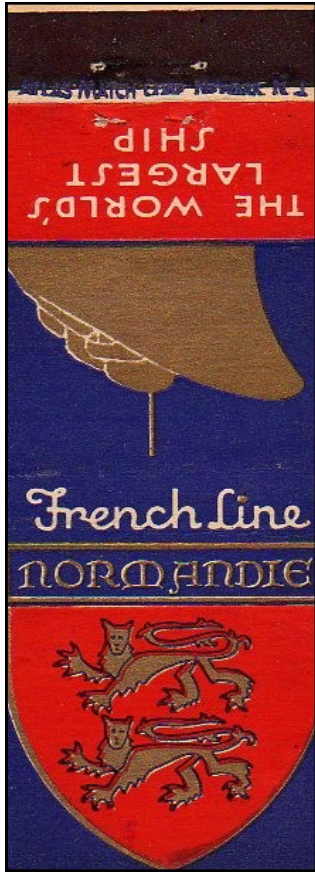


Great Ships of the Seas: *The Normandie*



One of the greatest ships ever built, the *Normandie* was built by Chantiers & Ateliers de St. Nazaire, at Penhoet, France, and completed in 1935. It was 1027 ft. x 118 ft., with a gross tonnage of 83,423 tons. She boasted ten decks, quadruple screws and four steam turbines connected to four electric motors. Normal speed was 30 knots. She had 848 firsts class cabins, 670 tourist, and 454 third class. She sailed on her maiden voyage, from Le Havre to Southampton to New York, on May 29, 1935.

The *Normandie's* main dining room was three decks high and 270 ft. long, with a seating capacity of 1000. She was built with a bulbous bow to increase her speed. Her swimming pool was 100 ft. long and 30 ft. wide. In March, 1936, her superstructure was enlarged, making her the largest ship in the world at the time. Each of her propellers weighed 23 tons and were 15 ft. in diameter.

Employed in the Le Havre-Southampton-New York run until she was laid up at New York in 1939, she was seized by the United States on December 16, 1941 for conversion to a transport and renamed the *U.S.S. Lafayette*. A worker's acetylene torch started a fire during fitting out on February 9, 1942, and she eventually keeled over at the dock. She was refloated by the U.S. on August 9, 1943, but anticipated reconstruction costs caused her to be sold, and she was scrapped in New Jersey, in September, 1946, a tragically brief career for such a great ship.

