

THE NO-NAME TIN CAN

She started her career with the Asiatic Fleet and wound up fighting the Japanese during the first days following America's entry into World War Two. Then, a strange turn of events would make her one of that war's most unique destroyers.

BY KEN SAYERS

She began her career in 1920 as another member of the US Navy's 158 *Clemson*-class destroyers. But she ended that career by fighting not for Uncle Sam during World War II but instead sailing with the Imperial Japanese Navy. Later, when back in American hands after the war, this most unusual destroyer was recommissioned minus her original name and was known officially thereafter merely as "USS DD-224."

The 26-year journey of the USS *Stewart*, from her 4 March 1920 launching by Mrs. Margaretta Stewart

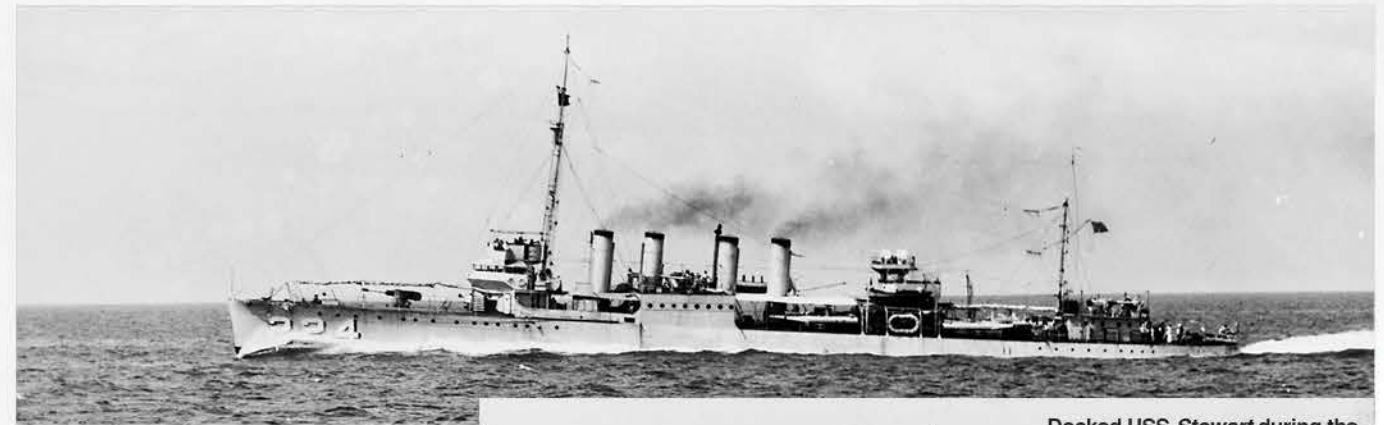
This atmospheric May 1923 view of the harbor at Hankow, China, makes a most appropriate opener for this article since USS *Stewart* spent the majority of its life in China and the Pacific. Destroyers are (left to right): USS *Pruitt* (DD-347), *Stewart*, USS *Preble* (DD-345), USS *Hulbert* (DD-342), and USS *William B. Preston* (DD-344). The Japan-China Steamship Company (NKK — *Nisshin Kisen Kaisha*) docks are in the foreground with a river steamer alongside in the center and an ocean-going freighter at right. Many small local craft can also be seen.

Stevens, grand-daughter of R/Adm. Stewart, at the William Cramp and Sons shipyard in Philadelphia (checkout "Theater of Horrors" in this issue for another William Cramp ship), through her wartime service with two opposing navies, to her intentional sinking off San Francisco, is one of the strangest stories from the war in the Pacific.

Initially, the remarkable history of USS *Stewart* (DD-224) was not unlike those of many of her contemporaries. She was commissioned on 15 September 1920 with Lt. S.G. Lamb

in command and spent her first months participating in Atlantic Fleet coastal operations and fleet exercises with Destroyer Squadron, Atlantic. On 20 June 1922, the destroyer departed from Newport, Rhode Island, to take up duties with the Asiatic Fleet. She sailed via the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, to the Philippines where she took up her new assignment with that fabled Fleet.

During what was to become a two-decade stay in the Far East, the *Stewart* operated in and around the Philippines, China, Japan, and the Dutch East Indies. She undertook training exercises from bases at Chefoo and Tsingtao during the



USS *Stewart* at high speed during the late 1920s. The *Clemson*-class destroyer had a length of 314-ft 5-in, beam of 31-ft 9-in, and a draft of 9-ft 4-in.

summer months and then from Manila during the winter. Among her several achievements in the pre-war years were the provision of humanitarian aid to Japan following the August 1923 Great Kanto earthquake in Yokosuka and Tokyo, supporting the around-the-world flight of four Army Air Service Douglas DWC (Douglas World Cruiser) aircraft in the spring of 1924, patrolling the Yangtze River in China in the late 1920s, and the protection of American citizens and interests in that country during 1920s and 1930s.

Within that time period, there was a great deal of civil unrest in China and sentiment against "foreigners" ran high, especially at Shanghai and Canton. *Stewart* carried detachments



Docked USS *Stewart* during the 1920s. Power came from two Parsons all geared steam turbines and four White-Foster water tube boilers producing 14,000-shp and giving a top speed of 35 knots.

of US Marines to Shanghai during January 1925 and then kept up a constant coastal patrols, watching for activities by communist sympathizers and other agitators. On 24 March 1927, the destroyer was at Shanghai when communist troops attacked

the foreign enclaves at Nanking, causing a crisis that left the American government with little choice but to step up patrols to "show the flag" and to protect American citizens and American interests. For nearly four months, *Stewart* patrolled the

