Myron T. Herrick , former U.S. Ambassador to France ; Paul M. Warburg , former member of the Federal Reserve Board ; and 14 current and former directors of the United States Chamber of Commerce . Dr. Samuel Eyde , the newly appointed Norwegian Minister to the United States , sailed for his diplomatic post in December on Kroonland . On the same trip , Max Goldberg , a 14 @-@ year @-@ old flower delivery boy , returned from an accidental roundtrip , begun in New York when the gangway was raised and the ship departed while he was making a last @-@ minute delivery . Four of the United States ' seven delegates to the 19th Inter @-@ Parliamentary Union Convention in Stockholm ? Congressmen Alben W. Barkley and Edwin B. Brooks , and Senators Thomas J. Walsh and William B. McKinley ? returned on Kroonland in September 1921 .

Passengers were not the ship 's only cargo during this time . The New York press reported on gold deposits carried to the United States on the liner several times on the Antwerp route . In a storm @-@ tossed December 1920 voyage , for example , she carried \$ 1 @,@ 650 @,@ 000 in gold , and the following June she carried £ 100 @,@ 000 gold to the Equitable Trust Company in New York . Another notable cargo arrived in New York in November 1922 , when Kroonland brought 840 @,@ 000 pounds (380 @,@ 000 kg) of cheese from Switzerland . The shipment was said to be the first big shipment from that country since before World War I. A more unwelcome cargo was carried in March 1921 , when a Hungarian immigrant in steerage was found to have typhoid fever . Discovery of the disease necessitated that all 731 steerage passengers be quarantined indefinitely .

Kroonland began her last voyage on the Antwerp route in January 1923 , after which she underwent a refit during the first half of 1923 . The ship was converted to cabin- and third @-@ class passengers only , and was painted white . In preparation for her announced return to the Panama Pacific Line in October 1923 , more refrigeration and cool air space were added for transporting Southern California agricultural products .

After this refit , the ship was briefly assigned to the American Line for three roundtrips on a New York to Hamburg route , with intermediate stops at Plymouth and Cherbourg . On her first Hamburg trip , she carried American comedic actress Florence Shirley and her husband , headed for a European vacation . Cecil Arden , a mezzo @-@ soprano with the Metropolitan Opera , and botanist Otto Warburg sailed on the same trip .

= = Panama Pacific Line service , 1923 ? 1925 = =

In April 1923 , IMM announced that Kroonland and sister ship Finland would be returned to the Panama Pacific Line beginning in late September , sailing from New York to San Francisco via Havana , the Panama Canal , and Los Angeles , with Los Angeles being the west coast hub of operations . On 18 October , Kroonland departed on her first voyage on the route since 1915 . Kroonland arrived in Los Angeles Harbor on 3 November amidst fanfare , becoming the largest liner to date to enter that harbor .

In contrast to her time on the North Atlantic , Kroonland encountered few weather or mechanical delays on the coast @-@ to @-@ coast route . In December 1923 , however , the ship was delayed one day by unusually heavy seas and gales off Baja California . Another delay in October 1924 proved to be fatal , according to the ship 's physician . An arrival two days late , caused by adverse currents north of Panama , cost a female passenger her life . Had the ship not been delayed , the physician believed , prompt hospital care could have saved her . On this same trip , Kroonland passed through a " hurricane zone " but was not adversely affected by the storm .

In December 1924 , the Panama Pacific Line announced that it would add Mongolia to the New York ? California route in February to replace Kroonland . Even though press accounts reported as late as March 1925 that Kroonland had sailed her last on the route , she continued carrying passengers and cargo through at least June 1925 because of booming business . Although plans had been announced to convert Kroonland and Finland to freighters upon the delivery of two new ships ordered for the route in late 1924 , there is no evidence that this was ever carried out .

= = = Notable passengers = = =

Kroonland carried her share of notable passengers during her second stint for the Panama Pacific Line . On her first voyage , passengers included American Modernist poet Wallace Stevens and his wife , Elsie . After transiting the Panama Canal , the liner headed north along the western coast of Mexico . The ship passed the Gulf and Isthmus of Tehuantepec in early November , inspiring Stevens to later pen the poem " Sea Surface Full Of Clouds " . First published in the July 1924 issue of literary magazine The Dial , it was later included in the 1931 edition of Stevens ' Harmonium . Each of the five stanzas begins with the line " In that November off Tehuantepec " and is a different portrayal of the surface of the sea . The poem has been called one of Stevens ' " most persuasive statements of the imagination 's powers " , and considered " the most perfect example of a ' pure poem ' " .

Other notable passengers included Brooklyn Dodgers shortstop Ray E. French , who sailed with his wife to their home in California on the same voyage as Stevens . California artist William Barr , American author Frederick O 'Brien , and actress Mary Carr all sailed on Kroonland in December 1923 . In February 1924 , Daniel Willard , president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad , sailed from New York to Los Angeles . Acknowledging that the Panama Canal had " detract [ed] volumes of freight " from railroads , Willard said that there was no cause for alarm because the railroad business was booming . In January 1925 , Gene Byrnes , creator of the comic strip Reg 'lar Fellers , sailed from New York to Los Angeles with his wife . On the same voyage , University of Southern California president Rufus B. von KleinSmid boarded Kroonland at Panama after attending the Pan @-@ American Scientific Congress in Lima . In mid @-@ June the same year , short story author and screenwriter H. C. Witwer and his family returned to New York aboard the ship .

= = American Line service , 1925 ? 1926 = =

In October 1925 , the American Line announced plans for the liner to sail on a weekly New York ? Miami route . Kroonland , supplanted H. F. Alexander of the Admiral Line as the largest ship in Miami service , and sailed from Pier 62 in New York on Thursdays , arrived and departed Miami on Sundays , and returned to New York on Wednesdays . Though Kroonland 's passenger capacity was potentially much larger , she was outfitted for 500 passengers in first class only . She sailed on her first voyage with 400 passengers , including American professional golfer Gene Sarazen , on 10 December .

By the time the seasonal service to Miami ended in late March 1926 , Kroonland had carried 11 @,@ 000 passengers on the route . Though plans were announced for the liner to resume the route the following winter , this did not happen . IMM offered no reasons , but conditions in Miami at the end of 1926 were very different from the previous year . The wild South Florida real estate boom had collapsed in mid 1926 , and the Great Miami Hurricane struck on 18 September , killing more than 325 and leaving as many as 50 @,@ 000 residents homeless , while causing some \$ 100 million damage (just over \$ 2 billion in 2005 dollars) . With no place to put the aging ship , IMM laid up Kroonland in Hoboken .

The ship was later sold to shipbreakers in Italy and departed the United States for the last time on 29 January 1927 . After delivering a cargo of grain to her old homeport of Antwerp , she was taken to Genoa and scrapped . According to an Associated Press report , Kroonland had completed 234 voyages totaling 1 @,@ 635 @,@ 468 nautical miles (3 @,@ 028 @,@ 887 km) during the course of her career without serious accident .