

= USS Orizaba (ID @-@ 1536) =

USS Orizaba (ID @-@ 1536 / AP @-@ 24) was a transport ship for the United States Navy in both World War I and World War II . She was the sister ship of Siboney but the two were not part of a ship class . In her varied career , she was also known as USAT Orizaba in service for the United States Army , as SS Orizaba in interwar civilian service for the Ward Line , and as Duque de Caxias (U @-@ 11) as an auxiliary in the Brazilian Navy after World War II .

Orizaba made 15 transatlantic voyages for the Navy carrying troops to and from Europe in World War I with the second shortest average in @-@ port turnaround time of all Navy transports . The ship was turned over to the War Department in 1919 for use as Army transport USAT Orizaba . After her World War I service ended , Orizaba reverted to the Ward Line , her previous owners . The ship was briefly engaged in transatlantic service to Spain and then engaged in New York ? Cuba ? Mexico service until 1939 , when the ship was chartered to United States Lines . While Orizaba was in her Ward Line service , American poet Hart Crane leapt to his death from the rear deck of the liner off Florida in April 1932 .

In World War II the ship was requisitioned by the War Shipping Administration and again assigned to the War Department as USAT Orizaba . After completing one voyage as an Army transport , the ship was transferred to the US Navy , where she was re @-@ commissioned as USS Orizaba (AP @-@ 24) . The ship made several transatlantic runs , was damaged in an air attack in the Allied invasion of Sicily , and made trips to South America . The transport also served in the Pacific Theatre , making several transpacific voyages , and one to the Aleutians .

In June 1945 , Orizaba was transferred under Lend @-@ Lease to the Brazilian Navy where she served as Duque de Caxias (U @-@ 11) . In August 1945 , Duque de Caxis carried parts of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force from Naples back to Rio de Janeiro . The ship was badly damaged by a fire in 1947 , but was repaired and remained in service . Permanently transferred to Brazil in 1953 , Duque de Caxias was decommissioned in 1959 and scrapped in 1963 .

= = World War I = =

Orizaba ? named after the town of Orizaba , Veracruz , Mexico ? was laid down for the Ward Line by William Cramp & Sons Ship and Engine Building Company of Philadelphia and launched in February 1917 . In mid @-@ 1917 the United States Shipping Board (USSB) commandeered and received title to all private shipbuilding projects in progress , including the still @-@ incomplete Orizaba and her sister ship Siboney . Plans for both ships were modified for troop @-@ carrying duties . Upon Orizaba ? s completion , the USSB delivered her to the US Navy for transport duty on 11 April 1918 , and she was commissioned as USS Orizaba on 27 May .

Assigned to the Atlantic Transport Service , Orizaba carried over 15 @,@ 000 troops in six convoy trips to France before the end of World War I. In one such voyage , Orizaba ? s executive officer , ordnance expert William Price Williamson , worked closely with Commander Richard Drace White ? Orizaba ? s commanding officer , himself an ordnance expert ? to develop a workable depth charge launcher which would provide the transport with a measure of protection from enemy submarines . Williamson set about modifying a Lyle gun into a depth charge launcher , and successfully tested it on 16 August 1918 . While attempting another test with an increased propellant charge the following day , a defective fuse exploded the depth charge prematurely , killing Williamson and three other sailors . White , four other officers , and twenty @-@ two enlisted men were also wounded in the blast .

Four days later on 21 August at 08 : 30 , Orizaba , traveling with Siboney , spotted a submarine in the act of submerging . Orizaba attempted to ram the sub and dropped depth charges , but there was no indication that the attack was successful .

In December 1918 , she was temporarily assigned to assist the French government in repatriating French , Belgian , and Italian prisoners of war . Detached from that duty on 10 January 1919 , she joined the Cruiser and Transport Force at Brest , and in nine voyages returned over 31 @,@ 700 troops to the United States . After the completion of transport duty service in the summer of 1919 ,

she decommissioned on 4 September and was turned over to the Army for further transport service as USAT Orizaba . The boat served in that capacity until returned to the Ward Line in 1920 .

According to the Statistical Department of the US Navy , Orizaba had the second @-@ shortest average in @-@ port turnaround time out of 37 US Navy transports used in World War I. The ship completed 15 round trips with an average turn @-@ around time of just over 30 days per trip , while the overall Navy average was 39 @-@ 8 days .

= = Post @-@ war civilian service = =

After both were reacquired by the Ward Line , Orizaba and Siboney were placed in transatlantic service on New York ? Cuba ? Spain routes in 1920 , with Orizaba calling at Corunna , Santander , and Bilbao in Spain . The two ships accommodated 306 first @-@ class , 60 second @-@ class , and 64 third @-@ class passengers , with each ship making several trips on the route , but a lack of passengers (along with the grounding of Siboney at Vigo in September 1920) led to the abandonment of the route .

By October 1921 , Orizaba was placed in New York ? Cuba ? Mexico service , where business thrived , in part because of Prohibition in the United States . Ward Line cruises to Havana were one of the quickest and least expensive ways to what one author called " alcohol @-@ enriched vacations " . Three years later , the ship underwent a major refit that , among other things , lengthened her funnels . A typical voyage at this time sailed from New York and called at Nassau , Havana , Progreso , Veracruz and Tampico .

By the early 1930s , Orizaba ? s typical route had remained virtually the same , though Nassau and Tampico were dropped as ports of call . It was in this period that American poet Hart Crane leapt to his death from Orizaba . At around noon on 27 April 1932 , while the ship was headed to New York ? some 275 miles (443 km) north of Havana and 10 miles (16 km) off the Florida coast ? Crane , clad in pajamas and overcoat , climbed the rail at the stern of the ship and plunged into the ocean . The captain of Orizaba immediately stopped the ship and launched four lifeboats that searched in vain for two hours , but no trace of the poet was ever found . Before he jumped , Crane had been drinking and , the night before , had been the victim of homophobic violence after a pick @-@ up attempt of a crewman ended with a severe beating .

In April 1934 , American actress Katharine Hepburn sailed from New York on Orizaba , eventually ending up in Mérida , Yucatán . After her arrival there on 22 April , she filed for divorce from businessman Ludlow (" Luddy ") Ogden Smith , whom she had married in December 1928 . After the divorce was finalized she and her travel companion , Laura Harding , planned to spend a week in Havana and return to New York on the Ward Line ship Morro Castle . Other notable passengers on Orizaba in the 1930s included Ecuadorean diplomat Gonzalo Zaldumbide and Cuban president Fulgencio Batista . Zaldumbide , the Ecuadorean Minister to the United States , sailed to Mexico for his new posting as Minister to Mexico in August 1932 . In February 1939 , Orizaba carried Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista back to Havana after a two @-@ week goodwill visit to Mexico .

Beginning in the mid @-@ 1930s , Orizaba often carried gold and silver bars from Veracruz to New York for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York , Chase National Bank , or for later transshipment to London . In October 1933 three short tons (2 @-@ 7 tonnes) of gold bars and coins were shipped on Orizaba for eventual delivery to London , prompting some to believe that gold was being smuggled into Mexico to take advantage of its policy of not charging duties on gold . In July 1934 Orizaba brought in 16 cases of Mexican gold , and in January 1935 , 20 cases ; in both instances , for delivery to Chase National Bank . Twice in 1935 , the Ward liner delivered over 1 @-@ 000 bars of silver for the Federal Reserve Bank , bringing 1 @-@ 390 bars in March , and 1 @-@ 933 bars in July . Mexico was not the only place from which Orizaba delivered precious metals . In March 1934 , she delivered 12 cases of gold ? consisting of 84 bars , and worth \$ 1 @-@ 624 @-@ 000 ? from Havana for Chase .

In mid @-@ 1939 , Orizaba was chartered to United States Lines as one of five ships added to increase what was perceived as a slow rate of return of US citizens fleeing war @-@ torn Europe . In September , the ship was diverted to Galway to pick up American survivors of SS Athenia ,

torpedoed by U @-@ 30 on 3 September ; Orizaba returned with 240 of the survivors later that month . After completing evacuation service , the ship was laid up in New York in the summer of 1940 , and subsequently purchased by the Maritime Commission on behalf of the Army on 27 February 1941 .

= = World War II = =

After her reacquisition by the War Department , Orizaba completed one round trip to the Panama Canal Zone . On her return she put in for a refit by the Bethlehem Steel Company at New York . After she was transferred to the Navy on 4 June 1941 , she was commissioned as Orizaba (AP @-@ 24) on 15 June 1941 .

Following several months of coastal operations , Orizaba , now armed with two 5 @-@ inch (130 mm) guns and four 3 @-@ inch (76 mm) guns , departed New York in April 1942 on the first transatlantic run of her second world war . Sailing via Iceland , she steamed to England , Cape Town , Recife , and Norfolk , Virginia , from which she got underway for Bermuda and Puerto Rico . Returning to Norfolk in January 1943 , she plied the eastern seaboard for a month , then took up transatlantic duties again . Until July she traversed the ocean to Oran , Algeria , carrying troops over and prisoners of war back to New York .

On 5 July she left Oran in Task Force (TF) 81 . The next day , she rendezvoused with TF 85 and on 9 July stood off Gela , Sicily , disembarking troops into landing craft . On 11 July , she sustained slight damage in an enemy air attack and retired to Algeria with casualties and prisoners on board the next day . She returned to Sicily at the end of the month to discharge troops and cargo at Palermo and then , on the night of 1 August , weighed anchor and stood out for home .

Arriving at New York on 22 August 1943 , she underwent an overhaul , then took on runs to Brazil and the Caribbean . At the end of the year she left the east coast , passed through the Panama Canal , and sailed on to the Southwestern Pacific . After calls at Samoa , Nouméa , Brisbane , and Milne Bay , she returned to the west coast in March 1944 , only to leave again for another Central Pacific run . Back at San Francisco in June , she underwent repairs ; completed a run to the Marshalls and Marianas ; and then sailed north to the Aleutians . Completing her northern run at Seattle , Washington on 1 December , she carried men and supplies to Hawaii , then returned to San Francisco , later sailing to New Guinea , the Philippines , and Ulithi to add men and materiel to forces gathering for the Battle of Okinawa .

From Ulithi , Orizaba sailed east , passed through the Panama Canal again , and , as the battle for Okinawa raged , arrived at Tampa , Florida . Decommissioning on 23 April , she underwent an overhaul and on 16 July 1945 she was transferred to Brazil under the terms of Lend @-@ Lease . The ship was permanently transferred to Brazil in June 1953 and struck from the US Naval Vessel Register on 20 July of that same year . Orizaba received one battle star for her US Navy service in World War II . As of 2008 , no other US Navy ship has been named Orizaba .

= = Brazilian Navy service = =

Assuming control of the vessel at Tampa on 16 July 1945 , the Brazilian Navy renamed the veteran transport Duque de Caxias (U @-@ 11) , the second ship of that navy named in honor of Luís Alves de Lima e Silva , Duke of Caxias , the patron of the Brazilian Army .

Duque de Caxias headed to Naples and on 28 August 1945 left there with elements of the returning Brazilian Expeditionary Force . The ship arrived at Rio de Janeiro for the first time on 17 September 1945 . The ship then loaded American military stores from US bases in Brazil and sailed for New York , arriving on 10 November 1945 , with plans to repatriate wounded Brazilian soldiers who had been recuperating in the US .

On 31 July 1947 , a day after sailing from Rio de Janeiro for Europe , oil spilled on the ship ? s boilers , causing an engine @-@ room fire that quickly spread through the first class cabins and killed 27 . The ship was towed from its position off Cabo Frio into Rio de Janeiro on 1 August 1947 . The ship had been carrying 1 @,@ 060 passengers bound for Lisbon , Naples , and Marseille ,

along with 500 crew members , and had been scheduled to carry Italian refugees on its return voyage .

In 1953 , Duque de Caxias was converted into a training ship , and in August of that year began a European and Mediterranean training cruise , which included a 12 @-@ day visit to New York in March 1954 as part of its homeward leg . The ship visited the United States again in December 1955 , with midshipmen aboard touring the United States Naval Academy and honored at a cocktail by the Brazilian Ambassador , Joao Carlos Muniz , at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington , D.C. In October the following year , Duque de Caxias called at Philadelphia , and the new Brazilian Ambassador Ernani do Amaral Peixoto ? also an Admiral in the Brazilian Navy ? and his wife sponsored a tea dance in honor of Captain Antonio Andrade , other officers of the ship , and the midshipmen aboard the ship ; Peixoto had traveled to Philadelphia to greet Andrade , a former naval attaché at the embassy . The ship was decommissioned 13 April 1959 , and finally scrapped in 1963 .