

# The *USS Rochester* CA 124: A Floating City

A Story of the U.S. Navy's Last Heavy Cruiser



By Daniel M. Barber, Curator of Regional History, Rochester Museum & Science Center



## About the USS Rochester Gallery

Life is often most interesting when we consider its numerous and unexpected connections. The year 1974 is a case in point. In that year, the U.S. Navy's last heavy cruiser, the *USS Rochester* CA 124, was scrapped at Bremerton, Washington. At the same time, 2,700 miles away in Rochester, New York, a beautiful new multipurpose auditorium was opened on the campus of the Rochester Museum & Science Center.

The connection? Elsa and M. Herbert Eisenhart – two very generous, patriotic, and community-minded Rochesterians. Mrs. Elsa Eisenhart served as the official sponsor of the *USS Rochester*, from the day of its christening through its service in the Korean War and its good will tours in the western Pacific to its decommissioning and its eventual scrapping. Mrs. Eisenhart and her husband, president of the Bausch & Lomb Optical Company, also funded the construction of the auditorium that now bears their name.

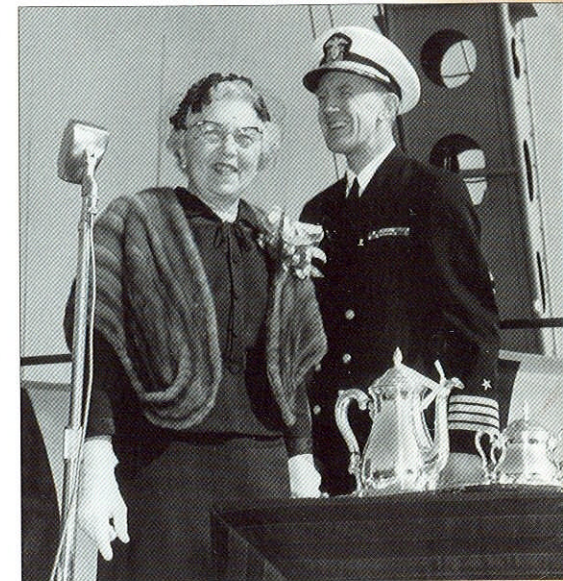


Mrs. Elsa Eisenhart with her husband, Mr. M. Herbert Eisenhart, and children, Eleanor and Richard, at the launching ceremony in 1945.

In recognition of the Eisenharts' lifelong involvement with the *USS Rochester* and their respect and affection for its veterans, a gallery dedicated to the ship's story was designed for the auditorium. This special project was underwritten by the Morris and Eisenhart families.

In 1999, with help once again from these families and from many of the veterans who served on the *USS Rochester*, the gallery was completely renovated. The ship itself may be gone, but certainly she has not been forgotten. Highlights of the new gallery include an exquisitely detailed builder's model of the *USS Rochester* CA 124 as well as the ship's original bell and wheel, all on loan courtesy of the Department of the Navy. Mementos of the 1945 launching ceremony, including the fragments of the ribboned champagne bottle sacrificed at the christening and the actual launch banner that adorned the ship, are also on view.

The 1999 refurbishment incorporates several interactive exhibit elements created to enable visitors of all ages to become better acquainted with daily life in this huge "floating city" and in so doing, to develop their own connections to the U.S. Navy's last heavy cruiser and the people who loved and served on this ship.



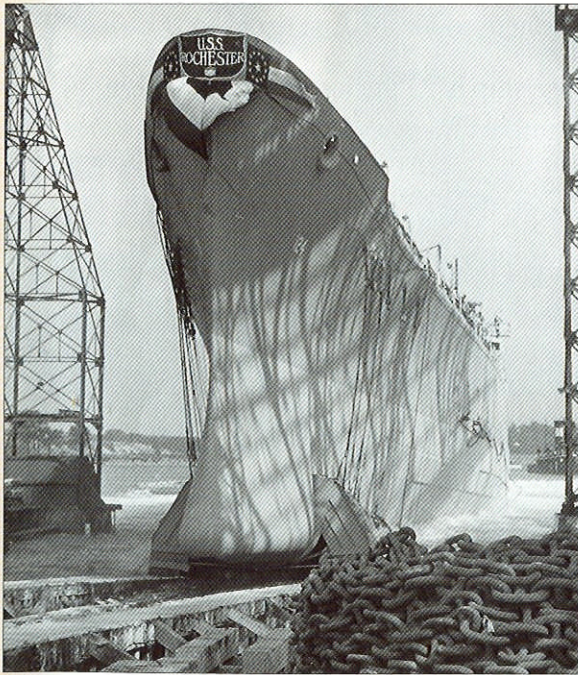
Mrs. Elsa Eisenhart presents a silver coffee and tea service to Captain A.T. Hathaway of the *USS Rochester* in January, 1960.

*The Rochester Museum & Science Center is grateful to the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation for funding the printing of this publication and thus enabling us to share this important story.*

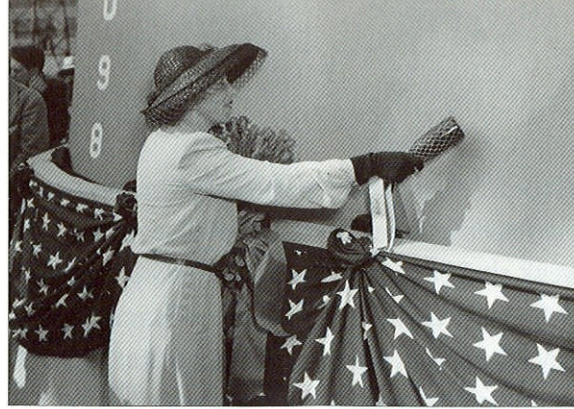


## A Day to Remember

It was August 28, 1945, just a few weeks after the end of World War II. A large crowd, including about two hundred people from Rochester, New York, assembled at Bethlehem Steel's Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, to witness the launching of the Navy's last heavy cruiser designed under World War II specifications. The Secretary of the Navy had selected Rochester, New York, as the namesake of the ship to honor the city's significant contributions to the World War II effort. On the platform two stories above the bank of the river, the bow of the the giant ship



The *USS Rochester* descends on the ways.



Mrs. Elsa (M. Herbert) Eisenhart christens the *USS Rochester* CA 124. The ribboned champagne bottle is on exhibit in the *USS Rochester* CA 124 gallery in the Eisenhart Auditorium, RMSC.

appeared to be a solid wall of steel. The prow, festooned with bunting and a dedication banner, towered several stories above the assembled dignitaries. There was a hubbub of activity around the massive hull of the newly constructed warship. Suddenly, a hush descended upon the scene.

Mrs. Elsa Eisenhart, the ship's official sponsor, approached the gray mass and raised a ribboned champagne bottle in her right hand. She swung it smartly against the steel. A loud 'pop' resonated over the loudspeaker system, and in a strong voice, she proclaimed, "I christen thee the *USS Rochester*."

The crowd roared, and the immense vessel was eased down the ways into the Fore River. A band played the national anthem while nearby vessels saluted the event by sounding their horns. Gradually, the fledgling came to rest, and surrounded by tugs, she was carried off for her final outfitting.

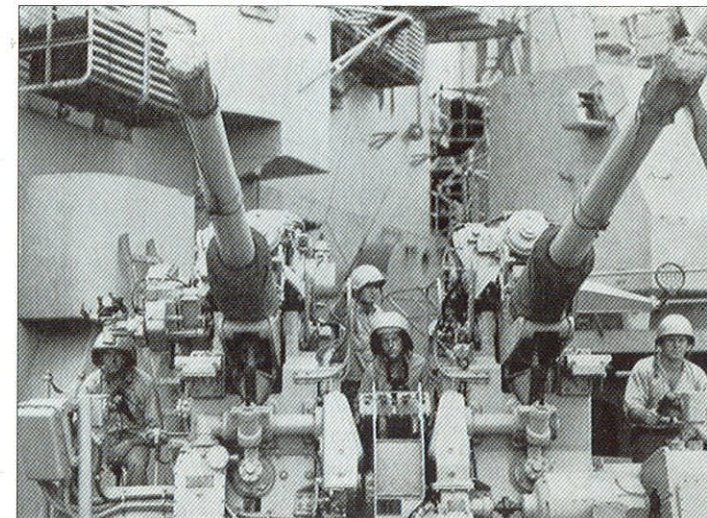
## Creating a Fighting Ship

It took a little more than a year to outfit the *USS Rochester*, designated CA 124 by the Navy. The armament she was given included nine 8-inch guns which comprised her main battery and a dozen 5-inch guns for her

second battery. In addition, she was supplied with huge array of 40 mm and 20 mm anti-aircraft mounts to respond to the Navy's growing need to protect warships from aerial attack.



Checking the 5-inch twin gun mount.



Gun crews on an anti-aircraft mount.





## Flying the Seven Star Pennant

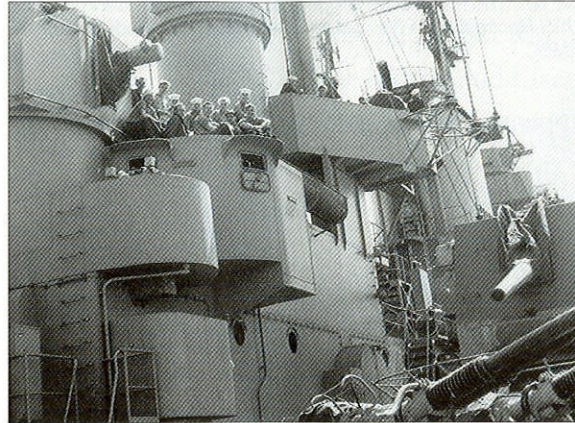
Elsa and her husband, Herbert, attended the commissioning ceremony along with their family at the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston on December 20, 1946. Addressing those gathered, she said:

“I wish all the people of Rochester could be here to share the honor accorded me in attending the commissioning of this great ship. May the *Rochester* be a guardian of peace. May she sail with guns ready and, God willing, through peaceful waters wherever she may go.”

Commissioned ships in the United States Navy were so identified by flying a long, thin, seven star pennant.

## The Test of a Cruiser

The *USS Rochester* departed Provincetown, Massachusetts, in February, 1947, for a nine-week shakedown cruise under the command of Captain Harry A. Guthrie to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. During this cruise, all the ship’s equipment was thoroughly tested.



Crew members assembled near the secondary fire director, aft.

Mr. Croop wired back this report for the newspaper:

“Early today we enjoyed the rare privilege of visiting the bridge and watching the magic radar. The use made of radar to navigate and control gunfire seems fantastic. The ship has been swarming with technicians testing the devices, some which are being used for the first time.

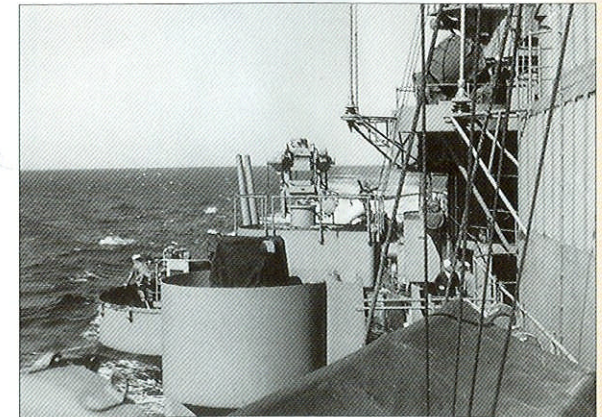
The ship is ... the last word in modern fighting efficiency.”

(*Democrat and Chronicle*, February 14, 1947)



An officer checks a periscope in the 8-inch gun turret.

Aboard ship were four representatives of Rochester’s press and radio: A. Vernon Croop from the *Democrat and Chronicle*; Howard Hosmer from the *Times-Union*; Gunnar O. Wiig from radio station WHEC; and Charles Siverson from radio station WHAM.



Anti-aircraft gun crews prepare for a drill.

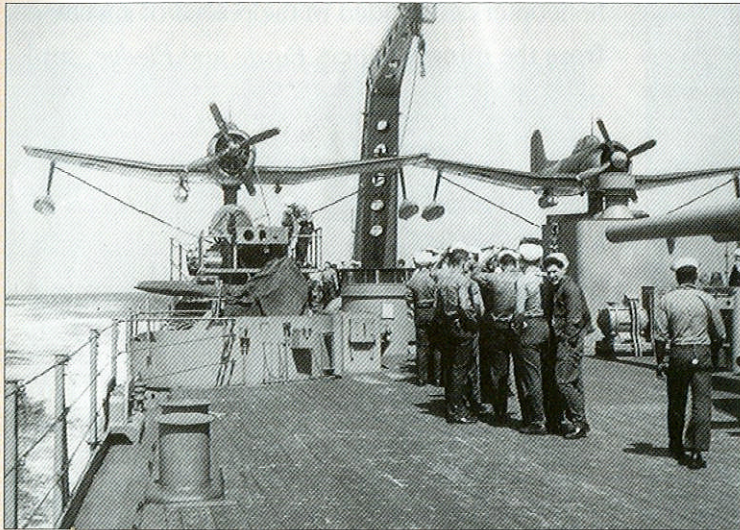


Mrs. Elsa Eisenhart addresses the assembled group at the *USS Rochester's* commissioning ceremony in December, 1946.



## The Atlantic Service

By the end of April, 1947, the *USS Rochester* was at Philadelphia and began a series of nine naval reserve training cruises throughout the Atlantic. She departed Philadelphia on February 20, 1948, for service in the Mediterranean. Arriving at Gibraltar on March 1, she became the flagship for Admiral Forrest Sherman, Commander of the Sixth Fleet.



Seaplanes on catapults.

She completed this tour June 14, and departed for Philadelphia where she resumed reserve training duty, making cruises to Bermuda, New Brunswick, and Jamaica.



In October, she reported to the South Boston Naval Shipyard for her first overhaul. Her airplane catapults were removed, and her aviation section was retrofitted to accommodate helicopters rather than seaplanes. Afterward, the *USS Rochester* continued to cruise the Atlantic. In January of 1950, she was under orders to sail to the west coast to a new home port at Long Beach, California.

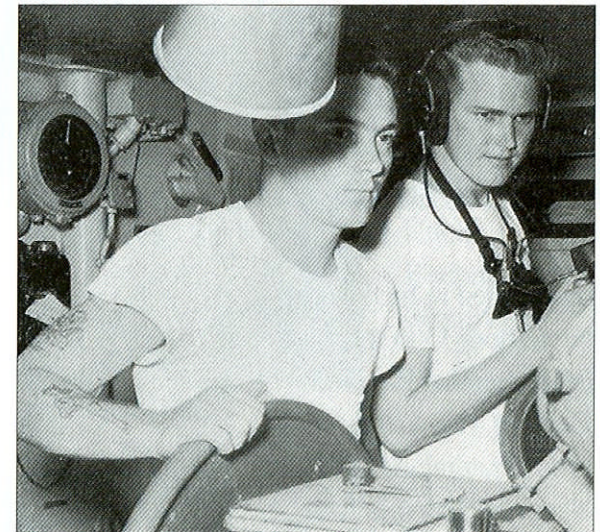


Helicopters replaced seaplanes in October of 1948.

## The Pacific Service

“Back when I was 17, I joined the Navy in Jamestown, New York. ... In February of 1950, I was shipped to Long Beach, California, with a contingent of radarmen to pick up ships on the West Coast. Tony Blair and I went aboard the *Rochester*, and she was a fairly new heavy cruiser. ... This is my first experience aboard any ship and here is this mammoth heavy cruiser!

“She was just as much a stranger to the West Coast as I was. I went aboard ship, and the first few days it took a lot of getting used to because everything was so different than anything we had ever experienced before.”



“By gosh, it's got power steering!”

O.W. “Bart” Bartholomew  
*USS Rochester* CA 124 Radarman  
February 1950 – August 1955



## The Korean War 1950-1953

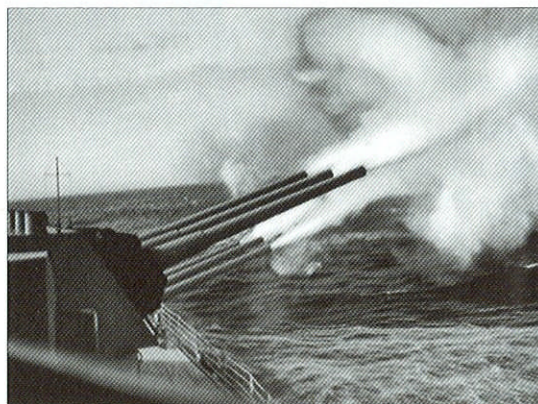
On the morning of July 3, 1950, while in the Philippine Islands as part of Carrier Task Force 77, the *USS Rochester* was ordered to sail to Korea to aid in the support of land forces. On July 18 and 19, 1950, she supported landings on Pohang Dong by the Army's First Cavalry Division. She continued to serve with Task Force 77 until August 25, 1950. The *Rochester's* guns provided support for the troops



"The Galloping Ghost of the Korean Coast."

that landed at Inchon on September 13 in the operation that inspired General MacArthur's proud statement, "The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning."

From October through December, 1950,



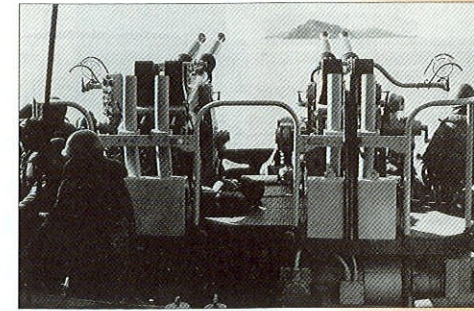
Big guns pound the Korean coast.

*Rochester* operated along the Korean coast for 81 consecutive days, providing gunfire support to troops ashore and serving as a mobile helicopter base. Helicopters were kept aloft constantly to aid the minesweepers in opening the ports of Changjon Koje, Wonsan, Hungnam, and Songjin. In addition to

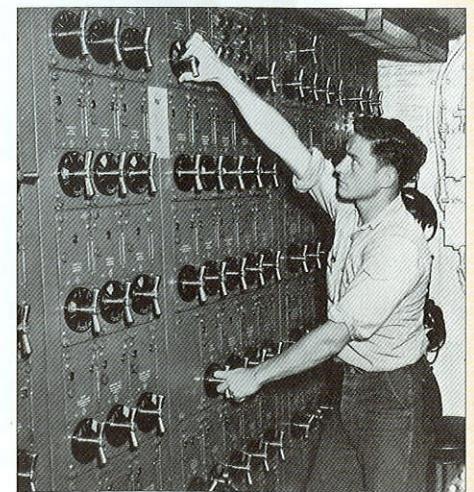
destroying six mines with her own gunfire, the cruiser controlled naval air operations in the Wonsan area prior to the arrival of landing forces. Her helicopters also aided in the rescue of survivors from the minesweepers *Pirate* and *Pledge*, sunk in Wonsan Harbor.

In the first 198 days of operations in Korea, the *Rochester* logged over 25,000 miles and expended 3,265 8-inch and 2,339 5-inch shells. Moving rapidly and silently up and down the

Korean coast, she was nicknamed "The Galloping Ghost of the Korean Coast." On January 10, 1951, she returned to California for a scheduled overhaul. However, she was destined to return to Korea two more times before the war came to an end in the spring of 1953. During the Korean War, the *USS Rochester* often acted as a flagship for the Seventh Fleet, an honor traditionally reserved for battleships, and earned six battle stars for service.



From behind the anti-aircraft guns.



Guns were aimed by remote control from below deck.

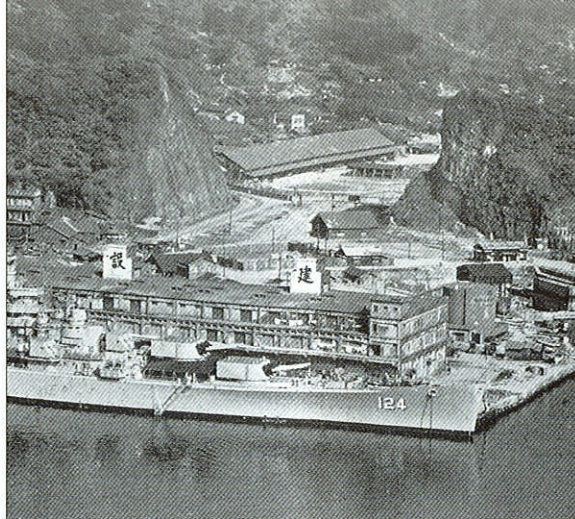


## Tours of the Western Pacific

The *USS Rochester* made nine good will tours to ports of the western Pacific between 1950 and 1960. These not only served to keep the ship and its crew prepared for military action, but they also afforded an opportunity to show the flag of peace in friendly ports. Through these WestPac tours, the ship visited Australia, Formosa, Hawaii, Hong Kong, Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Taiwan. For many young crew members, such visits afforded a completely new experience.



The *USS Rochester* visited Sydney, Australia, during a WestPac Tour, 1958.



Alongside the dock in Formosa, 1955.

## Cruise Books

From 1950 through 1960, the crews of the *USS Rochester* published annual cruise books. Similar to high school or college year books, they recorded the activities of the ship and its shipmates for the entire year. These were not official Navy publications; rather, they were compiled by the officers and crew of the ship and paid for through private subscriptions.



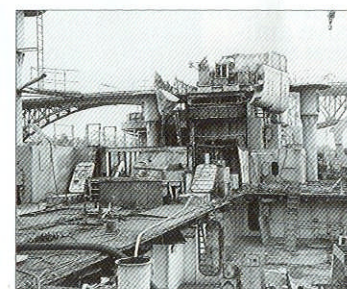
The publishing team for the 1960 *USS Rochester* cruise book.

## Decommissioning and Scrapping

On April 15, 1961, the *USS Rochester* was ordered to report to the Commander, Bremerton Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet, for inactivation. At the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Washington, she was taken out of commission and placed in reserve. She remained at Bremerton until she was struck from the Navy's list on October 1, 1973, after which she was scrapped. At the moment, there is no

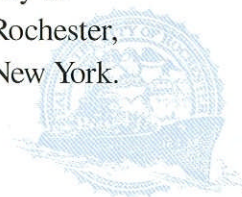


The last voyage.



Removing the bridge.

Navy ship carrying the name of the city of Rochester, New York.



## USS Rochester Association

Today, the memory of the *USS Rochester* CA 124 is perpetuated by the *USS Rochester* Association, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to locating former crew members and preserving the history of their ship. To date, the association has located approximately 1,300 shipmates.



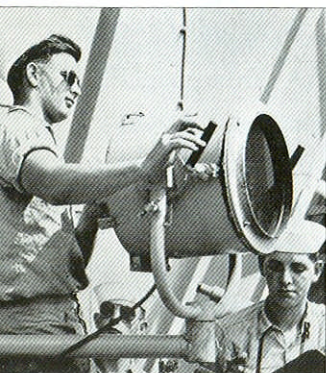
# Cruisers for Cruising, Battleships for Battling

The word “cruiser” is a description of function, not a classification of ship type. Unlike other warships, they were designed to cruise the oceans independent of a squadron or fleet, although they were capable of working in unison with other warships. They were large, powerful, fast, and heavily defended. The *USS Constitution* was America’s first cruiser.

The U.S. Navy took the cruiser to its ultimate in 1944-1945, producing ships of unparalleled fighting power. American cruisers of this time were characterized by efficient engines, uniform equipment, and massive anti-aircraft armament.

“Heavy cruisers” are so designated not because of their weight but because of

the size of their guns. Heavy cruisers carried guns capable of firing shells 6 inches or more in diameter. A battleship is the largest type of Navy warship. It sails with a fleet and carries the biggest guns. While the largest gun on the *USS Rochester* fired 8-inch shells, an *Iowa* class battleship, for example, carried guns capable of firing 16-inch shells.



Signal light operator.



A majestic warship.



Plotting the ship’s course.

## A New Design: Massive and Fast

The *USS Rochester* CA 124 was a cruiser of the *Oregon City* CA-122 class. Although the *Rochester* and her sister ships were built with the basic hull and battery of the earlier war-built *Baltimore* CA-68 class, the design included significant modifications of the superstructure in

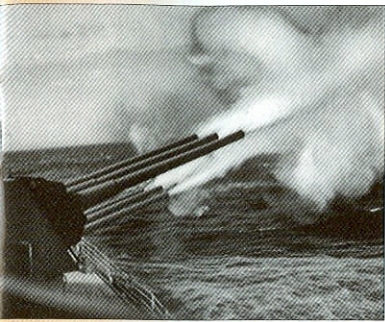
response to World War II naval experiences. For example, the boiler updrafts were trunked into a single stack, and forward and after bridges were clustered in the center of the ship. These changes provided an unobstructed field for anti-aircraft fire.

### USS Rochester Ship Stats

Weight .....	17,000 tons
Length .....	673 feet (equivalent to 2¼ football fields)
Width .....	70 feet
Height .....	10 stories
Total horsepower .....	120,000
Boilers .....	4
Main engines with steam turbines .....	4
Propellers (or screws) .....	4
Electrical generators .....	6 (750 Kilowatts each)
Fuel type .....	Diesel
Fuel capacity .....	2,406 tons
Cruising speed .....	16 knots
Maximum speed .....	33 knots
Range without need to replenish fuel .....	10,000 miles
Fuel consumption at 10 knots .....	900 gallons per hour
Fuel consumption at 33 knots .....	9,000 gallons per hour
Crew (peace time) .....	1,050 men and officers
Crew (war time) .....	1,500 men and officers



## A Fortress Upon the Sea

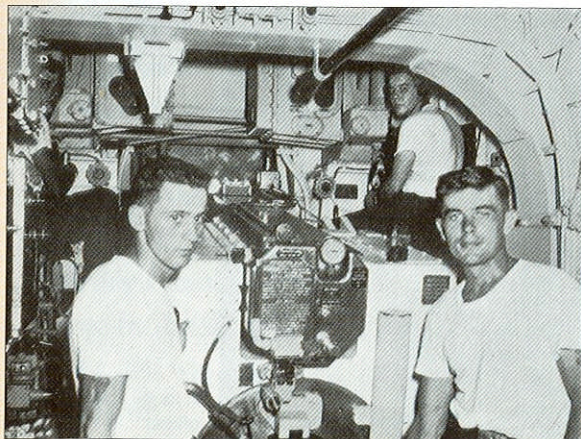


Laying out a broadside could move the ship 18 feet in the water.

The sole reason for the existence of the *USS Rochester* was her guns. The ship literally bristled with various sized guns that could be aimed in any direction.

More than one-half of the ship's crew

was attached to the gunnery department. The work was divided among nine divisions, each of which had a specific responsibility. The first three divisions were responsible for the main battery – the 8-inch guns. When all nine 8-inch guns were fired together, the concussion aboard the ship played havoc with anything exposed on deck. Therefore, the ship's boats and helicopter had to be cleared from the deck before the guns were fired.



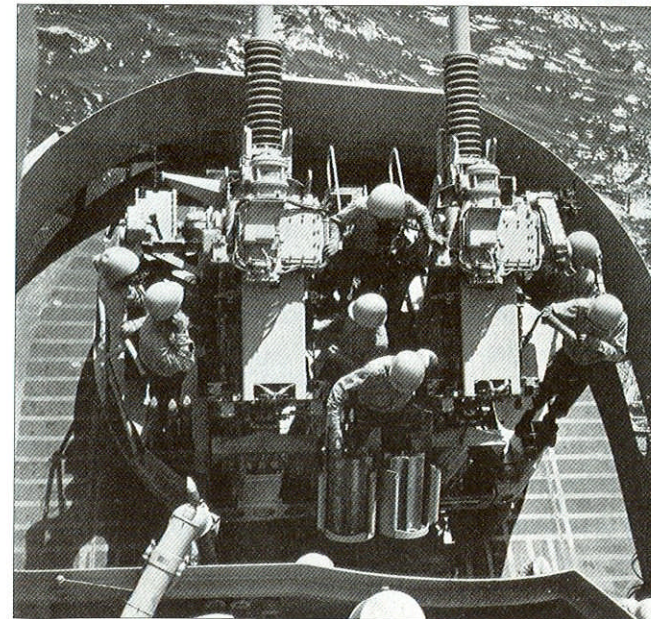
The gunnery crew inside the 8-inch turret.

### Armament

Main Battery	Nine 8-inch guns (Three triple-gun turrets)
Secondary Battery	Twelve 5-inch guns (Six twin-gun mounts)
Anti-aircraft guns	Forty-eight 40 mm; twenty 20 mm

In 1953, the 20 mm and 40 mm batteries were replaced with twenty 3-inch rapid fire guns.

“There was an alarm system that always went off when a gun was getting ready to fire. It was a bell and a buzzer system. It would be three bells and then BOOM! And you knew on the third bell that the gun was going off so you would...brace yourself for it. And then when the other turret came into play, it just doubled the effect. If you laid out a broadside with all nine barrels – all three turrets – firing, it would move the ship in the water about 18 feet.



40 mm guns ready.

“We'd been at general quarters one day for hours, and I got a relief to go down to the head. I had to go down on the main deck and go back aft, and without even thinking that we were on a fire mission, I walked underneath the barrels of Turret 3 when one barrel went off. It knocked me down and my head rang, ears rang. I was so embarrassed for being on the bridge and knowing we were shooting.”



Handling the 8-inch gun projectiles.

O.W. “Bart”  
Bartholomew  
*USS Rochester* CA  
124 Radarman  
February 1950 –  
August 1955





## Awesome Power, Awesome Work

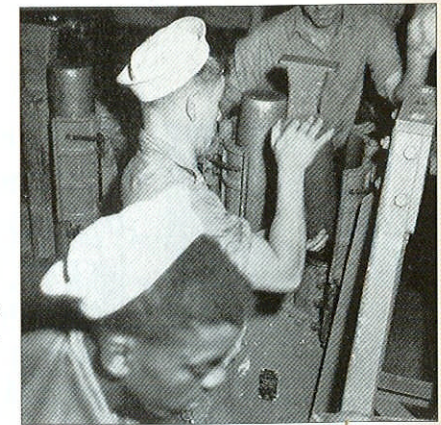
The interior of a 5-inch twin gun mount measured only 18 feet by 18 feet and was filled with machinery. On average, twelve fire control men worked here, each with a special job to perform. They were assisted by another six to eight men whose job it was to feed ammunition to those above them.

The work focused basically on two duties. The first was to aim the guns, the job of a Trainer, a Pointer, and a Safety Observer. The second was to load and fire the guns, the job of Powder Men, Projectile Men, Spade Men, and Hot Case Men. The entire operation was supervised by a Mount Captain.

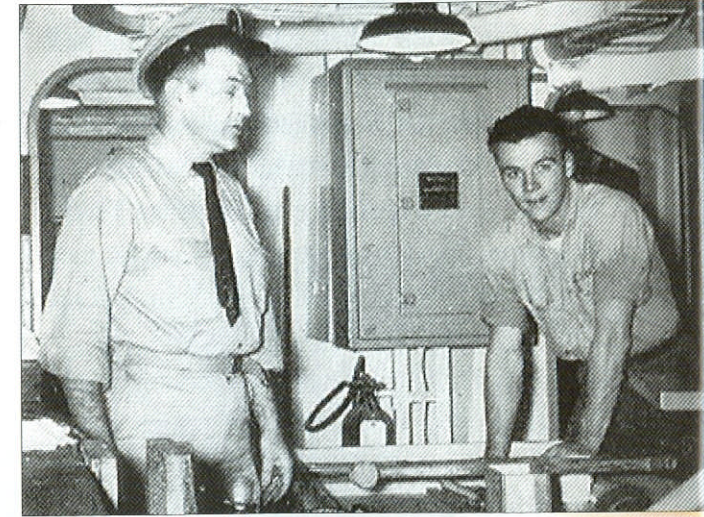
Working inside a gun mount required great muscle and stamina to maintain the pace and to endure hours of suffocating heat and deafening sound. Consider that a 5-inch projectile weighing 50 pounds and a powder casing weighing an additional 40 pounds were loaded into the breech of each gun every 4 or 5 seconds.



Passing the ammunition for 5-inch guns.



Loading the big guns.



Fire control man calculating the positioning of the 8-inch guns.

Gun mounts and turrets were often aimed by other crews in remote information-gathering centers in the bowels of the ship. Battery Plot rooms analyzed a wide variety of information regarding targets, weather, and the movement and orientation of the ship itself by means of then state-of-the-art electronic and manual equipment, including radar. Manually operated computers played a key role in what was an extremely complex series of calculations. In his study of this technology, Dr. David A. Mindell noted, "By the 1930s, no realm of warfare had become as mechanized, precise, and remote as naval gunnery" (Mindell 1996:86).



A radar control officer.



Radarmen practice writing backwards on the Vertical Plot screen.



# Life Aboard the USS Rochester CA 124 During Peace Time

The USS Rochester was a self-sufficient community of up to 1,500 people who operated with relative independence far from land for long periods of time. Life in this “floating city” was highly regimented, by necessity.



“Holystoning” or smoothing the wooden deck.

## Everyday Life: Well-Ordered Days

The average peace-time day of a crewman of the USS Rochester started at 6:00 am with reveille, showers, and breakfast. At 8:00 there was muster and inspection, followed by the distribution of the Plan of the Day. This was a schedule of the day’s routine, including events ordered by the ship’s Executive Officer, and was published daily aboard ship.

At 8:30 the work day began. It might have been mopping the deck or painting the railing – whatever was necessary. At 11:30 the crew knocked off work to get ready for lunch. At 1:00 pm they returned to work, and at 4:00 they stopped their chores for the day. If in port, two-thirds of the crew were free to leave the ship for liberty call, while the other third remained on duty to stand watch or do chores. When at sea, there was no liberty call, and all shared in watches and necessary chores.



Old but reliable technology. The sextant is used to check the accuracy of the ship’s high tech gyrocompass.

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*We turned in our cars....stowed our swim trunks.... We got underway....*

*Gunnery....we shot....scratch one drone....*

*We bettered our tans....lazy noon-time sunbathing....A lucky bag auction....*

*At night....movies under starlight....the Ramblers beforehand....*

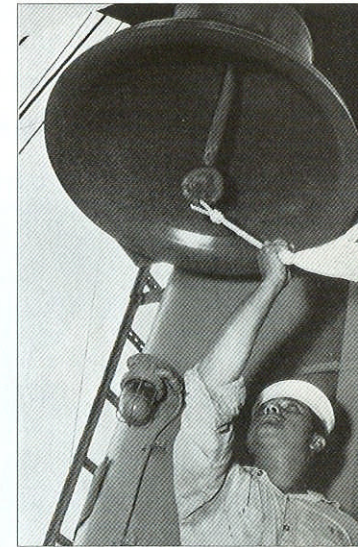
*And we worked....paint ship....holystone....shine brightwork....*

*The ship was spotless....*

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## Watches

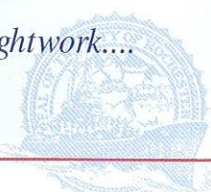
Watches were typically four-hour periods of duty assigned to crew members. They called for a variety of skills – from cleaning and painting to monitoring specialized equipment to maintaining the ship’s log. The ship’s bell was rung every four hours from reveille to taps except during religious services, when the ship was darkened, and when the fog signal was being sounded.



Ring the bell for the watch. This bell is on exhibit in the USS Rochester CA 124 gallery in the Eisenhart Auditorium, RMSC.



Painting again...and again...

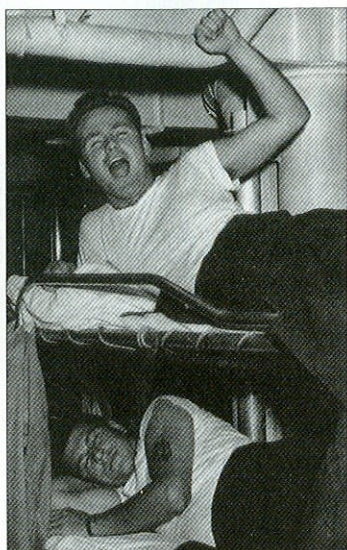




## *Life Aboard the USS Rochester CA 124 During Peace Time (continued)*

### *Sleeping*

Crews slept on bunks in berth compartments on the ship's second and third decks. Made of

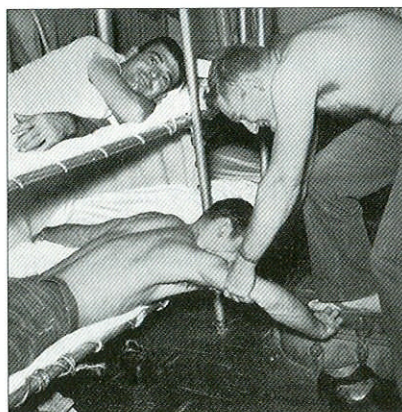


Reveille!

canvas stretched over aluminum frames, the bunks were closely arranged in tiers along walls or hanging from the ceiling. When not in use, they were folded flat against the walls. Personal possessions were stored in small lockers in the berth compartments.

### *Meals*

Meals were served three times a day at precise times: breakfast at 0600-0730 hours (6:00-7:30 am), lunch at 1130-1230 hours (11:30 am to 12:30 pm), and dinner from 1830-2030 hours (6:30 to 8:30 pm).

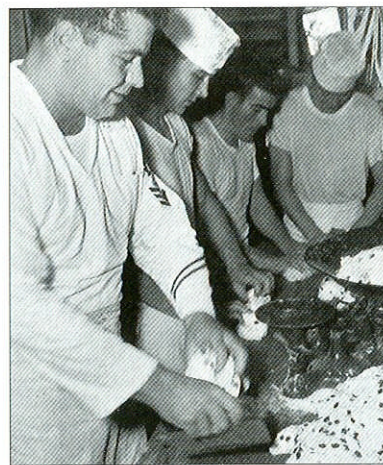


"Get up, get up. Didn't you hear reveille?"

"All the meals were served cafeteria style, and you worked your way through the serving line. ... The meals in the Navy are excellent. The only thing that they really would mess up would be chicken. I'm just getting around now where I'll eat my wife's chicken. ...

Otherwise their food was delicious and guys would gain weight from eating it."

O.W. "Bart" Bartholomew  
USS Rochester CA 124 Radarman  
February 1950 – August 1955



### *Fresh Water: A Precious Thing*

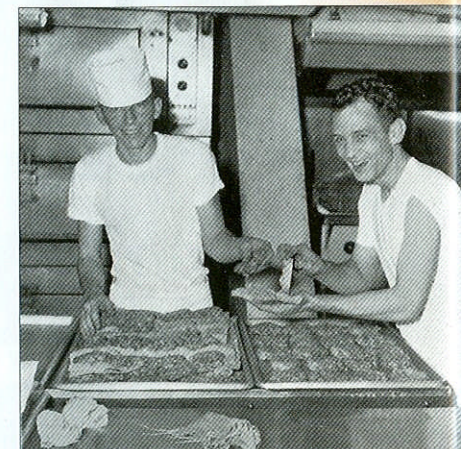
"Because fresh water was made aboard the ship in condensers, it was always at a premium. ... One way of restricting water use was to take a Navy shower. When you got into the shower, you turned the water on and

wet down. You shut the water off, and then you soaped down and scrubbed. Then you turned the water back on and rinsed off... as quickly as you could and turned the water off. So you may have been in the shower five minutes but your water was only on for about a total of a minute.

"If anybody saw that you were abusing the privilege, they had

what they called a "Navy shower." The scrub brushes that they used to use to scrub the deck were... short, stiff bristled brushes. A bunch of your shipmates would grab you and... soak you down alright, but they'd scrub it off with a deck scrubber brush. You didn't waste water after that."

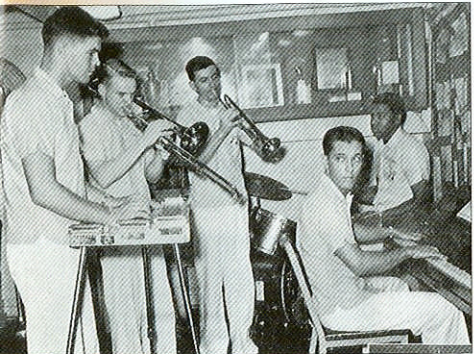
O.W. "Bart" Bartholomew  
USS Rochester CA 124 Radarman  
February 1950 – August 1955





## Just Having Fun

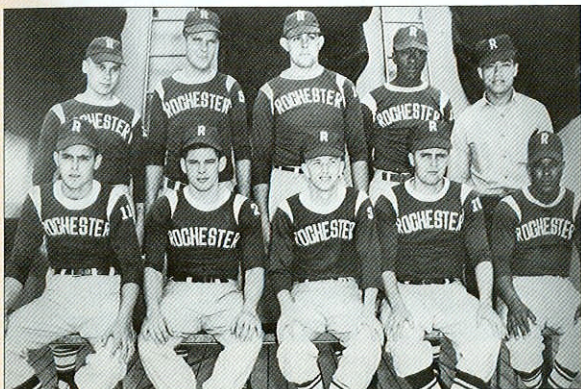
The ship's crew had a wide variety of ways to entertain themselves. Movies were shown regularly, and ships routinely exchanged films. Boxing matches or "smokers" were also popular and were often a reason to organize a party.



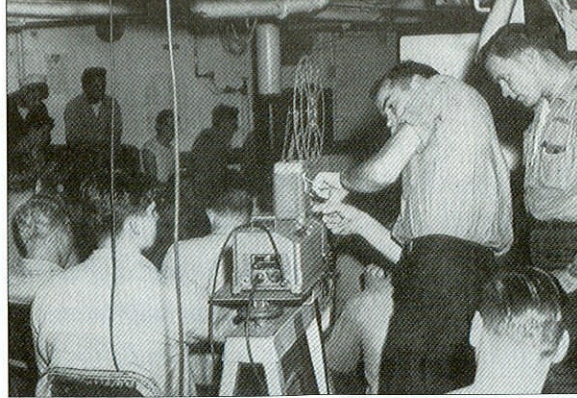
The Rochester Ramblers practice a new piece.

All ships had their own bands, and when the Admiral of the fleet was aboard, there were two. The *USS*

*Rochester's* band was unique in that it was the only Navy band that specialized in country and western music. Called the "Rochester Ramblers," they performed on the fantail of the ship before a very enthusiastic audience. Sports teams were also very popular, and the *USS Rochester* had a baseball and a basketball team.



Baseball team.

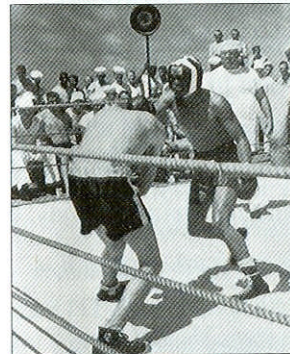


Showing movies.

## Movies

"Every night [there] was a movie shown in the mess hall, or if it was nice weather and we were in port, they would show it on the fantail. They'd rig a big screen and show movies up there. Sometimes you may have seen the movie three or four times. They'd have a movie that would circulate through the fleet. [When] ships [got] alongside one another, they'd always exchange movies. Periodically you'd get the same movie time and time again; seems like it just kept coming back to you."

O.W. "Bart" Bartholomew  
*USS Rochester* CA 124 Radarman  
 February 1950 – August 1955

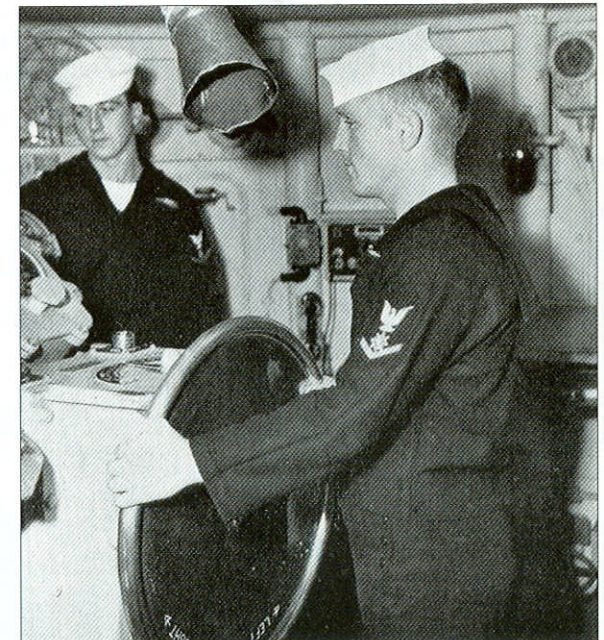


Smokers focused on boxing matches.

## Rites of Passage

"I think one of the big events for a sailor on board any ship is when that ship crosses the equator. ... Crossing the equator and proceeding through the realm of King Neptune Rex is an initiation that is unforgettable. I became a 'Shellback' on the *Rochester* in 1954 and that's what happens when you cross the equator the first time. Up until that point you are a 'Pollywog.'"

O.W. "Bart" Bartholomew  
*USS Rochester* CA 124 Radarman  
 February 1950 – August 1955



The steersman at the wheel with a voice tube for communicating, located directly in front of him. This ship's wheel and the voice tube are on exhibit in the *USS Rochester* CA 124 gallery in the Eisenhart Auditorium, RMSC.



## Life Aboard the USS Rochester CA 124 During Peace Time *(continued)*



Fresh fruit.

### *Liberty Call*

“If you were in port, there would be liberty call and you would go ashore and be with your family or whatever you wanted to do on shore, but you had to be back aboard ship by 7 o’clock the next morning.



Going ashore with pockets filled.

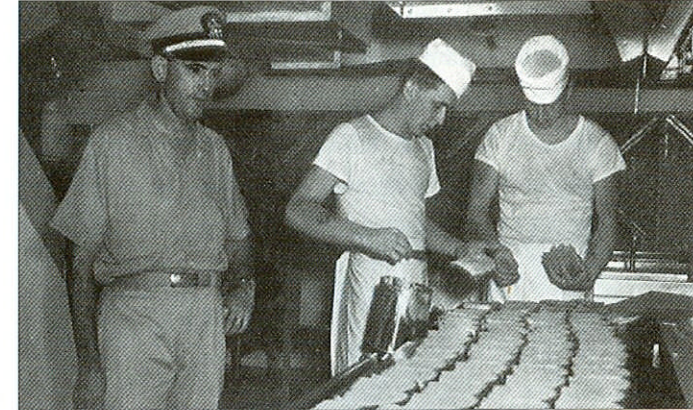
“If you were in a foreign port . . . , everybody was back at midnight. That was called ‘Cinderella Liberty’ because, at midnight, if you weren’t back aboard, you turned into a pumpkin . . . because, well, what would happen to you wasn’t nice. At foreign ports you did your shopping and got your souvenirs, and you went sightseeing. A lot of guys went to bars. They would sit and drink and reminisce and tell sea stories. You had letters to write home plus you kept the ship maintained during the day, too.”

O.W. “Bart” Bartholomew  
USS Rochester CA 124 Radarman  
February 1950 – August 1955



### *Jobs and Professions*

Each crew member had a job which altogether corresponded to nearly every major kind of skill and profession found in any small town in America. The ship’s company was a working community, and in many ways, life was very similar to what it was back home. Like its terrestrial counterparts, the floating city had butchers, bakers, and plumbers; machinists, welders, and tailors; laundry



Bakers.

people and carpenters; doctors, lawyers, and dentists; clerics, salesmen, and skilled laborers; foremen, entertainers, sportsmen, and policemen, to mention only a few.



Barber.



Store clerk.

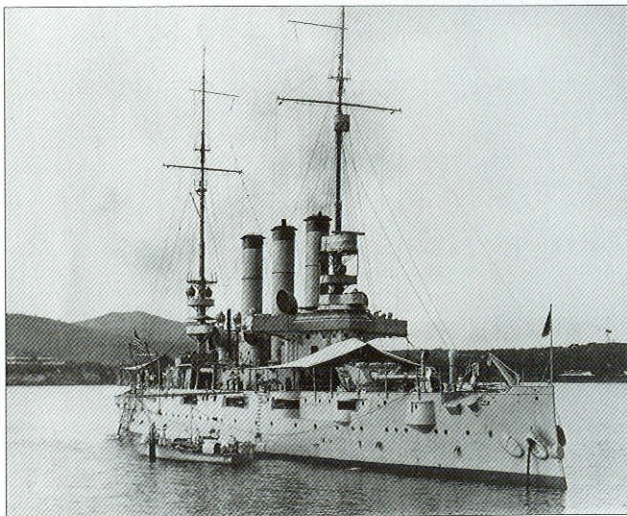


## The First USS Rochester

The *USS Rochester* CA 124 was actually the second ship to be named for the city of Rochester, New York. The first began life in 1891 as the armored cruiser, the *New York*. Built for some \$3 million by William Cramp & Sons of Philadelphia, the *New York* was the center of attention of the international armada that gathered for the opening of the North Sea-Baltic Canal in 1895. It later served as the flagship of Rear Admiral William T. Sampson in the Spanish-American War.

Her name was changed to *USS Saratoga* in 1911. In 1917, after a major refit, the name was changed once more to *USS Rochester* ACR 2. During World War I, the *Rochester* shepherded convoys of troop-packed transports across the Atlantic. When decommissioned in 1933, the *USS Rochester* was as famous as she was obsolete, having completed the longest service span of any of the U.S. Navy's steam-driven vessels.

The final chapter of the first *Rochester's* service to her country was written on December 24, 1941, when she was towed from her mooring in Subic Bay, the Philippines, and sunk in the main ship's channel to thwart a Japanese landing force's attempts to come ashore.



The first *USS Rochester*.

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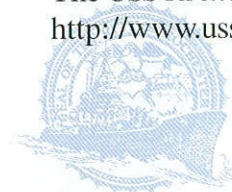
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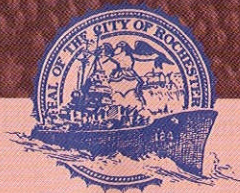
The reader may also wish to explore the following web sites as a starting place to learn more about the *USS Rochester*:

The Naval Historical Center:  
<http://www.history.navy.mil>

The *USS Rochester* Association:  
<http://www.ussrochester.org>







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