

February 2006

U.S.S. Sacramento

USS Sacramento (1863-67)

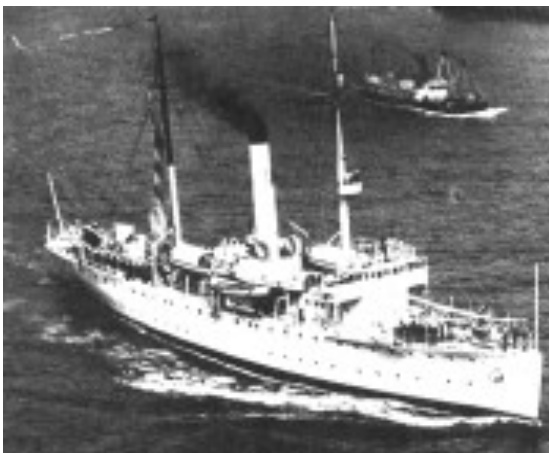


by
Mike Prero

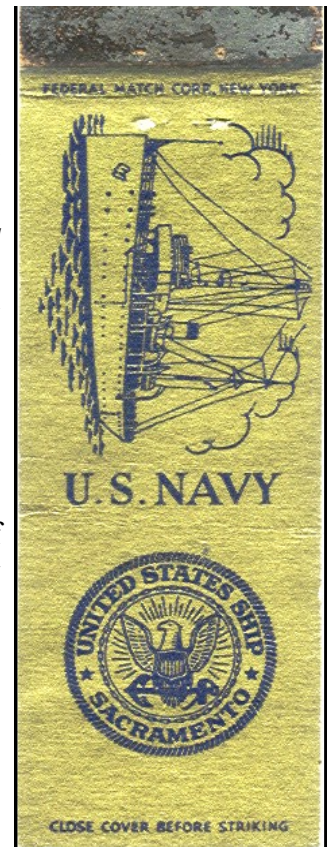
There have been several *USS Sacramento's* over the last 150 years, starting with the Civil War *USS Sacramento*, a 2100-ton steam screw sloop built at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire.

1914 saw the appearance of the *USS Sacramento (PG-19)*, a gunboat commissioned in the Philadelphia Navy Yard under the command of Commander Luke McNamee. The new *Sacramento* arrived off Vera Cruz, Mexico from Philadelphia on May 14, 1914, serving with *Tampico* in watching over Mexican gunboats *Zaragona* and *Bravo* as they transported coal to Puerto, Mexico. On April 6-9, 1917, it assisted Customs authorities in taking over the interned German Ships *Breslau*, *Andromeda*, *Anna Louise*, and *Teresa*. On May 8, 1917, it raced to

USS Sacramento (P6-19) (1914-1947)



the scene of the British motor ship *Sebastian* whose cargo of oil caught fire to envelop her in flames. The



USS Sacramento (AOE-1) (1964-2004)



crew of the *Sebastian* were taken on board *Sacramento* in heavy seas as fire and rescue parties from both ships fought to save the British ship. *Sebastian* sank while under tow toward Newport the morning of May 10, all but one of its crew survived. For its part in rescue and salvage attempts, *Sacramento* was commended by the British Government. On June 25, 1917 it went to the assistance of the cruiser *Olympia* aground at Cerebus shoal. It transported the men of *Olympia* into Newport and stood by during salvage operations .

In 1917, as part of the United States Patrol Force based at Gibraltar, *Sacramento* constantly performed convoy voyages up the Atlantic seaboard to the British Isles with time out for similar duty along the Barbary Coast and ports of Italy. By the time of its departure from Gibraltar for the United States on December 11, 1918, it had given protection to 483 ships in 343 days at sea which had included many special patrol and sea-rescue assignments. *Sacramento* cruised 63,640 miles during its war service in European waters.

Sacramento sailed in 1919 for duty with the U. S. Naval Forces in Northern Russia. It arrived in Murmansk by way of the Azores and England on May 22, 1919, giving support to the Russian Detachment of the U. S. Atlantic fleet . It then proceeded to Gibraltar to assist with the demobilization of forces there in accordance with the terms of the armistice. On June 12, 1922 it entered the Mediterranean to join the Asiatic Fleet at Cavite, Philippine Islands. The *Sacramento* gave valuable support putting down various insurrections in the Philippines and watching over United States interests among ports of China and Japan.

Sacramento entered Pearl Harbor on August 15, 1941 for defense patrol in Hawaiian waters and was in that port on December 7, 1941 when the Japanese launched their infamous aerial attack. *Sacramento* took aboard 36 survivors of *Utah*. *Sacramento* earned one battle star for her actions that day. *Sacramento* patrolled the Hawaiian Sea Frontier, was a tender for torpedo boats, served as air-sea rescue boat for the Naval Air Station Landing Field, trained armed guard crews in gunnery practice . It then operated out of San Francisco Bay on weather patrol and plane guard station off the California coast for the remainder of the war. *Sacramento* was decommissioned in Suisan Bay, Calif. on February 6, 1946 and simultaneously turned over to the War Shipping Administration which sold it on August 23, 1947.

USS *Sacramento* (AOE-1) is the third ship in the United States Navy to bear the name. She was the lead ship of her class. *Sacramento* was commissioned on March 15, 1964. Undersecretary of the Navy, Paul B. Fay Jr, addressed the crowd, stating, "The greatest pleasure I have in being here today is ... participating in the commissioning of a vessel which will provide the Navy with a unique capability hitherto never contained in one ship." He added the ship would be able to "run in speed with a destroyer escort, thereby giving our fast attack carrier task forces a flexibility of action hitherto unknown." *Sacramento* is considered a benchmark in West Coast shipbuilding. The ship and two of her sister ships, *Seattle* and *Detroit*, are the largest ships ever built on the West Coast. Only Iowa class battleships and aircraft carriers have greater displacements than *Sacramento*.

The ship's main engines came from the never completed battleship *Kentucky* and deliver in excess of 100,000 shaft horsepower (75 MW) to two 23 foot (7 m) screws, the largest on any ship in the Navy. After putting in forty years of service, *Sacramento* was decommissioned last year...which means there is currently no longer a *USS Sacramento* in the United States Navy....*What!!!*

An interesting note of trivia: Of the three ships, the first was named for the river, the second for the city and the third for both. [<http://www.history.navy.mil>; <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/dafs/PG/pg19-history.html>; <http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/09019.htm>; <http://www>.