

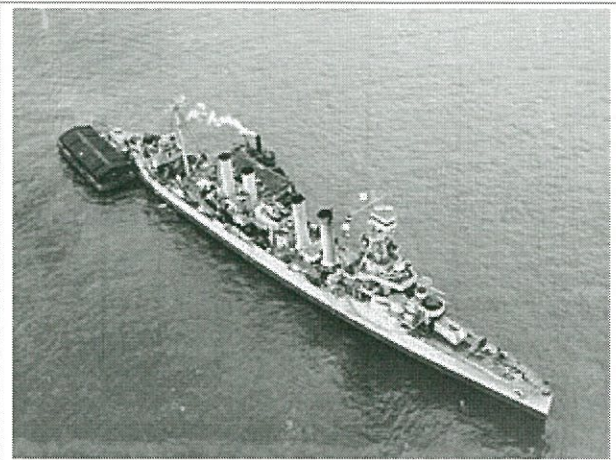
USS *Omaha* (CL-4)

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USS *Omaha* (CL-4) was the lead ship of *Omaha*-class light cruiser, originally classified as a scout cruiser, of the United States Navy. She was the second US Navy ship named for the city of Omaha, Nebraska. She spent most of her career in the Pacific. At this time her primary mission was training, and she proved to be very capable by consistently winning fleet awards in gunnery and communications. She made many ports-of-call throughout the Pacific, Mediterranean and Caribbean during her peacetime cruises, displaying the Stars and Stripes. Later she was assigned to Neutrality Patrol in the Atlantic, during which she captured the German blockade runner SS *Odenwald*. She also supported Operation Dragoon, the invasion of the south of France.

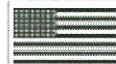
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USS *Omaha* (CL-4), in New York Harbor, 10 February 1943.

History



United States

Name:	<i>Omaha</i>
Namesake:	City of Omaha, Nebraska
Ordered:	29 August 1916
Awarded:	26 December 1916 21 February 1919 (supplementary contract)
Builder:	Todd Dry Dock & Construction Co., Tacoma, Washington
Cost:	\$1,541,396 (cost of hull & machinery) ^[1]
Laid down:	6 December 1918
Launched:	14 December 1920
Sponsored by:	Louise Bushnell White
Completed:	1 August 1921
Commissioned:	24 February 1923
Decommissioned:	1 November 1945
Struck:	28 November 1945
Identification:	Hull symbol: CL-4 Code letters: NISL 

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Construction and design

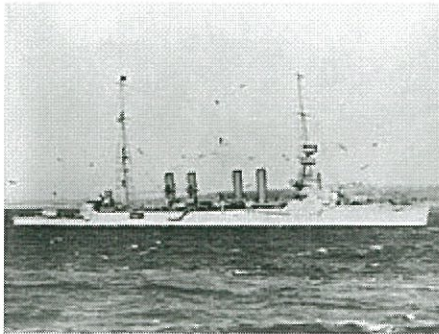
Omaha's keel was laid down by the Todd Dry Dock & Construction Company of Tacoma, Washington, on 6 December 1918. She was launched on 14 December 1920. *Omaha* was sponsored by Louise Bushnell White, she was a descendant of the inventor of the first documented submarine, *Turtle*, to be used in combat, David Bushnell.^[5] She was commissioned on 24 February 1923, with Captain David C. Hanrahan in command.^[2]

Omaha was 550 feet (170 metres) long at the waterline with an overall length of 555 feet 6 inches (169.32 metres), her beam was 55 feet 4 inches (16.87 metres) and a mean draft of 14 feet 3 inches (4.34 metres). Her standard displacement was 7,050 long tons (7,163 t) and 9,508 long tons (9,661 t) at full load.^[3] Her crew during peace time consisted of 29 officers and 429 enlisted men.^{[4][6]}

Omaha was powered by four Westinghouse geared steam turbines, each driving one screw, using steam generated by 12 Yarrow boilers. The engines were designed to produce 90,000 ihp (67,000 kW) and reach a top speed of 35 kn (65 km/h; 40 mph).^[3] Though the ship's design was intended to provide a range of 10,000 nmi (19,000 km; 12,000 mi) at a speed of 10 kn (19 km/h; 12 mph), she only delivered 8,460 nmi (15,670 km; 9,740 mi) at that speed.^{[4][6]}

Omaha's main armament went through many changes while she was being designed. Originally she was to mount ten 6-inch (150 mm)/53 caliber guns; two on either side at the waist, with the remaining eight mounted in tiered casemates on either side of the fore and aft superstructures. After the United States entry into World War I the US Navy worked alongside the Royal Navy and it was decided to mount four 6-inch/53 caliber guns in two twin gun turrets fore and aft and keep the eight guns in the tiered casemates so that she

Honors and awards:	★ 1 × battle star
Fate:	Scrapped, February 1946
General characteristics (as built)^{[2][3]}	
Class and type:	<i>Omaha</i> -class light cruiser
Displacement:	7,050 long tons (7,163 t) (standard)
Length:	555 ft 6 in (169.32 m) oa 550 ft (170 m) pp
Beam:	55 ft (17 m)
Draft:	14 ft 3 in (4.34 m) (mean)
Installed power:	12 × Yarrow boilers 90,000 ihp (67,000 kW) (Estimated power produced on trials)
Propulsion:	4 × Westinghouse reduction geared steam turbines 4 × screws
Speed:	35 kn (65 km/h; 40 mph) 33.7 kn (62.4 km/h; 38.8 mph) (Estimated speed on trials)
Crew:	29 officers 429 enlisted (peace time)
Armament:	2 × twin 6 in (152 mm)/53 caliber guns 8 × single 6 in/53 caliber guns 2 × 3 in (76 mm)/50 caliber anti-aircraft guns 2 × triple 21 in (533 mm) torpedo tubes 2 × twin 21 in torpedo tubes 224 × mines
Armor:	Belt: 3 in (76 mm) Deck: 1½ in (38 mm) Conning Tower: 1½ in Bulkheads: 1½-3 in



Omaha in harbor, 8 December 1923, her lower twin torpedo tubes visible and her aircraft catapults installed.

would have an eight gun broadside and, due to limited arcs of fire from the casemate guns, four to six guns firing fore or aft. Her secondary armament consisted of two 3-inch (76 mm)/50

caliber anti-aircraft (AA) guns in single mounts. She carried two triple and two twin, above-water, torpedo tube mounts for 21-inch (533 mm) torpedoes. The triple mounts were fitted on either side of the upper deck, aft of the aircraft catapults, and the twin mounts were one deck lower on either side, covered by hatches in the side of the hull.^[4] *Omaha* was also built with the capacity to carry 224 mines.^[7]

The ship lacked a full-length waterline armor belt. The sides of her boiler and engine rooms and steering gear were protected by three inches (76 mm) of armor. The transverse bulkheads at the end of her machinery rooms were one and a half inches (38 mm) thick forward and three inches thick aft. The conning tower and the deck over the machinery spaces and steering gear had one and a half inches of armor. The gun turrets were not armored and only provided protection against muzzle blast and splinter damage.^[4]



Omaha's #1 Vought UO-1

Omaha carried two floatplanes aboard that were stored on the two midships catapults. Initially these were Vought VE-9s, then Vought UO-1s, the ship then operated Curtiss SOC Seagulls from 1935, and Vought OS2U Kingfishers after 1940.^[4]

Aircraft carried:	2 × floatplanes
Aviation facilities:	2 × Midships catapults crane

General characteristics (1945)^[4]

Armament:	2 × twin 6 in/53 caliber guns
	6 × single 6 in/53 caliber guns
	8 × 3 in/50 caliber anti-aircraft guns
	2 × triple 21 in torpedo tubes
	3 × twin 40 mm (1.57 in) Bofors guns
	14 × single 20 mm (0.79 in) Oerlikon cannons

Armament changes

During her career *Omaha* went through several armament changes. Some of these changes were to save weight, while others were to increase her AA armament. On 8 September 1926, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Edward W. Eberle, along with the Commanders in Chief of the United States Fleet and

Battle Fleet, and their subordinate commanding officers, the Secretary of the Navy, Curtis D. Wilbur, ordered that all mines and the tracks for laying the mines be removed from all of the *Omaha*-class cruisers, the working conditions had been found to be very "wet". In December 1933, while she was undergoing overhaul at Bremerton, her 3-inch AA guns were increased from two to eight, all mounted in the ship's waist.^[5] The lower torpedo tube mounts, which had also proved to be very wet, were removed and the openings plated over before the start of World War II. After 1940, the lower aft 6-inch guns were removed and the casemates plated over for the same reason as the lower torpedo mounts. The ship's AA armament was first augmented by three quadruple 1.1-inch (28 mm)/75 gun mounts by early 1942, however, these didn't prove reliable and were replaced by twin 40-millimetre (1.57 in) Bofors guns later in the war. At about the same time, she also received 14 20-millimetre (0.79 in) Oerlikon cannons.^[4]



Mines on an *Omaha* class (CL 4-13) light cruiser. Taken while the ship was underway at sea, looking aft, showing the very wet conditions that were typical on these cruisers' after decks when they were operating in a seaway.

Photographed circa 1923-1925, prior to the addition of a deckhouse just forward of the ships' after twin six-inch gun mount.

Service history

Inter-war period

Omaha spent most of August 1923, near Puget Sound where she conducted her sea trials. On 6 October, she proceeded to Puget Sound Navy Yard to have her aircraft catapults installed. She then sailed for Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, California, on 17 October, where she loaded ammunition for target practice. At the end of November and into early December 1923, *Omaha* conducted "Short Range Battle Practice" with the battleship USS *Mississippi* (BB-41) before joining the Battle Fleet on 8 December.^[8]

Not satisfied with *Melville*'s suitability as a flagship, Rear Admiral Sumner E. W. Kittelle, Commander Destroyer Squadrons, sought a replacement. *Omaha* was chosen for RADM Kittelle's replacement, for which she reported at San Diego, California, 27 December 1923. She only held the post until 14 March 1924.^[8]

Omaha fell into a routine of operations along the Pacific coast, Central America, and exercises in the Caribbean, with occasional trips to Pearl Harbor. In 1925, she visited Australia and New Zealand, and in

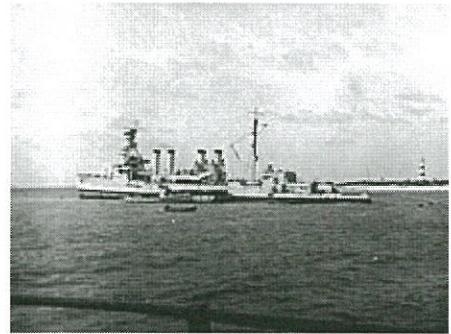
1930, she embarked member of the American Samoa Commission for their Congressional investigation of conditions at Pago Pago. In 1931, she sailed for the Caribbean where she joined in exercises from the end of March until early May. She then transferred to the Atlantic, where she participated in joint maneuvers with the US Army in Hampton Roads, at the end of May. From there she continued in maneuvers at Newport, Hampton Roads, and the Southern Drill Ground. *Omaha* sailed into the Boston Navy Yard at the end of October, where she remained until January when she set sail for her return to the Pacific.^[8]

Once again *Omaha* fell into her routine of steaming along the western coast until July 1937. In addition she returned to Panama several times for exercises and fleet problems, operated in Hawaiian waters and around the Aleutian Islands.^[8]

Grounding in the Bahamas

In July 1937, *Omaha* was serving as flagship of the Special Service Squadron when she was relieved by the year old gunboat *Erie*. On 19 July, *Omaha* became grounded on a reef at Castle Island, Bahamas, near 22°07'35.1"N 74°19'42.0"W. During the investigation it was stated that,

"she quickly and evenly decelerated as the bottom engaged the smooth reef."



Omaha aground in the Bahamas 1937

The grounding, which had occurred during high tide, made dislodging the cruiser more difficult. After removing as much as possible in an attempt to lighten the ship the salvagers employed tugs to pull on *Omaha* while destroyers circled around them to create waves. After attempting and failing for ten days, on 29 July, *Omaha* was finally floated free. She got underway the following day for the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia, where she underwent repairs. A general court martial, held on 11 October 1937, found that Captain Howard B. Mecleary, *Omaha*'s commanding officer at the time of the grounding, was guilty of negligence "resulting in the stranding of the vessel", he was sentenced to the loss of 25 numbers on the captain's list. On 14 February 1938, *Omaha* got underway after having the damage to her hull repaired, with Captain Wallace L. Lind, as her new commanding officer. She conducted sea trials while en route to Guantánamo.^[8]

Germany invades Poland

Omaha set sail for Gibraltar on 30 March 1938, for service in the Mediterranean Sea. Arriving in Marseille, France, 27 April 1938, she would remain in the Mediterranean for over a year, until 2 May 1939. She visited Villefranche-sur-Mer, and Menton, France, during her time before departing from Malta, for her return to the US and an extensive overhaul from 17 June until October 1939. It was during this time that, on 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, starting what would become World War II.^[8]

Omaha operated in the Caribbean after her overhaul conducting gunnery and tactical exercise from the end of October until 6 December 1939, when she arrived at Havana. She had been tasked with the duty of transporting the body of J. Butler Wright, the US Ambassador to Cuba, who had died 4 December, to Washington, DC. Upon completion, *Omaha* reported to Naval Station Norfolk, staying there until 1 April

1940. [8]

On 1 April 1940, set sail for the Philadelphia Navy Yard before getting underway for the Caribbean. She entered San Juan, Puerto Rico, then proceeded to Guantánamo and Havana, before returning again to Philadelphia, 5 May. On 28 May, *Omaha* would return to Norfolk, before leaving on 22 June, for Lisbon, Portugal, and her new assignment as flagship of the temporary Squadron 40-T, which had been formed to protect US civilians and interests in Spain, during the Spanish Civil War. [8]

Omaha was to relieve her sister ship *Trenton* in Lisbon. As *Tenton*, returning to the US, and *Omaha* passed each other upon her arrival the two crews cheered and waved. *Omaha's* band played "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" while *Trenton's* musicians responded with "Empty Saddles (in the Old Corral)". *Omaha* remained near Lisbon, during her service as flagship, until early October 1940, when the squadron was disbanded. On 3 October, she got underway for her return to the US. She made port calls at Monrovia, Liberia, on 10 October, and Pernambuco, Brazil, on 15 October, along the way. During her visit at Monrovia the necessary conditions for modern military training and equipment for the Liberian Frontier Force were set aboard *Omaha* at a meeting of the US admiral David McDougal LeBreton with the Liberian Secretary Clarence Simpson. [9] On 23 October, *Omaha* put into Naval Operating Base Norfolk, where she would remain until 7 November. [8]

From November 1940 until February 1941, *Omaha* was again in the Caribbean for more tactical and gunnery exercises. In February 1941, she entered the New York Navy Yard for overhaul and the installation of a radar system, her first. [5]

Omaha got underway 28 April 1941, but engine trouble soon developed and she was forced to return to Brooklyn, for repairs to her No. 4 turbine until 25 June. [5]

Task Force (TF) 3, which was at the time commanded by RADM Jonas H. Ingram, had initiated patrol operations out of the Brazilian ports of Recife and Bahia on 15 June 1941. *Omaha*, along with three of her sisters, were among the resources that were available for Ingram's Southern Atlantic operations, along with five destroyers. On 30 June, with the propulsion and engineering issues having been resolved, *Omaha* steamed out of Brooklyn, to begin her Neutrality Patrols between Recife and Ascension Island, British Overseas Territory. *Omaha* was tasked with enforcing a blockade against Germany by intercepting, boarding, and inspecting vessels that may have been German merchants or agents conducting trade in the region. In addition, she also tasked with escorting and protecting convoys in the shipping lanes between South America and West Africa, from Axis U-boats and merchant raiders. She visited Montevideo, Uruguay, in addition to Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and although not at war during this time she still operated under war conditions. [5]

Search for blockade runners

On 4 November 1941, with the report from the British oiler RFA *Olwen* that a German surface raider had attacked her at 03°04'N 22°42'W, Vice Admiral Algernon U. Willis, RN, Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic, order his heavy cruiser HMS *Dorsetshire*, along with the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Canton*, to search for the raider. The light cruiser HMS *Dunedin* and the special service vessels HMS *Queen Emma* and *Princess Beatrix* were additionally ordered to assist in the search and departed from Freetown, Sierra Leone. [5]

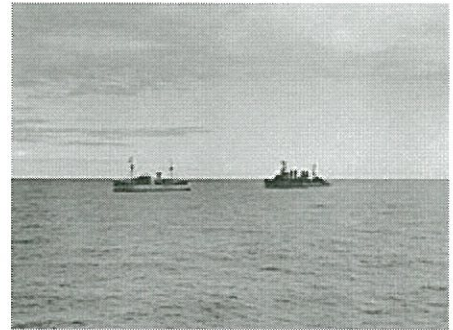
Dorsetshire and *Canton* seperated, with *Dorsetshire* steaming southeast and *Canton* setting an opposite course. *Omaha* and the destroyer *Somers*, TG 3.6, which were located well to the northwest of the reported

siting at that time, were tasked with supporting the Royal Navy ships. *Memphis* and the destroyers *Davis* and *Jouett*, who were near to the location given by *Olwen*, were able to search the area, but were unable to locate the "German raider", while *Omaha* and *Somers*'s search for survivors was also unsuccessfully. On 5 November, the next day, the search continued.^[5]

However, even though the hunt for the "raider" had been unsuccessful it ultimately proved to not be entirely fruitless. On 6 November, as *Omaha* and *Somers*, where en route back to Recife, returning from a 3,023 mi (4,865 km) patrol in the equatorial waters of the Atlantic, smoke was spotted, at 05:06, on the horizon. Captain Theodore E. Chandler, *Omaha*^[1] commander, put her on an intercept course with the sighting. As *Omaha* approached the ship, which was flying US colors with the name *Willmoto*, out of Philadelphia, identifying her on her stern, she began taking evasive action. While multiple attempts were made to signal the merchant ship, they either went unanswered or they were given suspicious responses. *Omaha*'s lookouts also reported that many of the crew visible on the deck of the ship were "uniquely un-American in appearance."^[5]

Capture of *Odenwald*

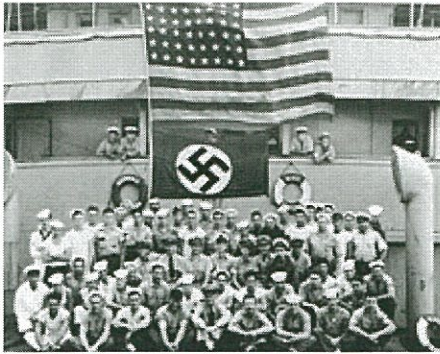
The ship identified herself as *Willmoto*, but did not satisfactorily identify herself to the American warships. After ordering *Willmoto* to heave to, *Omaha*'s crew dispatched a boarding party. At 05:37 Lieutenant George K. Carmichael, along with an armed boarding party, began to make way for the vessel. Around this time, the merchant hoisted the signal flags "Fox Mike", indicating that the ship was sinking and that they required assistance. Two distinct explosions could be heard within the ship when the boarding party began to climbing the ship's ladder. In an attempt to leave the sinking ship, several of the crew had lowered lifeboats, but LT Carmichael ordered them to return to the ship. At 05:58, Carmichael signaled to *Omaha* that the ship was indeed a German ship and that the crew had attempted to scuttle her. She was identified as *Odenwald*, a German blockade runner and that her holds were filled with 3,857 t (3,796 long tons; 4,252 short tons) of rubber, along with 103 B. F. Goodrich truck tires and sundry other cargo that totaled 6,223 t (6,125 long tons; 6,860 short tons) total.^[5]



Omaha CL-4 with German *Odenwald* 1941, taken from *Somers*.

Omaha's sailors were assisted by a diesel engine specialist from *Somers*'s ship's company to help prevent *Odenwald*'s loss. *Omaha*'s SOC floatplanes and *Somers* guarded the operation. After repairs the three ships set course for Port of Spain, Trinidad, to avoid possible complications with the government of Brazilian.^[5]

Omaha arrived at Port of Spain, on 17 November 1941, with *Odenwald* flying the German flag on the mast with the US flag flying over it. It wasn't until 30 April 1947, that a case was brought by *Odenwald*'s owners in the District Court for Puerto Rico, against the US. Their claim stated that because a state of war between the United States and Germany did not exist at the time of capture the vessel could not be taken as a prize or bounty. The court however, given the fact that *Odenwald* was rescued from sinking by the US crew, declared that the seizing of the ship was defined as a legal salvage operation. The US was awarded the profits that were made off of *Odenwald* and her cargo. All the men of the original boarding party received \$3,000 each, while the rest of the crewmen in *Omaha* and *Somers*, at the time, were entitled to two months' pay and allowances. The laws have since been changed and this was the last time that such an award was paid out to members of the US Navy.^{[5][10]}



Omaha crew members posing on the deck of *Odenwald*

World War II

On 7 December 1941, while *Omaha* was steaming with *Somers* to Recife, from San Juan, she received a communication that informed her captain about the Japanese attack on the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. She was ordered to "execute WPL (war plan) 46^[11] against Japan." Captain Chandler mustered the crew to read them the message. On 8 December, the US Congress would officially declared war on the Empire of Japan with Germany declaring war on the US three days later, on 11 December 1941.^[5]

Merchant sinkings

While *Omaha* was on patrol with *Jouett* on 8 May 1942, she came across the Swedish ship *Astri*. *Omaha*'s boarding party found Ensign John F. Kelly, USNR, from the US freighter *Lammot Du Pont*, along with six members of her armed guard detachment and eight crewmen. She had been sunk on 23 April, by *U-125* (Kapitänleutnant Ulrich Folkers) 500 mi (800 km) southeast of Bermuda. The men had been drifting in life rafts for two days. The Office of Naval Operations (OpNav) had informed *Omaha* that they suspected *Astri* of being a tender for German U-boats. *Jouett* was left on station to investigate the neutral vessel while *Omaha* set a course to Recife, with the survivors of *Lammot Du Pont*. Having been pointed to the area by a patrolling aircraft, the destroyer *Tarbell* was able to rescue another 23 survivors from *Lammot Du Pont* on 16 May.^[5]

Omaha spotted a light on the horizon at 01:30, on 1 June 1942. The light, as it turned out, was from a small lifeboat with eight surviving crewmen aboard from the sunken British merchant *Charlbury*. She had been en route to Buenos Aires, Argentina, when she had been attacked on 28 May, by the Italian submarine *Barbarigo*.^[12] The first torpedo fired by *Barbarigo* had missed *Charlbury*, at which point the submarine then surfaced to attack with "withering gunfire" before submerging again. This time *Barbarigo* struck *Charlbury* with her second torpedo, which caused the merchant to sink by the stern. After retrieving the crew from the lifeboat, several hours later, *Omaha* encountered more survivors from *Charlbury*. In all, she pulled a total of 40 survivors from the water and transported all of the them to Recife.^{[5][13]}

On 8 June 1942, only a week later, eight British seamen, from the British merchant *Harpagon*, where found aboard the Argentinian merchantman *Rio Diamante* by *Omaha*. They were the only survivors, 41 had died in the attack by *U-109* (Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Bleichrodt) near the island of Bermuda on 20 April. The men, who had survived being adrift for 35 days, stayed in *Rio Diamante*, which transported

them to Buenos Aires, Argentina.^[5]

In a two day period, 16–17 August 1942, five Brazilian merchantmen were sunk by *U-507* (Korvettenkapitän Harro Schacht). These attacks on Brazilian shipping had killed over 500 men outside of Brazil's territorial waters. *U-507* then destroyed a sixth vessel on 19 August, that was flying Brazilian colors. On 22 August 1942, while *Omaha* was waiting for a harbor pilot to guide her in at Montevideo, Uruguay, her crew were able to observe the rusting hulk of the German cruiser *Admiral Graf Spee* that had been scuttled almost three years earlier on 18 December 1939, after the Battle of the River Plate. When *Omaha* had moored, a Brazilian naval officer visited Captain Chandler and informed him Brazil was preparing a for a formal declaration of war against both Germany and Italy. The declaration was promulgated that day.^[5]

Hazards of life at sea

Even as the threat from Germany and Italy had diminished by August 1942, there were still many ways for the men of *Omaha* to be harmed. One day, as she was at anchor in Carenage Bay, Trinidad, one of her sailors had returned from an especially "hard liberty" and was sleeping off the effects on the direction finder deck. When the ship took an unexpected roll the inebriated bluejacket rolled off of the deck, down an awning, over the quarterdeck and then over the side of the ship into the water. According to Captain Chandler, "probably due to his perfectly relaxed condition", the sailor was uninjured. Other such occurrences did not always end as well.^[5]

On 30 October 1942, while in Trinidad, six of *Omaha's* baseball team were injured when one of the sides of the truck carrying them fell off. Just six days later, while *Omaha* and *Marblehead* were on escort duty, one of her newly arrived Vought OS2U Kingfishers flipped upon landing, while the aviator was able to make it out safely, the plane sustained serious damage which required it to need overhauling when *Omaha* put back into port. Tragedy did strike *Marblehead* though on 17 November 1942, while her whaleboat was being hoisted back aboard, a sailor from her landing party fell overboard but never resurfaced. He had been wearing a new style life vest that required being inflated by mouth. After this incident, Captain Chandler ordered that all of *Omaha's* boarding party members go back to wearing the older style life jackets. Even though the they were cumbersome and bulky, they were more effective.^[5]

Collision with *Milwaukee*

The year 1943, proved to be a quiet year for *Omaha*. Escorting the stores ship *Pollux* regularly out of Recife, and patrolling the southern Atlantic with her sister ships *Milwaukee*, *Memphis*, *Cincinnati*, and the destroyer *Moffett*, she did not encounter any enemy vessels or the results of their attacks.^[5]

The only damage she took that year occurred 30 April 1943, while she was changing stations on formation, *Milwaukee* struck *Omaha's* starboard bow. The collision destroyed one of her paravanes and rupturing some plating, which caused some flooding. *Omaha's* damage control party shored up one hole with two mattresses and were able to stop the leak. One compartment was flooded completely with another compartment needing to be pumped out every two hours. In *Milwaukee*, her port 6-inch guns along with her port torpedo tube mount were put out of commission. Several holes had opened up along her port side that were above the main deck, along with some leaks under the waterline due to plates and rivets that were damaged. *Milwaukee* also lost her No.3 main circulation pump. The damage was determined not to be serious enough to halt their mission and the two cruisers, after completing their patrol, put into Rio de Janeiro for the needed repairs at the Brazilian Navy Yard.^[5]

Sinking of *Rio Grande* and *Burgenland*

Omaha's time of relatively ordinary operations came to an end very early in 1944. While patrolling out of Recife, Brazil, with *Jouett* on 4 January, one of *Omaha*'s aircraft spotted a ship about 55 mi (89 km) northeast of the Brazilian coast. *Omaha* challenged the vessel at 10:20, with her one of her searchlights that produced no response from the unknown contact. Lookouts were able to spot two guns mounted on the ship's bow and then several minutes later, a large cloud of heavy smoke was observed coming from the ship's stern, indicating that her crew was in the process of scuttling the ship to avoid capture. As *Omaha* pulled along the unknown ship's port side she began to fire with her starboard battery as *Jouett* also began firing. The ship's crew were then observed attempting to escape in off her stern in lifeboats. *Omaha*'s crew tried to drive the men back aboard with machine gun fire. When it became obvious that the ship was lost *Omaha* again opened fire on the vessel which shortly thereafter sank by the stern. With fears that this surface action may have drawn the attention of enemy u-boats, *Omaha* and *Jouett* withdrew without picking up any of the survivors. The ship was later determined to be the German blockade runner *Rio Grande*. *Marblehead* was able to rescue 72 survivors later on 8 January.^{[5][14]}

Omaha returned the following day to the vicinity that *Rio Grande* had been sunk and again encountered an unknown merchant steamer. She once again challenged the unknown contact with her searchlight, and again received no response to her signals. This time *Omaha* fired two shots over the unknown ship's bow owing to the fact that she appeared to be dead in the water. Soon after, an explosion was observed, followed by smoke billowing from her. Captain Elwood M. Tillson ordered *Omaha*'s 6-inch battery to train on the unknown contact and open fire. Captain Tillson then allowed members of the crew to rotate topside to observe the gunfire since many of the men had been unable to witness the action against *Rio Grande* the previous day. The ship, later identified as another German blockade runner, *Burgenland*, sank by her stern thirty minutes later. Two days later 21 of her survivors were rescued by *Davis* with *Winslow* able to retrieve an additional 35 crewmen on 8 January.^{[5][14]}

Recovery of *U-177* survivors

Omaha was out patrolling with *Memphis* and *Jouett* on 6 February 1944, when the ships were given orders to be on the lookout for the survivors of a U-boat that had been sunk earlier in the day near their location. A yellow life raft was later spotted by *Omaha*'s lookouts. The occupants were German sailors that had survived the sinking of their boat, *U-177*, that had been sunk by a Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator from Bombing Squadron (VB) 107 that was operating out of Ascension Island. *U-177* had been sitting on the surface while some of the crew were sunning and swimming.^[5]

According to Leutnant zur See Hans-Otto Brodt, their commanding officer Korvettenkapitän Heinz Bucholz and another 50 men of the crew of 64, went down with the ship. The prisoners were sent to the sick bay for treatment of shock and exposure and supplied with fresh clothing that had been provided by the Red Cross. Until *Omaha* put in at Bahia, on 15 February, were they debarked and were transported to Recife, the Germans were placed under armed guard.^[5]

Transfer to the European Theater

On 4 July 1944, *Omaha* got underway to the European Theater with destroyer escorts *Marts*, *Reybold*, and troop transport *General W. A. Mann*. On 13 July, the convoy arrived at Gibraltar, with the addition of *Marsh*, *Hollis*, and the destroyer *Kearny*. *Omaha* set sail for Palermo, Sicily, on 18 July, in company with

the battleships *Nevada* and *Arkansas*.^[5]

Operation Dragoon

On 7 August 1944, *Omaha* was guarding the flank of a formation consisting of the US heavy cruisers *Quincy* and *Augusta*, the battleship *Nevada* and the French battleship *Lorraine*, bombarding Toulon, France. *Omaha* assisted in the bombardment firing 24 rounds. An enemy shore battery began firing on *Omaha* at 17:17, *Quincy* was able to lay a smoke screen out for her while she fired 3.5-inch (89 mm) rockets in an attempt to jam their radar. Again on 20 August, while she was supporting *Nevada*, she once again drew fire from the enemy as she was departing from the area with the shells splashing 1,000 yd (910 m) off her stern and 3,000 yd (2,700 m) off of her port quarter.^[5]

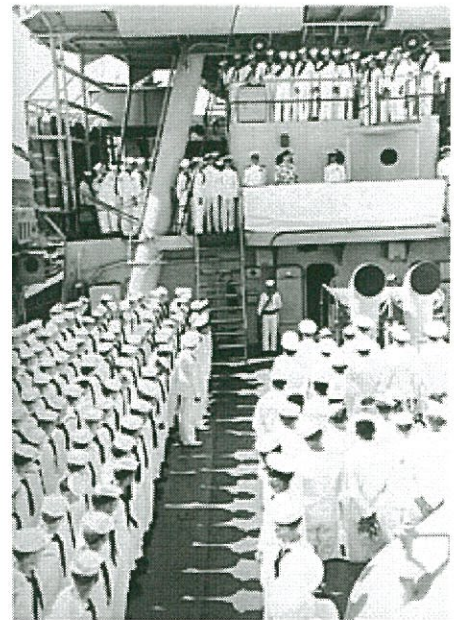
Shortly after, while she was at Porquerolles, France, *Omaha* responded to the net tender *Hackberry*, that had come under fire from a German shore battery, by firing 73 6-inch rounds into the enemy position.

Omaha then departed the assault area on 27 August 1944, and returned to Palermo, before getting underway to Oran, Algeria, with her sister ships *Cincinnati*, *Marblehead*, along with *Quincy* and the destroyer *McLanahan*. This group then sailed from Oran, on 1 September, after being joined by *MacKenzie*, for the Atlantic. When the formation exited the Mediterranean, *Marblehead* detached from the group and proceeded west independently.^[5]

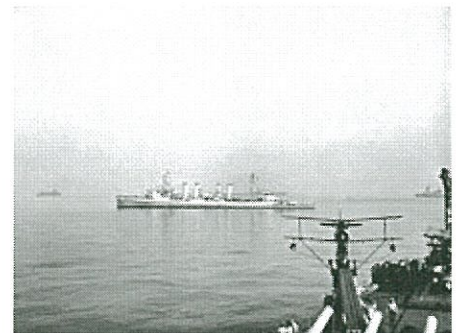
After *Omaha* returned to Bahia, 9 September, she once again resumed her previous duties of patrolling the southern Atlantic and providing escort services. A break in this routine occurred when she returned to the North Atlantic while escorting the transport *General M. C. Meigs* in company with the Brazilian *Marcilio Dias*-class destroyers *Mariz e Barros* and *Marcilio Dias* to Gibraltar. They reached their destination on 4 December, where *Omaha* handed her escort duty off to *Edison*. She then proceeded by herself to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, where she arrived on 14 December, and put in the next day to the New York Navy Yard. *Omaha* ended 1944 in New York, while undergoing repairs and alterations that would improve the living spaces for her crew.^[5]

Search for the Brazilian cruiser *Bahia*

When the *Bahia* (C.12) was reported sunk by a submarine *Omaha* set out from Recife, on 8 July 1945, on a search and rescue operation. A report came in from the British steamer *Balfe* that they had picked up 33 survivors from *Bahia*. *Omaha* set course to intercept *Balfe* so she could transfer her medical staff and aid in treatment of the remaining survivors. In all, only 44 sailors were rescued, with seven dying from their



Omaha hosted First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and RADM Oliver M. Read, Commander, Surface Patrol Force (TF 41), 16 March 1944, at Recife, Brazil.



Omaha during the landings in Southern France, August 1944, photographed from *Philadelphia*. In the distance are (from left to right): a French Navy destroyer, a French light cruiser, and *Augusta*.

injuries, and eight bodies recovered, out of a crew of 346. An investigation into the sinking of *Bahia* later determined that on 4 July 1945, while conducting anti-aircraft training, a gunner that had shot down a trailing target kite continued to fire as he was trailing the target's descent. Because the proper safety stops had not been installed on the gun he was able to inadvertently fire into a rack of live depth charges that were positioned on the fantail of the ship.^[5]

Decommissioning

Following the sinking of *Bahia*, *Omaha* continue to serve in the South Atlantic, until 12 August, two days after the Japanese announced their intention of surrendering under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, when she departed Recife, for the last time. She made ports of call at San Juan and Norfolk, before getting underway for the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Soon after arriving in Philadelphia, a Board of Inspection and Survey recommended that *Omaha* be taken out of commission.^[5]

Omaha was decommissioned on 1 November 1945, and was struck from the Navy Register on 28 November 1945. She was scrapped at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard by February 1946.^[5]

Notable commanders

Name	Date	Final rank attained
Captain Frederick Joseph Horne	14 June 1924–16 January 1926	Admiral
Captain Cyrus Willard Cole	16 January 1926–25 August 1927	Rear Admiral
Captain Lyal Ament Davidson	1 February 1939–1 September 1939	Vice Admiral
Captain Theodore Edson Chandler	15 October 1941–April 1943	Rear Admiral

Awards

- American Defense Service Medal with "A" device
- American Campaign Medal
- European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one battle star
- World War II Victory Medal

References

- ↑ Navy List 1921, p. 771.
- ↑ Ships21 1921, pp. 54–59.
- ↑ Ships35 1935, pp. 24–31.
- ↑ Terzibashitsch 1988.
- ↑ Watts 2017.
- ↑ Friedman 1984, p. 469.
- ↑ Friedman 1984, pp. 80, 84.
- ↑ Watt 2017.
- ↑ Curtis 2008, pp. 188–230.
- ↑ Nofi 2008.

11. Pike 2012.
12. Charlbury.
13. CDT 1942.
14. Whitley 1995, p. 229.

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- "Table 21 - Ships on Navy List June 30, 1919" (<https://books.google.com/books?id=mZEqAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA762#v=onepage&q&f=false>). *Congressional Serial Set*. U.S. Government Printing Office. 1921. p. 771. Retrieved 26 September 2015.
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External links

- StrategyPage.com article, "The Last 'Prize' Awards in the U.S. Navy?" (<http://www.strategypage.com/cic/docs/cic205b.asp#one>)
- Photo gallery (<http://www.navsource.org/archives/04/004/04004.htm>) of USS *Omaha* at NavSource Naval History
- AcePilots page on USS *Omaha* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20101119105956/http://acepilots.com/ships/omaha.html>)
- Department of the Navy, Navy Historical Center, Web page on USS *Omaha*, 1923–1946 (<http://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-navy-ships/alphabetical-listing/o/uss-omaha--cl-4-.html>)

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MUSTER ROLL OF THE CREW

of the U. S. S. OMAHA (CL-4)

for the quarter ending 30 September, 1944

1 NAMES <small>(Alphabetically arranged without regard to ratings, with surname to the left and the first name written in full)</small>	2 SERVICE NUMBER <small>(The service number must under no condition be omitted)</small>	3 Present Rating	4 DATE OF ENLISTMENT			5 Date first received on board
			Day	Month	Year	
✓ MASON, Richard W.	942 62 83	EM3cV6				26 Jun 44
✓ MASTERS, Vaughn H.	293 34 23	S2cV6				23 May 44
✓ MASTERTON, Alfred J., Jr.	906 07 48	S2cV6				31 AUG 44
✓ MATOVCIK, John W.	653 31 85	MM1cV6				26 Jan 43
✓ MATTHEWS, Ransom D.	551 69 22	MM1cV6				29 Oct 42
✓ MAURER, Francis K.	250 57 36	CHM(AA)				2 Nov 40
✓ MAXWELL, Ray F.	895 04 63	S2cV6				23 May 44
✓ MAZZARULLI, Antonio G.	826 35 03	S2cV6				10 Sep 43
✓ MC ALPHIN, Alonzo J.	637 56 16	MM2cV6				25 Mar 43
✓ MC BRIDE, Robert H.	638 86 08	MM2cV6				29 Dec 42
✓ MC CARTHY, Arthur P.	705 25 10	MM1c, M2				3 Jul 42
✓ MC CARTHY, Henry J.	600 84 38	MM1cV6				25 Mar 43
✓ MC CARTHY, John J.	205 46 73	S2c				6 Mar 44
✓ MC CLURE, John G.	337 45 58	MM1c				4 Jan 41
✓ MC CORMACK, Joseph T.	709 19 99	S2cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MC CORMACK, Robert G.	573 02 97	WT1cV6				25 Mar 43
✓ MC CUNE, James D.	628 93 22	EM3cV6				10 Sep 43
✓ MC CUTCHEON, George B.	652 03 32	Y1cV6				23 May 44
✓ MC ENTIRE, Paul W.	238 84 34	GM2c				15 Sep 42
✓ MC GUIGAN, Walter G.	204 42 14	GM2cV6				17 Apr 44
✓ MC GOWAN, Irving (n)	823 64 17	S1cV6				18 Oct 43
✓ MC GREW, George V.	338 08 16	F1cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MC GUIRE, Bernard W.	758 57 65	S1cV6				10 Sep 43
✓ MC HUGH, Gerald J.	705 45 70	S1c, M2				3 Jul 42
→ ✓ MC INTOSH, William B.	905 51 61	S2cV6				26 Jun 44
✓ MC KENZIE, Howard R.	958 54 46	F2cV6				31 Aug 44
✓ MC KINNEY, Jack H.	657 30 15	B2cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MC LAUGHLIN, Andrew J.	803 64 26	S2cV6				23 May 44
✓ MC LEAN, Kenneth A.	305 86 72	MoMM2cV6				10 Jun 43
✓ MC LELLEN, Gilbert W.	627 71 95	WT3cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MC MANUS, William O.	646 82 97	MM1cV6				11 Jun 42
✓ MC NEELEY, Samuel R.	621 58 67	WT3cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MEADE, Bernard E.	708 12 07	RGM3cV6				28 Aug 43
✓ MEADE, LeRoy C.	312 47 42	S2cV6				28 Aug 43

MUSTER ROLL OF THE CREW

of the U. S. S. OMAHA (CL-1)

for the quarter ending 31 Dec, 19 44

1 NAMES (Alphabetically arranged without regard to ratings, with surname to the left and the first name written in full)	2 SERVICE NUMBER (The service number must appear on conditions be omitted)	3 Present Rating	4 DATE OF ENLISTMENT			5 Date first received on board
			Day	Month	Year	
✓ MC ODFACK, Robert C.,	573 02 97	WT1c V6			25 Mar 43	
✓ MC GUNE, James D.,	628 92 22	EM3c V6			10 Sep 43	
✓ MC CUTCHEON, George B.,	652 03 32	Y1c V6			23 May 44	
✓ MC ENTIRE, Paul W.,	238 84 34	TC1c(t)			15 Jul 42	
✓ MC OOWAN, Irving	823 64 17	S1c V6			18 Oct 43	
✓ MC GREW, George V.,	338 08 16	WT3c(t)V6			28 Aug 43	
✓ MC GUIRE, Bernard W.,	758 57 65	S1c V6			10 Sep 43	
→ ✓ MC INTOSH, William B.,	905 51 61	S1c V6			26 Jun 44	
✓ MC KENZIE, Howard R.,	958 54 46	F2c V6			31 Aug 44	
✓ MC KINNEY, Jack H.,	657 30 15	B2c V6			28 Aug 43	
✓ MC LAUGHLIN, Andrew J.,	803 64 26	S2c V6			23 May 44	
✓ MC LEAN, Kenneth A.,	305 86 72	Me1BM2c V6			10 Jun 43	
✓ MC LELLEN, Gilbert W.,	627 71 95	WT2c(t)			28 Aug 43	
✓ MC MANUS, William Ol	646 82 97	ME1c			11 Jun 42	
✓ MC NEELEY, Samuel R.,	621 58 67	WT3c			28 Aug 43	
✓ MEADE, Bernard E.,	708 12 07	RdM3c			28 Aug 43	
✓ MEADE, LeRoy C.,	312 47 42	S1c V6			28 Aug 43	
✓ MEADOWS, Virgil C.,	928 47 92	S2c V6			23 May 44	
✓ MEARS, Floyd E.,	677 02 12	S2c V6			19 Oct 44	
✓ MECIMORE, Asa T.,	829 66 54	S1c V6			13 Oct 43	
✓ MEDETIROS, Jesse	606 47 07	BM2c(t)			11 Jul 42	
✓ MEDUNE, Frank	810 94 47	S1c V6			7 Mar 44	
✓ MELANOURIS Thomas	301 16 78	S1c			28 Aug 43	
✓ MELBERGER, Raymond R.,	708 12 08	S1c V6			10 Sep 43	
✓ MELONE, Ralph A.,	942 84 46	S2c V6			23 May 44	
✓ MESSER, Loyd W.,	262 33 94	CM3(t)			10 Sep 41	
✓ MESSINA, Joseph C.,	212 77 27	S1c			9 Jun 44	
✓ MICHAEL, Lawrence A.,	886 33 18	S1c V6			11 Oct 44	
✓ MICKEVIC, Alged B.,	724 56 72	SK3cV6			6 May 43	
✓ MILESKI, Albert F.,	820 69 92	S2c V6			18 Oct 43	
✓ MILLER, Carl A	948 46 92	F2c V6			31 Aug 44	
✓ MILLER, Carleton G.,	202 43 64	FOR3c			6 May 43	
✓ WILLIGAN, Irvin B.,	262 38 63	COH(AA)			27 Dec 39	
✓ MITCHELL, Jec	940 23 81	S2c V6			16 Dec 44	

REPORT OF CHANGES (Decommissioning)

of U. S. S. OMAHA (CL-4)

for the month ending 1 day of November, 1945, date of sailing

1	2	3	4	5
NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	Date of Issue of Last Report	Date of Retirement	Place of Retirement
1 MARBLE, Charles B.,	251 00 18	RM2c(T) V6		
2 MARLETTE, Elmer M.,	227 08 09	FbM2c(T) V6		
3 MARLOW, Albert (a)	931 82 20	F2c V6		
4 MARSHALL, William F.,	618 83 21	RM2c(T) V6		
5 MARTIN, Eugene L.,	888 18 11	WT2c(T) V6		
6 MASCO, Dale E.,	894 79 90	S1c V6		
7 MASTERSON, Alfred J., Jr.,	908 07 48	SK2c V6		
8 MAUER, Francis E.,	280 97 30	GM2(T)		
9 MC BRIDE, Robert H.,	528 85 22	ML2c(T) V6		
10 MC CORNACK, Robert C.,	273 02 97	WT1c V6		
11 MC CUNE, James D.,	828 93 22	RM2c(T) V6		
12 MC DANIEL, John R.,	865 82 26	RM2c V6		
13 MC DONOUGH, Joseph P.,	714 82 92	SC2c V6		
14 MC CLAIN, Herman H.,	470 78 77	Com V-8		
15 MC INTOSH, William H.,	908 81 21	S1c V6		

6	7	8	9
Branch of Service	Special assignment, detail, assignment, change of rating, leave, or any other change of status	Date of termination in column 7	Place to which transferred, where discharged and character of discharge, when reported, and terminal duty or assignment. Where final, name of final duty station and date issued. Signed and authority for entry. If changed, give cause if in de-licious duty, give place of duty. If paragraph, give position or level and time disposition.
1 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
2 USNR	TRANS	10/3	INTAKE STA., RS, Phila, Pa. ffa for separation, Shelton, Norfolk, Va.
3 USNR	TRANS	10/15	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
4 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
5 USNR	TRANS	10/15	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
6 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
7 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
8 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
9 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
10 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
11 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
12 USNR	TRANS	10/30	Comdt 9th ND for temp duty.
13 USNR	TRANS	10/15	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
14 USNR	TRANS	10/30	RS, Phila, Pa. ffa
15 USNR	TRANS	10/30	Comdt 3rd ND for temp duty.

This form to be submitted by commanding officers or all other and stations, whenever any ship or station is decommissioned or placed out of commission, on the last day of each month showing all changes for the month for which submitted, and upon sailing from one port to another, by commanding officers of port or origin of voyage and point of destination or command points.

REPORT OF CHANGES
CORRECTED COPY

of U. S. S. OMAHA (CL-4)

for the month ending 30th day of JUNE, 19 44, date of sailing

1	2	3	4			5
			Day	Mo	Yr	
16	KUSHON, Lloyd A.	896 54 55 F2c(EM)V6	20	Nov	43	Greensburg, Pa.
17	LETLER, Fred H., Jr.	262 80 77 Y1c	11	Feb	41	Raleigh, N.C.
18	LEILER, Thomas M.	869 53 97 F2c	27	Nov	43	Milwaukee, Wis.
19	LEVESQUE, William G.	206 68 60 OCB(AA)	21	Dec	41	Recife, Brazil
20	LINDSTROM, George A.	894 88 42 F2c(EM)V6	26	Nov	43	Detroit, Mich.
21	LITKE, Walter W.	894 89 58 F1c(EM)V6	27	Nov	43	Detroit, Mich.
22	MC INTOSH, William B.	905 51 61 S2c V6	6	Feb	44	Phillipsburg, N.J.
23	MALINKY, Mike M.	266 16 43 OMEc	29	Jul	40	Staunton, Va.
24	MASON, Richard W.	942 62 83 EM3c V6	27	Nov	43	Chicago, Ill.
25	MUTTER, James W.	928 63 20 S2c V6	31	Jan	44	Huntington, W.Va.
26	PITTS, Carrell H.	355 91 02 CSF(AA)	4	Jan	43	New York, N.Y.
27	REYNOLDS, William M.	266 35 65 S1c	24	Feb	41	Richmond, Va.
28	SAKELAKOS, George (n)	705 22 96 MM2c M2	21	Jan	42	Detroit, Mich.
29	SOCHA, Aloicus (n)	622 82 77 SM3c V6	11	May	42	Detroit, Mich.
30	SHORT, Alex R.	266 35 49 SF2c	21	Feb	41	Richmond, Va.

6	7	8	9
Branch of service	Received, transferred, deserted, discharged, change of rating, death, or any other change of status	Date of occurrence in column 7	Vessel or station from which received, to what vessel or station transferred, where discharged and character of discharge; where deserted, and amount due or overpaid. Where died, cause of death and where and when buried. If rated and authority for same. If detailed, give cause; if on detached duty, give place of duty. If passenger, give purpose of travel and final disposition.
16	USNR REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
17	USN REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
18	USN I REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
19	USN Change of Status	6/30/44	From: OCB(AA) to OCB(PA) Auth: BuPers CL 11-42.
20	USNR REC	6/30/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
21	USNR REC	6/30/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
22	USNR REC	6/30/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
23	USN TRANS	6/30/44	To: US Naval Dispensary Navy 120 for treatment
24	USNR REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
25	USNR REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
26	USN TRANS	6/30/44	To: RecSta NORVA for assign. to duty by Com. FIFTH Naval District.
27	USN SCM	6/18/44	Depriv. of liberty on shore on for. sta. for per. of 1 mo. to lose \$30 per mo. for 2mos. TIFast \$60
28	USNR REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.
29	USNR TRANS	6/30/44	To: Commandant NOF 120 (Flag Complement) for duty
30	USN REC	6/26/44	From: RS. SO. ANNEX, NOB, NORVA.