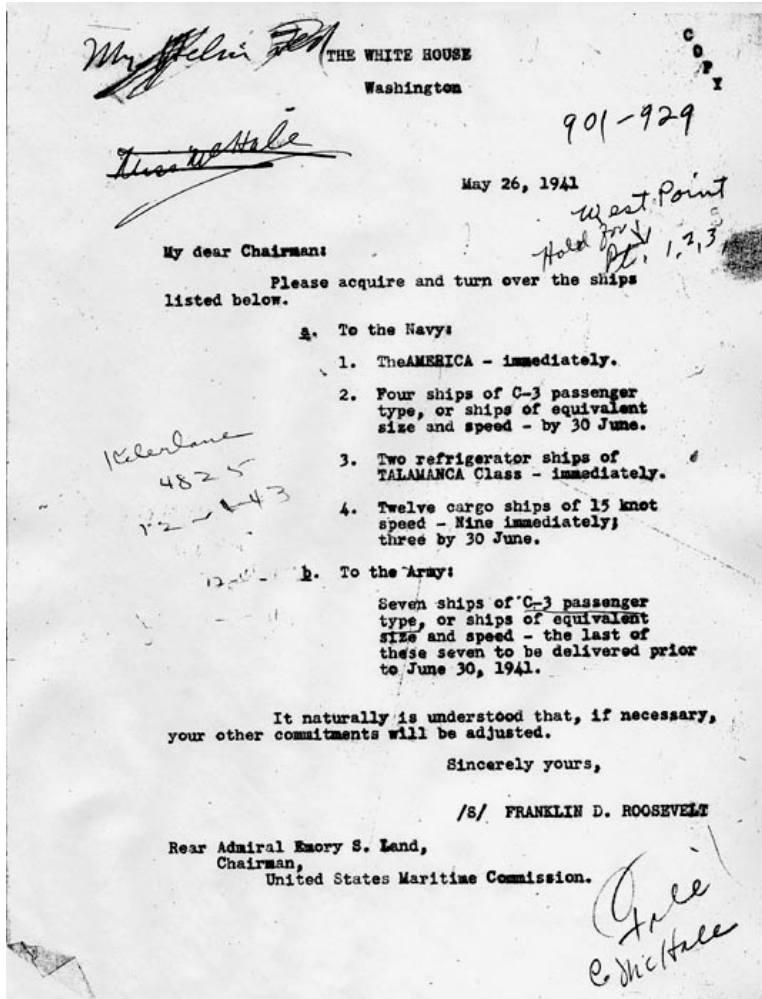


June 15th - Seventy Years Ago USS WEST POINT Commissioned at Newport News

When the ocean liner SS AMERICA was conceived in the late 1930's, her design wisely incorporated what were vaguely and deliberately termed 'certain defense features' to better enable her to safely transport troops in time of war.

Completed by Newport News Shipbuilding in June of 1940, AMERICA's promising civilian career was interrupted less than a year later by concerns about the United States becoming involved in World War II. In response to President Roosevelt's then-secret request, she was hastily converted from being the nation's largest and finest luxury liner vessel to become a navy transport.



On June 15, 1941, almost six months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, she was commissioned alongside a pier at the shipyard that had been her birthplace. Her new crew was mostly naval reservists from the New England states.

SHIPYARD BULLETIN

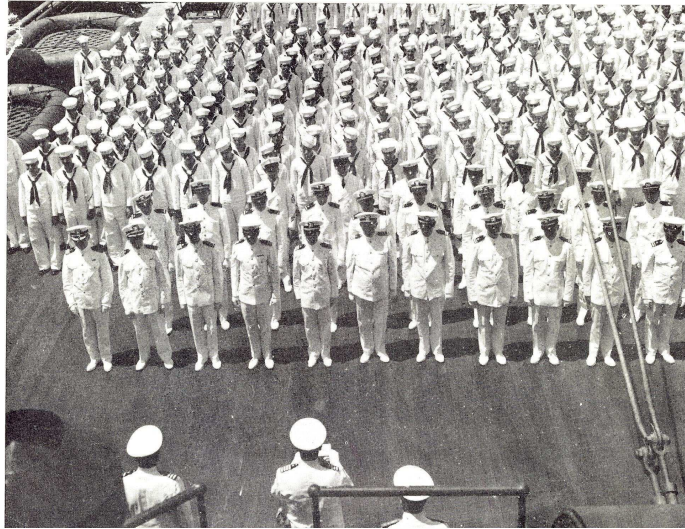
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING AND DRY DOCK COMPANY

Vol. VIII

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, SECOND QUARTER, 1941

No. 2

U. S. S. West Point Commissioned OUR HULL No. 369



Later that same day, WEST POINT backed away from a NNS pier and steamed away to serve her nation. It would be 56-1/2 months of arduous duty later for the ship and her crew before she returned to the Newport News shipyard.

Between June 15, 1941 and February 28, 1946, the WEST POINT sailed 436,144 nautical miles, and transported over 500,000 souls to their destinations all over the world. During that period of time, she never lost a single passenger to hostile action.



WEST POINT had the largest capacity of any US Navy troopship in service during World War II. On one voyage, she carried over 9,000 people (including the ship's company of 785). Affectionately called "The Grey Ghost" by her faithful crew, she crossed the Pacific 15 times and the Atlantic 41 times, almost always sailing alone and depending on her speed and maneuverability to avoid the enemy.

Following a brief ceremony, the USS WEST POINT was placed out of commission in Newport News on the last day of February, 1946. Entrusted to the care of her builders, the WEST POINT's military career started and ended where she had been designed and built. It is believed that she is the only United States naval vessel to have ever been commissioned and decommissioned at her civilian birthplace.

Ten months and several million dollars later, she had been restored to near-original condition; ready to resume her peacetime role as the Queen of the American Merchant Marine and United States Lines' flagship. When the AMERICA left Newport News in November of 1946, she was, once again, the largest and finest American passenger vessel afloat.

