A guide to the USS Uruguay (built 1928; passenger liner) survey report, 1946 January

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A Guide to the USS Uruguay (built 1928; passenger liner) survey report

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Abstract: The USS Uruguay (built 1928; passenger liner) survey report (SAFR 23827, HDC 1668) consists of copy number 6 of the comprehensive January 1946 survey and report of the condition of the USS URUGUAY.
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Historical or Biographical Note
The URUGUAY, a passenger liner originally named the CALIFORNIA, was built in 1928 and was transferred to the US Army during World War II. Operated by the Matson-McCormack lines until 1954 she was finally sold for scrap in 1964.
The CALIFORNIA was built at Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., in Virginia in 1928 and was used for passenger service from New York to San Francisco via the Panama Canal. She was 601 feet long, with a displacement of 32,000 tons with an electric turbine and twin screws. She was operated by the Panama Pacific Line and traveled from New York to Havana, Cuba and then through the Panama Canal to San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco.
In March of 1936, crew members of the CALIFORNIA, led by the maritime labor leader Joe Curran and in protest over harsh working conditions and low pay, refused to sail when the Captain ordered them to let go of the mooring lines while in port at the San Pedro pier in Los Angeles. The ensuing sit down strike lasted three days and ultimately resulted in a nationwide maritime work stoppage that led to the demise of the International Seaman's Union and the creation of the National Maritime Union (now part of the Seafarers International Union of North America).
Due to the effects of the Depression and the critical labor situation, the Panama Pacific Line sold the ship to the U.S. Maritime Commission in 1937, which renamed her the URUGUAY and made her the flagship of the Good Neighbor Fleet, sailing from New York to Buenos Aires, Argentina and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 1938, the Moore-McCormack Lines took over operation of the URUGUAY, sailing her to and from Brazil until 1942 when she became a United States Army Transport Ship (USAT). From 1942 until 1946, the URUGUAY ferried army troops to North Africa, Australia and Japan. In 1943 she was involved in a massive collision with the oil replenishment ship USS SALAMONIE off the coast of Bermuda. The Captain of the URUGUAY ordered the crew to abandon ship, however Lieutenant Paul "Bear" Bryant disobeyed the order and singlehandedly saved the URUGUAY from sinking by emptying the forward fuel tanks thereby shifting her ballast. Lieutenant Bryant was awarded the Navy medal for his actions and after the war went on to have a highly successful career as the football coach at the University of Alabama.

In January of 1946, while in port at Seattle, Washington, the URUGUAY was given a thorough inspection by the Naval Architectural company of Joslyn & Ryan, and based on this inspection report, the URUGUAY spent the entire year of 1947 in drydock at the Todd Shipyards, in Brooklyn, New York. From 1948 until 1954, the URUGUAY was again operated by the Moore-McCormack Lines, making passage from New York to South America and back. In 1954, she was sold to the U.S. government who put her in mothballs in the National Reserve Fleet on the James River in Virginia. In 1964, the U.S. Commerce Department sold her to the North American Smelting Company of Wilmington, Delaware for scrap.

Collection Scope and Content
The USS Uruguay (built 1928; passenger liner) survey report (SAFR 23827, HDC 1668) consists of copy number 6 of the comprehensive January 1946 survey and report of the condition of the USS URUGUAY.

The inspection was conducted in January 1946 while the ship was moored in Seattle, Washington by the San Francisco, California based naval architect & marine engineering company of Joslyn & Ryan, and is a sweeping review of the ship’s condition to include certification paperwork, the hull, machinery spaces, engine rooms, and electrical equipment. Each functional section of the ship is divided into chapters which detail the complete visual and operational inspections of each space and provide recommendations on the steps necessary to return each problem identified to a full shipshape status. The survey report includes foldout pages with floor plan layouts of the engineering spaces and is a complete copy of the report with the following exceptions: Copy of the vessel’s certificate, 3 pages of photographs, 3 pages of drawings of fire zones, and the flooding curve drawings. These exceptions are noted in the front matter of the report as being removed from this office copy #6.

The report is open for use without restriction.

Collection Arrangement
Single item

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Passenger ships
Moore-McCormack Lines, Inc.
Official reports
Administrative records
Naval architects
Inspection