

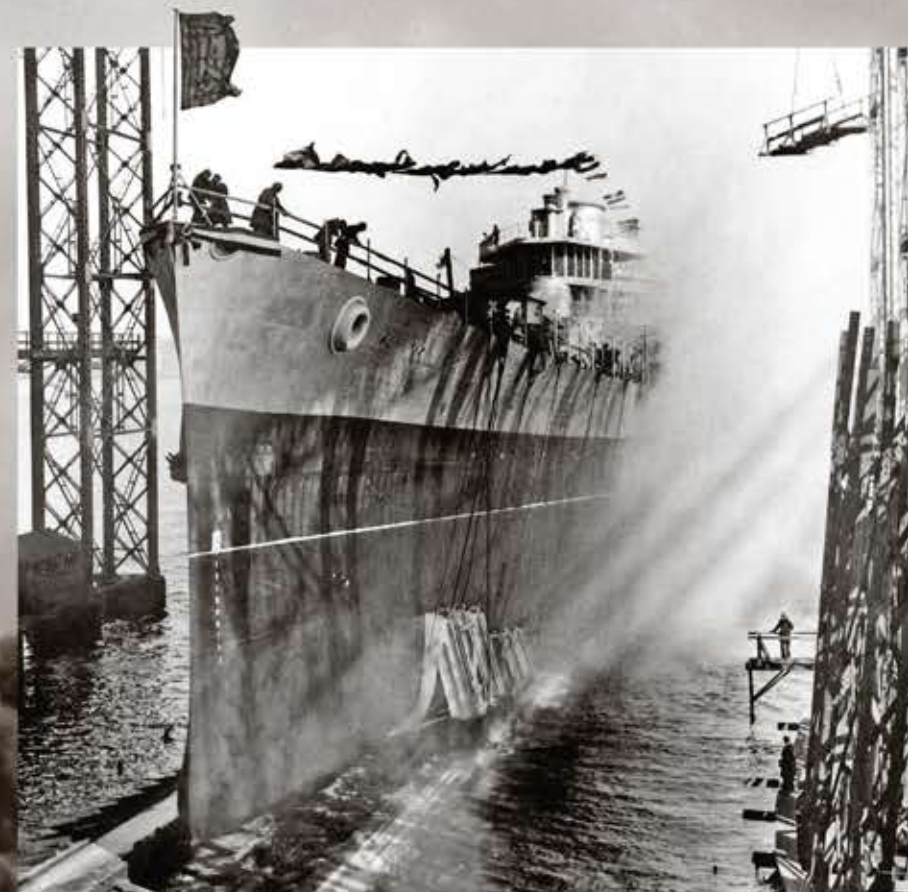
THE WARRIOR FROM PEARL HARBOR

THE LIGHT CRUISER USS PHOENIX WOULD AMAZINGLY SURVIVE THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR. THE WARSHIP WOULD IMMEDIATELY GO INTO ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY AND LEAD A LONG AND USEFUL LIFE BUT WOULD MEET ITS FINAL FATE IN A VERY UNUSUAL COMBAT - PART ONE

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Historic photograph of USS *Phoenix* (CL-46) steaming down the channel off Ford Island's Battleship Row, past the sunken and burning USS *West Virginia* (BB-48), at left, and USS *Arizona* (BB-39), at right, on 7 December 1941.



USS *Phoenix* hits the water at the New York Shipbuilding Corporation Yards on 13 March 1939.



An Act of Congress authorized CL-46 on 13 February 1929; the Navy awarded the contract for CL-46 to the New York Shipbuilding Co., on 3 October 1934; and the following day Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson selected the name *Phoenix* for her. The Navy's third *Phoenix* was laid down on 15 April 1935, at Camden, New Jersey; launched

on 12 March 1938; sponsored by Mrs. Dorothea K. Moonan (*née* Kays), daughter of Cmdr. Harlow T. Kays (Ret.) of *Arizona*; and commissioned at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 3 October 1938 with Capt. John W. Rankin in command.

The nine original *Brooklyn*-class (CL-40) light cruisers also comprised *Boise* (CL-47), *Helena* (CL-50), *Honolulu* (CL-48), *Philadelphia* (CL-41), *Nashville* (CL-43), *St. Louis* (CL-49), and *Savannah* (CL-42). *Helena* and *St. Louis* underwent modifications while they were being built and are often considered the separate *St.*

Louis-class. Changes included twin 5-inch guns and new higher pressure boilers arranged differently than their predecessors, so that the ships could survive a single hit to their engineering spaces that might otherwise render them dead in the water.

Designed and built under the terms of the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty, the *Brooklyn*-class cruisers displaced less than 10,000 tons and were armed with 6-inch guns as their main battery. The ships were designed largely as a response to heavily-armed Japanese cruisers, however, and as a result, mounted their 6-inch guns

in five triple turrets, three forward and two aft, with Turrets II and IV in super-firing (mounted above Turrets I and III) position. The class was also designed with a flush-deck hull, with a high transom and a built-in aircraft hangar aft.

Phoenix initially embarked four Curtiss SOC-1 Seagulls of Cruiser Scouting Squadron (VCS) 8 as her Aviation Unit. The new cruiser set out on her shakedown cruise to Port of Spain, Trinidad; Santos, Brazil; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. *Phoenix* returned to Philadelphia in

January 1939. By June of that year, *Phoenix* routinely embarked four Naval Aircraft Factory SON-1 Seagulls of VCS-9, the squadron led by Lt. Cmdr. Horace B. Butterfield.

Phoenix developed an aircraft cross-catapult launch in 1940. The system enabled her to launch up to four planes in about six minutes without requiring the ship to change direction. The bottom of the Seagulls' floats cleared the top of the other catapult by about a foot.

Brooklyn held the Light Cruiser 5-inch/25 caliber Armament Broadside Gunnery School (17-21 June and 29