



USS *Orange*, PF-43

A city on the Texas coast; shipbuilding center and site of a U.S. Naval Base.

Builder: Consolidated Steel Corp., Ltd., Wilmington Yard, Los Angeles, CA

Length: 303' 11"

Beam: 37' 6"

Draft: 12' 8" fl

Displacement: 2,230 tons

Propulsion: 2-shaft VTE, 3 boilers

Range: 9,500 nm at 12 knots

Top speed: 20 knots

Complement: 190

Armament: 3 x 3"/50; 4 x 40mm (2x2); 9 x 20mm; 1 x Hedgehog, 8 x depth charge projectors; 2 x depth charge racks. For those frigates fitted out for weather patrol duty, the after 3-inch gun was removed and a weather balloon hanger was added aft.

History:

Orange (PF-43), a frigate, was originally authorized as PG-151. She was reclassified PF-43 on 15 Apr. 1943 and was laid down by the Consolidated Steel Corp., Ltd., Wilmington Yard, Los Angeles, CA, 7 July 1943. She was launched 6 August 1943 and was sponsored by Mrs. Rufus S. Manley of Orange, Texas. She was commissioned 1 January 1944 under the command of CDR John A. Dirks, USCG.

After shakedown, *Orange* began her tour of Pacific duty as a fire support and anti-submarine vessel. On 2 June 1944, only five months after commissioning, she participated in her initial engagement at New Guinea. At one stage of the action, with much daring, she closed to within 1500 yards of a beach west of the Tor River to shell enemy installations, with the aid of an Army spotter, with a high degree of effectiveness.

Three days later, *Orange*, with an Army liaison officer on board, shelled supply dumps located along a road between Arami Village and the mouth of the Orai River. A field of floating wreckage hampered her progress as she again closed the shoreline, but she carried out her mission leaving many fires burning in the target area.

Between fire support missions, *Orange* conducted antisubmarine patrols to protect the heavy flow of supply shipping which supported the landings. On 27 July, while conducting such a patrol, she was directed to embark three Army officers for a scouting party which had been operating behind enemy lines near Sarmi Point. Through radio contact it was learned that the scouting team had encountered a number of Japanese patrols and that they might have difficulty in getting out. The frigate groped its way around the point, and with all guns manned, closed the shore and dispatched a motor launch with a landing party. Directed with the assistance of an observation plane, the launch moved in and was met by a rubber raft containing the scout group and two Japanese captives. The captives were forward members of one of the enemy patrols.

On 6 September, *Orange* proceeded to Napido for a scheduled assault landing there. At dawn on the 7th she engaged in shore bombardment to soften the landing area. By the first of December *Orange* was at Leyte with an ASW screening unit escorting *HMS Reserve* which had a damaged vessel in tow. As the unit was transiting Surigao Strait 5 December it came under attack by a lone Japanese plane which was repelled by *Orange's* fire. On the 6th, she kept several more enemy planes at bay by detecting them early and putting up a stream of fire that made their pilots decide to seek an easier target.

Orange carried out similar missions until February 1945 when she returned to the U. S. for availability at Mare Island Navy Yard. She was then assigned to the West Coast Sound School and was participating in training exercises when the war ended.

On 1 December 1945, *Orange* went back into the yards and had her guns replaced by an intricate array of meteorological equipment. Thus fitted out, *Orange* reported to Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier for duty as a weather station vessel off Pearl Harbor. She served in this capacity until she decommissioned 28 October 1946 at Bremerton, Wash. Struck from the U. S. Naval Register 23 April 1947, *Orange* was sold 17 September 1947 to the Alaska Junk Co., of Seattle, WA, and was scrapped in May 1948.

Orange earned two battle stars for service in World War II.

Sources:

The Coast Guard At War, Transports and Escorts, Vol. V, No. 1.

Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946. London: Conway Maritime Press, 1992, pp. 148-149.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. V, p. 20.

