

“Ships of Mercy: The True Story of the Rescue of the Greeks, Smyrna, September 1922” by Christos Papoutsy

“**Ships of Mercy**” reveals the true heroes of Smyrna, later forgotten by history. The book is based on more than 10 years of research by the Papoutsys, who traveled around the globe in their quest to uncover and document the truth about the rescue of hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees from Smyrna.

They discovered a compelling story and found previously unpublished materials. Vintage photographs, exhibits, naval war diaries, and captains’ logs appear for the first time in the pages of this volume.

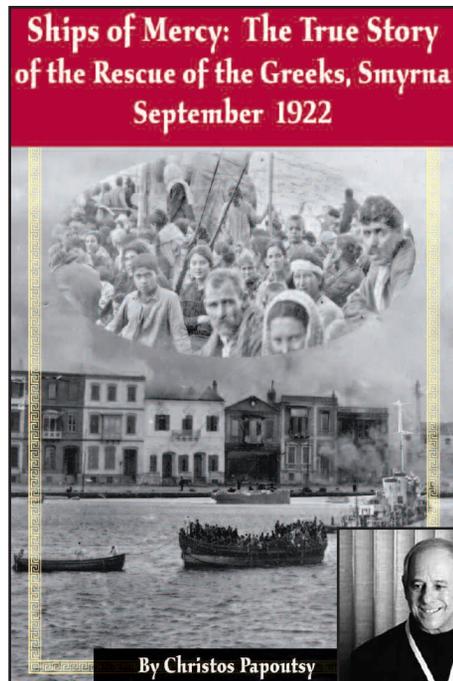
“Ships of Mercy” dispels common myths about the evacuation of the refugees and clearly documents the real heroes in this enormous tragedy.

Surprising and powerful, it is a story that needs to be told.

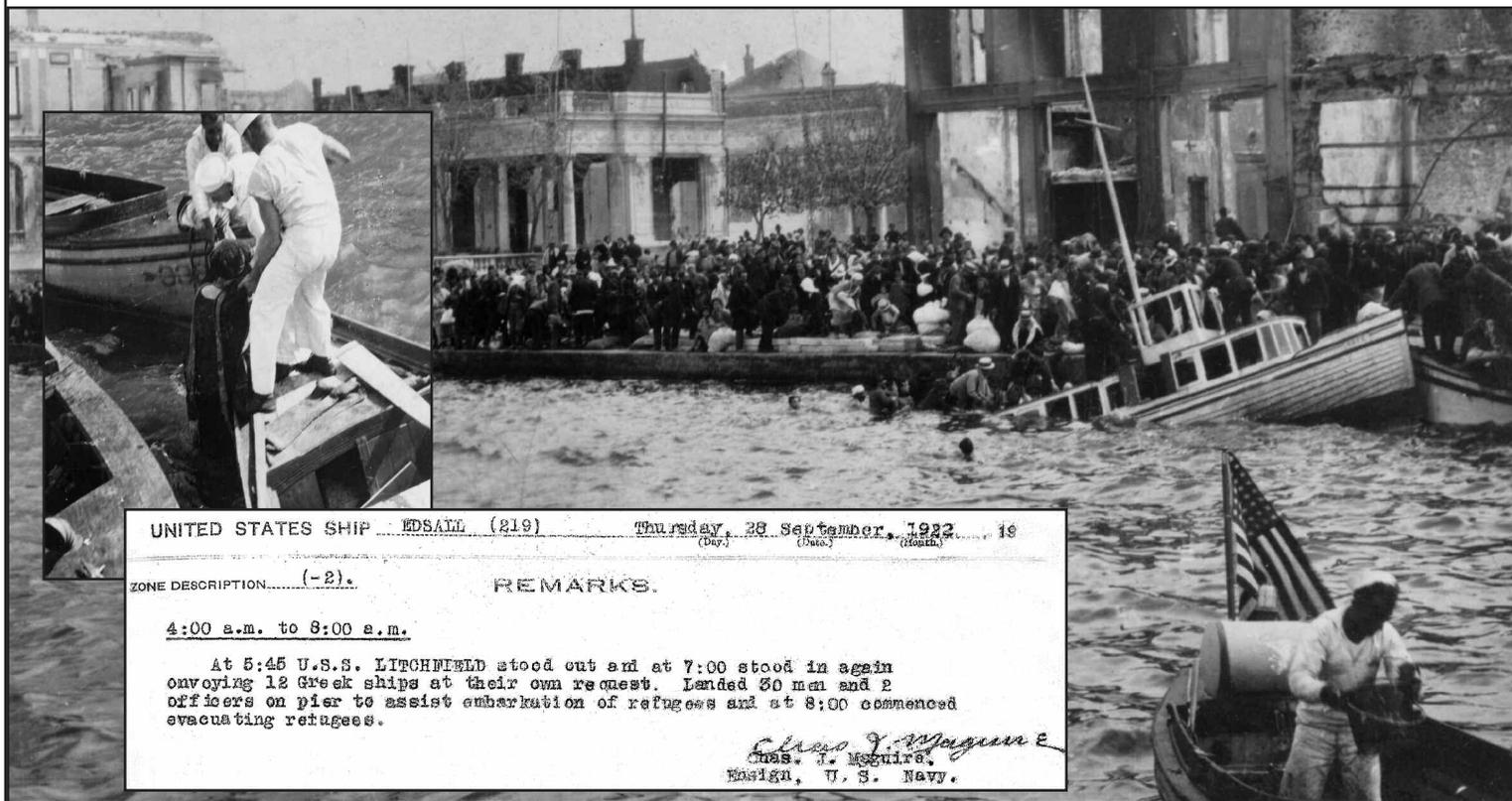
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Christos Papoutsy



UNITED STATES SHIP EDSAIL (219) Thursday, 28 September, 1922 19
(Day) (Date) (Month)

ZONE DESCRIPTION.....(-2)..... REMARKS.

4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

At 5:45 U.S.S. LITCHFIELD stood out and at 7:00 stood in again conveying 12 Greek ships at their own request. Landed 50 men and 2 officers on pier to assist embarkation of refugees and at 8:00 commenced evacuating refugees.

Chas. J. McGuire
 Ensign, U. S. Navy.



DOUBLY HONORED BY GREECE

Two Decorations for A.K. Jennings of Utica for Services in Asia Minor

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ATHENS Sec. 27—The Greek Government has awarded its highest civilian honor, the Golden Cross of Saint Xavier and the highest war honor, the Medal of Military Merit, to Asa K. Jennings of Utica, N.Y., for his work with the Near East Relief in directing the evacuation of 500,000 refugees from Asia Minor.

This was the first time in history that both medals were awarded to the same person simultaneously.

The Greek Government also has asked the United States to permit it to award the Medal of Military Merit to the commanding officers of the twelve American destroyers which assisted in the evacuation of the Greek refugees.



*Statue of Mikrasiatiki Manna
("The Mother from Asia Minor")
at Mytilene Harbor in Lesbos, Greece.*

In September of 1922, Smyrna is a beautiful city, known for its sweeping harbor, bustling quay, and blend of Eastern and Western cultures. At the time, war is waging between the Greeks and the Turks, and the Greek Army has been forced to retreat. Their headlong rush to the sea brings them to Smyrna. They are rescued, but the citizens of Smyrna remain, left to await their fate.

By mid-September, the quay is filled with hundreds of thousands of refugees. They bake under the hot sun. There is little food, little water. The Turkish soldiers brutalize them with beatings, robberies and rapes. The old and the infants begin to die. Many others pray for death.

On September 13, a horrific fire breaks out in the Armenian quarter. Unusually gusty winds turn the fire into a raging conflagration that consumes much of the city and sweeps towards the quay where the refugees are trapped. Some jump into the sea, while others are knocked into the water by the stampede of fearful humanity.

For more than 80 years, many accounts have claimed that American and Allied warships were in Smyrna harbor, yet provided no assistance during the rescue. In fact, many Greeks have said that when citizens swam out to these ships, they were forced away. The Smyrna citizens who were rescued from the quay were supposedly saved by Japanese ships. The Allies, it has been said, turned a blind eye.

Did events really unfold as many Greeks today believe? The Papoutsys began their search for truth because they had heard many conflicting stories, and were troubled by the bitterness still felt by a lot of the Greek people. Consequently, they believed that all sides needed to know, without doubt, what occurred in Smyrna during September 1922. In their search, they uncovered an amazing tale.

The story of the rescue of the Greeks is Asa Jennings' story. This shy American, a worker with the Y.M.C.A., moved heaven and earth to secure the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people. Jennings' story is the tale of how one man, driven by the force of his moral convictions, engineered one of the largest rescue efforts in history. For his actions, he is named "Admiral" of the Greek Navy, and will later be doubly honored by Greece, receiving the country's highest military and civilian accolades.

UNITED STATES SHIP "LITCHFIELD" #336 Friday 22nd. September, 1922
(Day.) (Date.) (Month.)

ZONE DESCRIPTION minus-2

REMARKS.

From 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Steaming as before. 4:02 C.C. to 165° (PSC). 4:20 standing into Meyteline Harbor on various courses and speeds. 4:30 anchored in 9 fathoms of water with 30 fathoms of chain on stbd anchor. 4:33 Captain left ship. 4:40 Commanding Officer Greek Auxiliary Adriadon paid official visit, 4:45 left ship. 5:30 boarding Officer Italian Destroyer Solferigno paid official visit. 7:03 made preparations for getting underway. 7:05 Captain returned with Mr. Jennings of Near East Relief as passenger to Smyrna, Turkey. 7:31 hove in and underway, on boilers #1&2. Stood out of harbor on various courses and speeds. 7:32 C.C. to 145° (PSC) and went ahead at speed 20 knots. 8:00 passed Greek predreadnaught Kilikis bound North. C.C. to 180° (PSC). Average Steam 230 Average Revolutions 175.

F.M. Shannonhouse
F.M. Shannonhouse,
Ensign, U.S. Navy

The book also clarifies the role of the U.S. Navy, showing how U.S. naval officers, horrified by the plight of the refugees, worked with Asa Jennings and organized the ships in the area into a large-scale rescue operation. During the fall of 1922, vessels from the United States, Great Britain, Italy and France evacuated thousands from Turkish shores. The American vessels also provided food and medical care, and delivered supplies to the refugee camps.

How these events became lost to history can only be speculated upon, but at last, the true story can be told. "Ships of Mercy" is the story of these forgotten heroes.

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plus \$4.00 shipping and handling (\$1.00 for each additional book) to:

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Greek language edition available late 2008.

Author available for book presentations and signings.

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