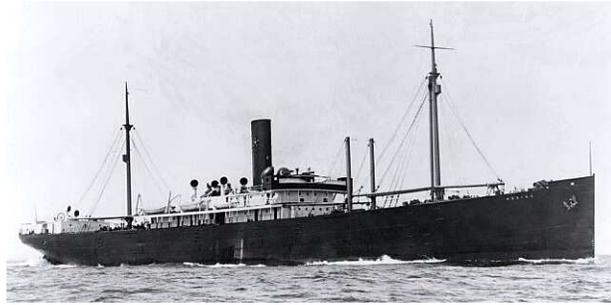


UPDATE - SS MEDINA



Six years ago, I chronicled the amazing story of the freighter MEDINA. Completed at Newport News Shipbuilding in 1914 for the Mallory Line, she has been rebuilt, re-engined, renamed and repurposed numerous times.

Originally coal-fired, she was built and initially operated as a cargo vessel. During both world wars, she was chartered to the US Government, and transported troops and supplies around the world without incident.

In 1948 she was extensively modified in order to serve as an immigrant ship, and renamed ROMA. Then her ownership changed and she served for a number of years as a popular Italian-owned cruise ship under the name FRANCA C .



In 1977, she was acquired by a Christian charity organization called Good Books for All, who renamed her DOULOS [Greek for servant]. For the next three decades, she visited over one hundred countries as a floating book store.

In 2006, she was laid up in Singapore. At first, she was threatened with being scrapped, but then she was renamed DOULOS PHOS [Servant of light], with the intent of transforming her into a floating multi-use facility in Singapore. Over the next five years, her current owners came to the conclusion that was not feasible.

Then, as so often has happened during her 102-year lifetime, another opportunity to continue this well-built vessel's usefulness developed. Read on!

Bill Lee

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In 2015, this venerable vessel's future brightened, once again. Her current owners, a joint venture of two well-established Asian firms in the resort business, concluded that it is both economically and physically feasible to reposition the DOULOS PHOS on land and turn her into a luxury hotel [see following artist's impression]. The location they have chosen is the island of Binan in Indonesia, which is one hour away from Singapore via an existing one hour 'fast ferry' ride, and where several existing resorts already flourish.



In August of 2015, DOULOS PHOS was dry docked in Singapore. In addition to some needed hull work and painting, major structural reinforcements were placed inside the vessel's original riveted steel hull to help support her during the planned transition from floating to becoming 'high and dry'.

The next month, she was towed to a temporary berth [below] at Binan Island, adjacent to a promontory of reclaimed land intended to be her final location. During the first two weeks of November, huge winches were utilized to pull the entire ship onto land. This maneuver was aided by placing industrial air bags under her hull as she emerged from the water.



The most recent image of the vessel appears below, just after the successful completion of her repositioning. Following what has been announced as a \$20-25 million refurbishment, it is expected that sometime next year the DOULOS PHOS (ex-MEDINA) will open for business as a 100-room luxury hotel.



Amenities planned include two restaurants, a swimming pool, library, spa, restaurants and piano lounge. There also will be, appropriately enough, a museum onboard that will reflect the different periods in the vessel's long history. Last year, one of the principals in the joint venture said: "We are giving much attention to the preservation of her heritage. In that regard, she will not be wholly made 'all-new', but rather, in many aspects will be 'the old made new'."

Stand by for the next chapter in this remarkable NNS-built ship's life story!

