

USS BAYFIELD - APA 33

Named for Bayfield County, Wisconsin--Home of the LCT *Outer Island*

The USS BAYFIELD was built by the Western Pipe and Steel Company at San Francisco during 1942-43 and acquired by the US Navy on 30 June, 1943. She was placed in full commission as an APA (Attack Transport) and RAGC (Reserve Headquarters Communication Ship). Some alterations within the ship provided berthing space for approximately 2,000 men.

On 2 December 1943, USS BAYFIELD got underway from the Brooklyn Navy Yard and sailed for Norfolk, Virginia and more alterations before joining the amphibious training exercises there in January of 1944. During the month of February she was loaded with troops for duty in the European Theater and sailed in Convoy UT8 for Glasgow, Scotland, arriving on the 22nd.

During March 1944, the USS BAYFIELD participated in landing exercises at Clyde, England and proceeded to sea in late April for more rehearsals near Plymouth. The force was now organized and ready for operation. Troops composing the assault elements of the 4th Battalion, 8th Inf. and 87th Chemical Battalion, Co. C were embarked on 7 May. On 5 June, the ship was in convoy for Bay of the Seine to execute plans for the Normandy invasion.

On the morning of 6 June, troops debarked--bound for Utah Beach near Marie Dumont, France. For 19 days the USS BAYFIELD functioned as a supply and hospital ship in addition to her regular flagship duties. She returned to England on 25 June, 1944.

Bud Farmer (LCT-A 2310) remembers the BAYFIELD being the command ship at Utah Beach. As with the BAYFIELD, Farmer was also reassigned to duty in the Pacific Theater after Normandy. Stationed on the USS Tyrel (AKA 80), he would also encounter the BAYFIELD at Okinawa in April of 1945.

After repairs, the BAYFIELD set sail for Italy in July and took part in the assault of Southern France in August. In September she returned to Norfolk for overhaul and repairs and was then assigned to the Pacific Theater. On 7 November 1944, she set sail for Hawaii and took part in various rehearsal exercises at Maui before departing for Iwo Jima by way of Eniwetok and Saipan. Arriving at Saipan 11 February, the BAYFIELD took part in training exercises off Tinian before leaving for Iwo Jima on the 16th. On D-Day, 19 February, she anchored off Iwo Jima where she functioned as a hospital ship and prisoner of war ship as well as flagship for the Task Group.

Returning to Saipan on 1 March, the BAYFIELD discharged casualties and POWs before departing for Okinawa. On Easter morning, 1 April 1945, BAYFIELD arrived off the southeast coast of Okinawa and began unloading troops for a diversionary feint. The BAYFIELD returned to Saipan on 11 April and remained there until 4 June for repairs and a new coat of paint.

The balance of June 1945 was spent throughout the far Pacific with stops at Tulagi, New Hebrides, and back to the Marianas. During July, the BAYFIELD was ordered to Guam to unload passengers and supplies, and then back to San Francisco late in the month for drydocking and routine maintenance. In September, BAYFIELD left for the Philippines to discharge troops and cargo, and then took part in the "Magic Carpet" operation, returning American servicemen back to the States.

The USS BAYFIELD earned four Battle Stars during the War and went on to serve in both Korea and Vietnam. We salute the men who served on her and will pay tribute to her good name when we visit Bayfield, Wisconsin during our upcoming LCT Flotilla reunion in June.



Length: 492 feet
Beam: 69 feet
Speed: 18 knots
Displcmnt: 11,760 tons