



General J. C. Breckinridge

AP-176

James Carson Breckinridge was born 13 September 1877 at Memphis, Tenn., and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant for the Spanish American War in 1898. He saw service in the Philippines, China, and Central America in the years that followed, and commanded a Marine detachment on *Utah* at the capture of Vera Cruz in 1914. General Breckinridge commanded the Washington Marine Barracks 1923-25 and the Marine detachment at the American Legation at Peking, China, 1930-32. He also commanded Marine Corps schools at Quantico, Va., and Parris Island, S.C. Breckinridge retired a Lieutenant General 1 October 1941 and died 2 March 1942 at Summit Point, W. Va.

Builder: Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey

Class: *General John Pope*

Type: P2-S2-R2

Commissioned: 30 June 1945

Decommissioned: Her Coast Guard crew was removed on 20 January 1946

Length: 622'

Beam: 76'

Draft: 25' 6"

Displacement: 11,450 (lt); 20,175 (fl)

Propulsion: Steam turbines; twin shafts; 17,000 HP

Top speed: 20.6 knots

Complement: 465

Troop capacity: 5,142

Armament: 4 x 5"/38 dual purpose; 4 x 1.1" twin gun mounts; (later replaced by 4 x 40mm twin gun mounts); 20 x 20 mm (single).

General J. C. Breckinridge (AP-176) was laid down as a Maritime Commission type (P2-S2-R2) hull, under a Maritime Commission contract, at Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., Kearny, N.J. She was launched 18 March 1945 by the Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. of Kearny, N.J.; sponsored by Mrs. Dorothy T. Breckinridge; and commissioned 30 June 1945 at Bayonne, N.J., Capt. H. S. Berdine, USCG, commanding.

Operated under the Coast Guard, *General J. C. Breckinridge* was commissioned too late to take an active part in the fighting in Europe, but after shakedown in July and August 1945 proceeded to Marseilles. Arriving there 14 August, she loaded over 5,000 troops and their equipment and proceeded to Manila. Word of the surrender of Japan came next day, however, and *General J. C. Breckinridge* proceeded to New York, where she unloaded her troops 24 August.

During the next 4 months, the transport made four more voyages, three to Marseilles and one to Le Havre, bringing home American troops and their supplies. At Marseilles 18 November, she had the honor of embarking the 2 millionth American veteran to be taken home from Europe since VE day. Arriving at Boston 26 November, she was soon underway for California, via the Panama Canal, and duty in the Pacific.

General J. C. Breckinridge arrived at San Francisco 20 January 1946, where a Navy crew took over 10 February. She departed San Francisco 25 February on one of five trips to the western Pacific in which she carried troops and cargo to and from Saipan, Guam, Shanghai, China, and Tsingtao. Departing Taku, China, on the last of these voyages 4 September 1946, she transited the Panama Canal and arrived 3 October at Philadelphia. At the shipyard *General J. C. Breckinridge* underwent conversion into a dependent transport, with modern nursery, kitchen, and medical facilities for dependents of military men. Following completion of conversion, the ship again took up her Pacific schedule, leaving Philadelphia 11 January 1947 via the Panama Canal for San Francisco and Pacific ports. For the next 2 1/2 years, the transport was a regular visitor at Pearl Harbor, Guam, Shanghai, Okinawa, Tsingtao, Manila, and other

cities of the Pacific, transporting military and civilian passengers. In June 1947 she carried convicted Japanese war criminals from Manila to Japan, and from time to time performed missions of mercy and conducted underway training exercises. During this time *General J. C. Breckinridge* spent almost 80 percent of her time underway in support of America's farflung installations in the Pacific.

General J. C. Breckinridge was transferred to the Military Sea Transportation Service 1 October 1949 and sailed thereafter with a Navy captain and crew as T-AP-176. She made one more trip to the Pacific in November 1949, after which she sailed to New York to transport dependents to San Francisco. At the outbreak of the Korean war 30 June 1950 the ship returned to San Francisco 19 July, and put in at Mare Island Shipyard for conversion to a troop transport.

Ready for duty as a troop transport, *General J. C. Breckinridge* carried fresh troops from Seattle to Yokosuka, arriving 14 August 1950, and from there stopped at Pusan, Korea, to return a load of casualties to Yokohama. The transport started to return to San Francisco, but was called back to participate in the pivotal Inchon amphibious landing. Arriving there with troops the day after the assault, the transport helped support the landing and consolidate the gains made.

After returning to San Francisco, arriving 7 October, *General J. C. Breckinridge* again sailed for Japan, and arrived at Sasebo 14 November. She immediately was dispatched with other available transports to Wonsan, where she assisted in the evacuation of troops at that port 22 November. After taking troops and casualties to Japan, "*Breckinridge*" returned to Korea, this time to help in the evacuation of Hungnam 15 December. The hardworking transport made two more troop voyages during the actual fighting in Korea.

Subsequent to the Korean War, *General J. C. Breckinridge* has again been active as an MSTTS transport carrying military and civilian passengers on a regular schedule of visits to Pacific ports - the already familiar Guam, Yokosuka, Okinawa, and Inchon, as well as Adak, Alaska, and Midway Island. She operated out of San Francisco on this duty until returned to the Maritime Administration and placed in the National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, Calif., 1 December 1966.

General J. C. Breckinridge received four battle stars for Korean conflict service.

Sources:

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Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.
