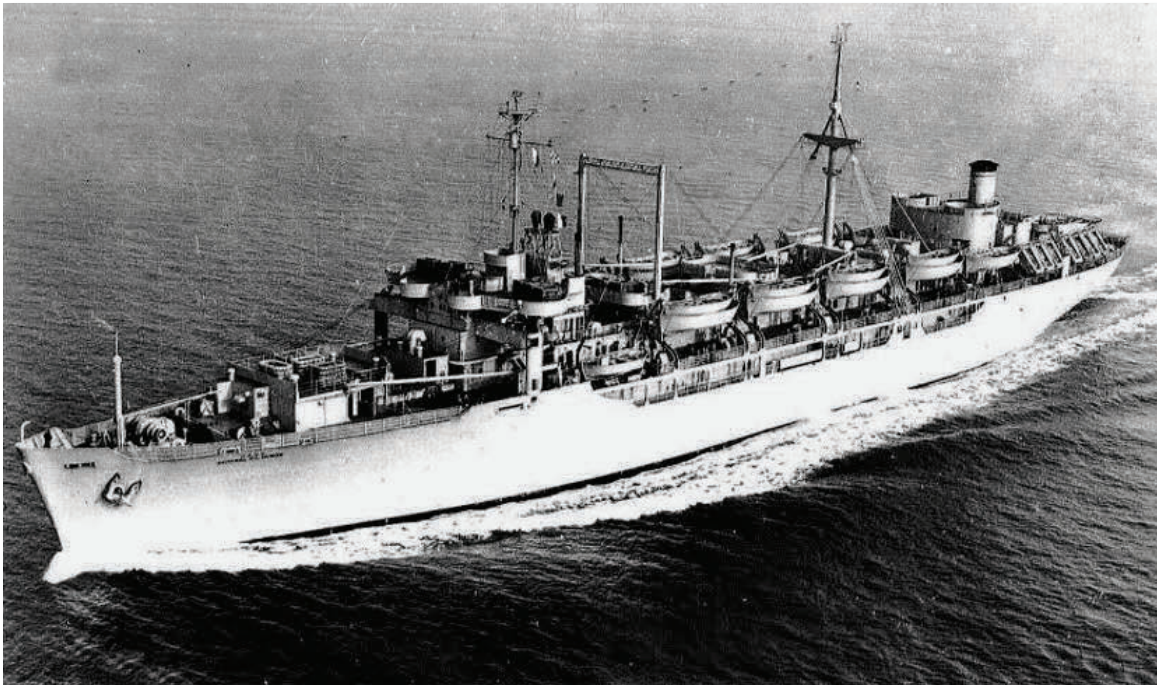


EMBARKATION – USNS GENERAL R. L. HOWZE (T-AP-134)

From 1939 through the end of World War II, the Maritime Commission funded and administered the largest and most successful merchant shipbuilding effort in world history. By the end of the war, U.S. shipyards working under Maritime Commission contracts had built a total of 5,777 oceangoing merchant and naval ships and many smaller vessels. While that is a staggering number, 1,554 US Navy Ships and 4,769 Army and merchant vessels were sunk or damaged beyond repair – almost an equivalent number.

Troop ship crossings were frequent and dangerous. Some traveled in convoys with Navy escorts while others travelled alone. In the first six months of 1944, there were eighteen Pacific crossings. The mass-produced ships had names like Liberty Ships, Victor Ships and a variety of classes of transport ships. Looking at the records of Pacific crossings just after the deployment orders were issued for the 5th Bombardment Group, there is only one ship that matches the dates of departure from the Port of San Francisco to Goodenough Island in New Guinea. The ship manifest also references Air Corps replacements among the 3,000+ passengers.

Departure Date	Embarkation Place	Vessel	Units on Board	Convoy Number	Debarkation Place	Arrival Date	Source of Information
44-03-20	Camp Stoneman near San Francisco CA	General R. L. Howze (AP-134)	3000 Infantry and Air Corps replacements	sailed alone	Goodenough Island, New Guinea	44-04-09	S. Castro, who was aboard (more)



USNS General R. L. Howze (AP-134) was a General G. O. Squier-class transport ship for the U.S. Navy in World War II. The ship was crewed by the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the war. She was named in honor of U.S. Army general Robert Lee Howze.

The General G. O. Squier class of transport ships was built for the U.S. Navy during World War II. The class was based upon the Maritime Commission's Type C4 ship. The class was named for United States Army Major General George Owen Squier.

The first ship was launched in November 1942, while the last was launched in April 1945. Over that period the United States produced 30 General G. O. Squier-class transports. All of the ships were initially designated with hull classification symbol "AP" and numbered from 130 through 159.



General R. L. Howze (AP-134) was laid down under Maritime Commission contract (MC #657) 22 July 1942 by Kaiser Co., Inc., Yard 3, Richmond, California; launched 23 May 1943; sponsored by Mrs. W. C. Gardenshire; acquired by the Navy 31 December 1943; converted to a transport by Matson Navigation Co., San Francisco; and placed in commission at San Francisco 7 February 1944 while moored port side to Pier 36.

General characteristics	
Class and type	<i>General G. O. Squier-class</i> transport ship
Displacement	9,950 tons (light), 17,250 tons (full)
Length	522 ft 10 in (159.36 m)
Beam	71 ft 6 in (21.79 m)
Draft	24 ft (7.32 m)
Propulsion	single-screw steam turbine with 9,900 shp (7,400 kW)
Speed	17 knots (31 km/h)
Capacity	3,530 troops
Complement	356 (officers and enlisted)
Armament	4 × 5"/38 caliber guns 8 × 1.1"/75 AA guns 16 × 20 mm Oerlikon AA guns

SHIPS LOG

The following information was taken from declassified World War II US War Diaries in the National Archives:

DECLASSIFIED Authority: E.O. 13526 By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

The commissioning order was read by Rear Admiral Edward D. Jones, United States Coast Guard and the vessel placed in the command of Captain Lee H. Baker, United States Coast Guard. Commander Stephen P. Swicegood, United States Coast Guard was assigned as Executive Officer.

8-19 February, 1944 was spent in deperming [de-magnetizing], calibrating radar and RDF [Radio Direction Finders] equipment, swinging ship and loading stores and ammunition at Naval Supply Depot, Oakland, California.

During the period of **20 February, 1944 to 12 March, 1944** the shakedown cruise was completed under COTCPAC, San Diego, California.

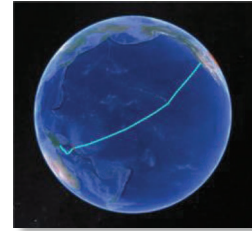
At 1123 **14 March, 1944**, upon return to San Francisco, California, reported to the Port Director for duty.

14 - 17 March, 1944 fueled ship, loaded stores and topped off water tanks.

18 - 19 March, 1944 embarked passenger personnel and prepared vessel for getting underway

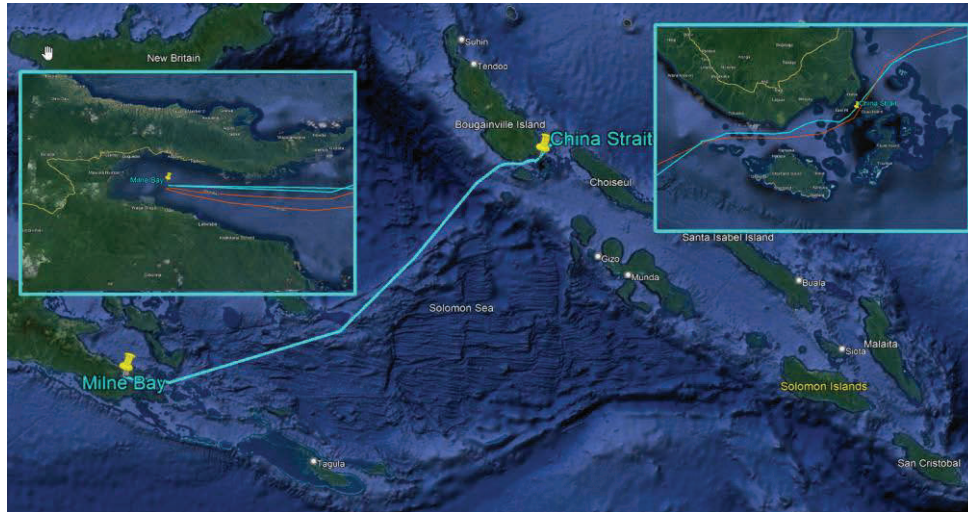
VOYAGE NUMBER ONE

0830 20 March, 1944 unmoored and departed San Francisco, California with 3495 passengers of the Army, Navy and Coast Guard enroute to Milne Bay, New Guinea. [2nd Lt [Anthony J. Goode](#), Air Corps, was in this group.]



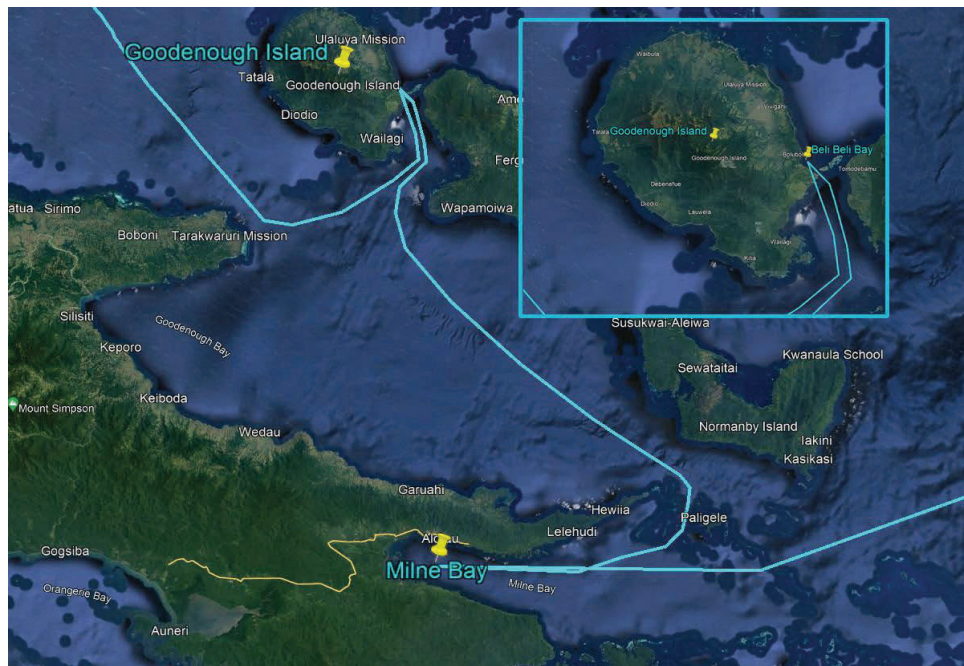
21 March - 7 April, 1944 underway as before from San Francisco, California enroute to Milne Bay, New Guinea.

0900 8 April, 1944 sighted land and at **1119** entered China Strait approaching Milne Bay, New Guinea. **1500** anchored in Milne Bay, ' New Guinea.



1900 8 April - 1020 9 April, 1944 disembarked passenger personnel. [3,000 infantry troops]

1105 - 1844 9 April, 1944 proceeded up the coast of New Guinea and anchored in Beli Beli Bay, Goodenough Island.



21.35 9 April - 0040 10 April, 1944 disembarked passenger personnel.

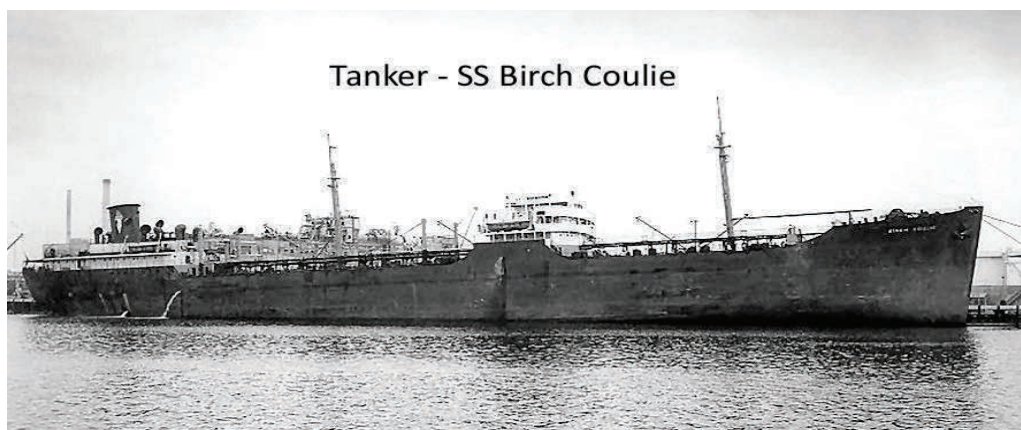
0529 - 2324 11 April; 1944 proceeded on up the coast of New Guinea and anchored in Markham Bay, Lae.



1137 - 1800 12 April, 1944 disembarked passenger personnel.

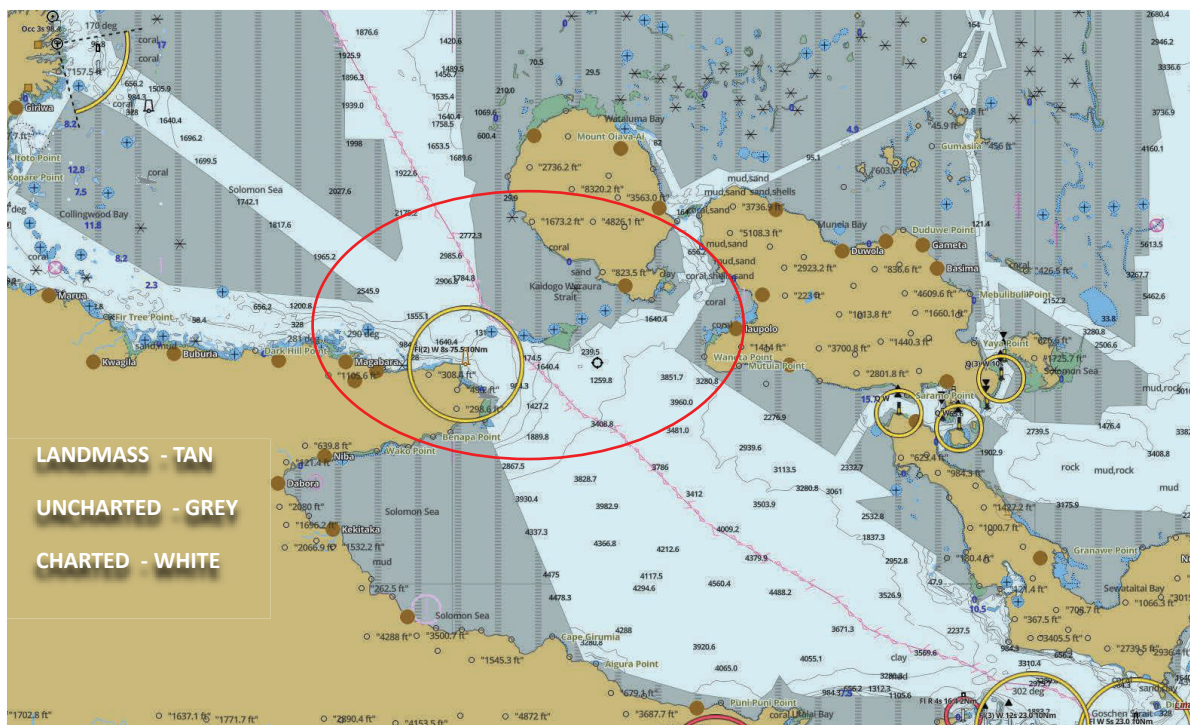
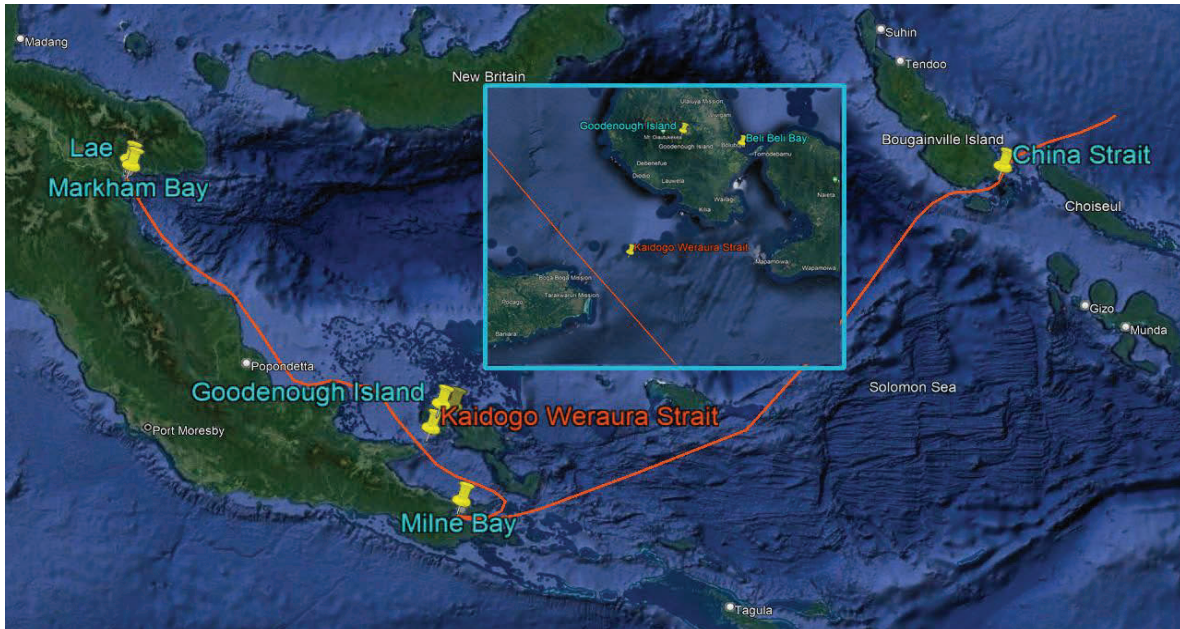
1942 12 April - 2052 13 April, 1944 proceeded back to Milne Bay, New Guinea.

1530 - 1900 14 April, 1944 fueled from the tanker S/S BIRCH COULIE, **2145** embarked 8 passengers of the Navy.

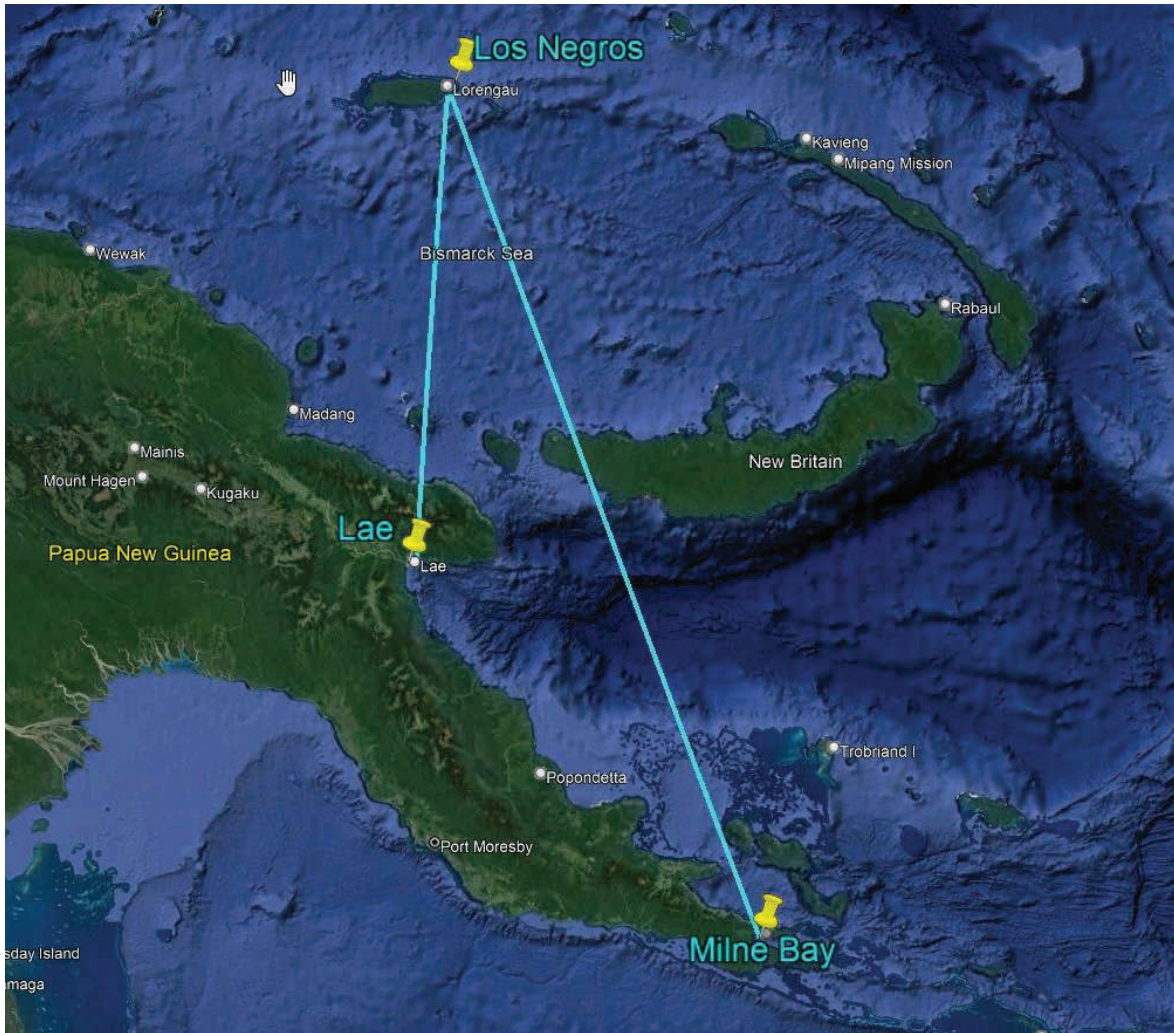


0857 15 April, 1944 weighed anchor and departed Milne Bay, New Guinea with 8 passengers of the Navy enroute to San Francisco.

Other than the inbound stopover on Goodenough Island, the outbound passage would sail straight through the Kaidogo Weraura Strait, replicating the course they had taken when inbound. Possible courses were limited due to the lack of navigation for these waters.



The last leg of 2nd Lt Anthony J. Goode's journey to Momote Air Field at Los Negros was most likely by transport plane from an air strip at Lae. While each of the three ports of call where the USNS General R. L. Howze anchored were near active air strips, Milne Bay and Beli Beli Bay were 620 miles (over three hours) from Los Negros whereas, Lae was only 310 (ninety minutes).



Air Transport



Momote Runway - 1944

