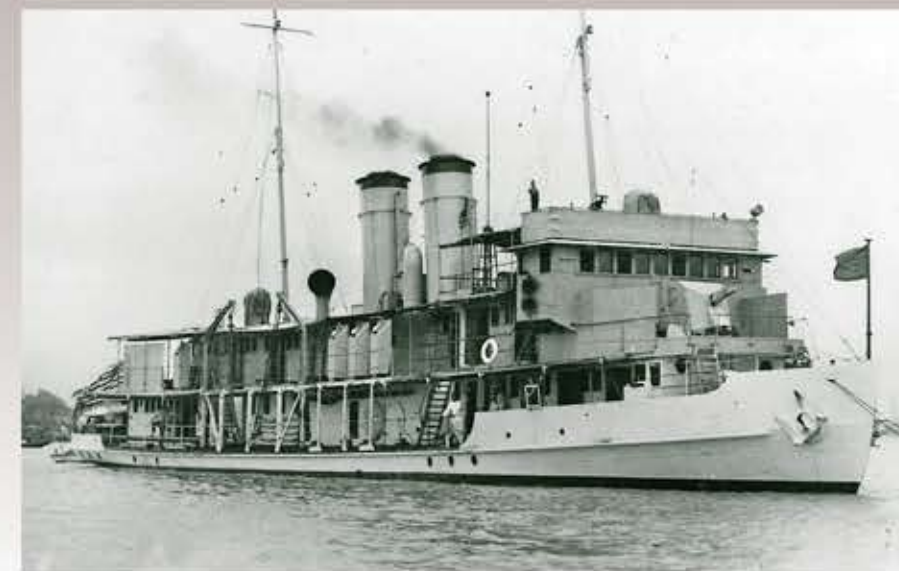


OLD CHINA HAND

THIS GUNBOAT SAILED CHINESE RIVERS TO UPHOLD AMERICAN INTERESTS. WITH THE START OF WWII, SHE WOULD MAKE HER FINAL STAND AT CORREGIDOR AGAINST OVERWHELMING JAPANESE FORCES
BY RAND BLICKSON



USS *Oahu* would steam to aid the sinking USS *Panay* (illustrated) in an incident that clearly indicated Japan's Imperialistic intentions.



Not the most elegant of vessels, USS *Oahu* served long and well in protecting American interests during a turbulent period of Asian history. In this photo, PR-6 is seen off Shanghai during August 1929.

The first *Oahu* (PG-46), a Yangtze River gunboat, was laid down by Kiangnan Dock and Engineering Works, Shanghai, China, on 18 December 1926. She was launched as PG-46 on 26 November 1927 and was sponsored by Mrs. Bryson Bruce, wife of Cmdr. Bruce. The vessel was commissioned as USS *Oahu* (PR-6) on 22 October 1928 with L/Cmdr. A.C. Thomas in command. With a displacement of 450-tons, she had a length of 191-ft, beam of 28-ft 1-in, draft of 5-ft 3-in, and a speed of 15 knots. She had a crew of 55 and carried two

3-in guns along with eight .30-caliber machine guns. Power came from two 1900-hp triple-expansion engines with two shafts in tunnels.

One of six river gunboats built for use on the Yangtze Kiang in south central China, *Oahu* departed Shanghai on her shakedown cruise 3 November 1928, proceeding upriver to Chungking, 1300 miles inland, stopping at the open treaty ports *en route* and returning to Shanghai on 2 June 1929. She then operated all along the Yangtze from the river's mouth to Chungking and in the tributaries in protection of American

lives and property into the 1930s.

In the course of her service with the Yangtze Patrol Force, the gunboat convoyed American and foreign merchantmen up and down the river, supplied armed guards to US and British river craft, landed bluejackets at treaty ports threatened by unrest and evacuated foreign nationals in times of danger.

Beginning in 1934, *Oahu* took up duty as station ship at various Yangtze ports supplying the ever-increasing river traffic with Naval Armed Guard detachments on a regular basis. Serving

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