

LOST AT SEA

SELECTION OF EX-MILITARY VESSELS WHOSE SAILING DAYS ARE DEFINITELY OVER
BY SUSAN DUPREY

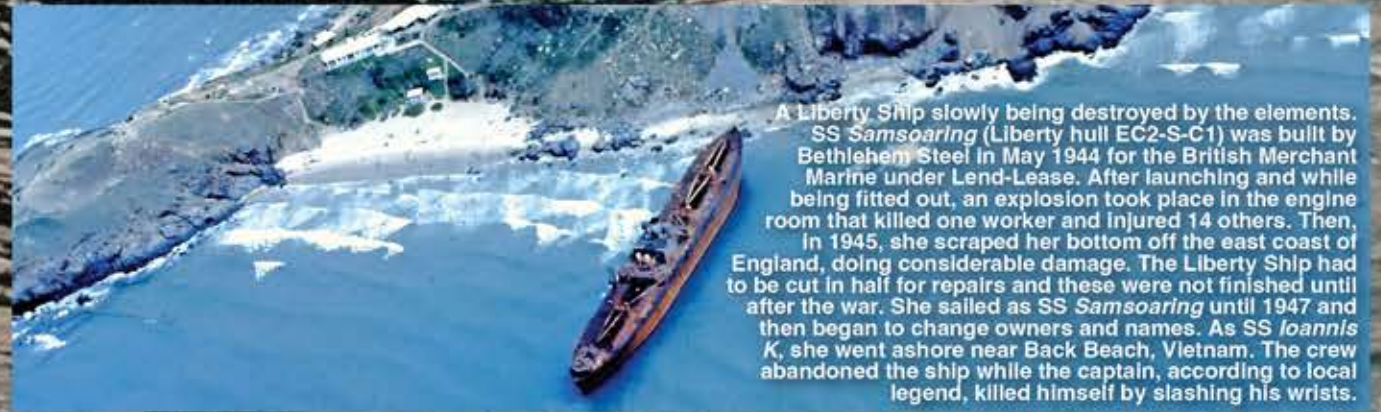
The *Murmansk* was a Sverdlov-class (NATO designation) light cruiser laid down in Severodvinsk during 1952 and commissioned on 22 September 1955. She joined the 2nd Cruiser Division in 1956. After nearly four decades of service, she was sold for scrapping in India during 1994 but ran aground off the Norwegian village of Sorvaer during that transfer. The ship appeared to be in almost perfect condition except for a massive list. In 2009, funding was gathered to dismantle the cruiser but panic resulted when a "source of radioactivity" was found in the ship along with asbestos, PCBs, fuel, and oil. By April 2012, a huge coffer dam built around the ship had been completed and demolition of the cruiser began. By 2013, *Murmansk* was no more.



In a beautiful natural setting, who would expect to find a small flotilla of French Navy warships awaiting scrapping? Located in Brittany, France, these ships are strangely complete — missile batteries and guns appear to have been left operational when the ships were anchored but the elements have caused internal rot and mold. All furnishings, beds, and other items used by sailors were still in place.



In early 2024, a former military vessel was found ashore on the Hawaiian island of Maui. It was the 85-foot former Navy torpedo retrieval boat USS *Chaparral* (TWR-7) that was resting on Sugar Beach in North Kihel. Built by Tacoma Boatbuilding and launched in 1975, she was sold surplus for \$17,300 at Pearl Harbor during March 2020. After discovery of the beached vessel, the Coast Guard ordered the owner of the surplus ship to cut holes in the deck to remove over 6800 gallons of oily waste along with 15 55-gallon drums filled with batteries and other hazardous materials. These holes apparently damaged the seaworthiness of the vessel and the owner walked away from the ship.



A Liberty Ship slowly being destroyed by the elements. SS *Samsouling* (Liberty hull EC2-S-C1) was built by Bethlehem Steel in May 1944 for the British Merchant Marine under Lend-Lease. After launching and while being fitted out, an explosion took place in the engine room that killed one worker and injured 14 others. Then, in 1945, she scraped her bottom off the east coast of England, doing considerable damage. The Liberty Ship had to be cut in half for repairs and these were not finished until after the war. She sailed as SS *Samsouling* until 1947 and then began to change owners and names. As SS *Ioannis K*, she went ashore near Back Beach, Vietnam. The crew abandoned the ship while the captain, according to local legend, killed himself by slashing his wrists.