

THE NAVAL SERVICE OF USS YALE-SPI672

William Davis (4780)

YALE was acquired by the US Navy from the merchant marine service on 13 March 1918 and converted to use as a troop transport at the Mare Island California Navy Yard. She was commissioned 25 March 1918 there under the command of Lt. Cdr. Richard C. Brennan, USNRF.

After certain trial runs, loading stores and fuel, and taking aboard as passengers a small contingent of US Marines to be stationed as Embassy Guard in Nicaragua, she departed from San Diego, Calif. 20 May 1918 for Nicaragua Roads, Va. via Acapulco, Mexico, Corinto, Nicaragua, and Panama Canal and arrived at her destination 3 June 1918.

10 July 1918 she left Newport News, Va. as part of Troop Convoy 49 for Brest, France with 254 US troop passengers, arriving there 21 July 1918. Thereafter, she made nearly daily trips between Southampton, England and Le Harve, France. That is she would leave one or other port in the morning, arrive in the late afternoon and the next day reverse her passage. Normally she would carry over 2000 US and/or foreign troops from England to France. On occasions would have troops of various nationalities as passengers from France to England - that is soldiers on leave, for transfer of duty station, wounded, or German prisoners. On a few occasions an additional stop might also be made at Portsmouth, England.

In the period 30 November 1918 - 7 December 1918 YALE was inactive at Southampton. On Christmas Day 1918, a small fire broke out that was quickly extinguished doing but slight damage to the vessel. After the end of War I YALE began having larger passenger lists on trip France to England. By February 1919 she began calling at Boulogne, France in lieu of Le Harve on some voyages. On her last voyage from Le Harve 28 April 1919 there was again a small fire aboard in the troop quarters.

On 1 May 1919 she departed from Southampton for the last time, stopping at Plymouth, England on the 2nd and arrived at Brest, France on May 3rd. 6 May 1919 sailed from Brest with 298 passengers bound for New York. On 9 May 1919 suffered damage from a heavy sea and on the 12th put into Ponta Delgada, Azores where 8 additional passengers were embarked. YALE anchored off Weehawken, N.J. in the Hudson River 22 May 1919 and discharged her military passengers. Still anchored in the river she was rammed by USS NANTASKET on 25 May 1919 causing slight damage.

Came 27 May 1919 and YALE was moored at Pier 16 Hoboken, N.J. where general repair work took place including alteration of passenger accommodations. June 7, 1919 the ship's original commanding officer Richard C. Brennan, who had been promoted to Cdr as of 13 May 1919 was relieved by Lt Cdr Frank C. Lane, USNRF. After further repair work including drydocking YALE left Hoboken 15 June 1919 with 1515 Army passengers for Portsmouth, Va. discharging them there on the 16th. The vessel then moved to Newport News, Va., took aboard 901 Army passengers for deposit at New York, NY 17 June 1919.

In the period 18-20th June 1919 YALE made a voyage from Deer Island to Cape May, N.J. effecting a transfer of 700 naval prisoners. Thereafter YALE made a number of voyages New York-Hoboken-Hampton Roads area with Army passengers. 19 July 1919 received orders to proceed to Philadelphia Pa. Navy Yard to be placed in ordinary pending and during conversion into a heavier-than-aircraft carrier and arrived 21 July 1919. Soon thereafter while attempting to go alongside USS ST. LOUIS rammed latter ship causing small damage to both vessels.

The record does not disclose why the planned conversion never came off. 26 August 1919 Lt Cdr Lane was relieved of the command by Lt Cdr Charles H. Sargent, USNRF. On 3 September 1919 YALE was towed by 2 tugs to Back Channel, Philadelphia Navy Yard and moored alongside USS CHARLES (ex SS HARVARD). On 11 November 1919 YALE was ordered sold, 10 June 1920 was placed out of commission at the Bremerton, Washington Navy Yard. Thus a gap in her official record as to when she made the voyage from Philadelphia to Bremerton. On 20 April 1920 was sold to Yale Harvard Syndicate, afterwards called Los Angeles Steamship Co.

Symbolic of her World War I career, YALE made a total of 85 round trips between England-France carrying a total of 99,346 passengers to France and 112,047 to England. Of these roughly 123,000 were British troops and 81,000 American. As a transport in US coastal waters after the War she

carried about 9500 passengers.

After an active career in the American merchant marine details not germane to this article, YALE was again acquired by US Navy for use in World War II. Her last civilian use had been as a barracks ship for base construction workers at Sitka, Alaska. US Navy purchased the vessel 3 February 1942 and she was reconditioned at Bremerton Navy Yard, the work being completed 30 April 1943 and she was commissioned there 19 August 1943 under the name USS GREYHOUND (IX106).

From the record it does not appear that GREYHOUND ever left Bremerton and on 1 April 1944 she was decommissioned but remained in a service status as a barracks ship at Bremerton until 4 September 1946. She was stricken from Register of Naval Vessels 18 June 1946 and transferred to the Maritime Commission Reserve Fleet at Olympia, Washington 12 November 1948. Soon thereafter was apparently sold for scrapping and was broken up at Seattle, Washington probably early in 1949.

The above article was inspired by the few lines I had on the vessel in USCS LOG for October 1964, Page 2. I felt that on my next visit to the Navy Dept. in Washington I would attempt to find out if more information was available on YALE, although to be honest I did not expect to find out much on an SP type vessel and I had never identified GREYHOUND (IX106) as being the same vessel.

I thought it might be of interest to all if I were to give certain details on my source of information. All US Navy public records - that is to say material that has been declassified - is technically in the custody of what is called The Department of Naval History, Navy Dept. Building, Constitution Ave., Washington 25, D.C. The head of this Department for some time has been Rear Admiral Ernest M. Eller, USN, Retired. Records pertaining to ships of the Navy are kept in what is called Ships' Histories Division presently headed up by Cdr Clayton Johnson, USN, Retired.

I think that I should first make clear that while these records are public in the sense that they are no longer classified and may be employed in publications of the Navy Dept. or such other records made available to regular and qualified members of the press etc., the rooms in which housed are not available for the casual tourist or sightseer. However it is possible that for good and sufficient reason setting forth a reasonable time allowance a letter addressed to Admiral Eller will bring forth permission to make a visit. In case a personal visit is not required or distance from Washington prohibits it a letter seeking some specific fact may well be answered by someone in Admiral Eller's Department. This type of thing must not be overdone or neither permission to visit nor answer to inquiry will be made. The Department is not staffed to handle inquiries from the public in any volume at all. If the material desired is for publication common courtesy if nothing else requires deposit of a copy of the published material with Admiral Eller.

In so far as article on USS YALE is concerned with Ships' Histories Division, there exists a file of folders devoted to the name borne by each ship of the US Navy. When there were 5-10 ships with same name all material on the various ships will be in the same folder, not always in any order. Basic however to each ship is what is called the individual ship's history card, which I can only say will contain various amounts of information depending on how well data has been transferred to the card from other sources over the years. All sorts of additional material may be in the folders. Some folders are several inches thick-on some there may be nothing but the name of the vessel on the individual history card.

Although individual history card contains space for say dimensional data on vessel this is normally not filled in if the information exists elsewhere as in Ships Data Books. It is apt to contain information as to dates of launch, commissioning, and perhaps operational history, etc.

As Ships' Histories Division is primarily concerned over past decade or so with preparation for publication of such wonderful volumes as Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, third volume of which is now in preparation, Civil War Chronology, and the mimeographed *United States Ship's History* (I believe they cost 20 cents each and several thousand have certainly been prepared by now), you can appreciate it when I say the personnel have little time for individual inquiries.

I was thus agreeably surprised to discover that YALE

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SECTION OF SAN DIEGO