

PATHE JOURNAL

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Liner FRANCE LAUNCHED BY MADAME DE GAULLE
35 mm. UNDEVELOPED positive : 108 meters - 360 ft

The world's longest passenger liner, the 55,000-ton "FRANCE" was christened in Saint Nazaire yesterday by Madame Charles de Gaulles and launched at the Chantiers de l'Atlantique yard.

Almost 50,000 persons came from all over France to watch Madame de Gaulle who wore a conservative navy-blue dress and hat, easily smash a magnum of champagne on the \$60 million superliner's bow a moment before the vessel started a 1,500-foot voyage down an inclined way into the Loire Basin.

Special trains, buses and even a fleet of pleasure craft brought spectators to the event. Almost the entire city of Saint Nazaire turned out on foot and bicycles to watch the latest product of their shipyard workers' take to the water.

General de Gaulle said he was one of the happiest of the thousands who attended. He said the launching of the FRANCE served as a symbol of citality and of the peace-loving desires of the French people.

The FRANCE will link the New and Old worlds in closer friendship, he added, pointing out that a ship is a place where people meet for enjoyment and peaceful travel, a mark of civilization and progress in our world.³

General de Gaulle spoke after the superliner had ~~been~~ splashed into the water. As he addressed the huge crowd the ship made a lovely backdrop while six tugs maneuvered her into a near-by outfitting basin.

The launching of the 1,035-foot FRANCE marked a high point in the career of the vessel that is being built to replace the famous NORMANDIE on the French Line service between LE HAVRE and NEW YORK. The France has been on the drawing boards since the end of World War II. Under construction for almost 2 years it will be another 2 years before the new ship is completed in the spring of 1962.

The ship will have accommodations for 2000 passengers in the air-conditioned luxury that marks modern passenger ships. About 500 berths will be first class and the other 1500 will be tourist berths. The FRANCE will not vie for speed records, but her eight boilers and 160,000-horsepower engines will drive the ship at 30 knots to maintain a five-day service between Europe and New York. The engines may one day be replaced by nuclear-power plants.

The most Reverend VILLETELET, Bishop of Nantes, blessed the superliner, sprinkling the bow with holy water.