



## Sun Ship Historical Society's Ships History Page

Site: [www.sunship.org](http://www.sunship.org)

Pub: 2019.01.27

Copyright Sun Ship Historical Society 2019

### Name: "Lancaster" Hull No: 004

Hope you enjoy this 'Ship's History Page'. As always, if you have any additional information, suggestions or corrections, please let me know.

Thank You,  
Dave Kavanagh  
SSHS  
davekav@verizon.net

#### 1. Ship's Record:

**Hull No:** 004  
**Name Orig:** "Lancaster"<sup>3.1</sup>  
**Launched:** 1918.05.05  
**Owner:** Cunard S.S. Lines  
**Official No:** 2216451  
**Propulsion:** Steam-Reciprocating  
**Boilers:** 3 Scotch Single-Ended  
**Propeller(s):** Single  
**Class:** Cargo  
**L-B-D:** 435', 57.5', 38'  
**DWT:** 11,572  
**HP:** 2600  
**Speed-Knots:** 10.5  
**Contract Date:** 1917.02.07  
**Keel-Laying:** 1917.05.03  
**Launch:** 1918.05.05  
**Delivery:** 1918.06.09

#### 2. Ship's Description:

2.1: Ship is classified as Lloyd's 100 A1 special survey and USSB Design No. 1166 (Oil Burner)-Steel Cargo.

2.2: She is equipped with three complete decks, all fore and aft and has four large cargo holds. A large cross bunker for coal and deep tank for ballast or oil fuel. The double bottom all fore and aft except under the machinery spaces and fore peak tank are fitted for the carriage of water ballast or oil fuel. The double bottom under machinery spaces also the after-peak tank are fitted for reserve feed water or

water ballast. Propelling machinery is fitted amidships.

2.3: Cargo handling consists of; hinged king posts mounting four 5-ton booms each are fitted forward and aft., with one 20-ton boom at the main hatchway. Two king posts amidships fitted with one 5-ton boom each. Telescoping topmasts is fitted amidships. The deck machinery consists of steam steering gear, steam anchor windlass, steam capstan, four compound geared steam winches and six single geared steam winches fitted at hatchways.

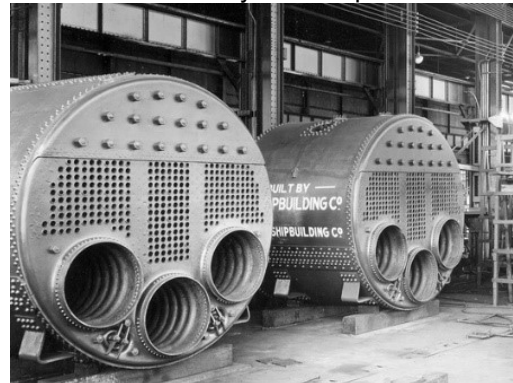
2.4: Accommodations for captain, officers, saloon, radio and petty officers provided in deck houses amidships. Engineers, messrooms, etc., inside deckhouse abreast casings, crew berthed in forecastle.

2.5: Armament consists of a 4-inch gun forward and a 5-inch gun aft, for protection against submarine attack, with magazines well protected and fitted in lower 'tweendeck.

2.6: Extra lifesaving equipment consists of six 26- foot lifeboats, two life rafts and one working boat.

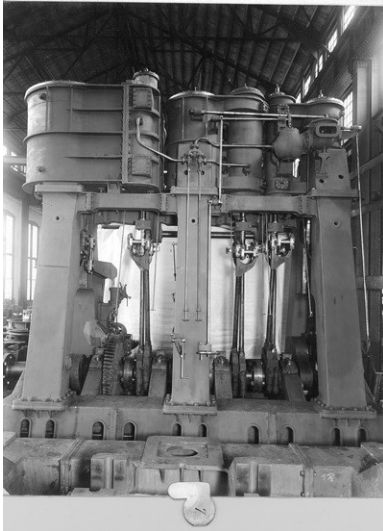
2.7: Propulsion machinery consists of triple expansion reciprocating engines provided with steam from three single-ended Scotch boilers. The usual auxiliaries for this class of vessel are fitted in connection with the main engine. The boilers were manufactured by the Wetherill plant of the Sun Company. Ballast pumps of ample capacity are provided.

Typical Scotch Boiler as used on ships at this time, built by Sun Ship.  
#HML\_3820\_002a (Photo courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library-Sun Ship Archives.



Typical triple-expansion reciprocating steam engine as used on ships at this time, built by Sun Ship at the Wetherill Plant.

#HML-3820-007 (Photo courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library-Sun Ship Archives).



### 3. Ship's Short History:

3.1: An announcement was made, by the Harrisburg 'Patriot' on 02/03/1917, that "the Sun Shipbuilding Company, a new concern with yards at Chester, PA has received a contract from the Cunard Line for two standard 10,000-ton cargo boats ("Radnor" H003 and "Lancaster" H-004). The contract was awarded some time ago, but permission was not granted until today to make the fact public. Other concerns, including the Bethlehem Steel Company have received similar contracts, but it is understood the Sun Company contract was the first awarded to an American shipyard by a British concern in fifty years."

3.2: The freighter "Lancaster" was launched on 05/05/1918. Originally contracted for the Cunard Steamship Co. and sponsored by Mrs. F.W. Grogan. The ship was later commandeered by the U.S. Government to form part of the Emergency Fleet Corp. fleet of cargo carriers.

Launch of the "Radnor"

#: HML\_3820\_077a (Photo courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library-Sun Ship Archives)

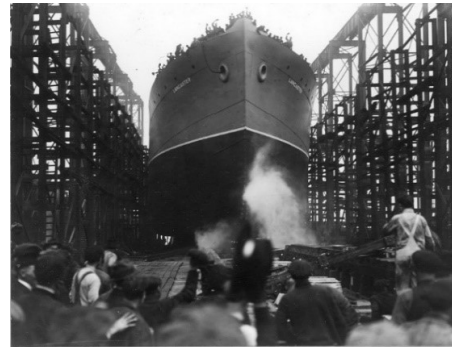


Photo of post-launching with tug "Neptune" in the foreground, tug to right is the Wm. Donaldson's "Columbia" and tug to left is the tug "Dixie" (Thanks to Dave Boone for naming the tugs)  
#: HML\_3829 (Photo courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library-Sun Ship Archives)



3.3: Acquired by the Navy 19 June 1918; and commissioned at Philadelphia the same day, Lt. Comdr. D. R. Fleming in command. Assigned to NOTS (Naval Overseas Transportation Service), the USS "Lancaster" departed New York 13 July with cargo for South American ports. Arriving Buenos Aires 10 days later, she discharged her cargo and proceeded to Marseilles, France, where she arrived 28 October. After the Armistice was signed 11 November, "Lancaster" returned to New York the following month to join the Cruiser Transport Force 17 December.

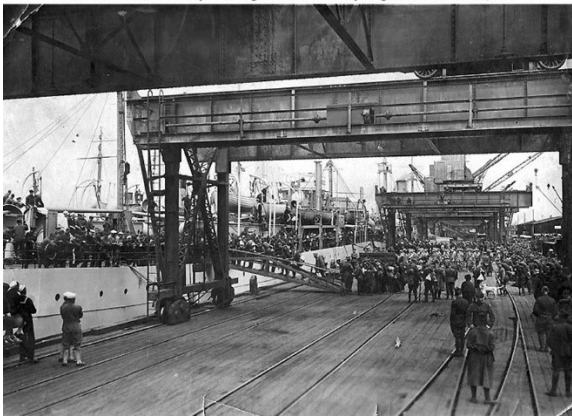
3.4: After the Armistice was signed 11/11/1918 the "Lancaster" returned to New York the following month to join the Cruiser Transport Force on 12/17/1918. She, along with other units, of the Cruiser Transport Force was assigned the task of

returning World War I veterans from Europe to the United States. The force returned over 85 percent of the veterans during the period from November 1918 to July 1919. Completing her service, "Lancaster" decommissioned 07/04/1919 and was returned to the USSB the same day.

3.5: "Lancaster" together with other units of the Cruiser Transport Force was assigned the task of returning World War I veterans from Europe to the United States. The force returned over 85 percent of the veterans during the period from November 1918 to July 1919. Completing her service, "Lancaster" decommissioned 4 October 1919 and was returned to the USSB the same day.<sup>3,4</sup>

Photo# NH 104495 Troops boarding USS "Lancaster" for passage from France, 1919. SSHS: 500\_004\_001 (Photo Courtesy of Navsource and National Archives)

Photo # NH 104495 Troops boarding USS Lancaster for passage home from France, 1919



3.6: The announcement on 11/28/1919 stated that the Green Star Line, through its subsidiary, the Imperial Shipping Corporation, purchased the "Lancaster" along with four other large cargo carriers from the U.S. Shipping Board

This photo of the S/S "Lancaster" of the Green Star Line, undergoing repairs at the Baltimore Dry Docks & Shipping Building Co. was published in 'Shipping' Magazine on 1/28/1920.

SSHS: 454\_13\_0581 (Photo courtesy of ISM)



3.7: While sailing for the Green Star Steamship Lines, schedules were posted on 4/24/1920 for sailing from Baltimore and Savannah to Yokohama, Kobe, Shanghai and Hongkong via the Suez Canal

3.8: The "Lancaster" transitioned through the following owners prior to her wrecking on 12/30/1942:

- 1: 1922-Lancaster SS Corp
- 2: 1935-Argonaut Line Inc.
- 3: 1940-American South African Line, Inc.
- 4: Ran aground and wrecked off Casablanca 12/30/1942

(Data in Section 2.6 is courtesy of The Miramar Ship Index)

#### **4. Notes:**

4.1: Reference(s) was located stating the ship was laid-down as the "War Trojan" however, Sun Ship's archives do not confirm this information. ([www.wrecksite.eu](http://www.wrecksite.eu))

4.2: Information from the "Chester Commercial" 5/1918 P3. Courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

4.3: Information from National Archives-Philadelphia, US Navy Ship Records. Courtesy of Steve Rochford. SSHS: 022\_18\_001