

WISTERIA

<i>Length, overall</i> 441' 6"	<i>Gross tons</i> 7,940	<i>Propulsion</i> Recip. eng.
<i>Beam</i> 56' 10"	<i>Speed (knots)</i> 11	<i>Patients</i> 595
<i>Draft</i> 24' 0"	<i>Radius (miles)</i> 21,000	<i>Cargo</i> None

Built in 1942 by North Carolina Shipbuilding Co., Wilmington, N. C.

Former name: WILLIAM OSLER

Operated by American Export Lines, Inc., prior to acquisition by the War Department.

THIS was the former Liberty type freighter WILLIAM OSLER, one of six such vessels selected for use as hospital ships. She was operated as a freighter a year and a half prior to undergoing conversion by Bethlehem's 27th Street yard at New York between 23 November 1943 and 15 July 1944. The name WISTERIA was chosen by the Office of the Surgeon General.

The day following conversion the WISTERIA departed from New York for the Mersey (England) and returned in August with her initial load of patients to Charleston, which became the vessel's home port for the ensuing year. After another voyage to Liverpool and the Mersey, the ship next left Charleston on 1 October for a voyage to Gibraltar, Oran and Naples. It was on this voyage that the WISTERIA was involved in a minor collision with a British destroyer while in the Mediterranean.

Having returned to Charleston in late November, the vessel made the following round trips in succession: two to Avonmouth (returning therefrom on 10 January and 26 February 1945, respectively); to Oran and Marseilles (with return in April); to Gibraltar and Marseilles; to Southampton; to Avonmouth and Horta (Azores); and to Cherbourg (with return via St. Johns, Newfoundland to New York in September).

The WISTERIA next made a voyage to Cherbourg, which was followed by a longer one to Cherbourg, Bremerhaven and Plymouth. From the latter journey, the ship returned to New York in January 1946. After another trip to Cherbourg, the vessel left New York in early March for Liverpool, Antwerp and Bremerhaven. On 1 May she departed again for Bremerhaven.