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Welcome Aboard



FLAGSHIP OF AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON EIGHT

U. S. S. MONROVIA

APA - 31

HISTORY OF THE USS MONROVIA (APA-31)

USS MONROVIA is an Amphibious Attack Transport (APA), with the primary mission of transporting troops and combat equipment from rear areas and landing them in assault on enemy-held beaches. MONROVIA carries 23 assault boats with which to carry out these landings. She is also fitted out as a flagship, and is presently the flagship for Amphibious Squadron EIGHT. Her keel was laid on 26 March 1942 at Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point Shipyard in Baltimore, Md. She was first intended to be the DELTARGENTINA, part of the maritime fleet of Delta Lines, Inc; however, the U.S. Navy purchased the hull for conversion to attack transport and she was christened USS MONROVIA on 19 September 1942. The ship was named after the home of President James Monroe, 'MONROVIA', located near the Potomac River not far from Wakefield, Westmorland County, Virginia.

MONROVIA was commissioned on 1 December 1942. After training, shakedown and further conversion, she received Army troops on 10 May 1943 for transport to Oran, Algeria, in support of operations in North Africa. On 30 June 1943 General George S. PATTON, Jr., the distinguished hero of World War II, boarded MONROVIA with his staff and troops to participate in the Sicilian landings.

MONROVIA received her first battle scars on 19 July 1943 in an attack off Sicily by a Stuka dive bomber which inflicted minor damage. After repairs, she set sail for the United States with Italian prisoners of war aboard. She was then transferred to Pacific waters and operated in the New Zealand-New Hebrides area. On 20 November 1943, the bloody TARAWA assault found MONROVIA in the force, landing her troops and then acting as a casualty evacuation ship. On the 15th of June 1944, MONROVIA again flew her battle colors during the SAIPAN invasion. She once again came through air attacks and shore fire unscratched.

In the Guam landings which followed, MONROVIA spent seven days with assault area landing elements of the 77th Infantry Division and experienced casualties. After repairs in Pearl Harbor, MONROVIA participated in the LEYTE invasion. On the 20th of October 1944, she landed elements of the 96th Infantry Division and completed off-loading equipment the next day, just in time to miss the arrival of units of the Japanese Fleet coming up from the Sulu Sea. The exit from the transport area was made under cover of a heavy smoke screen. On New Year's Eve, 1944, MONROVIA got underway to participate in the assault on LUZON, Philippine Islands. She made two trips to LUZON during the month of January 1945, carrying troops and cargo. In February and March of 1945, MONROVIA landed her troops in the assault on OKINAWA, harrassed by vicious air attacks. After the war, MONROVIA served as a shuttle ship between China and Japan, carrying troops and supplies. She was decommissioned into the Reserve Fleet on 31 January 1947.

In November 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, MONROVIA was recommissioned. She joined the Atlantic Amphibious Force and in December 1951 made the first of her many post-war Mediterranean cruises. On 15 July 1958, MONROVIA served in another important amphibious landing, being the first ship to anchor off Beirut, Lebanon, and land her landing force when that country requested assistance from President Eisenhower in resisting Communist pressure.

MONROVIA always seems to be close by when trouble arises. On 23 October 1962, she was the first amphibious ship to arrive at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and offload her Marines at the outset of the Cuban Quarantine Operation. And again on 9 January 1964, the day of the violent riots at the borders between the Canal Zone and Panama, MONROVIA had arrived in Cristobal, C. Z. only a few hours before. MONROVIA, on this occasion, supported U.S. Army troops on the embattled front line in sight of the ship. A MONROVIA boat and crew conducted three successful evacuations of U.S. citizens and dependents from Colon waterfront on the 10th and 11th of January bringing out a total of 108 persons, mostly women and children.

MONROVIA received the following citation from the Secretary of the Navy in 1949 for her outstanding record during World War II.

'For exceptionally meritorious service in action against enemy aircraft, shore batteries, mines and submarines. Operating in contact with the enemy and under attack the U.S.S. MONROVIA performed her duties as an attack transport, consistently maintaining a superior degree of efficiency in the performance of her assigned tasks and contributing materially to the development of the technique of amphibious warfare. Her courageous determination and effort were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.'

MONROVIA is authorized to wear the following ribbons: Navy Unit Commendation, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign (1 bronze star), Asiatic-Pacific Campaign (1 silver star), World War II Victory, Navy Occupation, China Service (Extended), Philippine and National Defense Service Ribbons.

VITAL STATISTICS

Length.....491 Feet
Beam.....65.8 Feet
Shaft Horse Power.....7,800
Maximum Speed.....17 Knots
Fresh water distilling capacity.....40,000
(gallons per day)
Displacement fully loaded.....14,281 TONS
Normal cruising radius.....15,700 Miles
Crew Complement.....396
Officers Complement.....39
Home Port.....Norfolk, Virginia