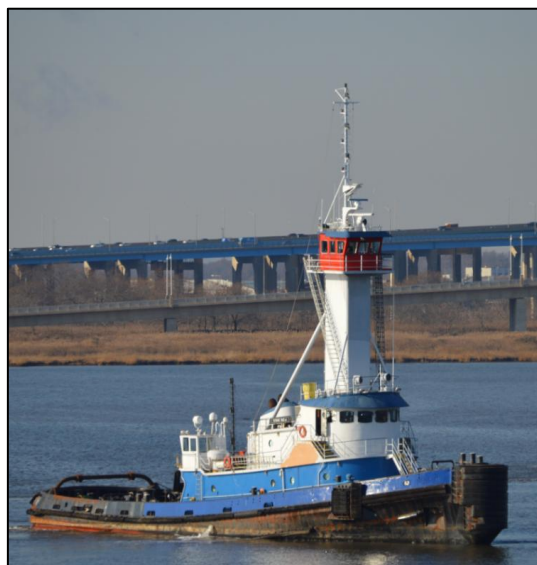




**CAPTAIN MIKE VINIK REFLECTS ON THE HISTORIC 10-DAY VOYAGE  
TOWING THE SS UNITED STATES TO MOBILE, AL  
JOIN US VIA ZOOM FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 6:30 PM (ET)**



*(Photos: Captain Mark Sweeny (left photo), Captain Mike Vinik / World Satellite Television News (right photo))*

Captain Mike Vinik, owner of the New Jersey-based tugboat company, Vinik Marine, captained the tugboat VINIK NO.6 on a 10-day journey from Philadelphia, PA, along the east coast and around the coast of Florida to safely deliver the historic vessel SS UNITED STATES to its new temporary home in Mobile, AL.

WSS-PONY Branch is pleased to welcome Captain Vinik as he provides his firsthand account of the historic 1,855-mile trip with his dedicated crew of seven using the now famous VINIK NO.6, and a half mile long 2¼in diameter steel cable. From their departure on February 19, 2025, until their arrival on March 3, 2025 the tow continued 24/7 and included a spate of bad weather conditions off Cape Hatteras, NC.

**Captain Vinik** attended the Marine Academy of Science and Technology and later graduated from New York Maritime College at Fort Schuyler in 2003. Just over a year later, he took a bold step by purchasing his first tugboat that was in “pretty bad shape [and then] spent 10 months getting it back up and running again.” Mike has never looked back.

## UPCOMING MEMBER EVENT

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### A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF P&O CRUISES

By Chris Frame

**THURSDAY, MAY 29, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING**

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## UPCOMING MEMBER EVENT

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### GRAND & GLORIOUS: THE GREAT CUNARD LINE

By William Miller

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 10 AM (ET) ZOOM ENCORE PRESENTATION**

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### MEMBER PHOTOS



Norwegian ESCAPE with the bow of Royal Caribbean's ICON OF THE SEAS, Nassau, March 18, 2025.  
(Photo: Tom O'Reilly)



ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS alongside Cape Liberty Cruise Terminal, March 16, 2025.  
(Photo: Nicholas Smith)





PLANTOURS ms HAMBURG in Montreal. (Photo: Lawrence Levine)



AMERICAN STAR in Yorktown, VA. (Photo: Lawrence Levine)



## UPCOMING MEMBER EVENT

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### COME ABOARD SEA DART II NEW YORK HARBOR SHIP SPOTTING & LUNCH SUNDAY, MAY 18, 12:45 PM – 6 PM



SEA DART II (Photo: Stuart Gewirtzman)

Come aboard Sea Scout Ship 228's flagship, SEA DART II, a Higgins 1953 T-Boat, and join your fellow PONY Branch members for a four-hour New York harbor tour highlighted by the views of the following scheduled departures:

**CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE  
MSC MERAVIGLIA  
NORWEGIAN GETAWAY  
VIKING NEPTUNE**

A picnic lunch and other light refreshments will be served onboard. Please note that SEA DART II is a working boat with traditional ladders and high steps and has limited indoor accommodation. Plan accordingly for the weather. You may also consider bringing a folding chair as seating is limited on the exterior deck space.

**Meeting Location and Times:** The National Lighthouse Museum, SI. Check-in Time: 12:45 PM. Boarding is tentatively scheduled for 1 PM, followed by a 1:15 PM departure. The Sea Dart II will return to the National Lighthouse Museum at approximately 5:45 PM. All guests will disembark no later than 6PM.

**Cost:** \$20 per member; \$40 per non-member guest with a maximum of 1 guest per member.

**Reservations:** To secure your reservations for this popular outing, watch for an upcoming WSS-PONY Branch special event email message and PayPal link.

*(Note: Ship schedules are subject to change.)*





**WORLD SHIP  
SOCIETY**

Port of New York Branch • Established 1965

## 60<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CRUISE

*with onboard and shoreside  
special group events*

**OCTOBER 13 - 18, 2025**

Questions: [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com)



**ALL-INCLUSIVE OFFER:** Celebrity Cruises special event all-inclusive fares with taxes and fees are guaranteed until June 15, 2025, or until the reserved special event cabins are sold out. These cabins include the Celebrity Classic Drink Package and the Basic Wi-Fi Package.

\$806 Inside \$859 Oceanview \$1129 Veranda

The included Classic Drinks Package with the Basic Wi-Fi Package is approximately \$400 less when compared to purchasing these packages separately. In addition, the Classic Drinks Package covers all drinks up to \$10 with the option for guests to pay the difference for any amount greater than \$10.

**FLEXIBLE FARE OFFER:** Celebrity Cruises will allow cabins to be booked outside the ALL-INCLUSIVE OFFER and be counted as part of the WSS-PONY Branch group event by following the reservation instructions. Go to [www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com) for prevailing fares and special sale offers.

**RESERVATIONS BY PHONE ONLY:** Call Celebrity Cruises Groups Department at 800-963-0311 and provide the "PONY" GROUP ID 8313566. Refundable deposits of \$200 per cabin are needed to confirm reservations. Final payments are due no later than July 15, 2025. All group reservations include a \$50 group credit or equivalent per cabin.

**GRATUITIES:** Cabin fares do not include gratuities and are pre-paid per passenger discretion.

**SHIP'S LOG**  
**A Review of “ALONG THE BURMA ROAD - A TOUR BEHIND  
THE SCENES OF QUEEN ELIZABETH” by Alastair Greener**  
**By Pat Dacey**

2025 is a celebratory year for Cunard as the legendary shipping line enters its 185<sup>th</sup> year of continuous service. This is a milestone that very few shipping lines ever achieve, especially considering that Cunard has been continuously sailing transatlantic crossings ever since its founding in 1840. On January 31, 2025, the PONY Branch was pleased to welcome Alastair Greener who presented live from the UK, his program “ALONG THE BURMA ROAD; A TOUR BEHIND THE SCENES OF QUEEN ELIZABETH” to our audience via Zoom.

Alastair Greener, a maritime lecturer and former Cunard Entertainment Director, conveyed his passion for Cunard history with an extensively researched program packed, remarkable photos and numerous stories that brought Cunard's fascinating history to life. Alastair started his career at sea serving on numerous cruise ships for 10 years when he was offered the chance to join Cunard Line as a Cruise Director. Later Alastair served as Entertainment Director, was part of the QUEEN VICTORIA inaugural team, and part of the QUEEN ELIZABETH maiden season. Alastair left Cunard Line in 2011 to resume his land based presenting career. During his time with Cunard Line, Alastair served on QUEEN MARY 2, QUEEN VICTORIA, QUEEN ELIZABETH and has recently lectured on QUEEN ANNE.



QE entering Southampton on her maiden arrival, October 8, 2010.

Alastair started his presentation with a short background of the original QUEEN ELIZABETH and QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 and an introduction to QUEEN ELIZABETH of 2010. This introduction included an overview of the public spaces that the passengers experience as well as some highlights of certain design elements of the ship. One such shared anecdote is that the Britannia Restaurant is based on the dining cars of the famed “Golden Arrow” train that connected London with Dover before a Channel crossing and transfer to the “Fleche d’ Or” between Calais and Paris in the 1920's.

The Burma Road was then introduced with historical context as the road completed in 1938 that connected Lashio (Burma) with Kungming (China). Although, according to Alastair, there does not appear to be an exact reason that the main crew corridor was named after the road, the name first appeared on QUEEN MARY and has been used on many British ships including the QUEEN ELIZABETH ever since. In the book, “Down the Burma Road – Work and Leisure for Below-Deck Crew of the Queen Mary (1947-1967)”

there is a reference that “a convincing speculation is that as many of the crew had recently returned from the War in the Far East, the conditions in the alley reminded them of their recent experiences.”

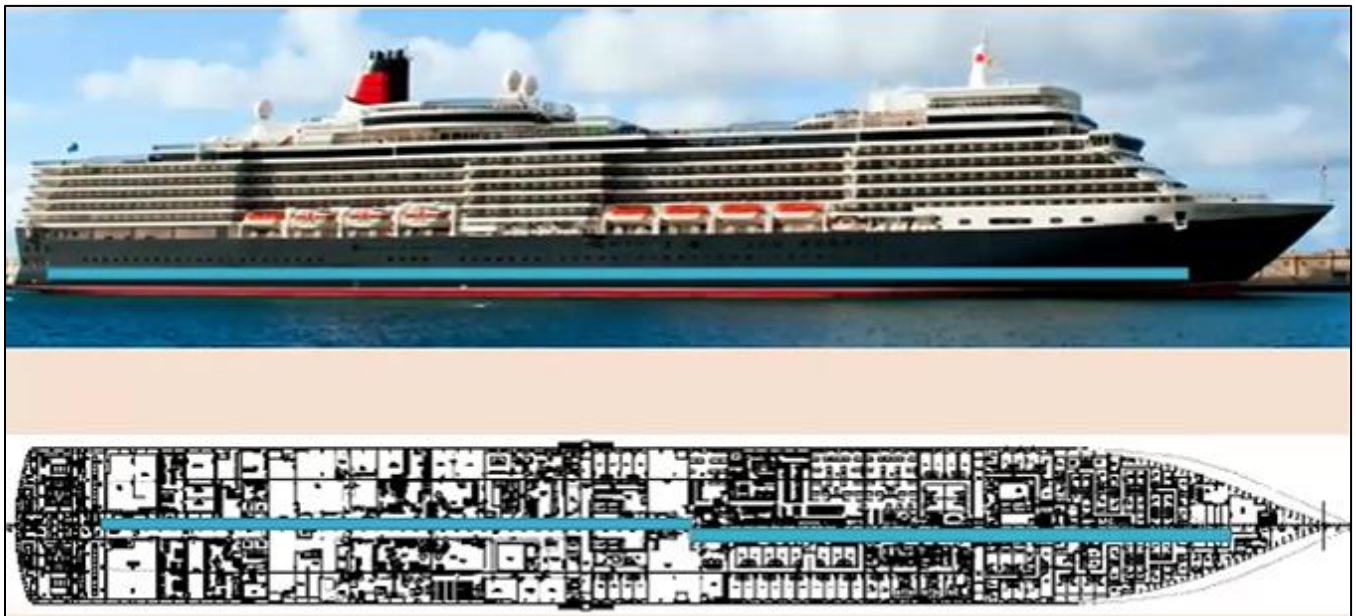
Onboard QUEEN ELIZABETH, the Burma Road is the main throughfare on Deck “A” which runs the length of the ship connecting most of the main crew work areas.



The “Burma Road” on QUEEN ELIZABETH

Alastair provided a comparison of crew versus passenger areas with images of staircases and elevators, along with a description of crew cabins which did not include images out of Alastair’s well-founded belief that the crew deserve their privacy.

Starting our tour aft, we were introduced to the hotel store and loading area. This is the area where 10 storekeepers work under the ultimate control of the Food and Beverage Manager to load, inventory and transfer over 4 million dollars’ worth of goods throughout the voyage. However, the average 15-day stock of goods is often replenished during voyages as well as when QE returns to her homeport.



The blue line represents the location of the Burma Road directly above the waterline on Deck “A”



Moving forward, Alastair introduced the food storage and preparation areas after describing the limited space available in the restaurants. These areas are used to prep food prior to sending it to the respective restaurant galleys for cooking. Departments located in this area include the fruit and vegetables, baking, butchery and seafood departments.



Since Cunard Line sails many different itineraries throughout the year as opposed to offering weekly service to and from the same port, Cunard ships must have additional support services to make repairs during the voyage as opposed waiting for an arrival at a homeport. Examples of this include a robust Upholstery Workshop and a Carpenters Workshop staffed by skilled crew to repair/replace damaged items during a voyage.

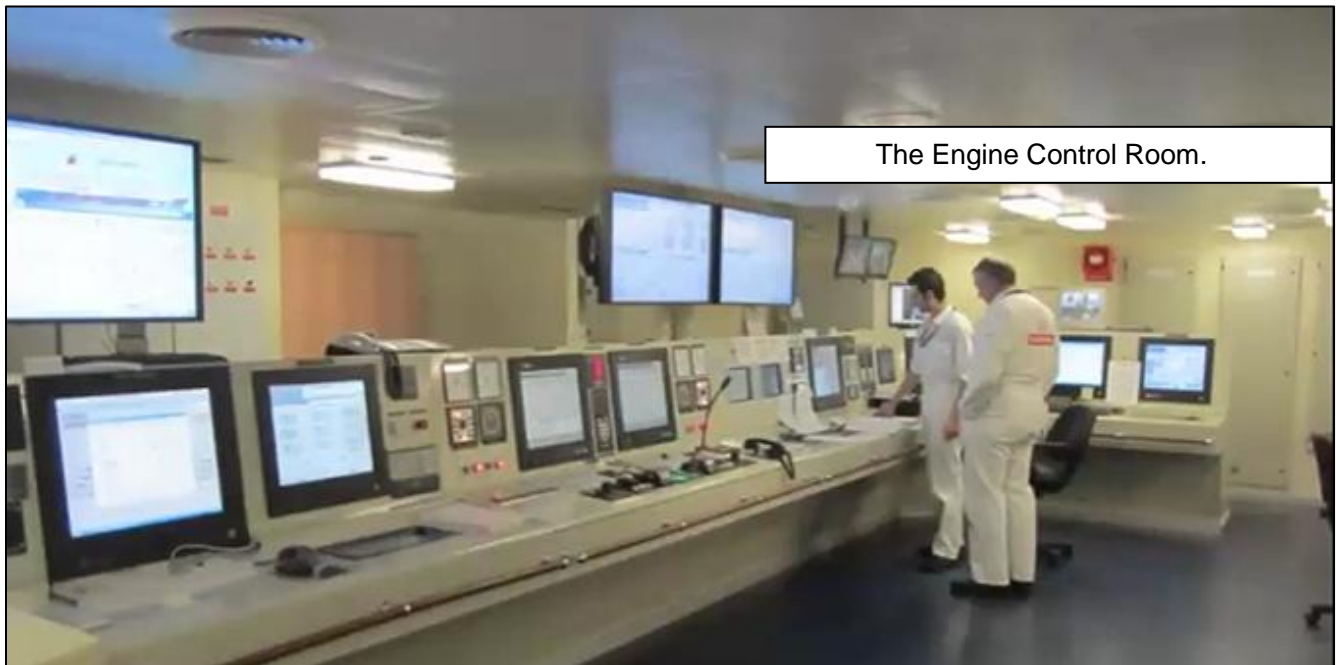
One of the most important areas on the Burma Road is the space dedicated to the processing of refuse during a voyage. Under the control of the Environmental Compliance Officer, this area is dedicated to the processing, disposal and recycling of all onboard refuse accumulated during the voyage in addition to guaranteeing that any refuse offloaded during a voyage ends up in an approved disposal facility following the stringent guidelines for disposal set by Cunard Line. In addition, new standards set by Cunard eliminate single use plastics onboard, contributing to a significant reduction in plastic waste and the need to process it.





In keeping with environmental concerns, the next two areas, the print shop and photo lab have actively sought to reduce the amount of paper and chemical waste by printing less onboard items as well as transitioning all photographs to digital images. This process reduces the overall waste by allowing only those photographs purchased while onboard to be printed. The addition of new passenger phone apps as well as new restaurant handheld devices for order taking has vastly reduced onboard printing and paper usage.

Next on our behind-the-scenes tour were the technical offices and spaces. These areas include all the actual engine control rooms as well as those that provide indirect support to the mechanical operations of the ship. The main Engine Control Room is where the propulsion, fresh water and all HVAC systems are monitored on a 24/7 basis with direct communication with the Navigation Bridge. In addition, the Engine Control Room has major redundancy control and can duplicate those essential tasks from the bridge to ensure continuity in the case of an emergency.



Within the area dedicated to technical office and space there are Technical Workshops and stores and the Electrical Workshop where repairs are made, and parts are fabricated if they are not readily available.

Although not physically located on Deck A, a brief overview of the main engines was provided to include technical details regarding fuel consumption, horsepower and size.

The gangway storage area and tender embarkation area are adjacent to the Security Office which is manned 24/7 and provides easy access for those security officers assigned to embarkation/disembarkation duties.

The baggage area which holds all the baggage trolleys and pallets while at sea transforms into an area capable of handling over 3,000 pieces of baggage on turn-around day.

Continuing forward, there are medical centers for both crew and passengers adjoining the crew version of the purser's office referred to as the Crew Office.

The Royal Court Theater stage "pit" which supports the technical and operational side of the at sea productions is adjacent to crew accommodations for those assigned to the entertainment department.

This forward area concluded the full length of the Burma Road, but Alastair continued his presentation by taking us below to both Deck B and finally Deck C to look at additional crew services.

One section of the laundry with a machine capable of washing 400 lbs. of clothes at a time



Decks B and C contain the Accommodations Office which supports the servicing of all onboard cabins and staterooms including passengers and crew. The laundry for washing, drying, and pressing of all onboard laundry is located on Deck B.

There is also an area dedicated to uniform maintenance as well as a uniform store and a full-service florist.

This comprehensive virtual tour provided the audience with a unique perspective on the modern cruise ship rarely seen by passengers but essential for the safe and efficient running of the ship. The presentation also brought awareness to the many unseen crew members who work at their numerous duties at all times of the day and night to make sure that the passengers' needs are met and that they have an enjoyable time while on board.

The meeting concluded with a lively Q&A session where Alastair continued to share his insights and answer questions for our audience members.

The World Ship Society – PONY Branch thanks Alastair for an entertaining and enlightening evening spent behind the scenes of QUEEN ELIZABETH.



The Inaugural Crew Photo of QUEEN ELIZABETH from 2010.  
(Images: Alastair Greener Collection)



## SHIPS IN PORT OVER IN JERSEY: AMERICAN EXPORT LINES

By Bill Miller

I especially remember them from their comings & goings and, of course, from being at dock in my hometown, at the bottom end of the waterfront of Hoboken, New Jersey. It was just across the mighty Hudson River from the famed Manhattan skyline. The American Export Lines had three piers -- quite a

Full house: American Export ships in Hoboken during a strike in 1963.



distinction in the very busy, ship-filled, often crowded New York harbor of the 1950s. They were leased from the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. Pier A at the foot of First Street was for inward cargo, Pier B in the middle was for both inward as well as outward, while Pier C at Fourth Street was only for outward goods.

Piers A & C had been newly built (in the mid '50s) and could handle three freighters at one time while Pier B, the longest at about 1,000 feet from end to end, had been refitted and upgraded after a long, colorful history. Built back in 1905, it had welcomed some of the great, pre-World War I ocean liners that belonged to the Hamburg America Line and North German Lloyd. Some of the largest, most luxurious ocean liners afloat once berthed there.



Piers A, B & C are parkland & public spaces these days.

Business for American Export was booming in the '50s. There were about two dozen freighters in all in the Company fleet, many of them standardized ships, belonging to the 8,500-ton, 459-foot-long EXPORTER class. They each had names beginning with "EX" such as EXPRESS, EXPEDITOR, EXEMPLAR, EXMINSTER and EXCELLENCY. Along with lots of freight, many of them carried up to 12 passengers as well. There were other, different ships as well like EXTON and EXMOUTH, which were Victory Ships from the Second World War. A few of these carried up to 6 passengers, but all in the same cabin and were sold only to male passengers.

Export ran two large, luxurious liners, the 1,000-passenger sisterships INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION, both of which were completed in 1951. The Company also had the so-called "Four Aces," a quartet of passenger-cargo ships that carried 125 all-first-class travelers and which were named EXCALIBUR, EXCAMBION, EXETER and EXOCHORDA.



The classic freighter EXEMPLAR being "fed" by a floating grain elevator.



The handsome EXPORT AGENT could carry up to 12 passengers in very fine quarters.



With a fleet of some 30 different ships, all used on the Mediterranean & Middle East runs, it was said that an American Export vessel passed through the Straits of Gibraltar every 24 hours. "The Mediterranean was our primary run, the backbone of the Company," remembered Robert Capello, who worked in both the Company's freight as well as passenger departments, both located in their Lower Manhattan offices. "Our long-haul freight service was through the Suez Canal to India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma. I remember that, in the 1950s and '60s, we carried lots of rags out to Bombay but returned with finished clothing. There were also lots of spices and teas going to the States. From the Mediterranean, we brought cans of olive oil and leather goods from Italy, wines from Spain and oranges from Israel. Over to Europe, we transported lots of American manufactured goods: machinery, automobiles, trucks, locomotives and even household appliances like stoves and refrigerators." American Export freighters regularly sailed to the likes of Lisbon, Cadiz, Barcelona, Marseilles, Genoa, Tunis, Piraeus, Salonika, Iskenderun, Haifa, Alexandria, Bombay and Karachi. And typically for freighters of that era, they did the so-called "East Coast swing," as it was called. While the longest stays were at New York (Hoboken), they also called for additional cargo at Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Norfolk/Hampton Roads.

In 1960, American Export bought out another US-flag shipping line, the Isbrandtsen Company, and together they now had over 40 ships. Noted especially for its eastbound around-the-world service with freighters with "Flying" names, such as FLYING GULL and FLYING ENTERPRISE, the two firms were soon renamed, by 1962, as the American Export-Isbrandtsen Lines.



Sisterships EXPORT AMBASSADOR (left) and EXPORT AIDE at Piers B & C

By the mid '60s, there were great changes in shipping as containerization began. It was now all more efficient and required different, more purposeful vessels. Export was a forerunner and began by converting two bulk carriers to carry up to 660 20-foot cargo containers. Soon, Container Transport Lines

was a specially created subsidiary, and early experimentation even included the loading of containers by helicopter!

The company also dabbled in nuclear power by chartering (from the US Government) the world's first nuclear merchant ship, the 14,000-ton, 60-passenger SAVANNAH. They leased this \$60 million ship, intended to be a prototype of many, for \$1 a year from the Federal Maritime Administration. Export even proposed a fleet of as many as 30 "nuclear super ships" to strengthen and also revive the already sagging American merchant marine. Sadly, however, the 595-foot-long SAVANNAH proved to be very expensive as well as difficult to operate. Also, because of the potential risks with her reactor, she was not always welcome in foreign ports. Many harbor officials even insisted, for example, that the ship dock stern-in so as to make a quick, emergency getaway if needed. She sailed only for six years before being made over as a museum ship now docked in Baltimore.



By the early 1960s, American Export and Isbrandtsen lines merged.

American Export also built new break bulk freighters and then purposeful containerships in the 1960s but gradually faced declining markets. Less expensive, foreign-flag tonnage was now a big problem, for example. Downsizing, Export left Hoboken in 1970 and relocated to smaller, New York harbor terminal operations at the Bush Terminal in Brooklyn. In 1978, Export was bought out by another American shipowner, the Farrell Lines, and soon lost its identity. In 2000, Farrell itself was bought out by P&O-Nedlloyd, the British-Dutch shipping giant (itself, now owned by Denmark's Maersk Line), and was reduced to but a few ships as the Farrell Mediterranean Express. One of the last former Export ships, the ARGONAUT, was used on the ammunition run out to Iraq. Another, the EXPORT BANNER, went to scrap in Texas in 2007. The long gone, but still wonderful ships of American Export are left these days to the history books.

*(Images: Bill Miller Collection)*

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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.

WSS-PONY ADDRESS: PO Box 384, New York, NY 10185-0384  
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## SHIP NEWS

### Compiled By Pat Dacey **VICTORY I SAILS AGAIN**



*(Image: Victory Cruise Line)*

On April 17, 2025, VICTORY I will set sail from Portland, ME for her inaugural sailing as part of the newly formed Victory Cruise Lines under the leadership of John Waggoner. The inaugural sailing will be a 10-night cruise to Toronto, Ontario, where the ship will be formally christened in a ceremony on April 27, 2025.

VICTORY I was built in 2001 by Atlantic Marine in Jacksonville, FL and entered service as the CAPE MAY LIGHT along with her sister ship CAPE COD LIGHT. In 2010, she was renamed SEA VOYAGER and registered in the United States. In 2011, her registry was changed to Nassau, Bahamas and in 2015 her name was changed to SAINT LAURENT.

In 2016, she was named VICTORY I for the newly formed Victory Cruise Line and in 2019, the line was acquired by HMS Global Maritime and managed by American Queen Steamboat Company until the Covid pandemic when she was withdrawn from service due to the cruising ban and was laid up at Port Royal, SC.

On December 7, 2021, VICTORY I was renamed OCEAN VOYAGER and returned to service on January 4, 2022, with seasonal cruises to the Great Lakes and around the Yucatan Peninsula.

On June 20, 2023, American Queen Voyages announced that they would be selling OCEAN VOYAGER and OCEAN NAVIGATOR, the former CAPE COD LIGHT.

In 2024, John Waggoner who founded American Queen Steamboat Company before selling it in 2019, bought both the OCEAN VOYAGER and OCEAN NAVIGATOR at auction under the supervision of the bankruptcy court, which oversaw the reorganization of the Hornblower Corporation, former owner of the now dissolved American Queen Voyages. After the purchase and refurbishment, both vessels were

renamed VICTORY I and VICTORY II under the “new” Victory Cruise Lines, which will be offering all-inclusive coastal cruising on North America’s Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway and the Canadian Maritimes starting this month with VICTORY I.

## QUEEN MARY 2 TO JOIN AMERICA’S 250<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN NEW YORK IN 2026 AS CUNARD PARTNERS WITH “SAIL4TH 250”



(Image: Cunard Line)

On March 25, Carnival Corporation announced that QUEEN MARY 2 will serve at the heart of America’s 250<sup>th</sup> celebration in New York Harbor. According to Carnival corporation, the 6-day centerpiece of America’s milestone anniversary will feature the largest international flotilla of tall ships and naval vessels ever assembled. Some 17 nations have already committed their tall ships to participate, and the US Navy has invited scores of others. More than 30 tall ships are expected. The celebration will also include festivals, public access to the tall ships, a massive fireworks display, and an exhibition of 18<sup>th</sup> century historic documents.

Planners expect 8 to 10 million spectators to line the 15-mile New York/New Jersey shoreline to view the July 4 parade of tall ships and naval vessels, with events planned from July 3 to July 8, 2026.

QUEEN MARY 2 will depart from the Brooklyn Cruise terminal on the evening of July 3, 2026, and move to a prime position at anchor in New York Harbor allowing guests to have unrivaled views of the celebration culminating in the fireworks finale on July 4. After the festivities, QUEEN MARY 2 will arrive at Newport, RI, on July 5, before sailing to Halifax and returning to New York on July 10.

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