

= USS Portland ( CA -33 ) =

USS Portland ( CL / CA -33 ), the lead ship of her class of cruiser , was the first ship of the United States Navy named after the city of Portland , Maine . Launched in 1932 , she saw a number of training and goodwill cruises in the interwar period . In World War II , she saw extensive service beginning at the 1942 Battle of Coral Sea , where she escorted the aircraft carrier Yorktown and picked up survivors from the sunken carrier Lexington . She screened for Yorktown again in the Battle of Midway , picking up her survivors as well . She then supported the carrier Enterprise during the initial phase of the Guadalcanal Campaign later that year , and was torpedoed during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal . The torpedo inflicted heavy damage which put her out of action for six months as she was repaired in Sydney , Australia and later San Diego , California .

Returning to action in mid -1943 , she saw action in many of the major campaigns of the Pacific War , conducting shore bombardments in support of campaigns at the Aleutian Islands , Gilbert and Marshall Islands , Mariana Islands , and New Guinea . She was involved in the October 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf , engaging Japanese ships in the decisive Battle of Surigao Strait . She then conducted shore bombardments at Lingayen Gulf and Corregidor Island , and in 1945 supported landings during the Battle of Okinawa until the end of the war .

Following World War II , Portland accepted the Japanese surrender in the Caroline Islands and then undertook several Operation Magic Carpet cruises to bring U.S. troops home . She was decommissioned in 1946 and scrapped by 1962 . In her extensive service she accrued 16 battle stars , making her one of the most decorated ships in the U.S. fleet .

= = Design and construction = =

Portland was the lead ship of the third class of " treaty cruisers " to be constructed by the United States Navy following the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 , following the two vessels of the Pensacola -class ordered in 1926 and the six vessels of the Northampton -class ordered in 1927 . Ordered for the U.S. Navy in Fiscal Year 1930 . Portland was originally designated as a light cruiser , because of her thin armor , and given the hull classification symbol CL -33 . She was reclassified a heavy cruiser , because of her 8 -inch guns , with the symbol CA -33 on 1 July 1931 , in accordance with the London Naval Treaty .

Portland was designed for a standard displacement of 10 ,258 long tons ( 10 ,423 t ) , and a full -load displacement of 12 ,755 long tons ( 12 ,960 t ) . However , Portland only displaced 9 ,800 long tons ( 10 ,000 t ) when completed . In 1943 , a light tripod was added forward of the second funnel on the ship , and a prominent fire -control director was installed aft .

Her four Parsons GT geared turbines each drove a propeller shaft using steam provided by eight Yarrow boilers . Portland 's power plant generated 107 ,000 shaft horsepower ( 80 ,000 kW ) and she had a designed maximum speed of 32 knots ( 59 km / h ; 37 mph ) . The ship reached , however , 32 .7 knots ( 60 .6 km / h ; 37 .6 mph ) on sea trials . She rolled badly until fitted with bilge keels . Portland was designed for a range of 10 ,000 nautical miles ( 19 ,000 km ; 12 ,000 mi ) at 15 knots ( 28 km / h ; 17 mph ) .

The ship was armed with a main battery of nine Mark 9 8 " / 55 caliber guns arrayed in three triple mounts , a superfiring pair forward and one aft . She was armed with eight 5 " / 25 caliber guns for anti -aircraft defense , and she also had two QF 3 pounder Hotchkiss saluting guns . In 1945 , her anti -aircraft defenses were upgraded , receiving twenty four Bofors 40 mm guns which were arranged in four quad mounts and four twin mounts . Portland was also upgraded with seventeen Oerlikon 20 mm cannons .

She was originally designed with 1 inch ( 25 mm ) of armor for deck and side protection , but during construction her armor was increased . As completed , the ship was protected with 3 .25 inches ( 83 mm ) of belt armor which increased to 5 inches ( 130 mm ) around the magazines . Her armor was between 2 inches ( 51 mm ) and 5 .75 inches ( 146 mm ) thick on the transverse bulkheads , while armor on her main deck was 2 .5 inches ( 64 mm ) thick . Armor on her

barbettes was 1 @. @ 5 inches ( 38 mm ) thick , armor on her gunhouses was 2 @. @ 5 inches ( 64 mm ) thick , and armor on her conning tower was 1 @. @ 25 inches ( 32 mm ) thick .

Additionally , the Portland @-@ class cruisers were designed with space to be outfitted as fleet flagships , with accommodations for an Admiral and his staff to operate . The class also featured two aircraft catapult amidships , and she could carry four aircraft which were stored in a hangar . Her total crew complement varied , with a regular designed crew complement of 848 , a wartime complement of 952 , and a complement 1 @, @ 229 when the cruiser was operating as a fleet flagship .

Portland was laid down by Bethlehem Steel at its Quincy Shipyard on 17 February 1930 . The machinery was provided by the builders . Portland was launched on 21 May 1932 and commissioned on 23 February 1933 . She was the first ship named for the city of Portland , Maine , and sponsored by the daughter of Ralph D. Brooks of Portland , and with Captain Herbert F. Leary as her first commander . Her sailors would later nickname her " Sweet Pea . "

= = Service history = =

Departing Boston on 1 April 1933 , the cruiser arrived Gravesend Bay , New York late in the day on 3 April . The next evening , she was dispatched on her first assignment to the scene of the airship Akron , which had crashed at sea . Thirty six minutes after receiving the message , she was underway and on route to the crash site . She was the first naval vessel on scene , and began coordinating the search and rescue effort with other ships arriving . In spite of her efforts , 73 were killed in the crash , including Admiral William Moffett , Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics .

Portland steamed from San Diego , California on 2 October 1935 along with Houston , which was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt . The president spent much of his trip fishing with his party . After visiting Panama and several other ports , the two ships steamed to Charleston , South Carolina , where the President disembarked . Portland spent the remainder of the interwar era with the Scouting Force , Cruiser Division 5 and later in the United States Pacific Fleet conducting peacetime training and a number of goodwill missions . She crossed the equator for the first time on 20 May 1936 during fleet maneuvers .

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 , Portland was two days away , en route to Midway Atoll as part of a carrier group escorting aircraft carrier Lexington . From December 1941 to 1 May 1942 , she operated between the West Coast , Hawaii , and Fiji on patrol .

= = = Battle of Coral Sea = = =

Portland joined Task Force 17 ( TF 17 ) , commanded by Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher and centered around the carrier Yorktown escorted by Portland as well as cruisers Astoria and Chester plus the destroyers Hammann , Anderson , Perkins , Morris , Russell , and Sims and oiler Neosho and Tippecanoe . TF 17 departed Tongatabu on 27 April en route to the Coral Sea . On the morning of 1 May , TF 17 joined with Task Force 11 ( TF 11 ) about 300 nmi ( 350 mi ; 560 km ) northwest of New Caledonia . TF 17 completed refueling the next day , but TF 11 reported that they would not be finished fueling until 4 May . Fletcher elected to take TF 17 northwest towards the Louisiades .

At 17 : 00 on 3 May , Fletcher was notified that a force of Japanese troops had been sighted at Tulagi the day before , approaching the southern Solomons . TF 17 changed course and proceeded at 27 kn ( 31 mph ; 50 km / h ) towards Guadalcanal to launch airstrikes against the Japanese forces at Tulagi the next morning . On 4 May , from a position 100 nmi ( 120 mi ; 190 km ) south of Guadalcanal ( 11 ° 10 ' S 158 ° 49 ' E ) , TF 17 launched airstrikes against Japanese forces off Tulagi . After recovering its aircraft late in the evening of 4 May , TF17 retired towards the south . The next morning , TF 17 rendezvoused with TF 11 and Task Force 44 ( TF 44 ) at a predetermined point 320 nmi ( 370 mi ; 590 km ) south of Guadalcanal ( 15 ° S 160 ° E ) . Prompted by reports the Japanese would attack Port Moresby , the force moved to the Louisiades to engage the Japanese the next day . Portland was assigned to Task Group 17 @. @ 2 under Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid together with cruisers Minneapolis , New Orleans , Astoria , Chester , and five destroyers

from Destroyer Squadron One . She screened for Yorktown throughout the operation , including during Japanese air attacks on the two carriers on 8 May . Following the battle , she was to escort the damaged Lexington , but after fires on that carrier became uncontrollable she was abandoned and sunk . Portland took on 722 of her survivors . She suffered no casualties herself , though at least four of her sailors were transferred to the Neosho shortly before the battle and were lost when that ship was sunk .

= = = Battle of Midway = = =

After brief repairs at Tongatabu , Portland took on a new commander , Captain Laurence DuBose . She then steamed for Pearl Harbor escorting Yorktown , before heading to Midway Atoll to set a trap for Japanese forces attacking there . On 4 June , after Dive @-@ Bombers from carriers Yorktown and Enterprise had sunk three Japanese carriers , aircraft from Japanese carrier Hiryu responded with an attack on Yorktown that afternoon . Portland was to her port , providing anti @-@ aircraft defense along with cruisers Pensacola and Vincennes . A Japanese air attack came at 14 : 00 and another after 16 : 30 , and Yorktown was struck several times with torpedoes . With increasing damage , the carrier was abandoned and its survivors picked up by five destroyers and then transferred to Portland . In all , 2 @, @ 046 of Yorktown 's crew transferred to the cruiser . She then steamed toward Pearl Harbor and met the submarine tender Fulton and transferred the Yorktown survivors aboard her on 6 June . During 7 June she searched for downed naval aviators and the next day joined the group of carrier Saratoga . They steamed for the Aleutian Islands to counter a Japanese force there but were recalled to Pearl Harbor two days later .

= = = Guadalcanal campaign = = =

Portland accompanied the invasion fleet to Guadalcanal , escorting Enterprise . She remained off the coast protecting the landings at Tulagi and Guadalcanal from 7 ? 9 August . In this duty , she missed the Battle of Savo Island and withdrew two days later following Enterprise . She then remained in the area to support the Guadalcanal operations and to protect communications lines for the attacking forces .

Remaining with Enterprise , she later participated in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons . On 24 August she was posted to air defense to the port of Enterprise , and though she and her sisters were able to down a number of Japanese aircraft , the carrier was hit at 18 : 34 . She continued to protect the carrier through 25 August , when Allied forces prevented reinforcement of Japanese units in the Solomons by a large naval armada under Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto . Following the battle she escorted Enterprise to Pearl Harbor and was then ordered on a secret mission to the Gilbert Islands to conduct a raid on Tarawa with light cruiser San Juan . She took aboard Rear Admiral Mahlon S. Tisdale and was designated Task Unit 16 @.@ 9 @.@ 1 . Between 14 : 10 and 14 : 51 on 15 October she attacked Japanese ships near the island , damaging a transport and a destroyer and suffering one damaged aircraft before she withdrew and rejoined the Enterprise task group near the Solomons .

She then steamed south to take part in the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands as one of the escorts for Enterprise . The carrier came under heavy air attack at 10 : 12 on 24 October , and Portland suffered her first wartime damage as one of her 1 @.@ 1 @-@ inch ( 28 mm ) guns exploded in firing and again when one of her AA guns depressed too low and damaged the splinter shield , injuring 19 officers and enlisted men . In heavy fighting Enterprise was hit once but Portland and the task group shot down several aircraft . At 11 : 53 the bridge lost control of steering , and before it could regain control , a Japanese submarine was spotted . The submarine struck Portland with three torpedoes , but all three did not detonate , likely because the submarine had fired too close and they had no time to arm .

Two weeks later , she participated in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal from 12 ? 15 November , which resulted in heavy damage to both forces but broke up the determined Japanese effort to disrupt the landing of 6 @, @ 000 American troops on Guadalcanal , to bombard Henderson Field ,

and to land 7 @, @ 000 reinforcements of their own . At the outbreak of the battle , Portland was escorting a convoy traveling to Guadalcanal from New Caledonia as part of Task Force 67 . After a four @-@ day journey they arrived and began to offload supplies on 12 November and were countered by a Japanese air attack of 46 aircraft . That night , she was among a force of five cruisers and eight destroyers under Daniel J. Callaghan which steamed to counter an approaching Japanese force . They spotted a Japanese force of two battleships , one cruiser and eleven destroyers and immediately opened fire , sinking the Japanese destroyer Akatsuki . Shortly thereafter , Portland was struck by a torpedo fired by either the destroyer Inazuma or the destroyer Ikazuchi at 01 : 58 , causing heavy damage to her stern . The torpedo struck the starboard side , which blew off both inboard propellers , jammed the rudder five degrees to starboard , and jammed her Number Three turret in train and elevation . A four degree list was quickly corrected by shifting ballast , but the steering problem could not be overcome and the ship was forced to steam in circles to starboard . The blast disrupted her steering column , forcing her to steer in a circle . At the end of her first circle , she fired on Japanese battleship Hiei , with her forward turrets . The Japanese ship returned fire , but all salvos passed over the cruiser . In the four six @-@ gun salvos returned by Portland , she succeeded in starting fires in the Japanese ship . At dawn , she was one of three U.S. ships still too damaged to withdraw on her own power . Then again at 06 : 30 , still circling , Portland opened fire on the abandoned hulk of Japanese destroyer Yudachi at a range of 6 miles ( 9 @. @ 7 km ) . After the sixth salvo , Yudachi exploded , rolled over , and sank within five minutes . She was eventually able to correct the steering problem and withdraw on her own power . She later received a Meritorious Unit Commendation for her actions in the battle . She suffered 18 killed , 17 wounded in the battle .

With the assistance of Higgins boats , a YP , and a tug , Portland anchored at Tulagi on 14 November . From there , she was towed to Sydney , Australia by the tugboat Navajo and escorted by the destroyers Meade and Zane for preliminary repairs prior to overhaul in the United States . She arrived at Sydney 30 November but did not enter drydock until 24 December after Chester and New Orleans were repaired . During this time the crew was given extended shore leave . Two of the ship 's sailors died in accidents during this leave . She left Australia after preliminary repairs , escorted by destroyer HMAS Warramunga . Following short stops at Samoa and Pearl Harbor , the ship arrived at Mare Island Navy Yard on 3 March 1943 .

== = 1943 ? 1944 == =

After operational training in southern Californian waters , Portland steamed for the Aleutians late in May , arriving on 11 June and bombarding Kiska on 26 July . After covering a reconnaissance landing on Little Kiska on 17 August , she called at Pearl Harbor on 23 September , there to San Francisco in early October , then back to Pearl Harbor in mid @-@ October . From November 1943 to February 1944 , Portland participated in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands campaigns . She bombarded Tarawa on 20 November supporting landings there for several days . She was lightly damaged by a friendly depth charge when a nearby destroyer erroneously detected a Japanese submarine . In December 1943 she moved to the Marshall Islands escorting the new Essex @-@ class carrier Lexington . While Lexington came under air attack , none of the Japanese planes came within range of Portland and she did not open fire . She returned to Pearl Harbor on 25 December , and went into drydock to repair her rudder and propellers .

After repairs , she joined Task Group 51 under Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill for an attack on Darrit , steaming for that island on 23 January and arriving 30 January . After shelling the island for 30 minutes , it was discovered no Japanese were ashore . She then moved to support operations on Eniwetok Atoll on 8 February , providing shore bombardment on Parry Island ahead of landings which took place on 19 February . She then screened carriers conducting airstrikes at Palau , Yap , Ulithi , and Woleai between 30 March and 1 April . She then joined with a carrier force assigned to cover the landings around Hollandia and Tanahmerah on New Guinea , which took place from 21 ? 24 April . She steamed northward with the carrier force and struck Truk with five other cruisers and destroyers . Portland then bombarded Satawan in the Nomei Group . Following this series of

operations , Portland returned to Mare Island for a more extensive overhaul , which was completed in August . She returned to the western Pacific for shore bombardments of Peleliu from 12 ? 14 September . The cruiser supported the landing on Peleliu on 15 September , providing artillery to support the advance of Allied forces . She provided gunfire support at Peleliu through 29 September , and then steamed for Seeadler Harbor , Manus Island in the Admiralties .

= = = Battle of Leyte Gulf = = =

Portland next joined Cruiser Division 4 for the next major campaign against the Philippines . She arrived off Leyte on 17 October , entering the Gulf the next day , and began two days of shore bombardments to prepare for the troop landings there . On the night of 24 October , a strong Japanese force consisting of two battleships , one heavy cruiser , and four destroyers headed for Surigao Strait with the apparent intent of raiding shipping in Leyte Gulf . The Japanese force advanced in rough column up the narrow strait during darkness , but was met with a large U.S. force of cruisers , destroyers and battleships , including Portland . She and her sisters steamed across the top of the strait , crossing the T of the Japanese force . The Japanese were first met by PT boats , then in succession by three coordinated destroyer torpedo attacks , and finally by devastating gunfire from American battleships and cruisers disposed across the northern end of the strait . Portland took the Japanese cruiser Mogami under fire , scoring three hits on her at 04 : 02 , striking the compass platform and AA defense center . She continued firing on the Mogami for ten minutes . She continued to fire on the stranded Mogami until 05 : 30 , striking several hits , including on the ship 's bridge . The Battle of Surigao Strait was a decisive defeat for the Japanese force , with most of its ships being destroyed .

= = = 1945 = = =

From 3 January to 1 March 1945 , Portland participated in the operations at Lingayen Gulf and Corregidor . Arriving off Lingayen Gulf on 5 January , and bombarding the vicinity of Cape Bolinao , she entered the Gulf the same day and commenced bombardment of the eastern shore but discontinued immediately when a large wave of Japanese kamikaze planes approached . Portland entered Manila Bay on 15 February , and bombarded the south shore of Corregidor in preparation for landings there . She returned to Leyte Gulf on 1 March for repairs and replenishment , having seen five months of continuous action .

From 26 March to 20 April , she conducted shore bombardments of Okinawa in support of the Allied landings during the Okinawa campaign . Portland endured twenty @-@ four air raids , shot down four Japanese aircraft , and assisted in downing two others . From 8 May to 17 June , she supported ground forces on Okinawa providing artillery support for ground forces , departing on 17 June for maintenance at Leyte before returning to Buckner Bay on 6 August , where she remained conducting shore bombardments until the end of the war .

= = Post @-@ war = =

With the termination of hostilities , Portland was designated flagship of Vice Admiral George D. Murray , Commander Mariana Islands , who was to accept the surrender of the Carolines . The ship steamed to Truk Atoll and there Murray , acting for Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz , accepted the formal capitulation of the senior Japanese military and civilian officials in ceremonies aboard Portland . She was then selected for Operation Magic Carpet duty , and returned to Pearl Harbor from 21 ? 24 September embarking 600 troops for transportation to the United States . She crossed the Panama Canal on 8 October and arrived at Portland , Maine for Navy Day celebrations on 27 October . She then conducted two trans @-@ Atlantic crossings in November and December , bringing troops home from the European Theater . She reported on 11 March 1946 to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for inactivation and assignment to the Reserve Fleet . She decommissioned at Philadelphia Navy Yard on 12 July 1946 and was maintained in the United

States Reserve Fleet . While she was identified as one of the few ships that fought through the entire war and not missed any major battle , no attempt was made to save her as a museum ship at either Portland Maine , or Portland Oregon . She was struck from the Navy List on 1 March 1959 and sold to Union Minerals and Alloys Corp. in New York on 6 October . She was scrapped at Wainwright Shipyard in Panama City , Florida during 1961 and 1962 .

Her tripod mast was preserved at Fort Allen Park , Portland . She received 16 battle stars for World War II service , making her among the most decorated US ships of World War II .