

Known to people of your Republic during peacetime as a luxury passenger liner and cargo ship catering to the Caribbean tourist trade, with mirrored dining salons and Rococo cocktail bars, the ANCON soon earned another name at war...the "Mighty A". Deadly gun mounts supplanted leisured sun-worshipping travellers; a wash and shower room for troops invasion bound ousted the swimming pool; and a wealth of modern radar and communications equipment was installed.

It was then that our enemies came to know the "Mighty A" well. During the first two years of war, she was the only communications ship in the European theatre. She served as the eyes and ears of invasion armadas at North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Normandy and, later, in the Pacific, at Okinawa. She had many close calls. At Fedala, North Africa, transports alongside were torpedoed, bombed and sunk but the ANCON escaped untouched. Off Salerno, a radio-controlled bomb struck the cruiser USS Savannah anchored nearby. It was also at Salerno that radiomen of the ANCON intercepted a German message to "GET THE ANCON...at any cost!" They didn't "get" her. In all of the ship's operations in the European theatre, she suffered only a few casualties, none killed.

When the ANCON turned her invasion directing talents to the Pacific, they again heard similar bombastic threats, this time by Tokyo Rose who promised the men of the ANCON that the Japanese would finish the job flunked by the Germans. The USS ANCON was in Tokyo Bay September 2 to see the finish of the Japanese.

To visualize her role off an invasion beachhead, the visitor may think of the ANCON as a hub in a giant wheel. From her radiated instructions

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and decisions which moved ships and men as puppets in a giant's show. Naval gunfire liaison teams ashore linked with deadly firepower of battlewagons far off; clouds of Allied planes providing cover overhead and blasting the way for advancing troops; warships of every size and nature moved in and out of the invasion area on merciless missions. It all fitted together with the ANCON as a hub in her particular beachhead section.

Many other distinguished visitors have graced the ANCON's decks. King George VI, Lord and Lady Astor, Secretary of the Navy Knox, Admirals, Generals, dozens of war correspondents have sailed and visited aboard the ANCON.

The ship will soon sail to the East Coast on what may be her last U.S. Navy cruise. Soon, she may be decommissioned and returned to peacetime service.

The officers and men of the USS ANCON are proud to have served aboard her....

15 January 1946

The Officers and crew of the USS ANCON welcome the people of Panama aboard the ship which bears the name of a city of this Republic.

After almost three years of wartime duty, Panamanians may well be proud of this ship which sailed into the thick of European and Pacific invasions. Both our conquered enemies and the liberated peoples of the world know the ANCON well. Here are the....

FACTS AND FIGURES

- September 24, 1938 - Christened the SS ANCON.
- June 22, 1939 - Made first cruise, carrying 202 first class passengers, a crew of 125 and 6000 tons of cargo.
- January 11, 1942 - U.S. Army Transport Service took over the ANCON for two trips to Australia. Then after the second voyage, she became U.S. Navy.
- November 8, 1942 - Participated in first full-scale Allied amphibious invasion at Fedala, French Morocco where she was the flagship of Transport Division Nine, Amphibious Force, United States Atlantic Fleet.
- July 10, 1943 - As flagship of Commander, Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, she took part in the invasion of Sicily.
- September 9, 1943 - At Salerno, Italy, where she was assigned invasion duty as flagship of Commander, Amphibious Forces, Northwest African waters, Eighth Fleet, the Ancon carried Lieutenant General Mark Clark, in command of the Fifth Army.
- June 6, 1944 - The Ancon stood in to the D-Day beachhead at Normandy as flagship of Rear Admiral John L. Hall, Commander of the Assault Force on Omaha Beach.
- December 31, 1944 - The Ancon spent New Year's Eve in Panama, then pushed on through the locks and into the Pacific war.
- April 1, 1945 - With Rear Admiral Jerauld Wright, Commander Fifth Amphibious Group aboard, she participated in Love-Day operations against Okinawa.
- August 29, 1945 - The U.S.S. ANCON rode into Tokyo Bay, the first AGC Command ship into the Bay for the setting of the Rising Sun.