

U.S.S. Oregon City (CA-122)

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The U.S.S. *Oregon City* (CA-122) was the namesake of its class of heavy cruisers. Designed, ordered, and built during World War II, it was an advanced warship; but the war emergency was over when the ship entered full service in early 1946.

About two-and-a-half years after Secretary Frank Knox announced the navy's plan to build a ship to honor Oregon City, Bethlehem Steel Company in Quincy, Massachusetts, launched the ship on June 9, 1945. Ruth Merrick Caufield, the wife of Oregon City Commissioner Raymond P. Caufield was present to sponsor the ship, and singer Bing Crosby attended as part of a war bond drive.

The *Oregon City* class weighed 13,000 tons, was 673'5" long, and had a beam of 70'10", draft of 26'4", and speed of 32.6 knots. The class carried a crew of 1,142, and its main armament was nine 8" guns in three turrets (two fore and one aft). For air defense, it had twelve 5" guns, forty-eight 40mm guns, and twenty 20mm guns.

The navy planned to build ten ships of the class, but only two others were built as heavy cruisers: the *Albany* (CA-123), launched on June 30, 1945, and the *Rochester* (CA-124), launched on August 28, 1945.

Once commissioned in February 1946, the *Oregon City* completed its "shakedown" cruise between Boston and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with Oregon City Mayor J.B. Caldwell among the guests. Based in Boston, the *Oregon City* served as the flagship of the 4th Fleet from July 1946 until its reassignment to the 2nd Fleet in January 1947. During those months, the ship was used primarily to train reservists and Naval Academy midshipmen.

The navy decommissioned the ship on December 15, 1947. After being held for long-term storage in Philadelphia from 1947 to 1970, the navy struck the *Oregon City* from its register in November 1970. The ship was sold for scrap in August 1973. The *Oregon City's* bell is on display at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City.

Sources

"U.S.S. Oregon City Launched in East," *Oregonian*, June 6, 1945, p. 1.

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