



Mohawk, 1904

A Native American people formerly inhabiting northeast New York along the Mohawk and upper Hudson valleys north to the St. Lawrence River, with present-day populations chiefly in southern Ontario and extreme northern New York. The Mohawk were the easternmost member of the Iroquois confederacy.

Builder: William R. Trigg, Richmond, Virginia

Length: 205' 6"

Beam: 32'

Draft: 12' 7"

Displacement: 980 (1905)

Cost:

Commissioned: 10 May 1904

Decommissioned: Sank, 1 October 1917

Disposition: Sank after a collision off Sandy Hook, New Jersey

Machinery: Triple-expansion steam, 25", 37 1/2", and 56 1/4" diameter x 30" stroke; single screw

Complement: 8 officers, 63 enlisted

Electronics: 1 x 2-kilowatt radio set

Armament: 2 x 6-pound rapid-fire guns (1907)
4 x 6-pound rapid-fire guns (1914)

Cutter History:

The *Mohawk*, a 205-foot steel-hulled "First Class Cruising Cutter," was placed in commission at Arundel Cove, Maryland, on 10 May 1904, under the command of

Captain Worth G. Ross. Her assigned signal letters were "G. V. F. T." On 17 May she was ordered to Jersey City, New Jersey. She set sail on 23 May, coaled at Norfolk, Virginia on 25 May and arrived at Tompkinsville, New York, on 27 May. Tompkinsville was her "headquarters" or home port. She arrived at Jersey City on 28 May 1904 and was ordered to make a "trial trip" on 11 July 1904, arriving at Tompkinsville that day. On 13 July she sailed for the New England coast. The *Mohawk* returned to Tompkinsville on 28 July 1904 and was ordered to "proceed with command" to Newport and then to Portland.

The *Mohawk's* primary cruising grounds were off the coast between Nantucket Shoals and the Delaware breakwater. Her primary duties included "assisting vessels in distress and enforcing the various navigation laws," including patrolling regattas. She destroyed or removed any derelicts or other hazards to navigation she located and undertook "winter cruises" as ordered each year.

She received her winter cruising orders on 30 November. On 18 January 1905, while conducting her winter cruise, her cruising grounds were extended to include the Capes of Virginia and Norfolk. On 9 February *Mohawk* was ordered to confine her operations to her regular cruising limits. On 1 April 1905 Captain Byron L. Reed took over command from Captain Ross, who had been appointed as the Chief of the Revenue Cutter Service. The *Mohawk* then underwent an overhaul at Woods Hole.

On 20 April 1905 she sailed for New London, Connecticut and participated in the 6 May 1905 dedication of the Winthrop Monument. She sailed to Poughkeepsie, New York to enforce the rules and regulations in connection with a 28 June regatta. She was ordered to be in the vicinity of Flushing Bay, Long Island, to enforce the rules and regulations in connection with a 22 July 1905 regatta in that bay. On 27 July *Mohawk* was ordered to be at Whitestone, New York, by noon on 30 July, for the "purpose of receiving on board Captain Worth G. Ross, Chief of Division, R.C.S. Movement of vessel to be governed by such instructions as he may give."

On 25 August 1905 the steamer *Barnes* was reported ashore 1 3/4 miles from the Jones Beach Life-Saving Station and *Mohawk* was ordered to "proceed at once" to that area. On 4 October she was ordered to extend her cruise to the east as far as Provincetown, Massachusetts. On 19 October she was ordered to procure "at once sufficient dynamite or other explosives and proceed without delay to latitude 42° 17' , longitude 62° 23', search for and destroy abandoned bark reported October 17 by Steamer TEUTONIC, in path of European vessels." However, on 21 October the Collector of Customs at Newport, Rhode Island, was ordered to notify *Mohawk* that the abandoned bark was in fact being towed by another ship to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and so was no longer a danger to navigation.

On 10 November *Mohawk* received orders to begin her winter cruise starting on 1 December 1905. Her cruising ground consisted of "New York, outside of Long Island to Vineyard Haven, and Nantucket Shoals and to southward to Delaware Breakwater." She sailed from Sandy Hook at noon on 1 December, and proceeded to New London. The next year, in April, *Mohawk* was overhauled at Woods Hole. She patrolled the regatta at Poughkeepsie on 23 June 1906 and on 28 June she patrolled the Yale-Harvard regatta. She was then ordered to Flushing Bay, Long Island, to "assist" at the 30 June regatta.

She spent the next 15 years destroying derelicts, patrolling regattas, boarding merchant vessels, conducting search and rescue operations and sailing on winter cruises. Some of her more unique operations included transporting President Howard Taft on 26 April 1912 from the "Recreation Pier" at West 50th Street, New York City, to Governors Island and back for the funeral of President Ulysses S. Grant's son, Major General Frederick Dent Grant. In September of that same year she received on board Dr. George Styles of the Department of Agriculture, and participated in a study of the bottom of the Potomac River. On 12 June 1914 she took aboard the Captain Commandant, Captain Commandant Ellsworth P. Bertholf and a "Representative Adamson."

On 5 August 1914 she was assigned to enforce the country's neutrality laws and to board all foreign vessels leaving port. She was relieved of that duty on 19 March 1915 to resume a regular winter cruise. On 5 May 1915 she was assigned to the Pan American Financial Congress and President Woodrow Wilson's review of naval forces that took place on 8 May 1915. She grounded on Bartlett Reef, Long Island Sound and underwent repairs.

The *Mohawk* was "temporarily" transferred to the operational control of the US Navy after the US declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917. She retained her Coast Guard crew. The *Mohawk* was assigned to New York and patrolled the waters off the entrance to New York Harbor.

The cutter collided with the British tanker SS *Vennacher* off Sandy Hook, New Jersey on 1 October 1917. According to the Navy's report of the incident:

"The British vessel struck the Mohawk nearly at right angles, her stem cutting into the side amidships, abreast the engine room, between the launch davits, smashing the surf boat and cutting into the ship's side to such an extent that the use of a collision mat was out of the question. . . Pumps were started at once, the general alarm sounded and all hands called to take stations for abandoning ship."

The cutter filled rapidly and began settling by the stern. Despite the severity of the collision all 77 of her crew were rescued by the USS *Mohican* (SP-117) and the USS *Sabalo* (SP-255). The USS *Bridge* (AF-1) arrived on the scene and attached a cable to *Mohawk's* bow bit. She then attempted to tow *Mohawk* into

shallow water. Before rescuers were able to generate any forward movement, however, they noticed that *Mohawk* had begun to sink rapidly and list heavily to port. The commanding officer of the bridge was forced to cut the tow line and throw both engines into full speed ahead to get clear. " With her bow high in the air, the *Mohawk* settled slowly emitting quantities of smoke." She sank within one hour of the collision in 100 feet of water.

The salvage rights to her sunken wreck were sold to the H.L. Gotham Corporation, of 15 Park Row in New York City, on 7 February 1921 for \$111.00.

Commanding Officers:

Captain Byron L. Reed, 1 April 1905 - 19 October 1908

Captain Stanley M. Landrey, 19 October 1908 - 1 November 1911

First Lieutenant Joseph H. Crozier, 1 November 1911 - 26 August 1913

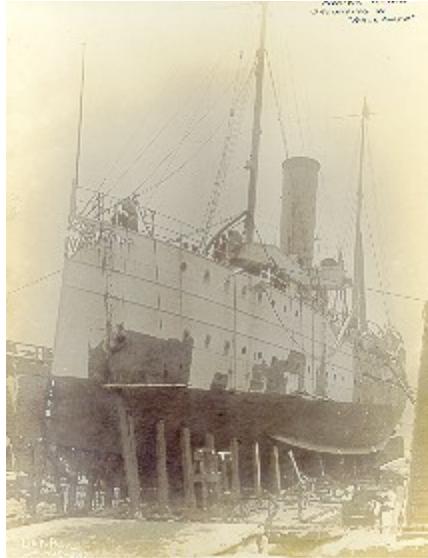
Captain Francis S. Van Boskerck, 26 August 1913 - 2 October 1914

Captain James. G. Ballinger, 2 October 1916 - 1 October 1917



"Mohawk."; no date/photo number; photographer unknown.

The *Mohawk* at anchor, circa 1914.



"'Mohawk' after grounding in 'Hell Gate.'"; no date; Photo No. 28; photo by Lerit & Paul, Naval Photographers (88 Pitt Street, New York).

Here *Mohawk* undergoes repairs after grounding on Bartlett Reef, Long Island Sound, on 29 May 1916.

Sources:

Cutter History File, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Donald Canney. *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790-1935*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995.

U.S. Coast Guard. *Record of Movements: Vessels of the United States Coast Guard: 1790 - December 31, 1933*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934; 1989 (reprint).

