



General M. C. Meigs

AP-116

Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, born in Augusta, Ga., 3 May 1816, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1836. He served with the Corps of Engineers for a quarter of a century and in 1861 became Quartermaster General. In addition to equipping and supplying the Union Armies during the Civil War, General Meigs supervised the construction of the Washington Aqueduct and the dome and wings of the United States Capitol. After the Civil War, he was a member of the Commission for the Reform and Reorganization of the Army. General Meigs retired in 1882 and died in Washington, D.C., 2 January 1892.

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

Class: *General John Pope*

Type: P2-S2-R2

Commissioned: 3 June 1944

Decommissioned: Her Coast Guard crew was removed on 4 March 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 M. C. Meigs (AP-116) was launched 13 March 1944 under a Maritime Commission contract by the Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., Kearny, N.J.; sponsored by Mrs. Henry R. Arnold; acquired by the Navy 2 June 1944; and commissioned at Bayonne, N.J., 3 June 1944, Captain George W. McKean, USCG, in command.

After two round-trip, troop-carrying voyages between Newport News, Va., and Naples, Italy, from 10 July to 1 September, *General M. C. Meigs* departed 5 September for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Arriving 18 September, she was visited by Brazilian President Getulio Vargas and embarked 5,200 troops of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, the first Brazilian troops to be carried by an American transport. She sailed 22 September for the Mediterranean; arrived Naples 6 October; and there embarked troops, civilians, and 460 German prisoners of war for transportation to the United States. Departing Naples 10 October, she embarked additional troops at Bizerte, Tunisia, and at Oran, French Morocco, before returning to New York 22 October.

Between 7 November and 8 March 1945 *General M. C. Meigs* made two similar round-trip voyages from the United States to Italy and North Africa via Brazil, carrying thousands of American and Brazilian troops to Europe for the remaining drive against Nazi Germany and returning several thousand others to the United States and Brazil.

General M. C. Meigs deployed troops to Panama and Puerto Rico from 25 March to 7 April before departing New York 16 April to carry troops to Le Havre, France. There she embarked homebound troops 28 April, sailed for the United States 30 April via Southampton, England, and reached Newport News 14 May. Between 22 May and 14 June she steamed to Naples and returned to Newport News with 5,100 veterans. Sailing again 23 June, she transported occupation troops to Naples, where she then embarked Brazilian troops 4 July and sailed the 6th for Rio de Janeiro. She reached Brazil 18 July and steamed to

Baia [sic; Bahia] and Recife, Brazil, before arriving Newport News 12 August. Between 23 August and 17 September she cruised to Naples and returned additional troops to Brazil.

Departing Rio de Janeiro 20 September, *General M. C. Meigs* steamed via Recife to Marseilles, France, where she arrived 2 October to begin duty with the "Magic-Carpet" fleet. She cruised to the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Far East and contributed significantly to the giant task of returning to the United States the veterans of the long, bitter fighting of World War II. After returning to Newport News from Marseilles 12 October, between 21 October and 3 December she steamed from Norfolk to Naples and Karachi, India, to return troops to New York. On 8 December she departed New York for the Far East. Steaming via the Philippines, she arrived Nagoya, Japan, 10 January 1946; embarked full load of troops, then sailed the 14th for the United States. She reached San Francisco 24 January, decommissioned there 4 March and was turned over to WSA for transfer to the American President Lines, Ltd., as a passenger ship in the Pacific.

After the outbreak of Communist aggression in Korea 25 June 1950, *General M. C. Meigs* was taken over from the Maritime Commission 21 July and assigned to MSTs. Manned by a civilian crew, she made 19 cruises to the Far East during the fighting in Korea and carried thousands of American troops from the West Coast to ports in Japan and South Korea. Following the uncertain armistice 27 July 1953, she continued to support American readiness in the Far East with troop-rotation cruises during the remainder of 1953 and through 1954. Placed in Reduced Operational Status in 1955, she was transferred to the Maritime Administration 1 October 1958 and entered the National Defense Reserve Fleet at Olympia, WA where she remains.

General M. C. Meigs received six battle stars for Korean War service.

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

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.
