



USS *Key West*, PF-17

A city in the Florida Keys.

Builder: American Ship Building Company, Lorain, OH

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.

History:

The second warship named *Key West*, PF-17, was launched 29 December 1943 by the American Shipbuilding Co., Lorain, Ohio. She was sponsored by Mrs. Vernon Lowe, sister of Lt. Harold Felton, the first resident of Key West reported missing in World War II. The *Key West* was commissioned at Houston 7 November 1944 with LCDR Bertheld Papanek, USCGR, in command.

Key West stood out of Galveston Bay 17 November 1944 for training exercises and escort duty out of Bermuda. The frigate operated there until sailing for Norfolk 22 December. *Key West* departed Hampton Roads 18 January 1945 escorting a convoy to Oran, Algeria, and returned Boston 28 February.

During the next 4 months, she made two cruises out of Casco Bay, Maine. Upon her return New York 14 June, from her final cruise, *Key West* remained at Brooklyn until 5 July when she sailed for Boston for conversion to a weather ship which included the removal of her after 3-inch gun and the addition of a weather balloon hanger.

She departed Boston 31 July and, after transiting the Canal, arrived Pearl Harbor 23 August. *Key West* was then assigned to duty of weather station patrol in the vicinity of Guam, arriving there 10 September. She operated out of Apra Harbor reporting meteorological data and stood by to aid ships in distress until 14 March 1946 when she arrived San Francisco. *Key West* departed San Francisco 9 April and served for 3 weeks on plane-guard station off the North California Coast. The weather ship arrived Seattle, Washington, 1 May and was decommissioned at Bremerton, 14 June 1946. She was sold 18 April 1947 to Cascade Enterprises, Oakland, Calif., and scrapped.

Sources:

The Coast Guard At War, Transports and Escorts, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 142.

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. III, p. 638.

