



USS *Monticello*, AP-61

The name of Thomas Jefferson's estate in Northern Virginia.

Builder: Stabilimento Tecnico, Triestine, Trieste, Italy

Cost: ?

Length: 651' 10"

Beam: 78' 1"

Draft: 26' 7"

Displacement: 25,021 tons

Keel Laid: ?

Launched: 28 June 1927

Commissioned: 1928 (commercial); 1942 (USN)

Decommissioned: 22 March 1946

Status:

Propulsion: Parsons' type turbine; 24,000 SHP; twin propellers

Top speed: 20.5 knots

Economic speed: 15 knots

Complement: 683

Troop Capacity: 556 officers & 6,334 enlisted passengers

Cargo Capacity: 37,400 cubic feet

Armament: 1 x 5"/38; 6 x 3"/50; 16 x 20mm/80; 4 x .30 MG

History:

The *Monticello* (AP-61) was built as *Conte Grande* by Stabilimento Tecnico, Triestine, Trieste, Italy as an Italian-flagged passenger ship capable of carrying 7,798 persons. She was launched on 28 June 1927 and entered service with Lloyd Sabaudo of Genoa at Cantieri San Marco for service on the North Atlantic tourist and passenger trade. In 1933 she transferred to the South American tourist trade. Early in June, 1940 the *Conte Grande* was in Santos, Brazil, on one of her regular South American cruises. Here her officers held her awaiting developments after Mussolini's attack on France on 10 June 1940. On 27 February 1942 she was transferred to Brazilian registry and a Brazilian crew replaced the Italian crew who were interned. She was purchased on 16 April 1942 by the United States. She was commissioned the same day at Sao Paulo in Brazil under the command of CAPT Morton L. Deyo, USN.

Monticello sailed north under the escort of the USS *Landsdale* (DD-426) to Philadelphia for conversion to a troop transport which was completed 10 September 1942. She left New York on 2 November for the invasion of North Africa, carrying troops to Casablanca. Returning to New York, she sailed again on 25 December, carrying men for the various commands of the China-Burma-India Theater to Karachi, by way of the Panama Canal, Australia, and Ceylon.

The transport returned to New York on 24 April 1943, carried reinforcements to Oran on two voyages, then sailed from Africa to San Francisco by way of the Panama Canal. Through the first half of 1944, she carried men from San Francisco to Californian ports, Australia, Hawaii, and the burgeoning bases of the South Pacific. In June 1944, she began the first of a series of transatlantic voyages bringing men to win victory in Europe. She reported to New York for an eight-week availability on 20 July 1945 and while there her Navy crew transferred off and were replaced by a Coast Guard crew beginning on 21 July 1945. Her first Coast Guard commanding officer was CDR George R. Leslie. He took command on 6 August 1945 and was replaced the next day by CAPT R. S. Patch, USCG.

The vessel remained under repair at Todd's Shipyards, Brooklyn, until 2 October. During this time all of her armament was removed. She departed New York, bound for Naples, on 8 October 1945, with 176 Italian officers, 5,590 Italian Army enlisted men, 13 U.S. Army officers and 34 Army enlisted men, a total of 5,813. She arrived at Naples safely on 19 October. She departed Naples on 22 October and arrived in Norfolk, Virginia on 3 November 1945. She departed Norfolk on 8 November and arrived at Le Havre on the 17th. She departed Le Havre on 19 November and arrived back at her home port of New York on 27 November. She then departed New York on 10 December, bound for Marseilles,

arriving there on 20 December. She departed Marseilles on 22 December, arriving at New York on 1 January 1946.

She decommissioned at Norfolk on 22 March 1946 and returned to the War Shipping Administration for disposal on 27 May 1946. She was returned to the Italian government in June, 1947.

Sources:

The Coast Guard at War: Transports and Escorts, V, Volume II (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, March 1, 1949), pp. 3-4.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.

Cutter File, Historian's Office, Coast Guard Headquarters.

