



Friday, June 17, 2022

LIVE at the National Opera Center, 330 7th Ave. at 29th Street, 7th Floor AND via ZOOM at 6:00 pm

THE FIVE LIVES OF THE FOUR ACES

By DOUG NEWMAN

Although they are among the better-known passenger-cargo liners, American Export Lines' postwar "Four Aces"—EXCALIBUR, EXOCHORDA, EXETER, and EXCAMBION—are nevertheless often seen as adjuncts of the express liners INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION rather than important in their own right. Yet these four ships are notable in several ways. Originally laid down as civilian freighters for AEL, they were completed as World War II attack transports for the U.S. Navy, and rebuilt after the war as passenger-cargo liners to replace AEL's four prewar ships of the same names on its long service from the U.S. to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. They are exemplars of the many vessels converted from wartime to peacetime use after the war as well as of a mid-20th century U.S. Merchant Marine that was heavily subsidized, partly in anticipation of yet another world war. They are also among the very earliest postwar liners, having entered service within a few months of each other in 1948, and represent the brief trend toward smaller passenger-cargo liners in the immediate postwar years. Lastly, they represented the height of postwar modernity as single-class ships with private facilities in every stateroom, as the world's first fully air-conditioned liners and in their modernist art and design. AEL commissioned Henry Dreyfuss, perhaps the preeminent 20th century American industrial designer, to design the Aces as well as the slightly later INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION. Dreyfuss in turn commissioned artworks from major artists such as Saul Steinberg to adorn the ships' main public spaces. As a result, in addition to their significance in maritime history, the postwar Four Aces were also important examples of 20th century American art and design.

Though their careers with AEL already represented a second life for each ship after a first one during wartime, each also went on to have an additional life after AEL declared the ships surplus and turned them over in pairs to the U.S. government. Each would therefore remain in use for at least 30 years after the beginning of its first wartime life. The EXOCHORDA and EXCAMBION left first and became, respectively, the dormitory ship STEVENS for Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken and the training ship TEXAS CLIPPER for Texas A&M University. The remaining pair, EXCALIBUR and EXETER, became the ORIENTAL JADE and ORIENTAL PEARL for Orient Overseas Lines' service from California to Japan and China. While three of the ships were scrapped in the 1970s, the EXCAMBION/TEXAS CLIPPER remained in service until 1996 and was not sunk as a reef until 2007, an extraordinary lifespan lasting from World War II into the 21st century.

Join us as Doug Newman as explores the five lives of these four famous, yet perhaps underappreciated, liners.



American Export Line's popular "Four Aces" steam along the cover of a 1950's deck plan booklet. (The Wolfsonian-FIU Collection)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership Meeting at the National Opera Center, New York, NY, and via ZOOM: Friday, September 30 - History of the Staten Island Ferry by Pat Salmon.

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



A busy Sunday afternoon in New York Harbor, April 24th 2022: the NORWEGIAN GEM, NORWEGIAN GETAWAY and a newcomer, the little OCEAN EXPLORER, were in port together. (Bill Miller)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
VIKING SIGRUN	Basel	Amsterdam	Rhine River Cruise	Catherine & Charles Crawford	08/21
NORWEGIAN GEM	New York	New York	Caribbean Cruise	Catherine & Charles Crawford	11/21
VIKING INGVI	Budapest	Passau	Danube River Cruise	Catherine & Charles Crawford	04/22
ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	New York	New York	New England/Canada Cruise	Catherine & Charles Crawford	05/22
OCEANIA INSIGNIA	Miami	Athens	World Cruise Segment	Tom Cassidy	03/22
LORD OF THE HIGHLANDS	Oban	Kyle of Lochalsh	Scottish Islands	Pat and Denise Dacey	05/22

PREVIEW: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, 6:00 PM –

LIVE AT THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER, AND VIA ZOOM : HISTORY OF THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY

By PAT SALMON

Most people do not realize that ferries have traveled to and from Staten Island since the time of the Lenape. As the island evolved and its transportation system became more elaborate, the ferries that operated also changed. This program features more than 400 years of Staten Island ferry service, including entrepreneurs involved, the ferryboats themselves, and the landings that existed all around this once isolated island.

Patricia M. Salmon retired as Curator of History at the Staten Island Museum in 2012 and has been a Staten Island resident for almost fifty years. Ms. Salmon has authored the books *Realms of History: The Cemeteries of Staten Island*; *The Staten Island Ferry: A History, Murder & Mayhem on Staten Island* and *Staten Island Slayings: Murderers and Mysteries of the Forgotten Borough*.



An early 20th Century view of the St. George, Staten Island Ferry Terminal.

(Pat Salmon Collection)

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

By Pat Dacey

As summer approaches, I hope that this expanded issue of The Porthole finds all our members and their families well. Our branch had an exciting start to 2022 with excellent programs through Zoom, a return to in-person membership meetings in April, and the introduction of online payment options on its website. We have also have had a fun and informative PONY Branch cruise to the United States Merchant Marine Museum at Kings Point as well as a visit with PortSide New York and the historic MARY WHALEN.

As per branch tradition, we will not hold monthly membership meetings during July and August and will restart our programs in September with Pat Salmon and "The History of the Staten Island Ferry". We hope to schedule some informal gatherings during the summer so that our members and friends can share their varied maritime interests.

One such event is a visit to the Noble Maritime Collection (noblemaritime.org) at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, located in Staten Island, to view its new exhibition, ANDREA DORIA: Rescue at Sea. In addition, we will be able to view the many maritime objects in the John A. Noble Collection.

In closing, I would like to thank all our members for their continued support of the PONY Branch and our presenters and partners, especially the National Opera Center, who have worked with us during the Covid pandemic. I look forward to seeing all of you in person at our June 17th membership meeting, as well as at our summer events.

PONY BRANCH STAGES THE FIRST LIVE PROGRAM SINCE FEBRUARY 2020

By Ted Scull

The ongoing Covid situation has certainly caused a lot of discussion from the world's leaders down to those who belong to both social and special interest groups. Some have folded and others turned to virtual programs that could be accessed, as we did, via ZOOM.

We all became aware of the plusses and minuses, and they need not be repeated here, because something more important was about to take place. Friday, April 29th approached, and after over two years of watching a computer screen, we went live again at our regular mid-Manhattan venue on the 7th floor of the National Opera Center on 7th Avenue at 29th Street.

The branch recently purchased some new equipment so that the program would be simultaneously available to a remote audience as well as an alive and kicking one. As 6 PM approached, members began to file in and within minutes it was Old Home Week all over again. Almost all faces were familiar to everyone attending, and some in my case, dated back five decades and a bit more.

Members found their seats and seatmates, conversations started up, and within a few minutes, it seemed like the intervening period had suddenly melted away.

The program was delivered by our most adventurous member, Tom Rinaldi, who travels into remote parts of the world to locate and sail aboard obscure ships. His Senegal River trip, reviewed in this issue, was simply his latest. Being in the same space as the speaker, you immediately sense his enthusiasm and are engaged regardless if the topic is a million leagues away from anything you have encountered.

As always, Tom was enthralling, and the Q&A lively, while in the past, frankly not always drawing the interest we experienced on this evening. Refreshments were offered, and most of the audience remained for about an hour to continue our personal renewal process. For those who live within reasonable commuting distance, the rewards are so much more than switching on the computer and when the speaker is finished, switch it off and call it a day.

Thanks to Tom Rinaldi for giving us an example of the power of the live and in-person presentation. Hmm, how soon will he locate another floating adventure travel target? Stay tuned.

A SAD PASSING

By Pat Dacey

It is with great sadness that we report on the passing of long-time PONY Branch member Mary Maxtone-Graham on May 9, 2022. Mary was the devoted wife of John Maxtone-Graham for 35 years before his passing in 2015. John and Mary, the former Mary Bergeron, were married in 1981 aboard the ROTTERDAM in New York Harbor. Mary was very active and supportive of John's "nautical calling," attending all of his lectures and joining him on his many voyages, which accounted for up to seven months a year at sea.

Mary Maxtone-Graham, who was 70 years old at the time of her death, had been in a healthcare facility for some time.

The WSS-PONY Branch extends its condolences to her family and friends and acknowledges her support over many years.

SHIP'S LOG, MARCH 2022: THE LINERS AND CRUISE SHIPS OF SCANDINAVIA

By Marjorieann Matusezk

Captain Albert Schoonderbeek's program followed the nearly 160-year history of passenger ships from Scandinavia. He sought to answer the question: "How did three, fairly small countries-- each having fewer than 5.5 million inhabitants-- bring such large fleets into service?"

The first half of his program covered the transatlantic liner companies from Denmark—Scandinavian America Line (1889-1934), Norway—Norwegian America Line (1910-1984), and Sweden—Swedish America Line (1914-1975). Their vessels first carried passengers to and from Scandinavian, Baltic and UK ports and then later carried emigrants to America. During the winter they became cruise ships, bringing passengers from Scandinavian ports to Mediterranean and Black Sea ports.

Like their latter-day counterparts, these companies were created by entrepreneurs of vision and courage. C.F. Tietgen, the Danish equivalent of J.P. Morgan, had interests in banking, building and engineering companies. In 1866, Tietgen oversaw the merger of several of these companies and some ship lines into the United Steamship Company—Det forenede Dampskibs-Selskab—or DFDS to most ship aficionados. One such company was the Thingvalla Line, founded in 1873.

Thingvalla Line's ships were chartered from various lines or purchased from White Star Line and the Engel Line. Its THINGVALLA (1874), named after a city in Iceland that was home to one of the earliest democracies, was only 300 feet long and measured 2,500 gross tons.

In 1898, DFDS bought four of Thingvalla Line's ships and renamed its fleet Scandinavian America Line. Eventually, it added two new ships: UNITED STATES (1903) and FREDERIK VIII (1913). In contrast to the THINGVALLA, the FREDERIK VIII was 500 feet long and almost four times the tonnage. From the photos of the Music Salon and the Gentlemen's Smoking Room shared by Captain Albert, we could see that their interiors were unlike those of ships built in England or Scotland. They were lighter and more streamlined--early Biedermeier rather than Victorian.

The Norwegians elected to jump start Norwegian America Line with two new-builds from Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, UK: KRISTIANAFJORD (1912) and BERGENSFJORD (1913), each about 10,700 tons and capable of achieving a speed of 17 knots. Their First Class Salon and the Gentlemen's Smoking Room evinced a Victorian décor.

Next up for our consideration was STAVANGERFJORD (1917), another Cammell Laird build. Since Norway was neutral during World War I, the ship was laid up in New York. In 1924, she was converted from a coal-burner to an oil-burner. According to Captain Albert, the ship crossed the North Atlantic 768 times during her long career, which ended in 1964.

Due to the stock market crash and the Depression, the Norwegians waited until 1938 to launch their next new-build, OSLOFJORD (A/G Weser Shipbuilders of Bremen). Unfortunately, the ship sank after hitting a mine in the North Sea in 1940. A new ship of the same name was ordered from the Netherlands Dock and Shipbuilding Company in 1949. This 17,000-ton ship plied the North Atlantic until 1963. She caught fire in the Canary Islands while chartered to Costa Cruises as FULVIA in 1970, and sank under tow. Is it any wonder why the Norwegians never named another passenger ship "OSLOFJORD?"



OSLOFJORD of 1949 was a popular NAL liner and cruise ship. Sadly, she was lost in a 1970 fire while on charter to Costa. (Bob Allen Collection)

Next followed the BERGENSFJORD of 1956, a Swan Hunter build measuring 18,739 gross tons, and the SAGAFJORD in 1965 from Societe Nouvelle des Forges et Chantiers de la Mediterranee at 24,500 gross tons. The SAGAFJORD sailed for Norwegian American Line until 1983 when she was transferred to Cunard Line.

Like the SAGAFJORD, the VISTAFJORD (1973) was built as a combination liner-cruise ship (Swan Hunter) and sold to Cunard Line in 1983. She was renamed CARONIA in 1999. When Carnival Cruise Lines acquired Cunard Line, it sold both ships to the Saga Group. SAGAFJORD was renamed SAGA ROSE and the VISTAFJORD became SAGA RUBY. Both ships were later sold for scrap, the SAGA ROSE in 2010 and the SAGA RUBY in 2013.

Eager to quickly establish passenger ship service to North America in the early twentieth century, the Swedes bought two ships, STOCKHOLM, ex-POTSDAM (Blohm and Voss) of Holland America Line in 1915 and DROTTNINGHOLM, ex-VIRGINIAN (Alexander Stephen and Sons, Ltd.) of Allan Lines in 1920. They also chartered the NOORDAM (Harland and Wolff) from Holland America Line in 1923. and renamed her KUNGSHOLM

Following World War I, Swedish America Line launched its first new build, the 18,000-ton GRIPSHOLM, built by Armstrong, Whitworth and Company. Completed in 1925, the ship accommodated 1,557 passengers in three classes. In 1954, she was sold to Bremen-America Line and renamed BERLIN. She was followed by the 20,000-ton KUNGSHOLM in 1928, with accommodations for 1,575 passengers, also in three classes. After World War II, she had a second career as Home Line's ITALIA.



A 1929 Swedish American Line promotional brochure for the KUNGSHOLM.

(Bob Allen Collection)

Following the stock market crash and the Depression the Swedes, like their Norwegian counterparts, waited until 1938 for their next new build: STOCKHOLM. The ship caught fire at the Cantieri Reuniti dell' Adriatico shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy and sank at her berth. The Swedes ordered a second ship, also to be named STOCKHOLM, from the shipbuilder. Since this second ship was completed at the onset of World War II, the Swedes sold her to Lloyd Sabaudo in 1941. She eventually became an Italian troop ship, which was subsequently scuttled by the Germans.

Sweden, though neutral, kept a fine balancing act during the war, on the one hand supplying Germany with much-needed iron ore and on the other hand accepting Danish and Norwegian refugees and training them in guerilla warfare for the purpose of freeing their occupied homelands. In addition, it provided a safe haven for thousands of Jewish refugees. The DROTTNINGHOLM and the GRIPSHOLM served the Swedish government as ships of state, shuttling political dignitaries to and from various diplomatic endeavors. They returned to Swedish America Line service following the war.

Did the Swedish America Line believe in lucky charms? Apparently so, because it added a fourth ship named STOCKHOLM (Gotaverken, Goteborg) to its fleet in 1948. Following STOCKHOLM's collision with the ANDREA DORIA in 1956, the ship was repaired in New York and returned to service for Swedish America Line. It was later sold for use by a consortium of East German trade unions (Der Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund in DDR) in 1960 and renamed MS VOELKERFREUNDSCHAFT (Friendship of the People). In 1986, she was renamed FRIDTJOF NANSEN and served as a refugee hostel in Oslo. Star Lauro acquired the ship in 1989 and planned to add her to Italian passenger service as the SURRIENTO. Given the "incident" with the ANDREA DORIA, the Italians were understandably reluctant. After sporting the name ITALIA I, she became ITALIA PRIMA and cruised the Mediterranean on charters for Neckermann Seereisen. She acquired more owners and names beyond 1997. After more than seventy years of service, the ship formerly known as STOCKHOLM is currently docked in Rotterdam and awaits her next maritime assignment.

The GRIPSHOLM (Ansaldo, Genoa) entered service for the Swedish America Line in 1957, first as a transatlantic liner on the Goeteborg-New York route. By 1971, she only did cruises. In 1975, she was sold to Karageorgis Lines and renamed NAVARINO. In 1984, she was sold again and became the REGENT SEA for Regency Cruises.

The last ship to sail for the Swedish America Line was the KUNGSHOLM (John Brown & Company, Clydebank) of 1965. Like her predecessors, she was designed for cruising as well as crossings. High fuel and labor costs rendered sailings unprofitable and hastened the end of passenger service for the Line. In 1975 the KUNGSHOLM was sold to Flagship Cruises, which went out of business three years later. In a refit overseen by P&O, the ship lost its forward funnel, leaving it with one modified cone-shaped funnel. It cruised as SEA PRINCESS until 1998 when it was renamed VICTORIA. Leonardo Shipping, which acquired her in 2002, renamed her MONA LISA and chartered her to various entities. She was scrapped in 2016.

The second half of Captain Albert's program described the entrepreneurs leading Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, Seabourn Cruise Line, Fred.Olsen and Royal Viking Line. He explained that P&O/Princess, with its PACIFIC PRINCESS (ex-SEA VENTURE) set the tone for cruising when the *Love Boat* series aired on TVs across America from the late 70's to the early 80's.

Arne Wilhelmsen and other executives at Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (1968) acquired Admiral Cruises, which had been formed through a merger of Eastern Cruise Lines, Western Cruise Lines and Sundance/Stardance Cruises. They oversaw the development and introduction of the fledgling company's first new-build, the 24,945-gross ton SONG OF NORWAY (Meyer Turku, Finland) in 1970. The company continued to grow through acquisitions as well as new builds. Celebrity Cruises was added in 1997, Azamara Cruises (ex-R ships) in 2007 and Silversea Cruises in 2020. Azamara Cruises was sold to Sycamore Partners in 2021.

Knut Kloster and Ted Arison were instrumental to the founding of Norwegian Caribbean Line (NCL) in 1966. Captain Albert pointed out that NCL was created earlier than Royal Caribbean, but its start-up, with the SUNWARD, took longer than expected. NCL stunned the maritime industry with its acquisition and re-purposing of the FRANCE for cruising in 1980 and renaming it NORWAY. Although the 70,000 gross ton ship had to anchor outside Caribbean ports because it was too large to dock, it was an immediate success. Like Royal Caribbean, NCL expanded through new builds and the acquisitions of Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises in 2014.

In 1987, a consortium of Norwegian investors founded Seabourn Cruise Line in 1987. Carnival Corporation purchased a 25% stake in the company in 1991 and completed its purchase of Seabourn in 1998.

Fred.Olsen, a ferry and cargo ship company, developed its passenger service fleet via acquisition of "gently-used" ships: BALMORAL (ex-CROWN ODYSSEY, ex-NORWEGIAN CROWN), BRAEMAR (ex-CROWN DYNASTY), BOLETTE (ex-AMSTERDAM) and BOREALIS (ex-ROTTERDAM).

Executives at Hurtigruten took notice of more and more tourists booking mail boats along the Norwegian coastline. The passenger-cargo ship RICHARD WITH (Volkswerft), named after the company's founder and launched in 1983, was one of the first ships to cater to a niche market.

Conceived by Knut Kloster, Jr., THE WORLD (Bruces SY, Landskrona), has been described as a floating country club. Whereas most new, large ships are designed as "the destination" for the mass market, THE WORLD offers tailored itineraries to its condominium owners.

Captain Albert said that Mr. Kloster envisions future ships measuring 400,000 gross tons and accommodating 10,000 people. Will they become extensions of the ship-as-destination concept—floating cities? Perhaps the next generation of Scandinavian entrepreneurs will provide the answer.

SHIP'S LOG, APRIL 2022: THE CRUISE OF THE BOU EL MOGDAD

By Pat Dacey

On Friday, April 29th, the WSS - PONY Branch welcomed for our first in-person program (and simultaneous ZOOM broadcast) since February 2020, noted historian, author and PONY Branch Member Tom Rinaldi, who presented an exciting program on his recent cruise on the BOU EL MOGDAD.

Tom Rinaldi's early fascination with ships started while growing up in New York State in the 1990's, watching the last of the great liners as they sailed into history. In 1997 he was fortunate to sail on the ROTTERDAM (V) on her last transatlantic crossing from Civitavecchia to New York before ending her career with Holland American Line later that year. Since that voyage and countless more, Tom has focused on sailing in older and more distinct second-hand tonnage such as the BOU EL MOGDAD.

The trip on the BOU EL MOGDAD had been on Tom's "to do" list since 2020 but was delayed by the worldwide pandemic. He finally made the voyage in February 2022, as the BOU EL MOGDAD achieved a record 72 years in service. Based in the old

colonial capital of Saint-Louis, Senegal (now a UNESCO World Heritage City), the BOU EL MOGDAD, winds her way upriver along Senegal's border with Mauritania, stopping at trading posts where she's been a familiar sight for generations.

Starting his presentation with vintage maps, Tom provided concise geographic orientation as to Senegal's location and the BOU's route both past and present-day. Viewers were made aware of the location and political boundaries of this region in western-most Africa. Built in 1950 to carry passengers, freight and mail on overnight voyages along the Senegal River, the BOU EL MOGDAD today makes weekly trips following a similar route to the one she sailed 70 years ago. However, today's route is a substantially shorter journey, traversing 200 kilometers instead of the original 1,100 kilometers.

With his usual detail oriented and descriptive dialogue, Tom vividly covered his passage to Saint-Louis, formerly the colonial capital of Africa until 1902. Tom began his journey in New York City. His trans-Atlantic travel was via Air Senegal, then by car to the historic Hotel de La Poste. Deferring to the "art of presentation," it was at this point in the program that we captured our first glimpse of the BOU EL MOGDAD berthed in Saint-Louis.

Tom recounted his successful earlier quest to learn more about the ship, from her construction in the Netherlands and her early history. His research was well rewarded at the New York City Public Library, when he came upon several very useful French maritime journals from the 1940's. Using a combination of vintage and modern photographs, Tom provided us a deck-by-deck tour of the ship highlighting some of the more significant areas onboard. He also highlighted layout changes over the decades, resulting in the BOU EL MOGDAD's current configuration for river cruising.

Tom expressed his initial concerns about the cruise. Most of the travelers on the passenger list were more than 50 years old. As the only US citizen on board, he would not be able to interact with other voyagers as much as he wanted. However, he quickly discovered that the ship was only booked at 80% capacity (40 passengers) mostly with Europeans, so the default second language of the ship was English and many of his concerns were alleviated.

Tom brought his voyage to life with vivid images and detailed descriptions of the sights and sounds encountered along the river. On a typical day, passengers tendered ashore and immersed themselves in the local culture before returning to the ship for dinner. Onshore activities included not only observing the people and culture of the region, but also joining them for meals, sharing local traditions and cuisine.

Interspersed in Tom's narrative was additional history of the ship, such as the vessel's 10-year transition from transport vessel to cruise vessel. Thirty years of the BOU's history was intertwined with the adventures of Georges Console, who bought the BOU EL MOGDAD in the 1970's and owned it until 2005. His life is the subject of the book "Le Roi Du Fleuve" (The River King).

As a final thought on the week's adventure, Tom summed up his experience by reminiscing how the BOU EL MOGDAD would pass a village and everyone, young and old, would come to the riverbank to watch her sail by. Tom found it poignant that for generations, the BOU EL MOGDAD and the lives of those who lived along the Senegal River were so deeply connected.

Tom concluded his presentation with a "bonus feature:" his follow-on journey from Saint-Louis to Dakar, a 14-hour ferry ride on the "Liaison Maritime Dakar-Ziguinchor" (Maritime Link Dakar-Ziguinchor). Like all of Tom's programs, this one was thoroughly enjoyable, an educational experience complemented with stunning photography and fascinating narrative.

The World Ship Society – PONY Branch thanks Tom for his presentation and his continuous support of our chapter. We look forward to welcoming him back in the near future to share his adventures for another WSS-PONY program.



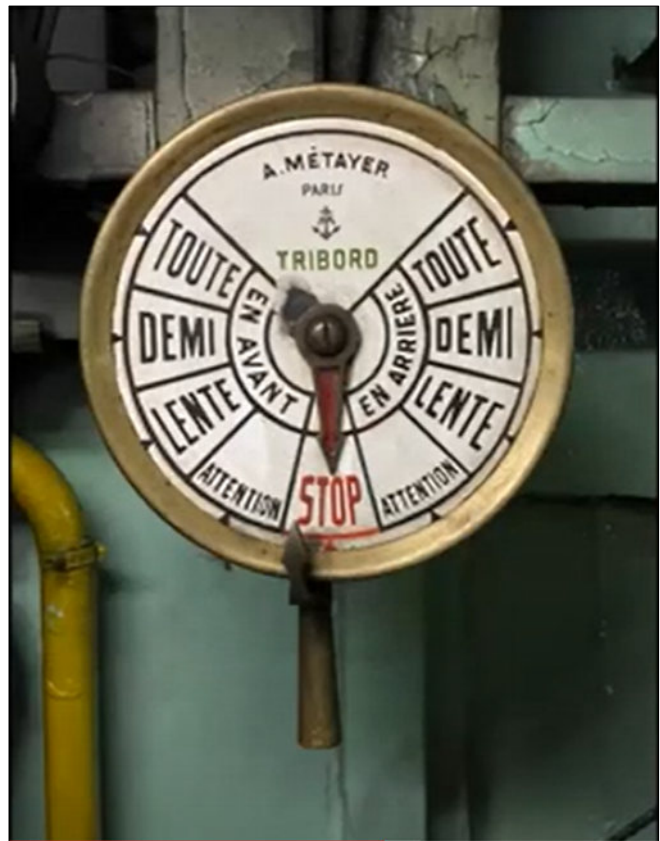
The BOU EL MOGDAD tied up along the Senegal River



(Tom Rinaldi)



The funnel and engine telegraph of the BOU EL MOGDAD



(Tom Rinaldi)

SHIPS IN PORT: INTENDED CRUISES ON THE ATLANTIC II

By Bill Miller

Occasionally, ships were scheduled to visit New York and even offer a full round of sailings, but then something changed, something went wrong. The visit or visits were canceled. Indeed a small group, they might be called “the ships that never made it.” One of them was the Greek cruise ship ATLANTICA. To have been chartered by Manhattan-based Caribbean Cruise Lines for the summer of 1964, the 600-passenger ship was intended to run a series of 7-day cruises to Bermuda and Nassau. Owned by the Greek-flag Typaldos Lines, the charterers decided to modify the ship’s name as ATLANTIC. But American Export Lines already had an ATLANTIC, a passenger ship well known within New York travel circles and used on the New York-Mediterranean run, and so protested. Two ships with the same name – and both sailing from New York – would cause great confusion especially within the travel agent business. So, months before the first cruise was scheduled to begin, Caribbean Cruise Lines changed, if slightly, the ship’s name in its advertising. The ship’s name was changed to ATLANTIC II. But Caribbean Cruise Lines itself was heading into financially troubled seas and the charter with Typaldos Lines never materialized. The ATLANTICA never left the Mediterranean or ran the projected weekly cruises.

Originally, the 509-ft long ATLANTICA had been the COLOMBIE of the famed French Line. She had last been in New York in April 1946, when after Allied wartime duties (and a 60-day voyage from Honolulu via Panama) she was returned to the French. The Tricolor was re-hoisted in fact along the Manhattan waterfront, at the French Line terminal, Pier 88 at the foot of West 48th Street. She was renamed COLOMBIE.

The 13,800-ton ship dated from 1931, having been built purposely for Caribbean service (especially to French colonial Guadeloupe and Martinique) from Le Havre. She occasionally detoured for some cruising including one to New York, purposely for the World’s Fair, in August 1939. After World War II had started, the COLOMBIE (along with the giant NORMANDIE) was seized by the US Government soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. First used as a troopship, she was refitted at the War’s end as a hospital ship (for up to 828 patients) at a Brooklyn shipyard and was renamed USAHS ALEDA E LUTZ, honoring a US Army nurse killed in a plane crash in southern France. Nurse Lutz had participated in 190 missions to evacuate wounded personnel. It was a short stint for the 16-knot ship, however – she began having mechanical problems. She was ordered back to US waters and then was decommissioned.

After a very extensive refit and restoration (in a Dutch shipyard) in 1948-50, she was modernized on the outside as well – her original funnels were removed and replaced by a single tapered stack. Her passenger quarters were upgraded (the first class section was especially nice and highly appraised in the travel industry) and the post-war configuration modified to 192 in first class, 140 in cabin class and 246 in tourist class. She was back on the West Indies run and became popular with port-to-port passengers as well as round-trip cruise-like travelers escaping the British and European winters to warm, sun-filled tropic waters. After leaving Le Havre, the COLOMBIE always called at Southampton or Plymouth in England.



As built, the COLOMBIE was a "mini liner" with twin funnels.

(Bill Miller Collection)

The French withdrew her from Caribbean service in 1962 and then used her mostly for cruising. But by early 1964, she was retired, offered for sale and quickly sold to the Greeks, to the Piraeus-headquartered Typaldos Lines. As for the ship's new owners, the Typaldos Brothers of Greece, as they were often called, had the biggest and busiest passenger fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean in the early 1960s. The ATLANTICA was acquired for the Company's so-called 14-day "express service" – from Venice to Piraeus, the Greek isles, Istanbul and Haifa. But by 1965, the Typaldos's golden image was becoming tarnished. There were reports of canceled or delayed sailings, ill-kept ships and poor onboard sanitary conditions. A year later, the Company was ruined completely and closed down. On December 8th 1966, its IRAKLION – a converted ferry – sank in an Aegean storm resulting in 241 casualties. In the inquest that followed, the ship was found to be unsafely loaded and therefore not in compliance with Greek maritime law and regulation. The Typaldos brothers, in a test case, were sent to jail and their ships seized, mostly by the National Bank of Greece, which was the mortgage holder. Like most others in the fleet, the ATLANTICA went to Perama Bay, outside Piraeus, and sat at an anchorage – silent, rusting and forlorn. The ATLANTICA was partially scrapped in 1970, but then waited for four years before its hull was towed across the Mediterranean for final demolition at Barcelona.



After World War II, the COLOMBIE was refitted and modernized with a single domed funnel.

(Mick Lindsay Collection)



The ATLANTICA was the largest ship in the Typaldos fleet of the mid 1960s.

(Bill Miller Collection)




The ATLANTICA's Eastern Mediterranean voyages were offered as 7- as well as 14-day cruises.

(Bill Miller Collection)




In her final years, the laid-up ATLANTICA is seen outside Piraeus in Greece.

(Philippe Brebant Collection)



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SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

ONWARD FOR AZAMARA: Azamara Club Cruises christened its fourth vessel, the AZAMARA ONWARD, in Monte Carlo on May 2. The 30,277-ton ship was named by Godmother Beth Santos, CEO of the lifestyle brand Wanderful, which supports women travelers worldwide. Santos remarked “Following two years of pause, we look forward to pressing onward with new mindsets, new adventures and new opportunities to learn how we can be better travelers.” Azamara CEO Carol Cabezas added “We are thrilled to introduce AZAMARA ONWARD and share this special moment with our loyal guests.” Founded as a boutique division of Royal Caribbean in 2007, Azamara was recently sold to private equity firm Sycamore Partners in March 2021. The new owners immediately announced the purchase of the PACIFIC PRINCESS, ex-R THREE (1999). The four Azamara vessels are all identical “R-Class” sister ships, built for long-bankrupt Renaissance Cruises between 1998-2001. After operating for multiple owners, the eight ships of the R-Class are now evenly divided between Azamara and Oceania Cruises, competitors in the luxury market. Following the christening, AZAMARA ONWARD departed Monte Carlo on her 11-day Mediterranean maiden voyage, which ended in Ravenna, Italy.



With the addition of ONWARD, Azamara now operates four identical former R-Class vessels.

(Azamara Club Cruises)

SAILING AWAY AGAIN TO MARGARITAVILLE: Margaritaville at Sea's MARGARITAVILLE AT SEA PARADISE entered service on May 14 with possibly the longest ocean liner name since JOHAN VAN OLDENBARNEVELT (1930). The company is a rebranded version of Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line, with much of the same ownership and management in place. The addition of Jimmy Buffet's highly successful hospitality brand gives the new cruise product a loyal fan base from which to draw clientele. The 1991-built vessel was originally COSTA CLASSICA, and later GRAND CLASSICA for Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line from 2018-2021. The 53,000-ton ship will continue to offer the same 2-night Bahamas itinerary from the Port of Palm Beach. Perhaps onboard activities will include looking for that lost shaker of salt.



Wasting away again in Margaritaville....on the MARGARITAVILLE AT SEA PARADISE.

(Margaritaville at Sea)

GENTING DREAM RESURRECTED BY RESORTS WORLD: Just months after the collapse of Genting Hong Kong's three cruise brands - Dream, Star and Crystal – the GENTING DREAM is poised for a June 15 return. It will be chartered to Resorts World Cruises, a division of the Resorts World hotel group, which is largely owned by the Lim family who founded the Genting cruise business in the 1990's. The plan is to operate the new company with Genting senior management, and to rehire much of the laid-off Genting staff. GENTING DREAM will be based in Singapore, initially operating two and three-night cruises to nowhere. Beginning in July, ports-of-call will be added in Malaysia. By October, ports in Thailand and Indonesia will be added as cruise lengths expand to five days. In related news, Genting's bankruptcy administrators continue looking for a buyer for the incomplete 208,000-ton WORLD DREAM. They will also auction the CRYSTAL SYMHONY and CRYSTAL SERENITY in June, hoping to raise cash to pay creditors. Both former Crystal ships are laid up in the Bahamas.

ROTTERDAM VII CHRISTENED IN ROTTERDAM: Holland America Lines' seventh vessel to bear the name ROTTERDAM was christened in Rotterdam, The Netherlands on May 30. Although she has been cruising since October 2021, ROTTERDAM awaited the ceremony in her namesake city, the homeport of Holland America's transatlantic service, which began in 1873. Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet, godmother of four previous HAL vessels, performed the christening that was attended by a throng of dignitaries. Also invited to the ceremony was a couple representing HAL's loyal past passengers, David and Gisela Gere, who have logged more than 2,500 days on HAL cruise ships. The Geres started enjoying HAL in 1988 on ROTTERDAM V (1959), now a hotel and museum permanently docked in Rotterdam, and also sailed ROTTERDAM VI (1997), now Fred. Olsen Cruise Line's BOREALIS. No doubt, they will be sailing on ROTTERDAM VII. When they do, a typical "Pinnacle Class" vessel awaits, a duplicate of the KONINGS DAM (2016) and NIEUW STATENDAM (2018). She is of 99,863-gross tons and can accommodate 2,650 passengers. Built to New Panamax standards, she stretches 983 feet and almost 115 feet wide, but is able to fit in the new Panama Canal's locks. ROTTERDAM VII was originally to be named RYNDAM; when ROTTERDAM VI was sold during the COVID-19 Pandemic, HAL decided that a ROTTERDAM should always be in the fleet – for now.

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