

MS Batory



MS Batory was a Polish ocean liner which was the flagship of Gdynia-America Line, named after Stefan Batory, the sixteenth-century king of Poland. She was the sister ship of MS Piłsudski. After Allied wartime service, mainly under the UK Admiralty, she became in 1951 the flagship of the Polish Ocean Lines and the Polish merchant fleet. She is often described as the "Pride of the Polish Merchant Marine". Batory along with her sister Piłsudski were the two most popular ocean liners of Poland.

History

Construction

Gdynia America Line (Gdynia–Ameryka Linie Żeglugowe, GAL), a Polish-Danish partnership based in Gdynia, was formed in 1934 as successor to Polskie Transatlantyczne Towarzystwo Okrętowe (PTTO), an enterprise originally dedicated to transporting Polish migrants to the USA. It changed its focus to leisure travel and for that purpose decided to commission a new vessel. Batory was built in 1934–5 at the Cantieri Riuniti dell'Adriatico Monfalcone shipyard in Trieste, Italy, under an arrangement where part of the commission was paid in shipments of coal from Poland.

She was among the best-known Polish ships of all time. She was launched on 3 July 1935. She was powered by two Sulzer diesel engines driving two screws giving a speed of 18 knots (33 km/h). She began regular service in May 1936 on the Gdynia — New York run, and by 1939 had carried over 30,000 passengers.

World War II

Mobilised at the outbreak of World War II, she served as a troop ship and a hospital ship by the Allied Navy for the rest of the war. In 1940 she, along with Chrobry, transported allied troops to Norway. She was also used for secretly shipping many valuable Polish treasures to Canada for safekeeping. She participated in the evacuation of Dunkirk late May early June, taking aboard 2,500 people. Later she carried as many as 6,000 people in one evacuation. In June to July, she secretly transported much of the UK's gold reserves (£40 million) from Greenock, Scotland to Montreal, Canada for safekeeping. On 4 August 1940 she left Liverpool with convoy WS 2 (Winston's Specials) evacuating 480 children to Sydney, Australia, under the Children's Overseas Reception Board until the war was over. She sailed via Cape Town, India, Singapore to where she had carried 300 troops and Sydney. The journey had been a happy one, with so much music and laughter that the Batory was dubbed the "Singing Ship" and was the subject of a book of the same name. In April 1942 British writer Roald Dahl was on board to America.

She was involved in the allied invasion of Oran, Algeria in 1942. That same year she took troops to India and took part in the occupation of Sicily and southern France, where she was the flagship of General Jean de

Lattre de Tassigny, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army. She came under attack several times from the ground and the air, but managed to escape serious damage.

Dubbed the Lucky Ship for her military career during World War II, she was a sister ship to the less fortunate Piłsudski which sank in November 1939 off the east coast of Scotland.

Postwar career

Returned to post-war Poland in 1946, she resumed civilian service after a refit, transporting such eminent people as Ryszard Kapuściński. From May 1949 through to January 1951, she was the subject of several political incidents in which American dockers and shipyard workers in the United States refused to unload her cargo, or to service the ship.

After these incidents, she was withdrawn from the North Atlantic route, refurbished at Hebburn for service in the tropics, and sailed in August 1951 from Gdynia and Southampton to Bombay and Karachi, via Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, and Suez. In 1957, she returned to the North Atlantic run. She continued in service until 1969, when she was decommissioned and became a floating hotel in Gdynia. However, after about a year, she was sold back to Polish Ocean Lines, and from there she was sold for scrap to Hong Kong. She left Gdynia on 31 March 1971 and arrived at the scrapyard on 26 May. On 2 June, the Polish flag was lowered and the scrapping process began. The ship had been scrapped completely by 1972.

She was replaced by a larger vessel Stefan Batory, which operated from April 1969 until 1988.

Details

Name: Batory

Namesake: King Stefan Batory

Owners:

Gdynia-America Line (1936–45)

Ministry of War Transport (1945–46)

Gdynia-America Line (1946–51)

Polish Ocean Lines (1951–71)

Operators:

Gdynia-America Line (1936–45)

Lamport and Holt (1945–46)

Gdynia-America Line (1946–51)

Polish Ocean Lines (1951–71)

Port of registryGdynia

Ordered: 29 November 1933

Builder: Cantieri Riuniti dell'Adriatico, Monfalcone

Yard number: 1127

Laid down: 1 May 1934

Launched: 3 July 1935

Acquired: 23 April 1936

Maiden voyage: 18 May 1936

In service: 1936

Out of service: 1 July 1969

Identification:

call sign SPEE (1936–45)

ICS Sierra.svgICS Papa.svgICS Echo.svgICS Echo.svg

call sign GJNV (1945–46)

ICS Golf.svgICS Juliet.svgICS November.svgICS Victor.svg

UK official number 180583 (1945–46)

IMO number: 5038088

Nickname: Lucky Ship

Fate: Became a hotel ship in Gdynia, 1969. Sold back to Polish Ocean Lines in 1970, scrapped between 1971 and 1972 in Hong Kong.

Type: Ocean liner

Tonnage: 14,287 GRT 8,167 NRT

Length: 160.4 m (526.25 ft)

Beam: 21.6 m (70.87 ft)

Draught: 7.5 m (24.6 ft)

Decks: 4 + 3 in superstructure

Installed power: two Sulzer 2SSA 9-cylinder diesel engines, 12 680 hp (12 500 hp from April 1947)

Propulsion: 2 propellers

Speed: 18 knots (33 km/h)

Capacity:

to March 1940: 760

from March 1940: 1650 troops

from February 1941: 2200 troops

from April 1947: 832

from May 1957: 816

from June 1969: 600

Crew:

to December 1939: 313

from April 1947: 343