



## PAST AND FUTURE OF NUCLEAR SHIP SAVANNAH

PRESENTED BY ERHARD W. KOEHLER

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING**



Nuclear Ship SAVANNAH is the world's first nuclear-powered merchant ship, built at the New York Shipbuilding Corporation in Camden, NJ, under President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace Program. Throughout its operation, the ship called in New Jersey, while Hoboken served as its home base. As responsible stewards of a National Historic Landmark, the Maritime Administration (MARAD) worked to minimize adverse effects during the decommissioning process and were able to save key elements of the nuclear power plant and even improve the ship in the process. When the decommissioning process is complete

(anticipated 2026), the ship will be available for preservation. This program will highlight the history of the ship, how the decommissioning process improved the ship, and what must be done before SAVANNAH enters its next act.

**Erhard Koehler** is a graduate of the State University of New York Maritime College with a degree in Naval Architecture. He first worked as a structural and field-support engineer with the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Soon after he joined MARAD's Office of Ship Operations in Washington, DC. An avid amateur maritime historian, in 1992, Erhard enthusiastically jumped at the opportunity to oversee SAVANNAH's return to MARAD custody from the Patriot's Point Naval and Maritime Museum and her subsequent 1994 drydocking and relocation to the agency's reserve fleet site near Newport News, Virginia. Erhard remained with the ship as a project engineer and member of the licensee organization during its protective storage period. In 2004, he advanced to the agency's senior SAVANNAH management positions and is responsible for all SAVANNAH program activities, operations, maintenance, repair, custody and preservation.



*(Top Image: Pat Dacey collection. Bottom Photo: Erhard Koehler collection)*

## UPCOMING MEMBER EVENT

### FAREWELL MARCO POLO

PRESENTED BY DAVID TREVOR-JONES

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 10 AM (ET) ZOOM ENCORE PRESENTATION**

**MEMBER EVENT RECAP**  
**MARITIME CITY EXHIBITION GUIDED TOUR**  
**SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM, NYC**  
**By Stuart Gewirtzman & Denise Dacey**

On Saturday, June 21, twenty-five PONY Branch members and guests enjoyed a private guided tour of the South Street Seaport Museum's new exhibition, *Maritime City*, in the historic and recently reopened 1868 A.A. Thomson & Co. warehouse. Martina Caruso, the museum's Director of Collections and Exhibitions, led the tour of the extensive three-floor exhibition in the innovative exhibition space, which features 540 objects from the museum's collections and archives deliberately selected to underscore how New York City's identity as a global capital of culture and finance is rooted in its origins as a seaport. A highlight for many in attendance was the newly restored, 22-foot-long builder's model of RMS QUEEN MARY that was displayed for decades in the ticketing hall of the Cunard Building at 25 Broadway and for many additional years and most recently aboard The Queen Mary Hotel in Long Beach, CA. After the tour, many of those attending enjoyed a waterside lunch at the Cobble Fish restaurant on nearby Pier 16. More information on the exhibition can be found at [Maritime City - South Street Seaport Museum](#).



(Photos: Denise Dacey)

## MEMBER PHOTOS



*Island Princess at Red Hook Cruise Terminal, Brooklyn, NY, June 2025. (Photo: Justin Zizes)*



*QUEEN MARY 2 at anchor in Newport, RI, July 2025. (Photo: Denise Dacey)*



*The historic S.S. KEEWATIN and 2025 SSHSA Museum Ship of the Year shown at the Great Lakes Museum, the former Kingston Shipyards Company Victorian-era dry dock, Kingston, Ontario, July 2025. (Photo: Donald Leavitt)*



**WORLD SHIP SOCIETY - PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH  
60<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CRUISE  
CELEBRITY SUMMIT - OCTOBER 13 - 18, 2025**

*Day 1 Fort Lauderdale, FL - Day 2 At Sea Cruising - Day 3 Key West, FL  
Day 4 At Sea Cruising - Day 5 Nassau, Bahamas - Day 6 Fort Lauderdale, FL*

**RESERVATIONS BY PHONE ONLY:** Call Celebrity Cruises Groups Department at 800-963-0311 and provide the "PONY" GROUP ID 8313566.

**INCLUDED SHORESIDE AND ONBOARD GROUP BENEFITS:** \$50/cabin on-board credit, guided tour and reception at the Wolfsonian Museum, Miami, FL on Sunday, October 12. The museum tour will highlight some of the passenger ship collection not typically on exhibit. Other group onboard activities will also be provided.

**QUESTIONS:** [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com)

## SHIP'S LOG

Recap by Marjorieann Matuszek



*(Left) VINIK NO.6 (Right) Captain Vinik with SSUS under his tow on their way to Mobile, Alabama prior to the planned SSUS reefing.*

On February 19, 2025, the SS UNITED STATES departed under tow from Pier 80 in Philadelphia, destined to become the world's largest artificial reef. Hundreds of onlookers lined the shoreline of the Delaware River to watch the ship glide majestically out to the Atlantic Ocean. Countless numbers of people via the internet and merchant mariners at sea along her route monitored, recorded and reported her progress throughout her twelve-day journey to Mobile, Alabama.

Towing a high-profile vessel with a storied history to its nearly final destination was certainly a unique and high-stakes assignment for a tugboat merchant mariner. The ship had to be in Mobile by a specific date and the potential loss of the ship enroute whether from heavy listing, water intake, or other was unthinkable. Furthermore, everyone was watching! Fortunately, Captain Mike Vinik, his seven crew members and the tugboat VINIK NO.6 would prove worthy of the task.



During our April 11 member program, billed as "A Conversation Between Friends," PONY Branch Board member Captain Jimmy Zatwarnicki, Associate Dean of Faculty and Acting Provost at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and Captain Mike Vinik, founder and owner of Vinik Marine (*Image at left*), talked about Captain Vinik's decision to become a merchant mariner and some of the interesting stories as well as some of the challenges he and his crew faced while towing the UNITED STATES to Mobile. Both men have been friends for more than twenty years since meeting while at SUNY Maritime College at Fort Schuyler, NY.

Growing up, Captain Vinik had initially wanted to become an astronaut. The several great days he spent as a seventh grader at “Space Camp” in Alabama convinced him being an astronaut was not what he really wanted but the experience opened his mind to other opportunities. Captain Vinik first studied naval architecture at SUNY Maritime and then marine operations which offered a dual license program where he could graduate with a third mate license and engineering licenses. His early goals, although turning out to be “mutually exclusive”, were to become a Sandy Hook Pilot, and to start his own company. Per the latter goal, Captain Vinik found a “somewhat neglected tugboat”, took it apart and “resurrected it.” A later tugboat he acquired, a 140-footer with a 6,000-horsepower engine became VINIK NO.6. It was during VINIK NO.6 sea trials in 2018 where Captain Vinik had his first up close encounter with the UNITED STATES, his self-defined “favorite ship.”



*(Above) A young tugboat captain, Mike Vinik.*

More recently, Captain Vinik had been working on a number of projects with Coleen Marine, a highly respected ship reefing company with projects along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. Tim Mullane, Director of Operations at Coleen Marine, informed Captain Vinik that the company had been contracted to reef the SSUS and asked if he would like to be a part of the project. Captain Vinik who was honored for being asked to be a part of this momentous project agreed since VINIK NO.6 was one of the most capable vessels of towing a ship like the UNITED STATES with its “massive amount of steel.”

Captain Vinik’s first time aboard SSUS was during the pre-towing assessment phase. Extensive inspections and investigations by Captain Vinik and the Coast Guard for the SSUS hull integrity, watertight integrity, tow gear, and contingency plans followed. Before towing was approved some last-minute Coast Guard requests for VINIK NO.6 bollards’ tension specifications, fuel requirements, estimated speeds and more were provided.

During the SSUS tow, Captain Vinik and his crew generally kept the tow line at about 1,800 feet but needed almost 2,000 feet while encountering Cape Hatteras winds. They learned that they could “mix” the towing speed depending on the sea state and winds. They could pull the SSUS at 5 knots and slack off for a couple of hours as the wind intensified. Wind speeds of 15-20 knots were “no big deal.” Buffeted by North-to-South wind speeds higher than 20 knots, the SSUS just wanted to head East. (She had years of practice!) The 35-45-knot tailwinds and 12-16-foot waves at Hatteras were the biggest challenge of the journey. Captain Vinik joked that he really did not want to end up in Europe.

Aside from the notable Cape Hatteras challenge, the other major concern was realizing after exiting the Delaware River that there was no internet connection aboard VINIK NO.6 that was needed for the tugboat’s satellite phone. After first heading East, the tugboat and its charge headed West to come just close enough to shore to pick up WI-FI to activate Starlink.

VINIK NO.6 carried 100,000 gallons of fuel for the journey. Captain Vinik had estimated that 50,000-70,000 gallons would be consumed heading Southbound. As reference, 46,000 gallons were used on VINIK’s Southbound trip, and 29,000 gallons were used for towing a standard barge North on her return.



*SSUS under tow departing Philadelphia, PA, with tugboat VINIK NO.6 in front (not shown) as she passes under the Walt Whitman Bridge.*

While at sea, Captain Vinik was astounded by the number of daily phone calls and requests he received.



*Copyright: CAPT Mike Vinik*

*(Above) SSUS under tow off Cape Hatteras, NC.*

One caller asked if the SSUS could make a detour to Panama City so he could see her one last time! Other calls came from the SSUS Conservancy regarding the large number of Garmin monitoring software users wanting to follow along with VINIK NO.6 during the historic trip. One cruise ship captain even called and asked permission to stay close to them “for a while.”

Once the UNITED STATES is scuttled, it will lie at a depth of 120 feet with an overhead clearance of approximately 60 feet, making it very accessible to divers. Captain Vinik said he was very much looking forward to diving to the SSUS at her final destination off Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

WSS-PONY Branch sincerely thanks Captain Zatwarnicki and Captain Vinik for their candid, humorous and insightful conversation complemented by Captain Vinik’s beautiful and iconic photos of the SSUS on her last sea voyage under the care of the very capable tugboat VINIK NO.6, captain and crew.

*(Photo credits as shown.)*

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

### THE FRENCH LINE & CIE SUD ATLANTIQUE – PRE-WWII MEDALLIONS

By Alan Zamchick

Few ocean liner collectibles are as rewarding to the collector or as beautiful and substantial to hold as line-issued bronze or silver medallions. The French Line, historically and properly called Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, often abbreviated to Cie Gle Transatlantique, minted their very first medallion in 1906 and leads all steamship lines in the number of medallions issued.

Most medallions were encased in colorful round paperboard holders usually embossed with the ship name, perhaps an emblem of one type or another, or the date of the Maiden Voyage. Special issues were carried in small velvet-lined jewelry boxes. Finding excellent versions of the packaging is more challenging than finding the medallions themselves, so this review focuses solely on the medallions.

*Note:* Some sources claim the images of the ships to be the reverse side of medallions. For continuity in this article, I opted to use the ship images as the obverse side.



There is no verification available that this first French Line medallion was issued for the LA PROVENCE April 21, 1906, Maiden Voyage. The obverse is an image of the steaming ship and if you'll note it includes the etched name of the recipient, Lucien DER ODE, perhaps speaks to it being a gift from the home office to an important patron. Not all versions include a name, and I suppose it is possible nameless versions were distributed for the Maiden Voyage. The silver medallion, 1.9 oz. and 3.5 cm. in diameter is embossed

with "2ARGENT" on the rim which also includes a mintmark of the Paris mint. Attempts to identify the lovely lady adorning the reverse of the medallion were fruitless. Engraved by Louis Patriarche. Referred to as a "Publicity Medal for the CGT" by the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent.



With their new four-stacker FRANCE (II) departing LeHarve for her NY Maiden Voyage a mere 6 days after the TITANIC sinking one would not imagine a celebratory MV distribution, and there was not. The 1912 striking was issued for the "General Meeting of Shareholders" as it appears (translated from the French) on the obverse with a lovely image of the ship. While also silver, it does not include any mint mark on the rim. An interesting note is the medallion is larger than that of LA PROVENCE, 4.2 cm. in diameter but weighs only about half (1.0 oz.) attesting to a thinner

striking. Designed again by Louis Patriarche, his name appears along the lower left rim of the reverse with the maiden (or is it mermaid) image.



When the PARIS finally made her delayed Maiden Voyage in 1921 (she was initially laid down in 1913 and launched in 1916, but WWI interfered), this beautiful Jean Vernon designed medallion was distributed among her first-class passengers. Sporting just a wisp of her third stack in the lovely forward port superstructure view on the obverse side, the coat of arms for the city of Paris graces the reverse. The PARIS medallion should be included among the most difficult to find on the market today. 2.2 oz., 5.8 cm.

Despite only two ILE DE FRANCE stacks being visible the late Richard Faber assured me this was her original, 1927 Maiden Voyage medallion. The most secure verification of that is she features only two forward starboard Boat Deck windows. She never had a full hull version struck that featured her three stacks. Similar to the PARIS issue the tri-Fleur-De-Lis on the reverse celebrates the French province of ILE DE FRANCE. Engraved by Jean Vernon. 1.8 oz., 5.8 cm.



This is a large 1930 LAFAYETTE Maiden Voyage medallion issued for her May 17, 1930 initial sailing. The inscription at the bottom of the obverse side, along with the image of the ship translates as: "The largest French motor liner." An image of Lafayette appears on the reverse as well as the name of the engraver Maurice Delannoy. 5.4 oz., 6.8 cm.



The Compagnie De Navigation Sud-Atlantique, joined CGT in 1931 issuing an even larger Maiden Voyage medallion for their brand new L'ATLANTIQUE. Engraved by Lucien Georges Bazor, this was among his very first works serving as the Chief Engraver at the Paris mint from 1930-1958. His name appears at the bottom of the reverse below "Amphitrite, goddess of the sea, driving her four-horse drawn chariot out of the sea." The rim is inscribed "BRONZE." 5.2 oz., 6.9 cm.



(Above medallion photos: eBay)

Above we have two versions issued for the 1932 CHAMPLAIN. The first at the left is generally accepted as CHAMPLAIN's Maiden Voyage issue, which celebrates not only the CHAMPLAIN with a lovely bow three quarter view, but also Pont Grave's ship, the BONNE-RENNMEE (Good Fame) in which as a passenger Champlain arrived at Tadoussac (New France, now Quebec, Canada) in 1603. The reverse is of Samuel de Champlain himself looking out triumphantly on what is now Quebec circled by (translated from the latin) "Old World Joins the New." Engraver Raymond Delamarre's name appears below Champlain above the rim. 5.1 oz., 6.7 cm.

The second medallion is similar to the ILE DE FRANCE Maiden Voyage medallion in that it portrays the forward starboard side of CHAMPLAIN's superstructure and features her original stack. The reverse

carries the coat of arms for the New France Champlain (now Quebec) province. This may have been struck as a shipboard souvenir. It carries the "BRONZE" imprint on the rim. Engraved by Jean Vernon. 2.1 oz., 5 cm.



This large 1935 VILLE D'ALGER Maiden Voyage bronze medallion includes the mark of the Paris mint on the rim. The obverse presents a relief of the ship at sea as well as a relief of the ports of Marseille and Algiers, the VILLE D'ALGER's initial itinerary. The reverse features a warrior on a horse overlooking Algiers with the date 1830 which marked the French invasion of that Algerian port. Engraver Raymond Delamarre's name appears at the rim of the reverse where he has also dated the medallion as 1935. 5.3 oz., 6.7 cm.

The 1935 NORMANDIE was a ship without equal. So, too, was the number of medallions struck in her honor. A full six medallions were struck for this extraordinary vessel.



Two were struck specifically for distribution on her May 29, 1935 Maiden Voyage from Le Havre to New York. The bronze version above was distributed to second and third-class passengers. The comparatively rare silver version was distributed to French Line VIPs, dignitaries, and first-class passengers. They feature identical obverse and reverse sides and measure 6.7 cm., but the silver 5.6 oz. edition outweighs the bronze 5.3 oz. edition. Engraved by Jean Vernon, the reverse has been described simply as a "classical female figure" or the more emphatic "diaphanous goddess releasing a seahorse from chains." It has been estimated that only 500 of the silver version were created. The version with the bronze finish is rim marked with the 90% silver minting standard "2ARGENT." Both carry the Paris mint's mark.



(Above medallion photo: Worthpoint)

The French Line elected to send the NORMANDIE on two cruises to Rio De Janeiro. Medallions were struck for each of the February 1938 and 1939 cruises. They duplicated the obverse of her bronze Maiden Voyage image but changed the reverse for each. The example in the middle, above, was issued for the '38 cruise. They switched things up a bit for the '39 cruise (right, above), adopting a format similar to Jean Vernon's design done for the second CHAMPLAIN striking of 1932. Each matches the size of her Maiden Voyage issues, but the '39 cruise is slightly heavier than '38: 5.2 oz. vs. 4.9 oz.



This medallion was issued presumably after the Maiden Voyage versions, portraying NORMANDIE on the obverse complete with the Blue Ribband visible flying from her mainmast. While the reverse is similar to the Vernon's versions, this medallion was designed by Maurice Delonnoy and features an image of the Normandy province coat of arms. Some sources claim this medallion is considerably rarer than the two versions of the Maiden Voyage medallion and some claim it was minted well in advance of her Maiden Voyage,

presuming a Blue Ribband crossing. I have found no definite discussion of either theory. Smaller than most of its predecessor medallions. 2.6 oz., 4.9 cm.

If anyone can claim for sure that the smaller NORMANDIE bronze medallion that features the Normandie province coat-of-arms WAS also distributed for the Maiden Voyage, I'd welcome the details. You can write me at [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com).

My guess is that this non-line issued NORMANDIE "token," variably described as either brass or copper, was a private striking done perhaps by a US-based firm. I have been unable to identify the issue date with any certainty, and I am guessing it was issued as a souvenir for shops along the New York waterfront.



Obverse is a different port bow view of the ship at sea compared to that which appears on the M/V medallion. Surrounding the ship appears "S. S. NORMANDIE, WORLD'S LARGEST SHIP, COMMEMORATING MAIDEN VOYAGE May 29<sup>th</sup>-June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1935." Reverse is an elongated imprint very similar to the design of a NORMANDIE ship's pin. 0.3 oz., 3 cm.



Compagnie de Navigation Sud-Atlantique launched the PASTEUR in 1938 as a long-delayed replacement for their L'ATLANTIQUE, whose career was cut short by her disastrous 1933 fire. PASTEUR's Maiden Voyage Medallion was supposed to have been distributed for her first peacetime sailing from Bordeaux to Buenos Aires but World War II intervened and upon completion she was immediately laid up. There was a minimal distribution of the medallion for a short shakedown cruise prior to layup

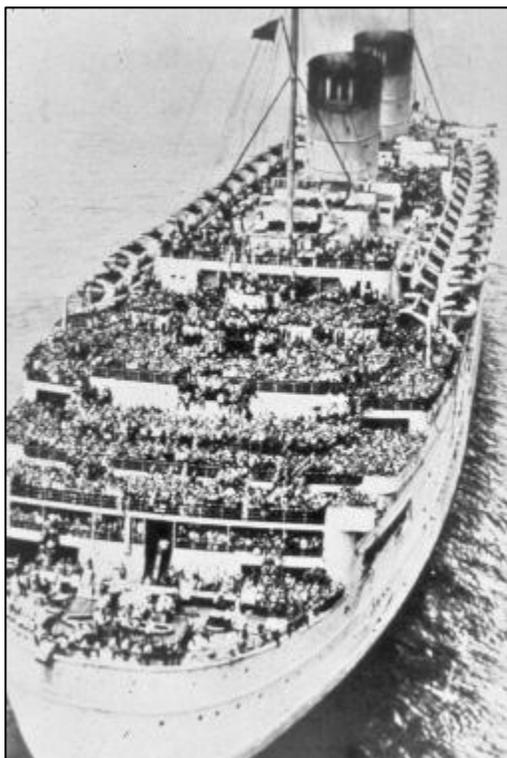
but no other detail of a medallion passenger distribution is evident. No doubt this medallion, along with the PARIS, the NORMANDIE silver, the '39 Rio De Janiero and L'ATLANTIQUE issues are the rarest of all French ship striking's. The obverse is a beautiful port view of the ship underway surrounded by Cie DE NAVIGATION SUD-ATLANTIQUE – PAQUEBOT PASTEUR 1939. The reverse features a relief profile of Louis Pasteur flanked by a herdsman tending his sheep (honoring his pasteurization achievement) and a mother with child (honoring his study of vaccines). Two olive branches surround the detailed profile. At bottom it reads, "PASTEUR – BIENFAITEUR DE L'HUMANITE 1822.1895 (translation: Benefactor of Humanity)." Engraved by Francois Bazin whose imprint interestingly appears on both sides of the medallion and is misspelled F. Bazir. Bronze with a triangular Paris mint mark on the rim. 5.4 oz., 6.7 cm.

*(Photos by Alan Zamchick, except where noted.)*

## SHIPS IN PORT WAR & POST-WAR ON THE CUNARD QUEENS

By Bill Miller

The Wartime voyages of the then gray-painted QUEEN MARY & QUEEN ELIZABETH were heavily planned. They operated between New York and Gourock in Scotland and used a different course on each Atlantic crossing – sometimes going as far south as the Azores; at other times, north toward Iceland. Alone, 15,000 troops onboard (*below QE photo*) was very valuable “cargo.” Every route was top secret and zigzagging was constant. And of course, the two huge liners were “blacked out” by night and largely radio silent. They often crossed with great urgency, logging up to 28-29 knots.



Allied planners, particularly at the US and British navies, knew that if one of the QUEENS – with 15,000 troops and 1,000 crew onboard – were attacked and sunk, the losses would have been huge. During the War, and although well outfitted for military duties, the QUEENS only had a lifeboat capacity for one-fifth of their capacities at the time. Furthermore, if attacked, the liners would have listed heavily to one side and so only half the lifeboats might be of use. Furthermore, and while there were life rafts for over 15,000, many would have died later in the bleak, open exposure of the Atlantic.

The twin-funnel QUEEN ELIZABETH was to have a grand maiden voyage from Southampton to New York in April 1940. It was the world’s largest liner (over 83,000 tons and taking nearly 2,400 passengers) – and what a commemorative: 1940 was Cunard’s 100th anniversary. But none of that came to pass – there were no celebrations. Since September 1939, Britain was at war.

The QUEEN ELIZABETH had to wait for over six years, until October 1946, for a flag-flowing, gala maiden crossing. For months before, 2,000 workers chipped away the wartime gray paint. Alone, 2,000 portholes and large Promenade Deck windows had to be restored, cleaned and readied. Then there was 4,000 miles of wiring and other installations that needed renewing or replacement. Fittings – from winches to clocks in the Smoking Room – were given loving care. When the QUEEN ELIZABETH set off for New York in October 1946, a Cunard official noted: “The great vessel was actually a much finer, better equipped ship than originally planned for 1940!”



*(Right) A winter arrival for the QUEEN ELIZABETH in late 1945.*



(Left) The QUEEN ELIZABETH and the battleship MISSOURI together at Pier 90 in the fall of 1946. (Right) Grand gathering: the BRITANNIC (far left), QUEEN MARY, MAURETANIA, FLANDRE, OLYMPIA, UNITED STATES & CONSTITUTION in September 1957. (Right photo: Moran Towing.)



(Above) Bon voyage for the QUEEN ELIZABETH in 1966.

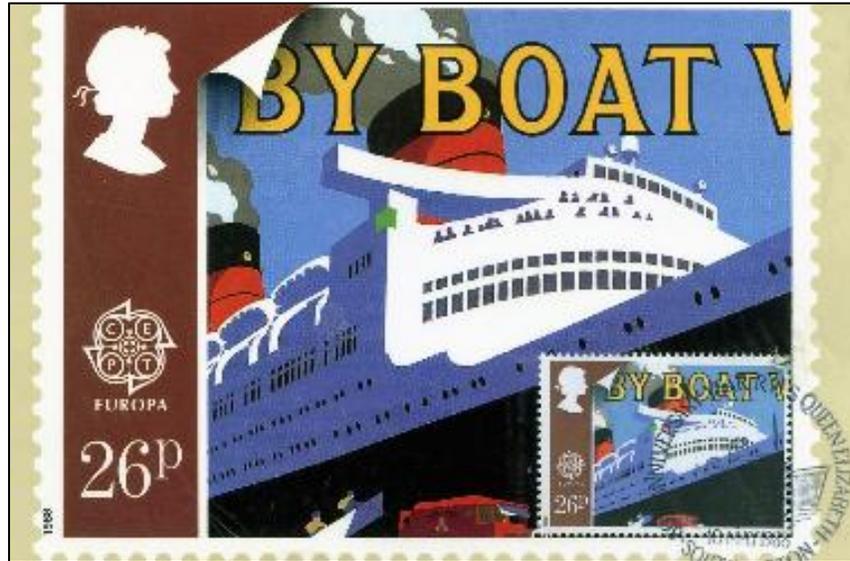
Soon after the war in Europe ended in May 1945, the QUEEN MARY & QUEEN ELIZABETH carried returning troops on westbound voyages from Southampton to New York, and “regular” passengers on the return trips. But Cunard was clear to inform travelers that it was altogether an “austerity service” – those good old days of opulence, luxury & fine service were yet to return. The sign over the main bulletin board still read “Orders of the Day.” In 1945-46, the Cunard Queens ran an “austerity service” between Southampton and New York. Regular passengers routinely accepted that the glory days of Cunard’s famed luxury service were yet to come. Neither the QUEEN MARY nor QUEEN ELIZABETH was refitted after their strenuous wartime services. Among the “passengers” were the returning Dutch royal family (from Canada) and, going westbound, the first Soviet delegation to the new United Nations.

Although the troop bunks had been hastily removed in the summer and fall of 1945, only straw mattresses were used in cabins. Cunard’s inner-spring mattresses were still in storage. The cabin class indoor pool was still cluttered with war items and the First-Class Main Lounge was furnished with extra chairs removed from the dining rooms. Specially installed spigots (for the troops) still lined the promenades and cabin accommodation was often for four and even six to a room. And in the ship’s shop, only candies and tobacco were sold.

While the QUEEN MARY and QUEEN ELIZABETH were used for returning American troops, they were also used to transport War Brides, mostly British, and their children. These trips were affectionately dubbed “the Diaper Run.” Onboard the QUEEN MARY, the record was for 950 babies on one voyage to New York. And Cunard tried to be especially accommodating. As examples, two dozen playpens replaced chairs and sofas in the Cabin Class Smoking Room. Meanwhile, the indoor pool was converted to a diaper-drying area, and, as precautions, no liquor was served on these westbound crossings.

Then a maritime reporter, the late Frank Braynard wrote in 1946: “Paying passengers on these austerity voyages had the run of the ship – and paid slight heed to the shipboard conventions and standards of peacetime days. Slacks for women were not unusual even in the main dining room at dinner. It might have seemed, well, shocking to Cunard staff familiar with pre-war customs and formalities!”

The QUEEN MARY as well as the QUEEN ELIZABETH would become two of the most heroic ships of all time, altogether carrying 2½ million Allied soldier-passengers during the War years, until 1945-46.



*A commemorative stamp was issued in the early 1980s to celebrate the heroic QUEENS.*

*(Images: Bill Miller Collection except where noted.)*

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## **PUBLIC SHIP TOURS**

### **NUCLEAR SHIP SAVANNAH & JOHN W. BROWN**

### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 10 AM – 3 PM**

The world's first nuclear-powered merchant ship, the N.S. SAVANNAH will be open for tours on Saturday, August 23. The ship will be open from 10am to 3pm, where you can experience its mid-century modern interiors, engine and control rooms, and other spaces, just as passengers and visitors did during its operation. In addition, you can now take a self-guided tour of the containment vessel, which housed the nuclear reactor – truly a unique experience. The Liberty Ship JOHN W. BROWN will also be open for tours, but it is recommended that you visit SAVANNAH first if you wish to sign-up for tours of the engine room. SAVANNAH and JOHN W. BROWN are located at 4601 Newgate Avenue, Pier 13 at the Canton Marine Terminal, Baltimore, MD. Please note no open-toed shoes, and the ships have limited accessibility for those with disabilities.

For more information and to RSVP: [Events | NS Savannah Assn](#)

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## SHIP NEWS

### A VISIT TO THE S.S. KEEWATIN

**Compiled by Pat Dacey**



*KEEWATIN arriving in Kingston, Ontario under tow on October 26, 2023. (Photo: Great Lakes Museum)*

On July 26, 2025, the Steamship Historical Society of America (SSHSA) presented the Great Lakes Museum in Kingston, Ontario, with the 2025 Museum Ship of The Year award for the 1907 built S.S. KEEWATIN. I was fortunate to be able to attend the ceremony and an extensive tour of the ship which provided a rare glimpse into an Edwardian vessel and life at sea from over 100 years ago.

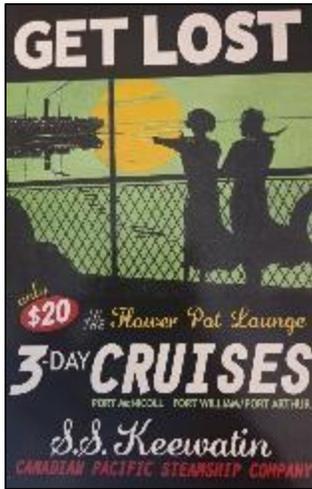
Built by Fairfield Works, Govan, Glasgow, in 1907, KEEWATIN, which in native Cree language means "Blizzard from the North," was designed for the Canadian Pacific Railways continental route linking the railroad's Owen Sound depot to Fort William Port Arthur on Lake Superior. During construction, it was predetermined that the ship would be too long to transit the Welland Canal so after crossing the Atlantic, the ship was cut in two before being reassembled at the Buffalo Dry Dock Company.

When its route moved to Port McNicoll, Ontario in 1912 which by then was established as the new 'super port' and rail terminus, KEEWATIN took two and a half days to make the trip each way, including half a day traversing the Soo Locks until the trains and ships were discontinued in 1965 following the completion of the Trans-Canada (automobile) Highway through northern Ontario.

In the last fifteen years of her working life, like many passenger ships of that era on the Great Lakes, KEEWATIN operated under stringent regulations imposed for wooden cabin steamships following the NORONIC disaster in 1949. Doomed by her wooden cabins and superstructure, KEEWATIN lasted through the decline of the passenger trade on the Great Lakes in the post-war years, as travelers opted for more reliable and faster modes of travel. To continue in service beyond the 1965 season, rebuilding of the wooden superstructures was required. Instead, she was withdrawn from the passenger trade on November 29, 1965. The following year KEEWATIN operated a freight-only service, and on November 8, 1966, KEEWATIN was sold to Marine Salvage Ltd of Port Colborne for demolition.

After languishing for a few years, in January 1967 KEEWATIN was bought by West Michigan entrepreneur Roland J. Peterson Sr. to serve as the Keewatin Maritime Museum. She was docked across the river from the summer retreat Saugatuck, Michigan, from 1968 until she was relocated to Port McNicoll, her original port, in 2012. Later she was purchased by Skyline investments and operated as a tourist attraction while being restored by a large volunteer group.

KEEWATIN arrived at her newest home at the Great Lakes Museum in Kingston, Ontario, on October 26, 2023, before opening to the public for tours in Spring 2024. The Great Lakes Museum is located at the historic Victorian Era Kingston Dry Dock Company and includes additional museum galleries and an opportunity to visit the internal workings of the original steam powered dry dock.



(Top Left) An early S.S. KEEWATIN cruise promotion. (Top Right) Main Dining Saloon. (Bottom Left) Main Lobby (a.k.a. "The Flower Pot Lounge." (Bottom Right) Drawing Room. (Photos: Denise Dacey)

KEEWATIN is an excellent example of a working quadruple expansion reciprocating steam engine, working steering gear and windless. All rooms are staged with authentic furniture and fixtures. Of 3,800 similar ships in Great Britain between 1900 and 1920, she is the only restored and functioning example in the world. Notably, KEEWATIN worked from 1907 to 1965 and never missed a sailing! For more information visit [Home - Great Lakes Museum](#)

Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in The Porthole: member photos with descriptions and dates taken, news, cruise details, and articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com). Please note published materials are subject to editing and are not necessarily the opinion of the WSS-PONY Branch.

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