

= Portland @-@ class cruiser =

The Portland @-@ class of heavy cruisers was a class of ships designed and constructed by the United States Navy in 1930 . The two ships of the class , USS Portland (CA @-@ 33) and USS Indianapolis (CA @-@ 35) saw extensive service during the Pacific War in World War II .

Designed as a modification over the previous Northampton class cruiser , the Portland @-@ class displaced just under 10 @,@ 000 long tons (10 @,@ 000 t) and featured heavier armor and armament than previous cruisers . Featuring 8 " / 55 caliber guns and designed to function as fleet flagships , the Portland @-@ class were intended to fix problems with armament and armor that had been a weakness of preceding U.S. cruisers . These designs were carried over to the following New Orleans class , of which several Portland cruisers were converted to mid @-@ construction .

Portland served in a large number of engagements including the Battle of Coral Sea , the Battle of Midway and the Guadalcanal Campaign , where she was severely damaged but nonetheless able to return to service . She later fought in the Battle of Leyte Gulf and the Battle of Okinawa . Indianapolis served as a fleet flagship for much of the war and fought in the Battle of Philippine Sea and the Battle of Iwo Jima . On 30 July 1945 , after transporting components for the nuclear weapons Little Boy and Fat Man from the United States , she was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I @-@ 58 . Due to a series of errors and miscommunications her loss was not discovered for several days , and only 316 of her 1 @,@ 116 crew survived .

= = Background = =

The Portland @-@ class was the third class of heavy cruiser to be constructed by the United States Navy following the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 . The first " treaty cruisers " were the two of the Pensacola @-@ class ordered in 1926 , which emphasized armament and speed at the expense of protection . These ships were followed by the six vessels of the Northampton @-@ class ordered in 1927 which were more heavily armed , and introduced the configuration of three triple turrets which would become standard on U.S. Navy heavy cruisers . The Portland @-@ class was a modification of both the Pensacola and Northampton designs .

Ordered for the U.S. Navy in fiscal year 1930 , the Portland @-@ class was originally designated as a light cruiser , and given the hull classification symbol CL , being re @-@ designated a heavy cruiser with the symbol CA on 1 July 1931 , due to their armament , in accordance with the London Naval Treaty . Originally , eight cruisers were envisioned as modified Northampton @-@ class vessels , but eventually two of these became the Portland @-@ class , with the remaining six eventually being further modified into the succeeding New Orleans @-@ class .

= = Design = =

As built , the Portland @-@ class cruisers were to be 610 feet 3 inches (186 @.@ 00 m) in length overall , 592 feet (180 m) long at the waterline , 64 feet 6 inches (19 @.@ 66 m) abeam , and with a draft of 21 feet (6 @.@ 4 m) , and 24 feet (7 @.@ 3 m) maximum . They were designed for a standard displacement of 10 @,@ 258 tonnes (10 @,@ 096 long tons ; 11 @,@ 308 short tons) , and a full @-@ load displacement of 12 @,@ 755 tonnes (12 @,@ 554 long tons ; 14 @,@ 060 short tons) . However , neither completed ship reached this weight , displacing 9 @,@ 800 tonnes (9 @,@ 600 long tons ; 10 @,@ 800 short tons) and 9 @,@ 950 tonnes (9 @,@ 790 long tons ; 10 @,@ 970 short tons) , respectively . The ships featured two distinctive raked funnels , a tripod foremast , and a small tower and pole mast aft . In 1943 , light tripods were added forward of the second funnel on each ship , and a prominent Naval director was installed aft .

The ships were equipped with four propeller shafts and four Parsons GT geared turbines and eight Yarrow boilers . The power plant of the ships generated 107 @,@ 000 shaft horsepower (80 @,@ 000 kW) and the ships had a design speed of 32 knots (59 km / h) The ships were designed for a range of 10 @,@ 000 nautical miles (19 @,@ 000 km ; 12 @,@ 000 mi) at 15 knots (28 km / h) . Both completed ships rolled badly until fitted with bilge keels .

The cruisers were armed with a main battery of nine Mark 9 8 " / 55 caliber guns arrayed in three triple mounts , a superfiring pair fore and one aft . For anti @-@ aircraft defense , they were armed with eight 5 " / 25 caliber guns as well as two QF 3 pounder Hotchkiss guns . In 1945 , the anti @-@ aircraft defenses of both ships were upgraded , with each receiving twenty four Bofors 40 mm guns . On Portland these were arranged in four quad mounts and four twin mounts , and on Indianapolis they were arrayed in six quad mounts . Both ships were also upgraded with twelve Oerlikon 20 mm cannons . No torpedo tubes were fitted on either ship of the class . The ships were outfitted with Mk . 8 rangekeepers and Mk . 27 directors which also housed auxiliary Mk . VII rangekeepers .

The Portland @-@ class was originally designed with 1 inch (25 mm) of deck protection and 1 inch (25 mm) of side protection , but during construction they were substantially up @-@ armored . The ships were completed with belt armor 5 inches (130 mm) thick over the magazines and 3 @-@ 25 inches (83 mm) elsewhere . Armored bulkheads were between 2 inches (51 mm) and 5 @-@ 75 inches (146 mm) , deck armor was 2 @-@ 5 inches (64 mm) , the barbettes were 1 @-@ 5 inches (38 mm) , the gunhouses were 2 @-@ 5 inches (64 mm) , and the conning tower was 1 @-@ 25 inches (32 mm) .

Additionally , the Portland @-@ class cruisers were designed with space to be outfitted as fleet flagships , with space for an Admiral and his staff to operate . The class also featured an aircraft catapult amidships . They could carry four aircraft . The total crew complement varied , with a regular designed crew complement of 807 , a wartime complement of 952 , which could increase to 1 @-@ 229 when the cruiser was operating as a fleet flagship .

= = = Comparison with previous cruiser designs = = =

The Portland @-@ class was generally longer than the Northampton @-@ class by about 10 feet (3 @-@ 0 m) and featured a revised bow shape . They were otherwise generally similar to the Northampton @-@ class , with an extended forecastle to improve sea @-@ keeping abilities . Their masts were reduced as compared to the Northampton @-@ class in order to reduce top weight .

When completed , the Pensacola @-@ class displaced less than expected , at 9 @-@ 100 tonnes (9 @-@ 000 long tons ; 10 @-@ 000 short tons) , which was 1 @-@ 000 tonnes (980 long tons ; 1 @-@ 100 short tons) less than expected , and were found to be greatly deficient in their protection . For the following Northampton @-@ class , the armor protection was increased to 1 @-@ 057 tonnes (1 @-@ 040 long tons ; 1 @-@ 165 short tons) with 3 inches (76 mm) of armor along the main belt . Still , these ships only displaced between 9 @-@ 050 tonnes (8 @-@ 910 long tons ; 9 @-@ 980 short tons) and 9 @-@ 300 tonnes (9 @-@ 200 long tons ; 10 @-@ 300 short tons) . While the Portland @-@ class cruisers were more heavily armored than the preceding classes , this problem was found to be so significant that in fiscal year 1929 , an entirely different design was formulated for a new class of cruisers , the New Orleans @-@ class . Several of the Portland hulls were then converted to New Orleans hulls during construction .

The Portland @-@ class were also designed with more advanced armament in mind . Their main guns were the first to be specially designed to fire long @-@ point projectiles with a streamlined shape , which increased the guns ' range when compared with older cruiser guns . Such projectiles were in use by ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy , which until that point out @-@ ranged U.S. cruisers with their firepower . The New Orleans @-@ class was designed with these lessons in mind , intended to create a better balance between protection , armament and speed .

= = Construction = =

Five ships were ordered in fiscal year 1930 , to be constructed by three builders . In 1931 , CA @-@ 32 , CA @-@ 34 , and CA @-@ 36 , all ordered with Westinghouse machinery , were converted to the New Orleans @-@ class . Portland was laid down by Bethlehem Steel at Quincy Shipyard on 17 February 1930 , and Indianapolis was laid down by New York Shipbuilding Corporation on 31 March 1930 . The hull and machinery of both ships was provided by their respective builders . Indianapolis was launched first , on 7 November 1931 and commissioned on 15

November 1932 . Portland was launched on 21 May 1932 and commissioned on 23 February 1933 .

= = Ships in class = =

= = = USS Portland (CA @-@ 33) = = =

Portland was the first ship on the scene when the airship Akron went down in 1933 , and coordinated efforts to retrieve survivors . She conducted a number of fleet maneuvers and goodwill missions throughout the Pacific Ocean . After the start of World War II , Portland took part in the Battle of Coral Sea , there rescuing 722 survivors from the sunk aircraft carrier Lexington . She then fought at the Battle of Midway , the Battle of the Eastern Solomons , and in the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands , where she was hit by three dud air @-@ launched torpedoes . She then supported U.S. Marine landings during the Battle of Guadalcanal . During the naval battle there in late 1942 , she was struck and severely damaged by a torpedo from a Japanese destroyer , a hit which required interim repairs in Australia followed by extensive repairs at Mare Island Navy Yard . In spite of this damage , she was still able to inflict damage on the Japanese battleship Hiei .

Returning to the war , she bombarded Kiska as part of the Aleutian Islands campaign , played a supporting role in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands campaign , covered landings during the New Guinea campaign , and Pelelieu . She then participated in the Battle of Leyte Gulf , covered landings in the Philippines , and supported the Battle of Okinawa . At the end of the war she was decommissioned and remained in the United States Reserve Fleet until 1959 , when she was broken up for scrap .

= = = USS Indianapolis (CA @-@ 35) = = =

Indianapolis served as flagship of Scouting Force 1 during World War II , and saw action in a number of campaigns in the Pacific theater . She supported the Gilbert and Marshall island campaigns as well as operations off the Caroline Islands . Later in the war she fought in the Battle of Philippine Sea and later the Battle of Iwo Jima and participating in the Battle of Okinawa .

In mid @-@ 1945 , she sailed from the United States to Tinian Island carrying components of Little Boy and Fat Man , the two nuclear weapons which would later be used to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki . Sailing for Leyte unescorted under Captain Charles B. McVay III , she was sunk by Japanese submarine I @-@ 58 on 30 July 1945 , sinking in just 12 minutes . Many sailors were killed by sharks after the wreck . An estimated 800 of her 1 @,@ 119 crew survived the initial sinking , but her SOS signal was not heard , and due to a series of errors and misunderstandings , her loss was not discovered until 2 August when her crew was spotted by reconnaissance plane . Only 320 men were recovered following the sinking , of whom 316 survived . McVay survived and faced a court martial and reprimand but retired in 1949 as rear @-@ admiral , committing suicide in 1968 .