

## Granville Charles Schuch – June 12, 1945 – August 13, 1945

### Part 5 – Going Home

At the core of the U.S. Army Demobilization Plan in Europe was the so-called 'Point System.' Points were awarded for years of service overseas, medals and other commendations received, campaign battle stars earned, as well as other factors. The magic point total for being sent home was 85. Many men had more points, and those that had the most were slated to be sent home first. Following is a pretty typical point-system computation table (though probably incomplete):

S/Sgt Schuch		
<b>Number of months in the armed forces</b>	1 point per month	58
<b>Number of months overseas</b>	1 point per month	36
<b>Number of children</b>	12 points per child	0
<b>Number of battle stars earned by unit</b>	5 points per star	5
<b>Purple Heart winner</b>	5 points per award	5
<b>Soldier's Medal winner</b>	5 points per award	5
<b>Bronze Star winner</b>	5 points per award	5
<b>Presidential Unit Citation winner</b>	5 points per award	5
	Total	119

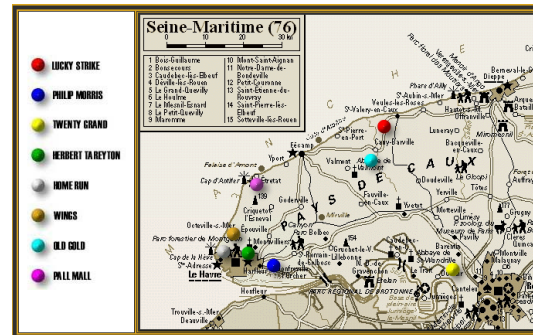
GIs were constantly badgering company clerks to get errors corrected and adjustments made to their point totals, which were recorded on their "Adjusted Service Rating Cards." Those men with the magic number of 85 points, or more, were to return to the United States, while those with fewer points were transferred out to make room for high point men from other organizations. Those with 80 to 84 points were sent to other units in the ETO and some of those with even fewer points were sent home on furlough and then went on to retraining for duty in the Pacific. The latter were perhaps the most fortunate of all, since the war in the Pacific soon ended and many of them were discharged before the higher-point men in the ETO got home.

However, S/Sgt. Schuch had more than earned his ticket home.

Following in the footsteps of thousands of liberated American POWs including his brother-in-law, George Hofmann, one month earlier, S/Sgt. Schuch was transported by either truck, French boxcar train or C-47 aircraft 372 miles to a transition camp Northern France that had earlier served its purpose as a deployment point for incoming troops. These were the infamous Le Havre, France, Cigarette Camps of World War II.

### Cigarette Camps

The transition camps were all named for cigarettes – Old Gold, Twenty Grand, Philip Morris, Taryton, Chesterfield, Pall Mall and, of course, Lucky Strike. Strange? Not really.



The staging-area camps were named after various brands of American cigarettes; the assembly area camps were named after American cities. The names of cigarettes and cities were chosen for two reasons: First, and primarily, for security. Referring to the camps without an indication of their geographical location went a long way to ensuring that the enemy would not know precisely where they were. Anybody eavesdropping or listening to radio traffic would think that cigarettes were being discussed or the camp was stateside, especially regarding the city camps. Secondly, there was a subtle psychological reason, the premise being that troops heading into battle wouldn't mind staying at a place where cigarettes must be plentiful and troops about to depart for combat would be somehow comforted in places with familiar names of cities back home (Camp Atlanta, Camp Baltimore, Camp New York, and Camp Pittsburgh, among others). (I doubt if the GIs heading into Europe were taken in by any of that cigarette and city mumbo-jumbo!) By war's end, however, all of the cigarette and city camps were devoted to departees.

There was Camp Herbert Tareyton, located in the Forest of Montgeon within the city limits, with a capacity of 16,400 men. Camp Wings, with a capacity of 2,250 men, was situated — somewhat appropriately — on the grounds of the Blaville Aerodrome. At Sanvic, 2,000 men called Camp Home Run home; at Gainneville, Camp Philip Morris held 35,000 men; and at Etretat, Camp Pall Mall provided rather soggy billets for 7,700 men. But these were not the largest, or even the busiest, camps. That distinction goes to the "Big Three" — Camp Lucky Strike, located between Cany and Saint-Valery (capacity 58,000); Camp Old Gold, at Ourville (capacity 35,000); and Camp Twenty Grand, at Duclair (capacity 20,000). (Information about Camp Chesterfield is very sparse.)



In 1945, when the end of the war in Europe was in sight, some of these camps underwent tremendous changes, in anticipation of the role they were to play after the war in Europe was over. Barracks and other permanent structures were built. Hospitals and PXs too. Mess halls replaced outdoor chowlines snaking through rows of tents to mobile field kitchens. One of the ironies of war that these camps lent themselves to was that after V-E Day the mess halls at some of the camps were staffed with cooks and

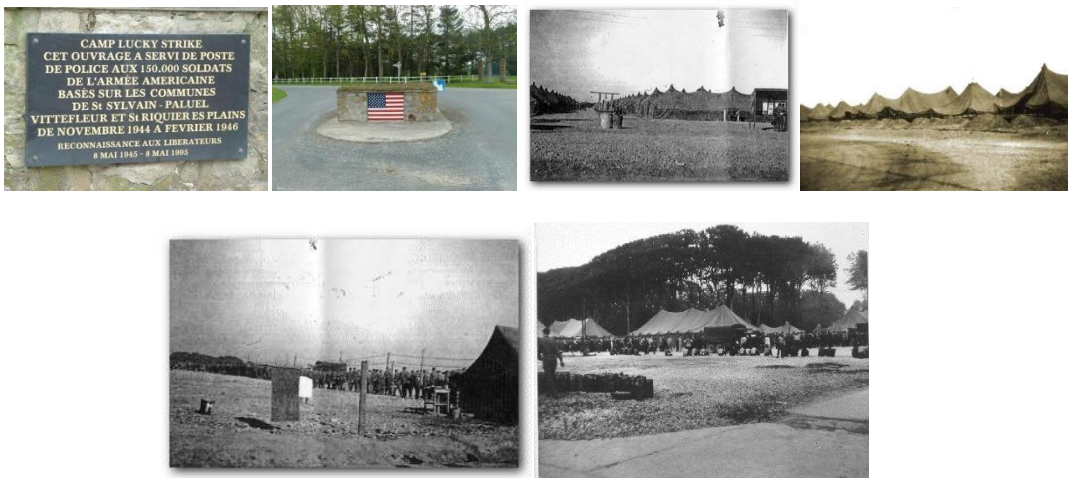
waiters that were German POWs. Many U.S. veterans recall arriving at a camp underfed and malnourished and being served by Germans who were well-fed by virtue of working in the American mess halls for a few months. Stories abound of tired GIs arriving on a cold autumn night after a five-day-long ride from Germany to France in a boxcar — only to end up being served lousy boiled chicken by "fat krauts" that had been eating steak on a regular basis.)

Wood began replacing canvas and concrete and asphalt replaced the mud. The Red Cross had a tremendous presence at those camps that were to handle returning POWs (Prisoners of War). "Java Junctions," those ubiquitous dispensaries of real coffee and doughnuts, were established at all of the camps. (Spend a day at a camp and one would come away thinking that the American GI could be sustained solely by tobacco and doughnuts!) After V-E Day the camps were now ready for these new roles and were redesignated redeployment centers as part of the American plans to both reassign units to the Pacific Theatre and to demobilize others and return men home.



While it is not clear which specific camp **S/Sgt. Schuch** passed through, it was probably one of the larger camps due to the volume of service men and women leaving or being redeployed from Europe following V-E Day. The dimensions of Camp Lucky Strike underscore the magnitude of the operation.

Lucky Strike was a veritable American city for 18 months. Life was therefore rhythmical with this enormous hub of military personnel, short stopover for some, several months for others. One could find, like in any American city, a hospital, church, movie theater, post office, police station, barber shop, and a supermarket. There were also concerts and shows with famous celebrities (Bob Hope and Mickey Rooney, among others).



The city was divided into four sections: A, B, C, and D. Each section was made up of 2,900 tents under which were housed 14,500 men (at times, more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers stayed there). These virtual neighborhoods even had public parks, and in certain places, statues of pretty women.

The Red Cross also had offices in the neighborhoods: nurses and girls who would serve hot coffee, cake, and newspapers day and night. A little further down were the bars: one for officers; another for NCOs and soldiers. One could drink everything they used to in pre-war France: the best liqueurs, good champagne, cognacs, and water of life (aqua vita), as well as Coca-Cola, whiskey, gin, and American beer. The bars were only open from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., which was not enough time to satisfy the customers. Each sector also had its own auditorium, which served as a theater, cinema, and chapel all-in-one.

Most of these camps have been converted back to farmland. The only part of Camp Lucky Strike visible today is the original air strip.

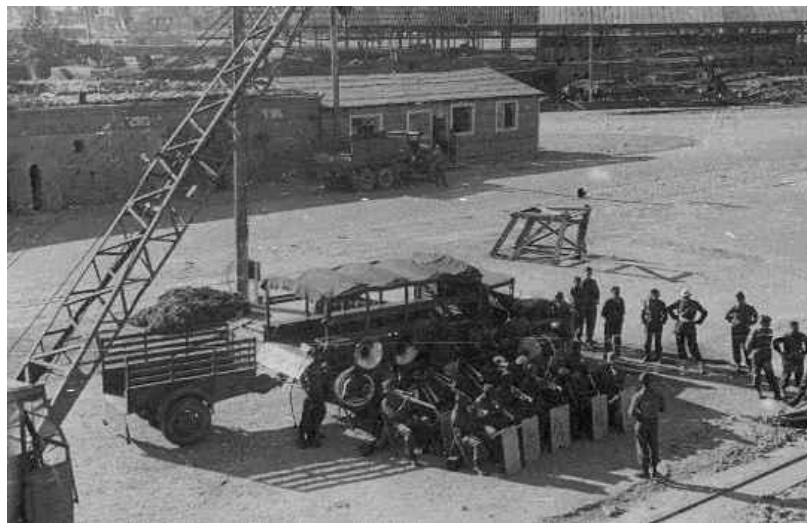
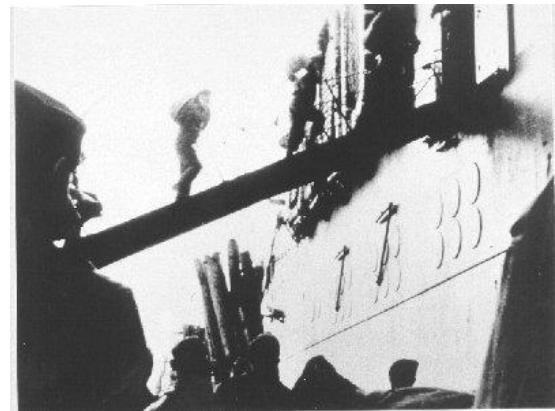


### Le Havre, France – Leaving Europe

The most visited place in the Cigarette Camps, especially for those designated to return home, was the Redeployment Information Center. A large bulletin board listed all units in camp (left-hand side) and both ships that had arrived at the port of Le Havre and ships that were due (right-hand side). The men looked at this board every day waiting "for their ship to come in."



Happy U.S. veterans head for harbor of Le Havre, France, the first to be sent home and discharged under the Army's new point system.



**An Army band plays a farewell tune as a Victory Ship leaves Le Havre bound for the States.**

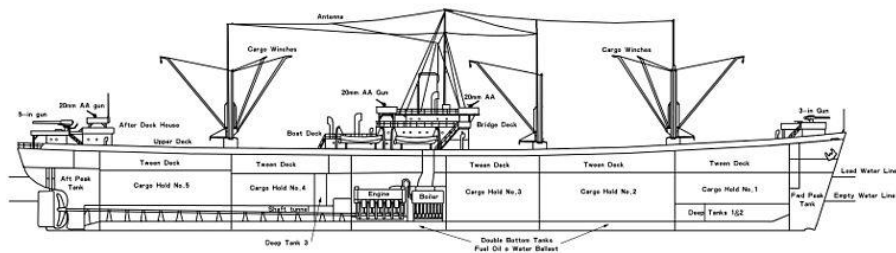
The records of ships used to carry troops to their theaters of operations were destroyed intentionally in 1951. "According to U. S. National Archives records, in 1951 the Department of the Army destroyed all passenger lists, manifests, logs of vessels, and troop movement files of United States Army Transports for World War II." Thus there is no longer an official record of who sailed on what ship, though there are still valuable sources that can be found.

## Liberty Ship – SS Lincoln Steffens

Given the dates of departure and arrival on **S/Sgt Granville Charles Schuch**'s discharge papers he had to be on the Liberty Ship SS Lincoln Steffens.

Departure	Embark	Ship	Troops Transported	Convoy	Debark	Arrival
45-07-26	Le Harve, France	<i>Lincoln Steffens</i> #0668	28 officers and 478 enlisted men of the 767th Field Artillery Battalion; members of the 324th, 327th, 331st, 341st, 335th, 346th, 349th and 351st Military Police detachments and others.	Sailed alone	Charleston, SC	45-08-07

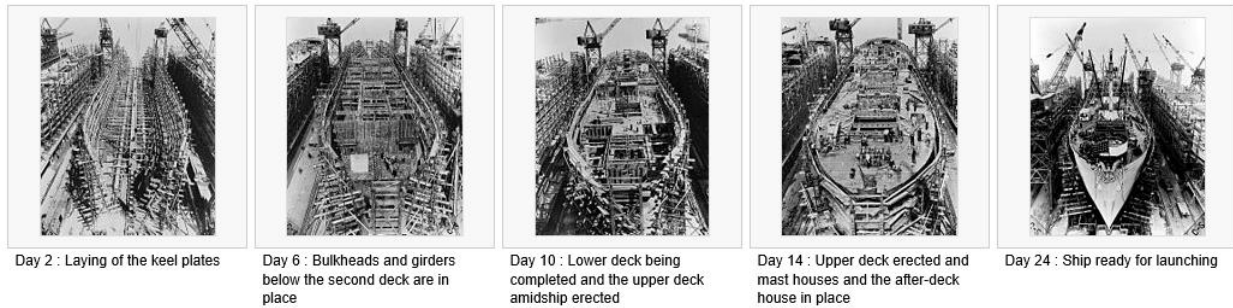
### *Liberty Ships built by the United States Maritime Commission in World War II*



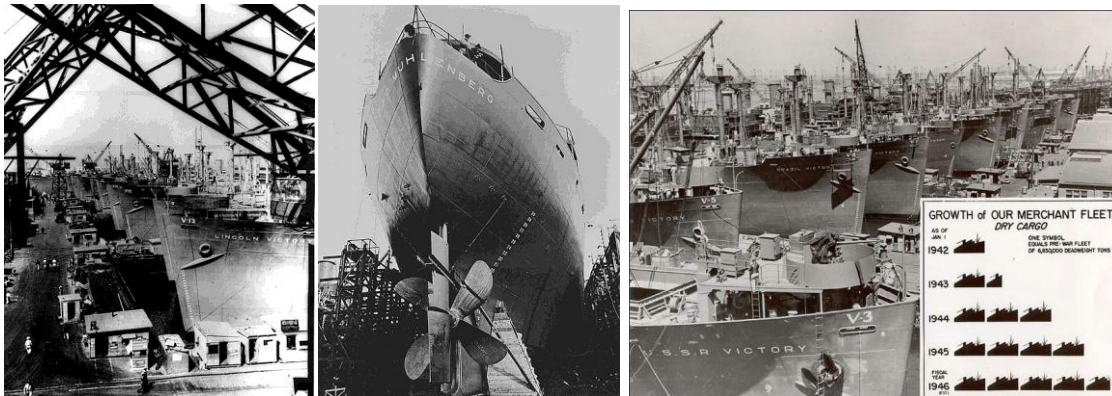
"Liberty ship" was the name given to the EC2 type ship designed for "Emergency" construction by the United States Maritime Commission in World War II. Liberty ships were nicknamed "ugly ducklings" by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The first of the 2,711 Liberty ships was the **SS Patrick Henry**, launched on Sept. 27, 1941, and built to a standardized, mass produced design. (2,710 ships were completed, as one burned at the dock.) The 250,000 parts were pre-fabricated throughout the country in 250-ton sections and welded together in about 70 days. One Liberty ship, the **SS Robert E. Peary** was built in four and a half days. A Liberty cost under \$2,000,000.

The construction of a Liberty ship at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyards, Baltimore, Maryland, in March/April 1943.



The speed at which Liberty Ships could be constructed allowed the US to build cargo vessels faster than German U-boats could sink them. This, along with Allied military successes against the U-boats, ensured that Britain and Allied forces in Europe remained well-supplied during World War II. Liberty Ships served in all theaters with distinction. Throughout the war, Liberty Ships were manned members of the US Merchant Marine, with gun crews provided by the US Naval Armed Guard.



The Liberty was 441 feet long and 56 feet wide. Her three-cylinder, reciprocating steam engine, fed by two oil-burning boilers produced 2,500 hp and a speed of 11 knots. Her 5 holds could carry over 9,000 tons of cargo, plus airplanes, tanks, and locomotives lashed to its deck. A Liberty could carry 2,840 jeeps, 440 tanks, or 230 million rounds of rifle ammunition. (See Appendix E for a pamphlet from Boston Harbor Port of Embarkation – 1943.)

The Liberty's maximum speed of 11 knots, making her easy prey for submarines, so early in 1942 designs for a 15 knot ship were begun. The first of 534 Victory ships, the **SS United Victory**, was launched on February 28 1944, and like the Libertys, used production line techniques. The next 34 Victory ships were named for each of the Allied nations; the subsequent 218 were named after American cities, the next 150 were named after educational institutions, and the remainder received miscellaneous names.

Liberty ships were named after prominent (deceased) Americans, starting with Patrick Henry and the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Any group which raised \$2 million dollars in War Bonds could suggest a name for a Liberty ship, thus, one is named for the founder of the 4-H movement in Kansas, the first Ukrainian immigrant to America, an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Union, the woman who suggested the poppy as a symbol of American soldiers who died in World War I, and an early muckraking journalist named Joseph Lincoln Steffens (ship # 0668).

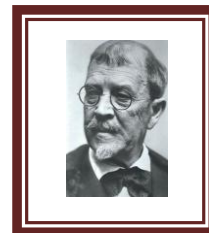


Photo of Liberty ship SS John W. Brown



Ship # 0669

Libertys carried a crew of about 44 and 12 to 25 Naval Armed Guard. Some were armed with:

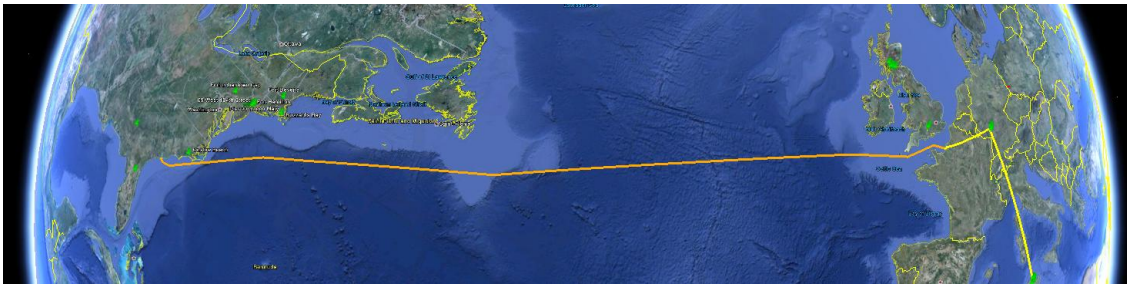
- One 3 inch bow gun
- One 4 or 5 inch stern gun
- Two 37 mm bow guns
- Six 20 mm machine guns



About 200 Libertys were lost to torpedoes, mines, explosions, kamikazes, etc. during WWII. Two Liberty ships, the **SS Jeremiah O'Brien** in San Francisco and the **SS John W. Brown** in Baltimore, survive today as "museum ships" open to the public for tours and occasional cruises.

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After twelve long days at sea at 11 knots (more than twice the time spent on the Queen Mary) **S/Sgt. Schuch** was finally back on American soil.



... there's no place like home.