

SHIP'S HISTORY



This aerial of the 269-foot U. S. Coast Guard ice-breaker SOUTHWIND in camouflage was taken from the ship's plane off San Diego, Cal., in August 1944, during World War II, one month after she was commissioned by the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Southwind was originally commissioned on July 19, 1944, in San Pedro, California, as the ultimate in modern icebreaker design. She was a "WIND-CLASS" breaker and joined her sister ships Northwind, Eastwind, and Westwind in the Coast Guard's wartime fleet.

Bristling with guns and with special camouflage paint covering her traditional Coast Guard white, Southwind was assigned duties in the frigid waters of the Arctic escorting supply ships to our northern outposts, doing reconnaissance, and gleaning vital weather information, in a joint operation with Eastwind in October 1944, Southwind destroyed a Nazi radio station on Little

Koldeway Island, a remote outpost 800 miles from the North Pole. The two icebreakers later engaged and captured the German trawler Externsteine near the East Coast of Greenland. The crew of the Externsteine was taken prisoner, and the trawler was manned by a crew of 28 Coast Guardsmen, renamed the "East Breeze", and sailed into Boston, Massachusetts, as a prize of war.

In March 1945 and at the request of the U.S.S.R., Southwind was sent to Russia under the Lend Lease program. The Russians renamed the ship Admiral Makarov after the famous Russian mariner and naval architect who is recognized as the father of the modern icebreaker.

The ship operated under the Red flag for nearly five years along the sea routes north of Russia and in both eastern and western Arctic areas. In the summer of 1950 the vessel was returned to the United States and was taken over by the U.S. Navy at Yokosuka, Japan. After two months of emergency repairs in Japan, the Navy sailed the ship to Boston which was to be her home port for the next 16 years. The Navy renamed the vessel USS Atka after a small island in the Aleutian chain, and she began a long series of distinguished missions under Navy control.

In 1964, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard began the transfer of all icebreaking