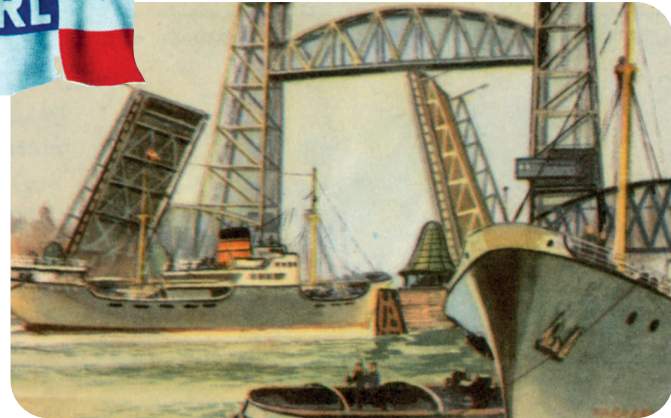


ACHILLE LAURO

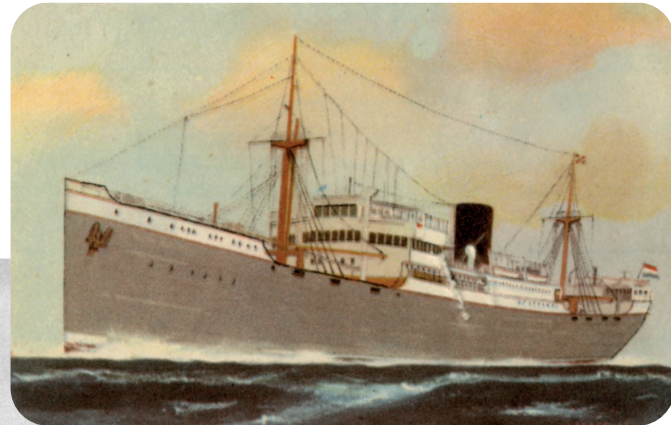
One of the relatively few ships of which great things were expected and whose life proved to be both long and glorious, was the Dutch liner *Willem Ruys*.

In 1930-'1 the Rotterdamsche Lloyd Line had built their latest passenger liners on the East India service. These were: *Baloeran* (1930; 17.001 grt) and *Dempo* (1931; 16.979 grt), both motorships. Her Amsterdam-based rival, the Nederland Line (Stoomvaart Maatschappij "Nederland"), had also had two motorvessels built: *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* (1930; 19.428 grt) and *Marnix van Sint Aldegonde* (1930; 19.355 grt).

In the late thirties the Nederland Line decided that her next mail ship was to be diesel-driven and fast, ordering the vessel from the Nederlandsche Scheepsbouw Mij., Amsterdam. In 1938, even though the East Indian trade had not recovered from the Depression, the Rotterdamsche Lloyd felt obliged to build a big liner to compete with this super ship. In 1939 the Nederland Line was ready to inaugurate the 20.500-ton *Oranje* destined to cover the line Amsterdam-Batavia via Suez.

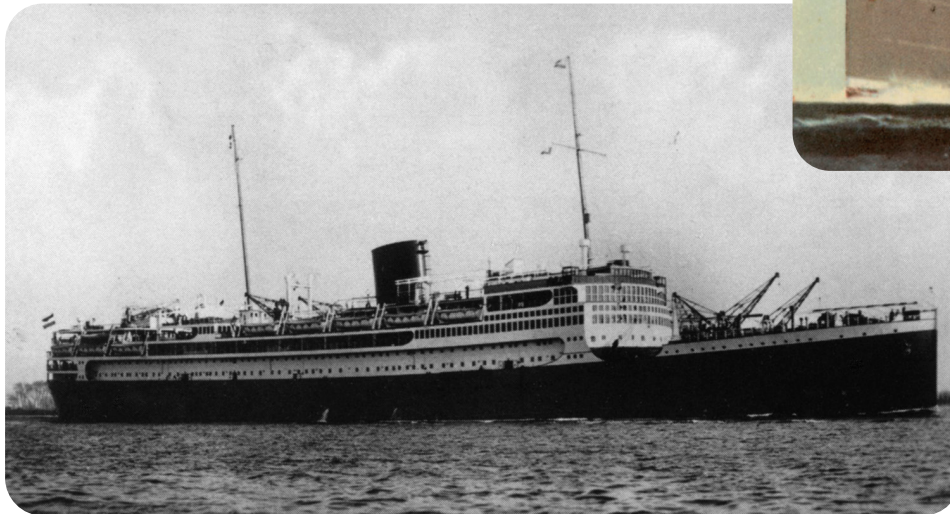


In the port of Rotterdam.
(ill.: G.J. Frans Naerebout)

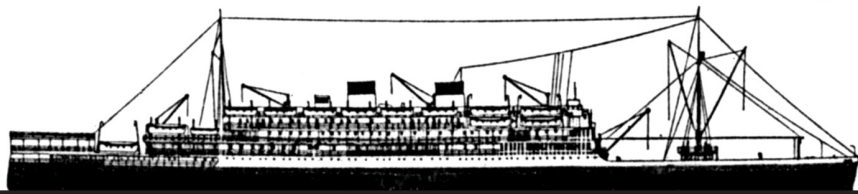


ms Kota Agoeng (1930-'58; 9.524 tons deadweight) was a RL-cargovessel of the Kota-class working the East Indies run. A 5.200 hp-machine gave the proud vessel a speed of 13 knots. Passengers: 20. Here Kota Agoeng shows the regular company-colors: grey hull with white boottopping, softbrown/pink masts and a black funnel.

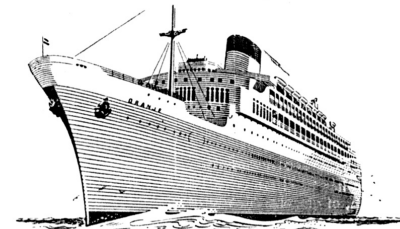
(ill. G.J. Frans Naerebout)



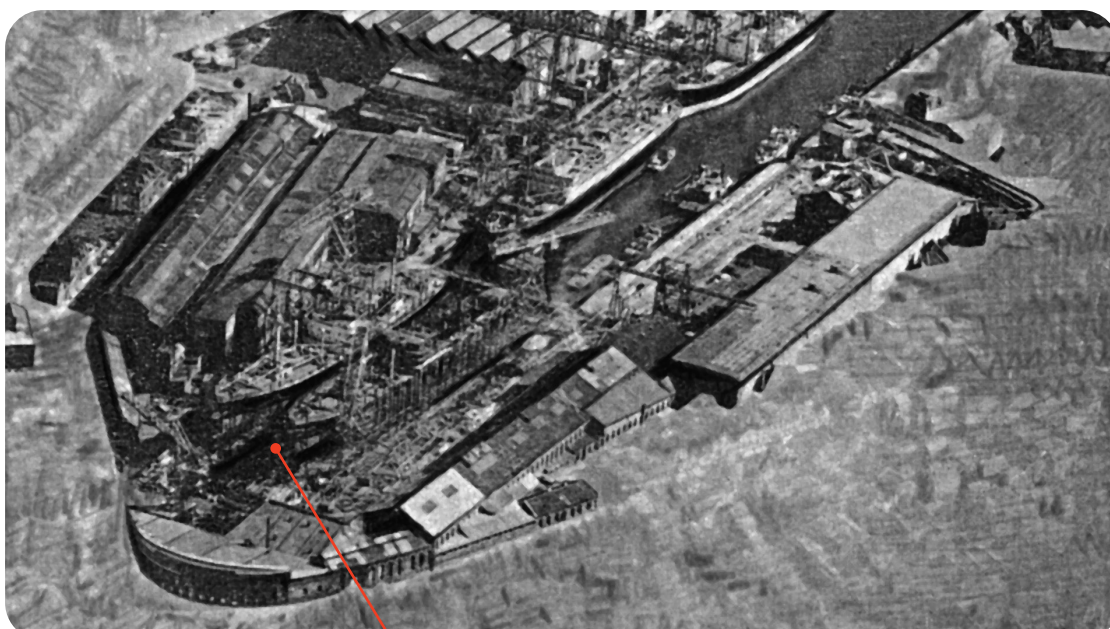
dms Dempo (1931-'44). (coll.: J.G. Nierop)



dms Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1930-'63)/Marnix van Sint Aldegonde (1930-'43).
(ill.: G.J. de Boer)



]] ms Oranje (1939-'79; 20.016 grt; 192,02 x 25,45 x 11,68 m; 3 x 12.500 hp). Nederland's race ace; in 1964 sold to the Lauro Organization, renamed: Angelina Lauro.



View of the "De Schelde"-yard in Vlissingen.

*Below:
Present situation of the
same spot.*



On 16th of August 1938 the Rotterdamse Lloyd signed the construction for her new liner with the shipbuilders the Koninklijke Maatschappij "De Schelde" at Vlissingen ("Flushing") in the province of Zeeland, ordering the yard to build her, including the engines. The intended vessel was to be an experimental ship, seeing as it planned the installation of no less than eight Sulzer engines, instead of the usual two or three, and thus capable of guaranteeing a greater velocity and so being competitive with *Oranje* of the rival company, then world's fastest motorvessel.

The designated "Nummer 214" should be delivered in 1940, but World War II put the delivery date off end November 1947.



The keel of "Nummer 214", laid down 25 January 1939.



The 79th vessel of the Rotterdamsche Lloyd (RL), dating from 1924, was the twin-funneled passenger ship Slammat, designed and built by Kon. Mij. "De Schelde" at Vlissingen in the province of Zeeland. "Number 214", as the future Achille Lauro was called in 1939, would differ distinctly.

Technical staff of the Kon. Mij. "De Schelde":

- J. Blokland Visser (chief naval architect)
- H.S.O. Erdelman (naval architect)
- G.W. Pieterse (naval architect)
- L.W. Bast (naval architect)
- D.T. Ruys (naval architect; engines)
- C. Kapsenberg
- Romijn
- Van Dierendonck

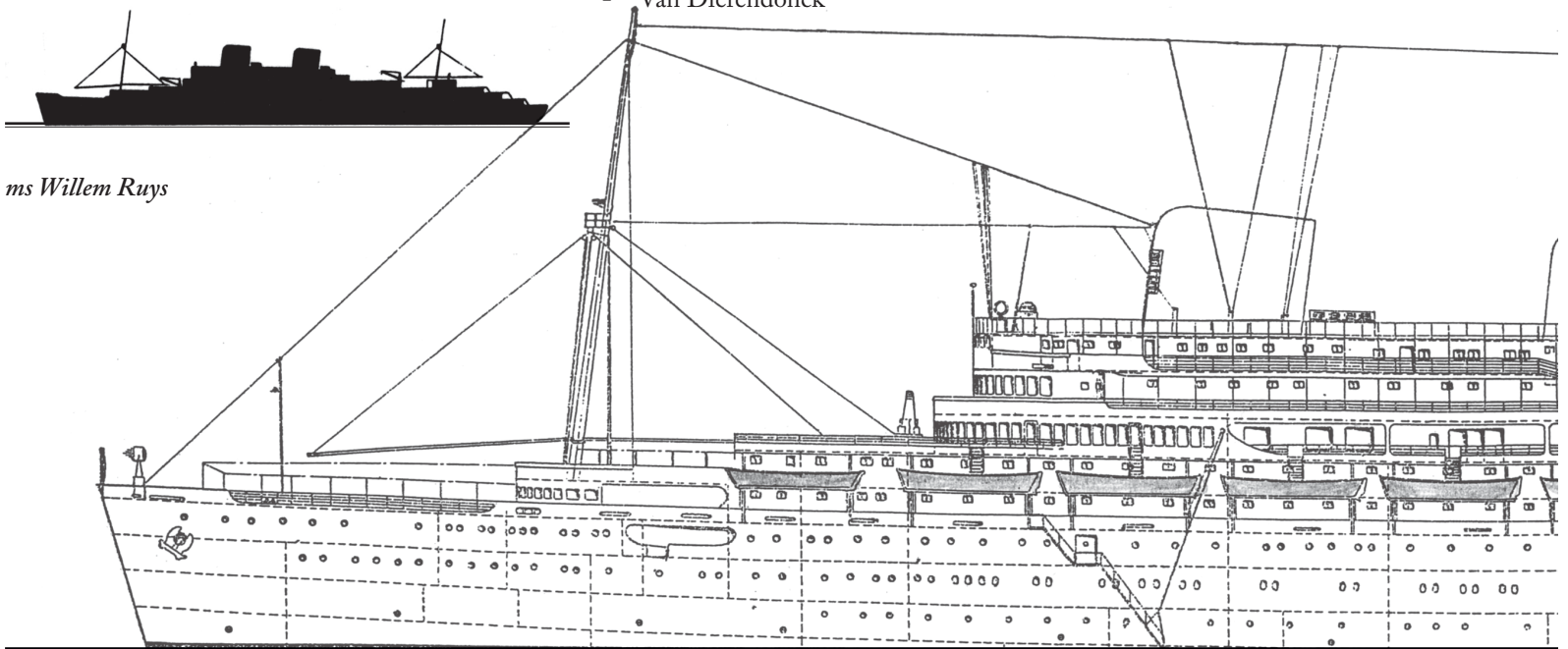
Every liner is first arranged according to her normal route and then according to her recognition features. The sequence in "Nummer 214" is her number of funnels: two, tapered and doomed, rather close together. The design sports deep and evenly spaced windows; widely spaced stanchions. Her hull has a pronounced tumble home, a raked stem and spoon stern. Note novel placing of boats. Two pole masts; foremast with cross-tree half way up clear of stepped, full superstructure.



ss Slammat



ms Willem Ruys





KMS's chief-engineer J. Blokland Visser (1886–1967) worked on an advanced design for a modern liner since the year of 1929. He planned rounded, or at least less square overall lines, more variations in the deckhouse, gracious turns for and aft and an exceptional arrangement of the lifeboats. His ideas came into life in the definitive design of the new passengership for the Rotterdamsche Lloyd, the future Willem Ruys/Achille Lauro – no one figured then this would be the last big East Indiaman of Dutch origin.

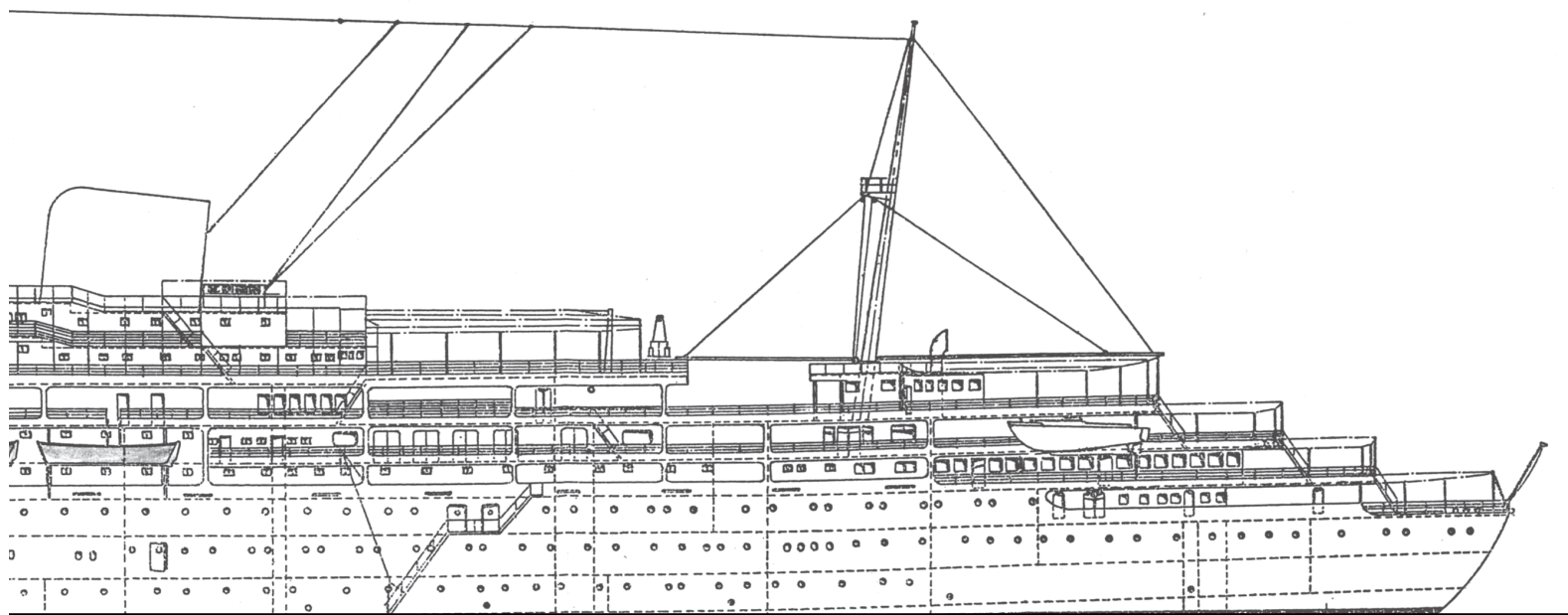


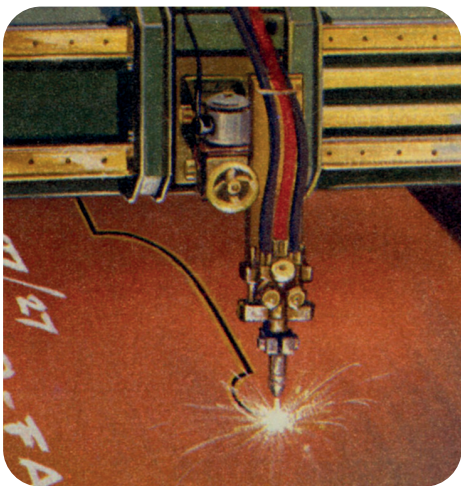
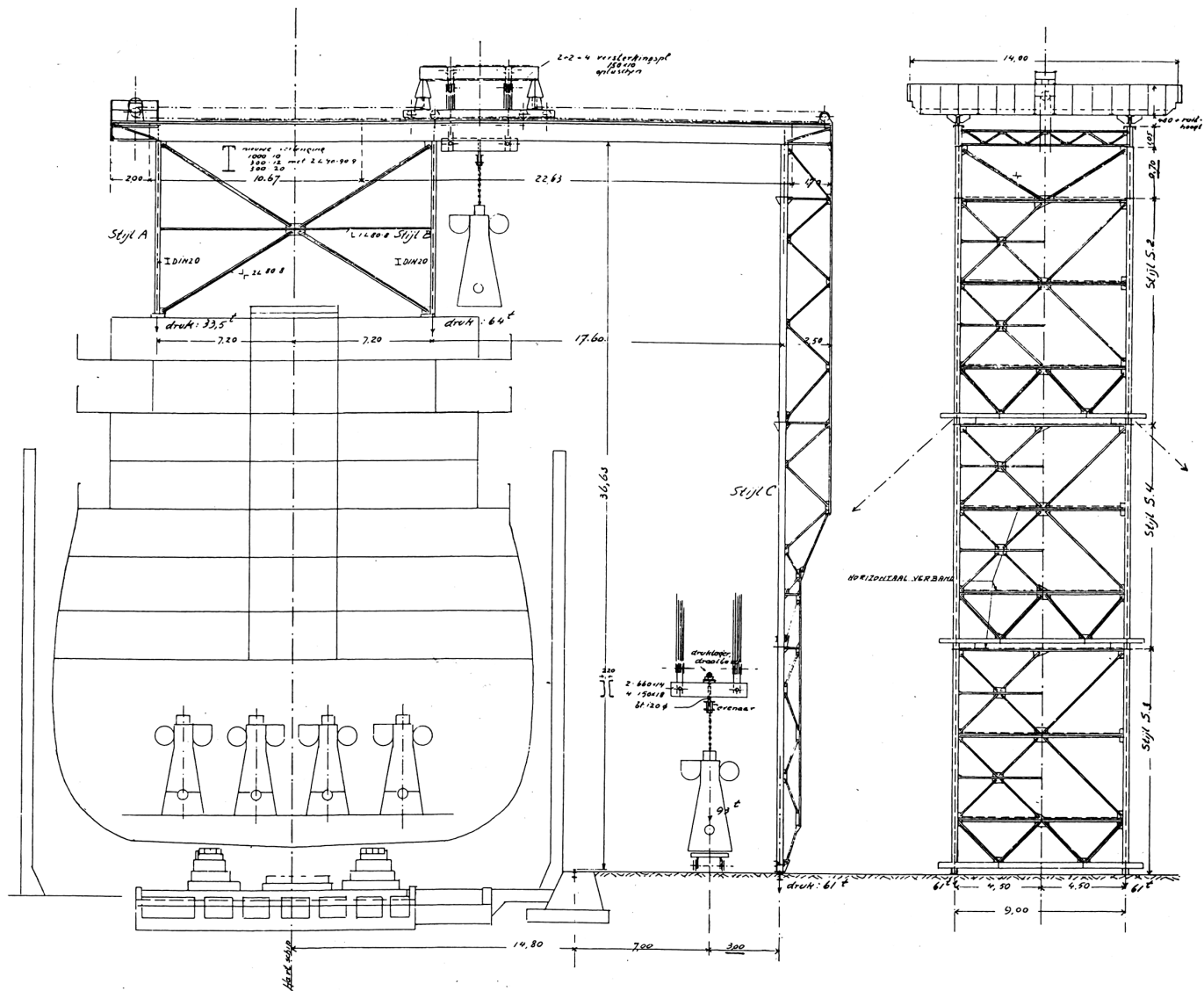
Artist's impression of "Nummer 214". (ill.: G.J. Frans Naerebout)

Laid down in January 1939, work on "Nummer 214" ceased with the occupation of Nederland by the Germans in May, 1940. Work was slowed deliberately by the yard-labourers and the Dutch underground. The men also, with tenacious courage, did their best to save "Nummer 214" from the destruction of war. They constructed a stone wall along her broadside, and the inter-spaces were covered with sand to protect her against the dangers of bombing.

The unfinished hull laid on the stocks throughout the war, rising visibly above the low buildings of Vlissingen, as a too easy a target. The Dutch government in exile in London expressly asked that the incomplete vessel was not to be hit during allied bombings of Vlissingen.

Maybe it is here that her lucky star is said to make the future liner a favourite of good fortune. "Nummer 214" survived the war's destruction intact. From November 1944 to February '45 "Nummer 214" pumped drinking water for the entire Vlissingen-population, supplying a total of 1.500.000 liters.



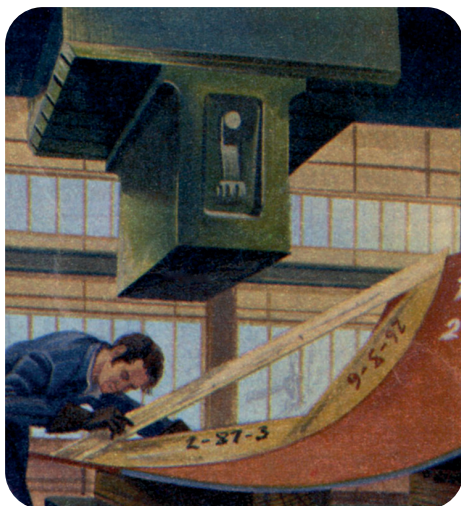


Cutting the steel plates.

Specially built construction for hoisting and placing the engines on their right locations.

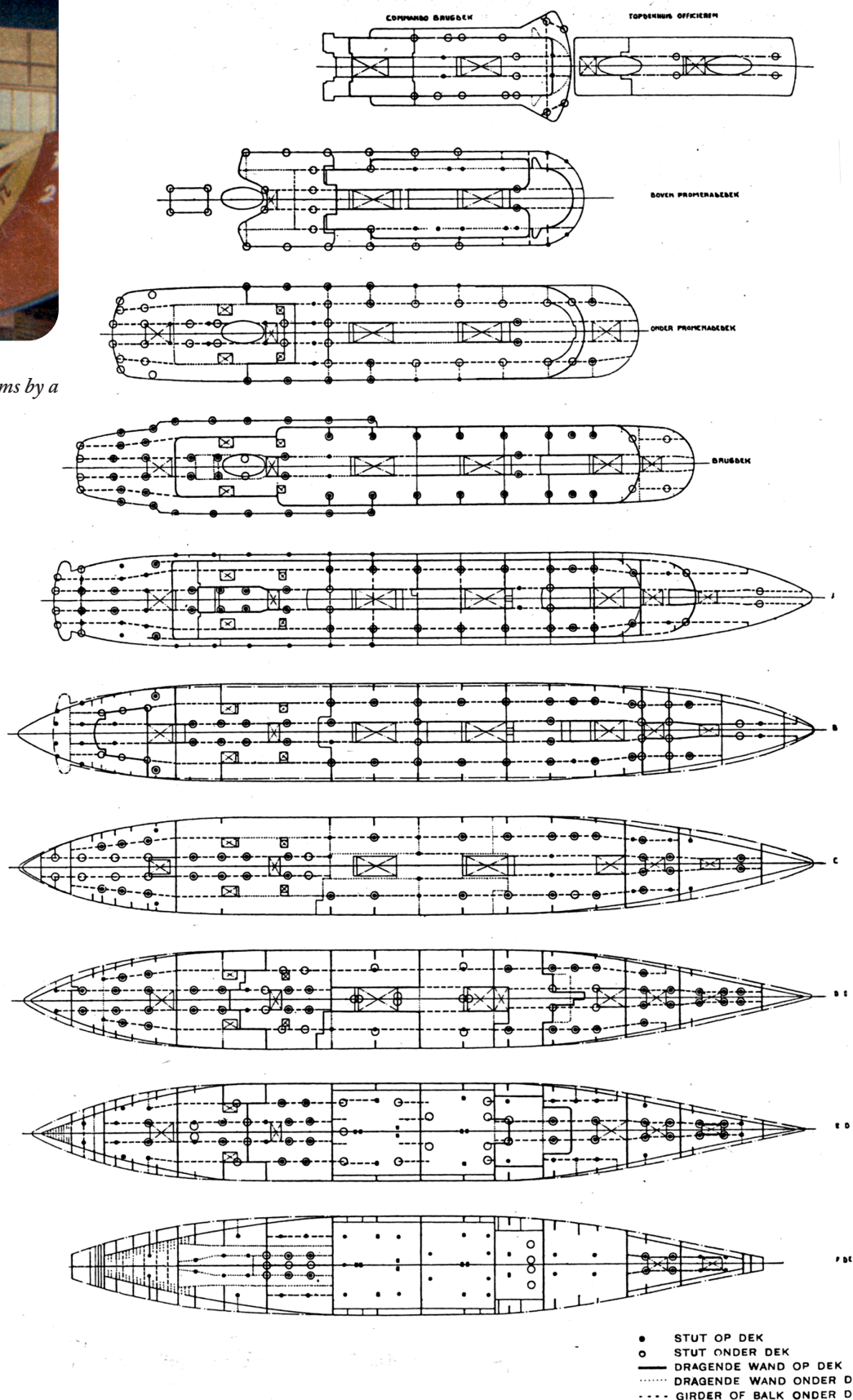
Construction resumed in the summer of 1945. As early as 1938 the Rotterdamsche Lloyd decided her next mail ship was to be diesel-driven. Indeed, one of *Willem Ruys* principal characteristics that distinguished her from other ships is founded upon her propulsion system. It consisted of two twin groups of 4 dieselengines each, the advantage of this system being the fact that one or more engines of each group could be deactivated while the others were able to operate at the maximum of efficiency. The two groups of 4 propelled two shafts through reduction gearing and electric slip couplings. The twin-screws were driven by 8 cylinder single-acting 2-stroke Sulzer oil

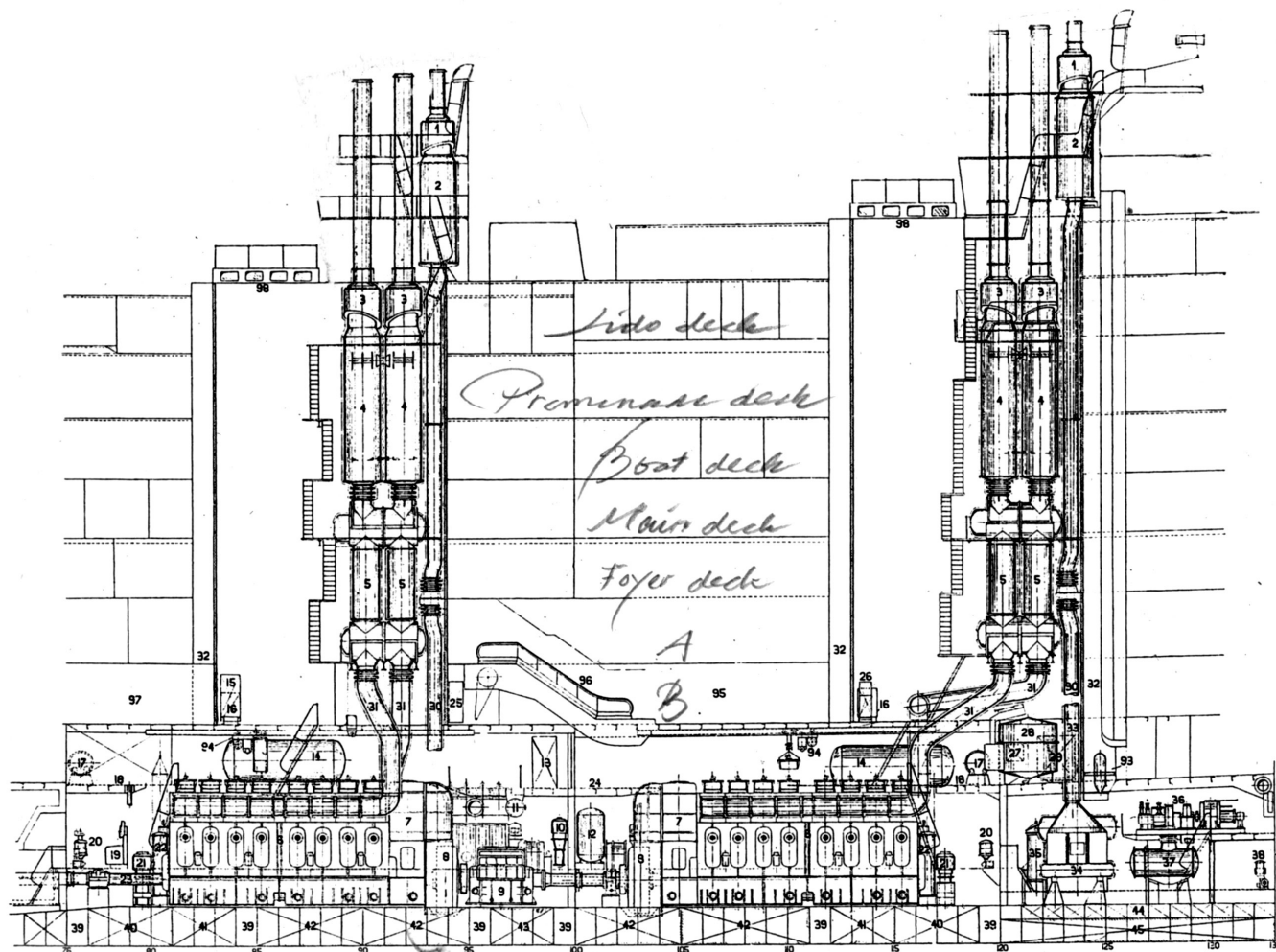
engines with air injection and cylinders 580 mm x 840 mm, each producing 4.000 bhp at 215 rpm. These gave the ship a cruising speed of about 22 knots, with a maximum speed of 24. On her trials in November 1947 *Willem Ruys* achieved 24,62 knots. Two engines were built at the Sulzer works at Winterthur, and six at the shipbuilders' wharf. This machinery has been used until the very end of a long career.



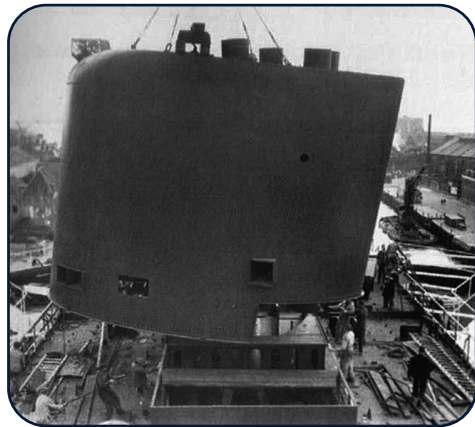
Manipulating the plates into their forms by a hydraulic press.

Right:
Indication of the most important connection parts. With supports, girders and supporting walls.

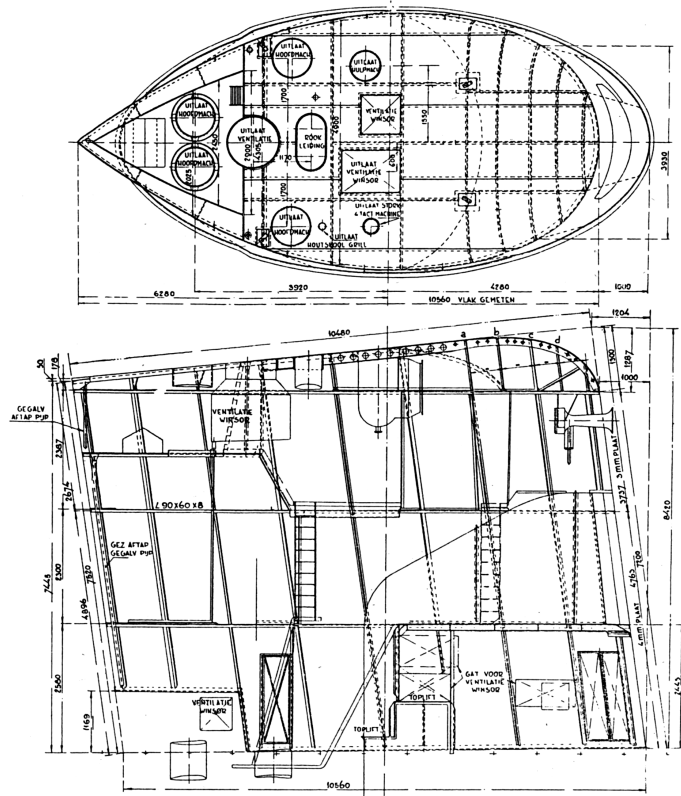


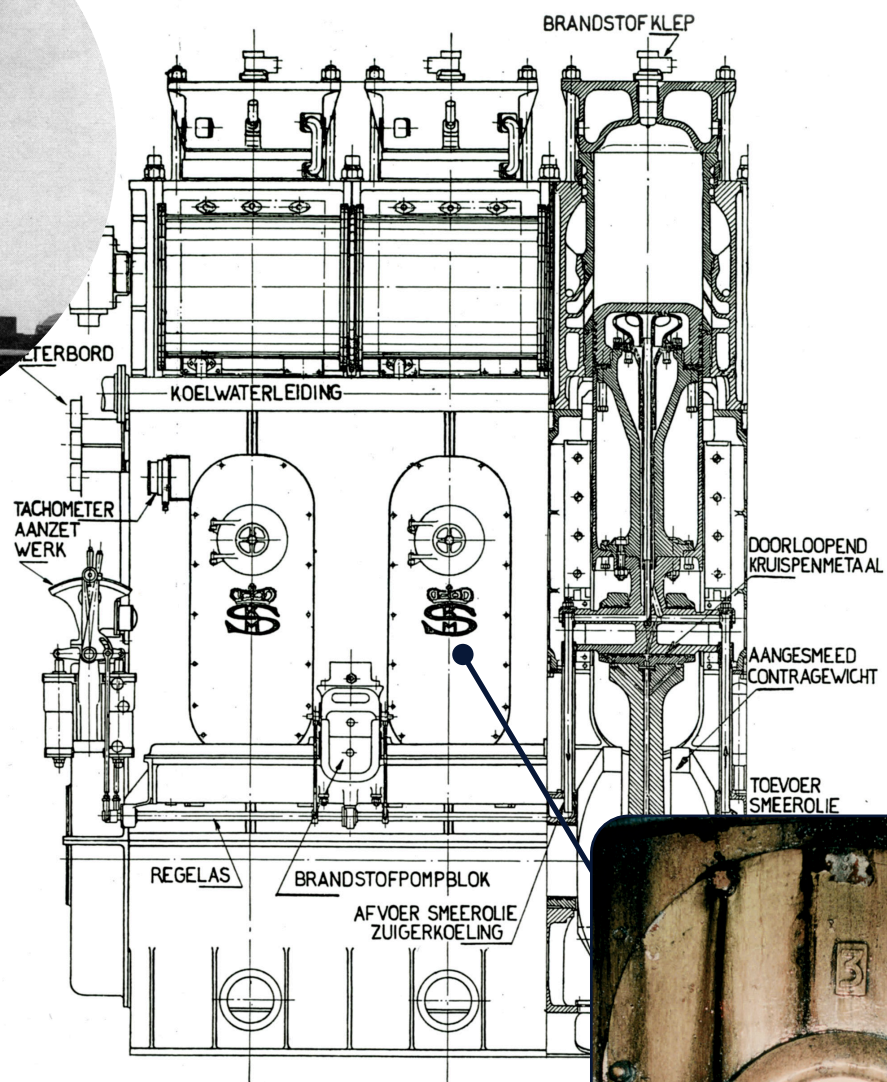
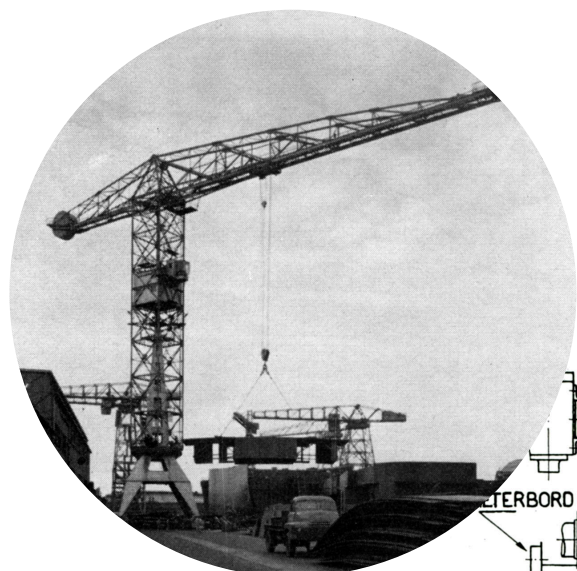


Cross section engine rooms and decks. There were in all 10 decks.
10 bulkheads gave the ship a two-compartment standard.



Cross section funnel, seen from above and sideways.

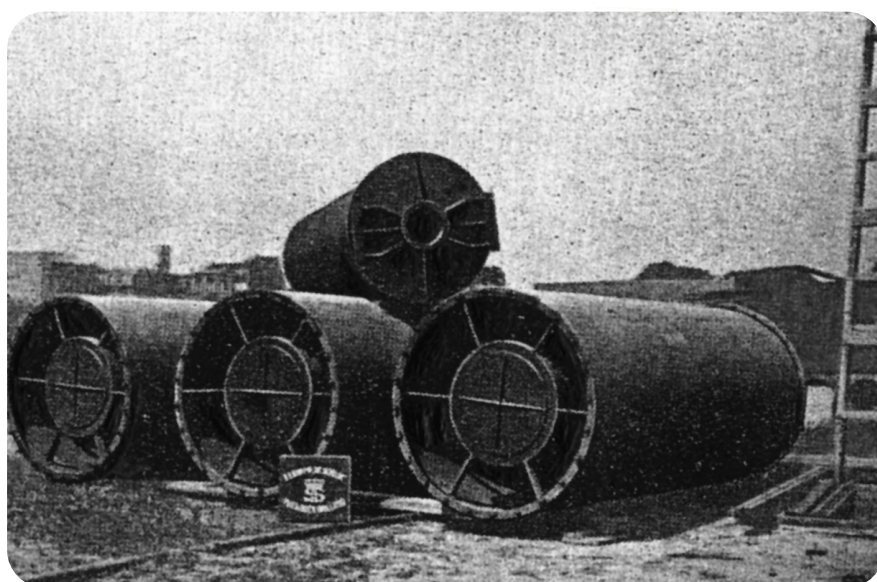




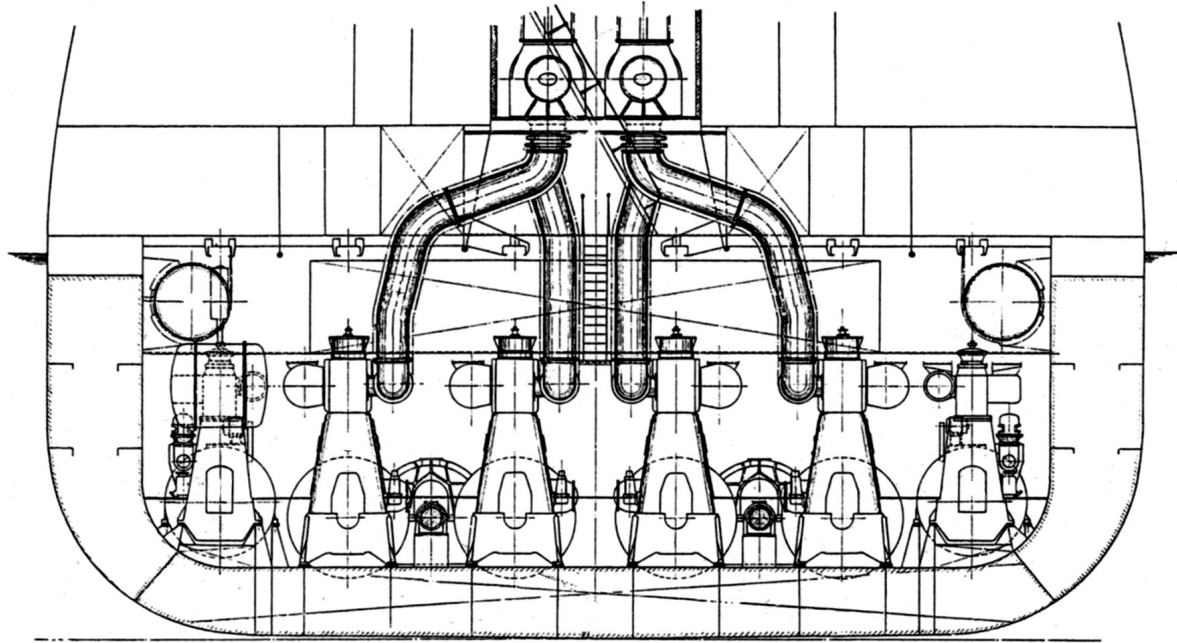
Cross section of one of the eight Sulzer/De Schelde engines.



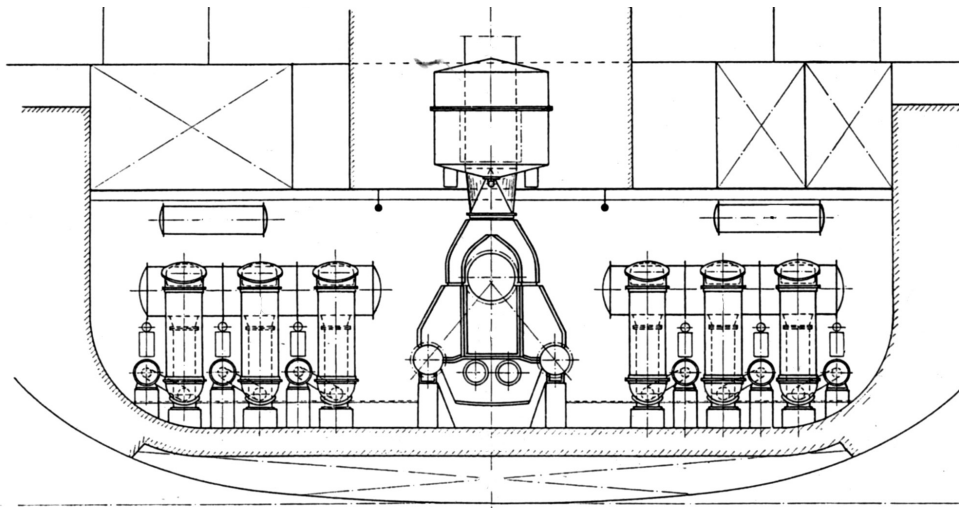
*A look at the housing of engine #3.
 (photo: A. Zuidboek)*



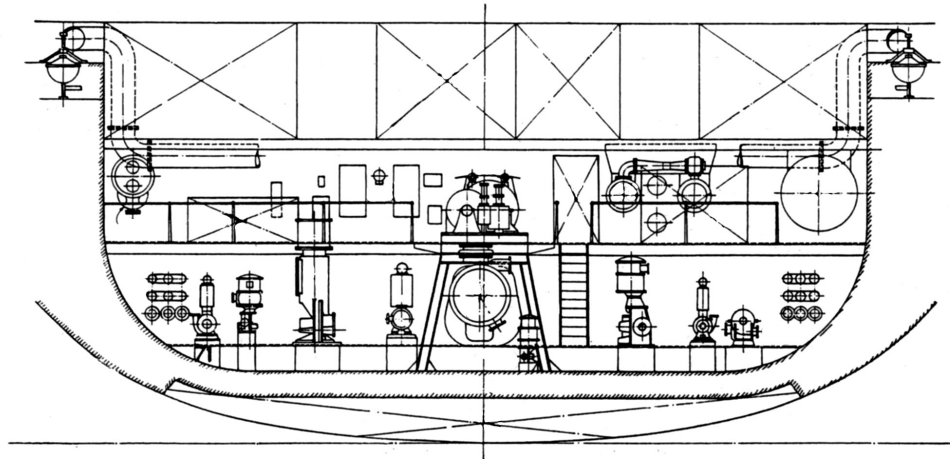
Giant mufflers for main - and auxiliary engines, waiting to be installed.



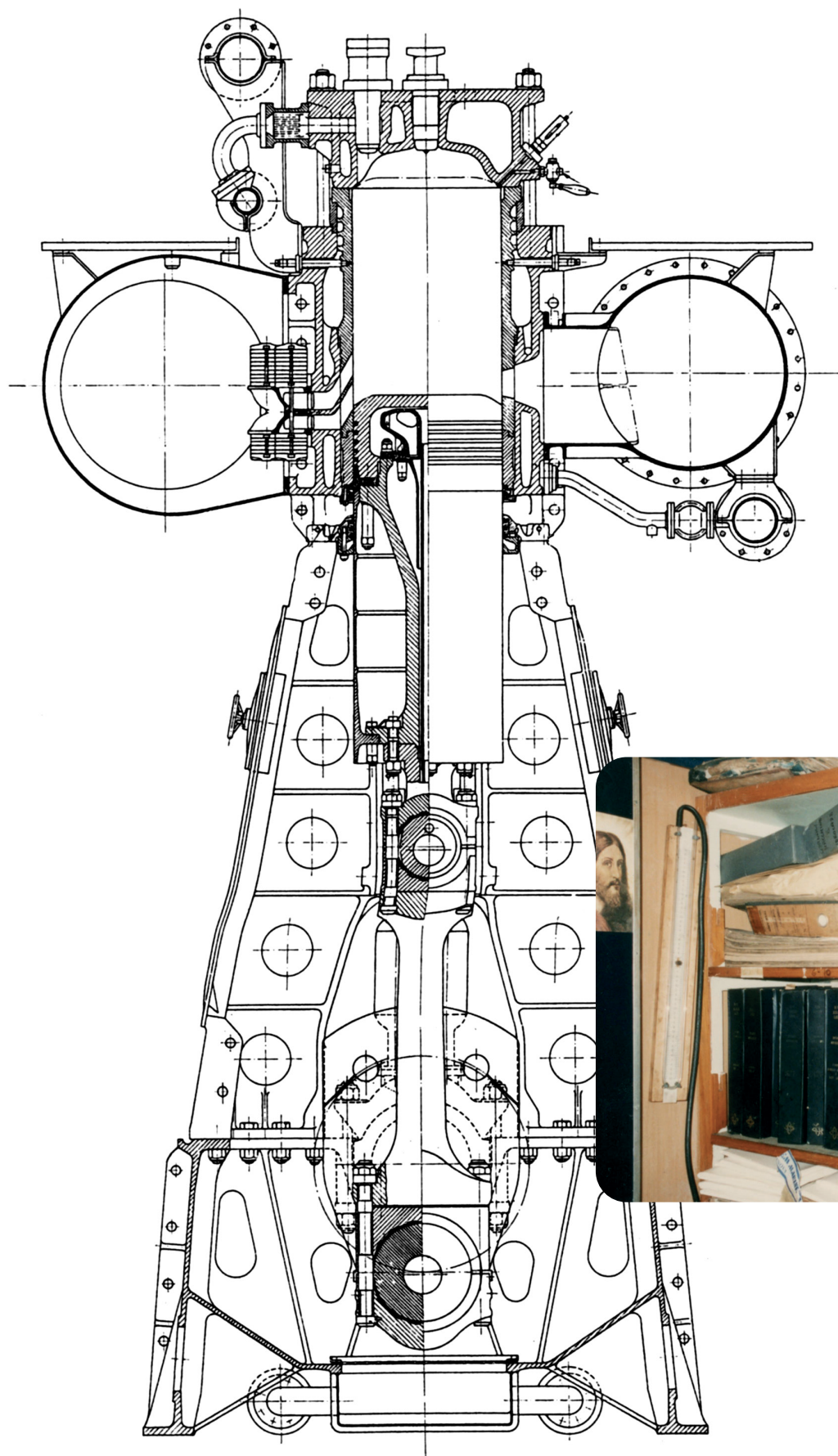
Machine arrangement in the main engine room.



Machine arrangement. Cross section in the auxiliary engine room.



Machine-arrangement. Cross section in the auxiliary engine room with turbo generator.



Ir. D.T. Ruys designed the machineries for "Number 214". He kept the height of the engine rooms low. The space gained room to the galleys.

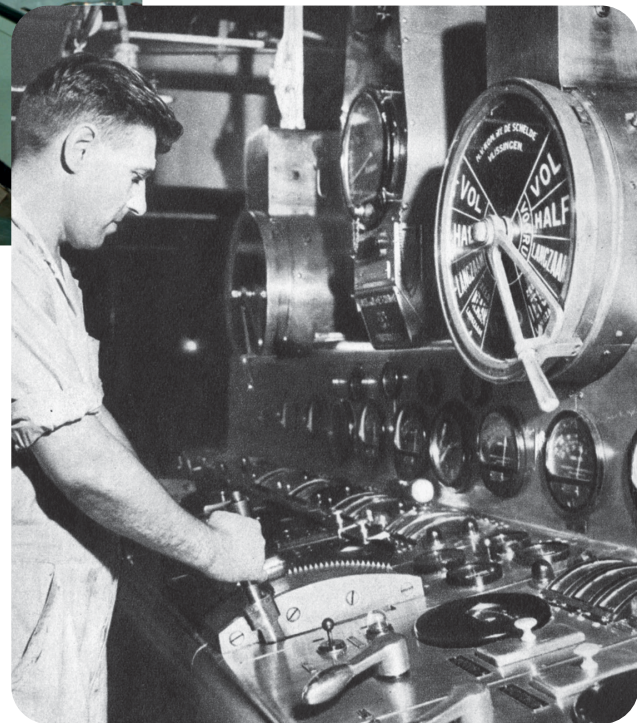


*Bookshelf in the control-room on A-Deck with original documents and details.
(photo: AZ)*

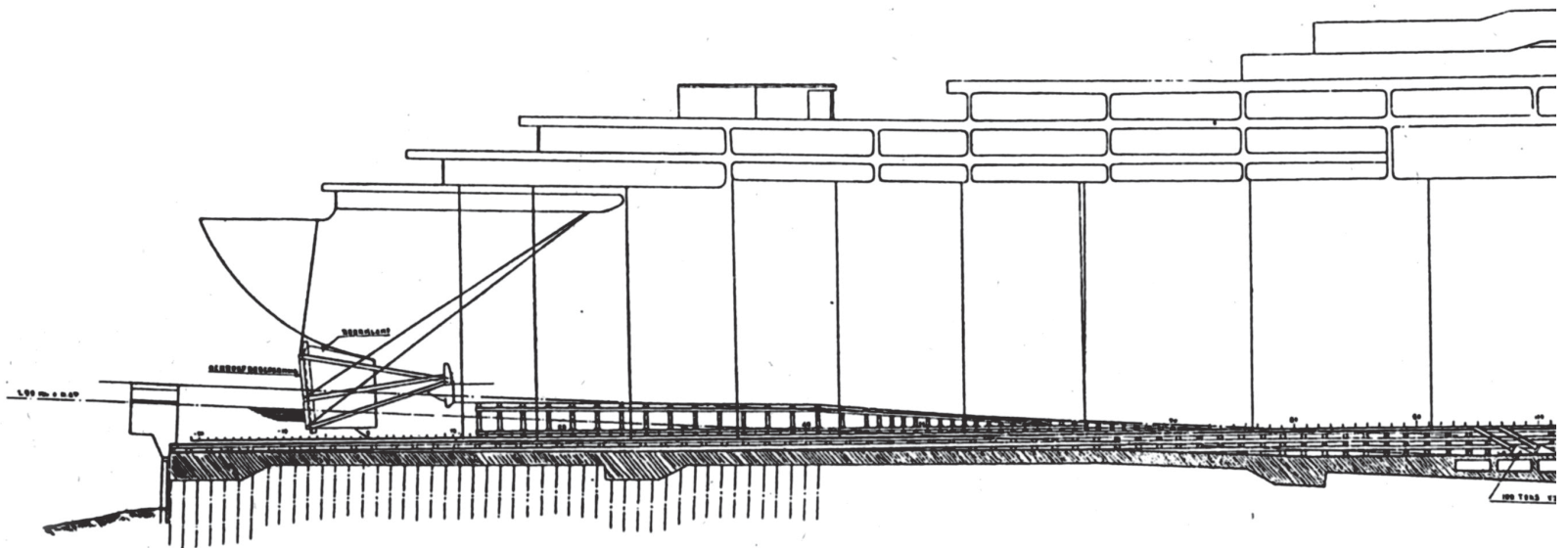
Cross section of one of the eight main engines.

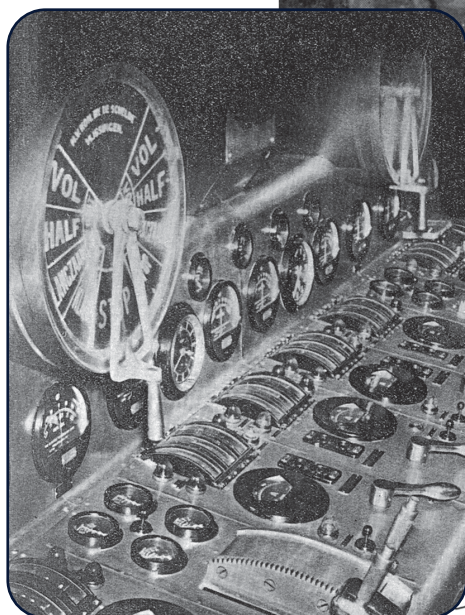
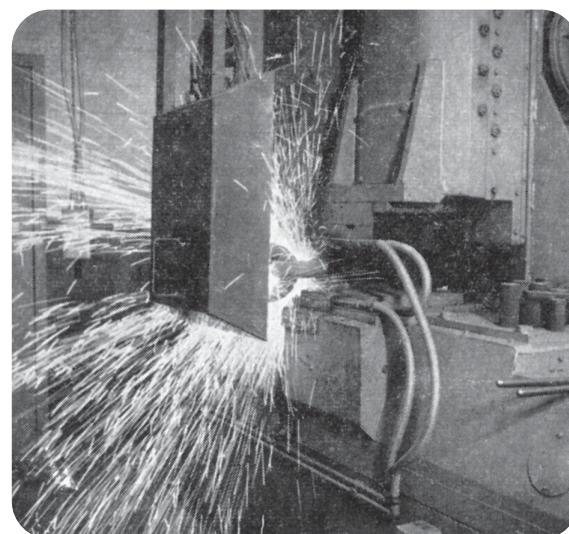
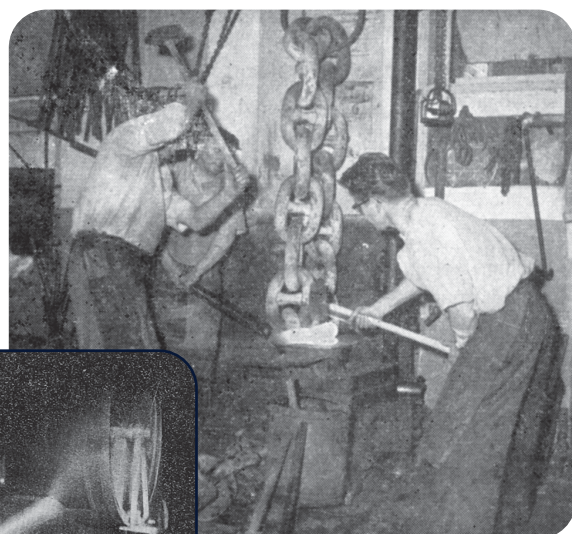


The engine control-room in Achille Lauro-days was located right behind the dining-room on Deck A. (photo: Shipfoto Achille Lauro)

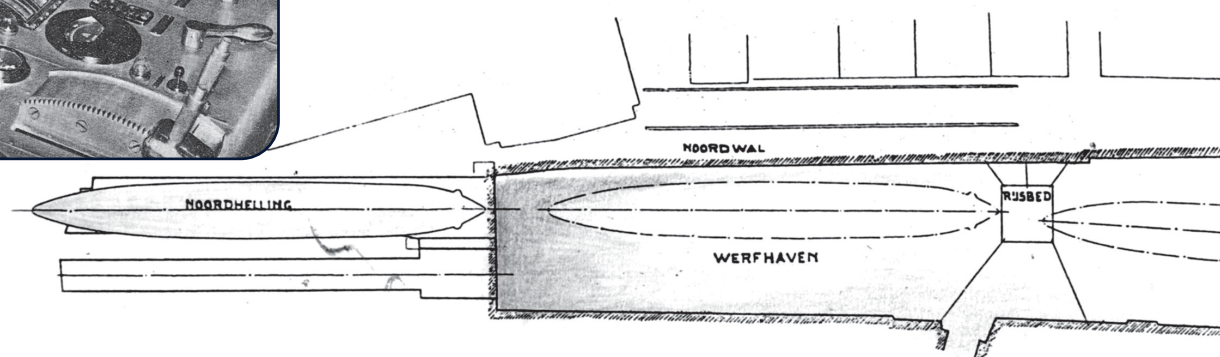


In the engine-room two engineers operate the engines from one panel where, in former days, eight engineers would have been needed. On this photograph an engineer poses at the handle at the right side of the panel. On the opposing page another shot of the same panel, then unmanned. The right side handle is not visible on this picture..





Anchor chain fabrication had been modernized rapidly. These photographs, taken in a factory at Schiedam, show an early working method (left) and the way it was done in the '40-ties.



"Nummer 214" on the slipway at KM "De Schelde". Compare her position with the pictures on page 3.

