



USS *Mintaka*

AK-94

A star in the constellation Orion.

Builder: California Shipbuilding Corp., Wilmington, California

Length: 441' 6"

Beam: 56' 11"

Draft: 28' 4"

Displacement: 14,350 tons

Top speed: 12.5 knots

Complement: 207

Armament: 1 x 3"; 2 x 40mm

HISTORY:

Mintaka (AK-94) was laid down under Maritime Commission contract as SS *Ansel Briggs* by California Shipbuilding Corp., Wilmington, Calif., 9 February 1943; launched 10 March 1943; sponsored by Mrs. A. V. Bechtel; renamed *Mintaka* 17 March 1943; delivered to the Navy 26 March 1943; and commissioned at San Diego, Calif., 10 May 1943, Lt. Comdr. L. S. Burgess, USCGR, in command.

Mintaka steamed to San Francisco late in the month and after loading cargo sailed for the South Pacific 15 June. Steaming via New Caledonia, she reached New Zealand 15 July and discharged cargo at Auckland and Wellington before departing for the west coast 1 August. She arrived San Francisco the 23d, thence steamed 11 September for Seattle to prepare for supply runs in Alaskan waters. Departing Puget Sound 24 September, she touched at Dutch Harbor 11 October and during the next month she shuttled cargo to American bases in the

Aleutians. After returning to Seattle 27 November, she underwent conversion to a troopcarrying cargo ship at Portland, Oreg., early in December.

Mintaka sailed 11 January 1944 for San Francisco whence, after embarking 1,056 troops, she sailed 2 February for the South Pacific. She reached Noumea, New Caledonia, the 23d and began troop and cargo shuttle runs among the islands of the South Pacific. Between 27 February and 10 March she carried 1,800 troops to New Zealand and back: thence, she made a run to the New Hebrides before arriving Guadalcanal 9 April. During the next several months she maintained a busy schedule transporting fighting men and supplies to numerous American bases in Melanesia from the Admiralties to the Fijis. She carried thousands of troops to and from staging areas; on one run between the Green Islands and Guadalcanal in late May, she carried more than 1,500 soldiers.

Mintaka departed Guadalcanal 26 September; operated out of Manus, Admiralties, during much of October; and sailed in convoy 26 October for shuttle duty in the Palaus. Between 31 October and 30 November she operated from Kossol Passage south to Peleliu discharging troops and cargo. After embarking 994 veterans of the Palaus' campaign, she returned to Guadalcanal 10 December and resumed shuttle runs among the Solomons and the Bismarck Archipelago. With 968 Seabees embarked, she departed Guadalcanal 26 April 1945 bound for Okinawa.

Steaming in convoy via Eniwetok and Ulithi, *Mintaka* reached Okinawa 21 May and began debarking troops Rule unloading cargo. Despite periodic Japanese air attacks, she continued off-loading operations during the next week. On 25 May her gunners splashed an enemy plane during an assault which damaged a nearby merchant ship. *Mintaka* sailed 31 May, touched at Ulithi 6 June, Pearl Harbor the 23d, and arrived San Francisco 3 July.

After voyage repairs, *Mintaka* embarked 1,035 troop reinforcements and departed Portland 24 July. The cessation of hostilities found her at Eniwetok. On 20 August she reached Saipan, Marianas, and began debarking troops. Subsequent troop and cargo runs during the remainder of the year carried her to Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Ulithi. She returned to San Francisco 30 December, decommissioned there 12 February 1946, and was redelivered to WSA the same day. Her name was struck the Navy list 26 February 1946.

Mintaka received one battle star for World War II service.

SOURCES:

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.

