

V-J DAY

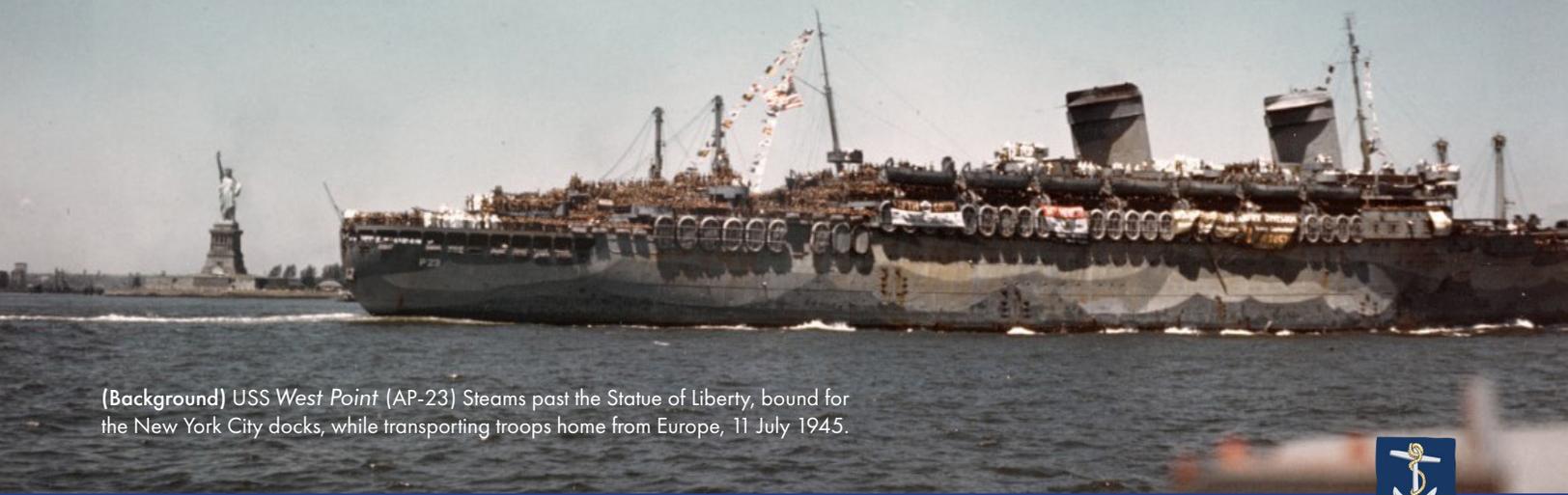
& OPERATION MAGIC CARPET

On August 14, 1945, an announcement was made that the Empire of Japan surrendered to the Allies. World War II was over. In the United States, President Harry S. Truman announced a two-day holiday and joyous celebrations erupted all over the country. Troops met the news with a combination of joy and disbelief. In the following weeks, the actions were set in motion for the formal surrender ceremony.

U.S. Navy Sailors were among the earliest service members sent to occupy Japan in August of 1945. On September 2, 1945, USS *Missouri* (BB-63) hosted the official ceremony for the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender. However, following the surrender, a new problem emerged: how would millions of troops be returned to the United States as quickly as possible? The answer was to load them on as many ships as they could during Operation Magic Carpet. Operation Magic Carpet relied heavily on United States Navy ships to return troops home to their families. At home, a new challenge awaited those that served - returning to civilian life after years of combat and hardship. American occupation forces remained in Japan until 1952 when sovereignty was returned to the Japanese government of all but two islands, Iwo Jima (restored in 1968) and Okinawa (mostly returned in 1972).



(Top) USS *Saratoga* (CV-3) makes her final run as a troop transport during operation Magic Carpet. (Middle) Sailors at Camp Catlin Fleet Training Center at Oahu, Hawaii, celebrate Japan's acceptance of surrender terms on 15 August 1945. (Bottom) Returning veterans of the Pacific fill the hangar deck of USS *Enterprise* (CV 6) as it stopped in Pearl Harbor preparatory to moving to the United States.



(Background) USS *West Point* (AP-23) Steams past the Statue of Liberty, bound for the New York City docks, while transporting troops home from Europe, 11 July 1945.