



USS *Manitowoc*, PF-61

A city and county in eastern Wisconsin, located on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Builder: Globe Shipbuilding Co., Superior, Wisconsin

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:

The first *Manitowoc* (PF-81), originally designated PG-169, was reclassified PF-

61 on 15 April 1943. She was laid down under Maritime Commission contract by Globe Shipbuilding Co., Superior, Wisconsin on 26 August 1943. She was launched 30 November 1943 and was sponsored by Mrs. Martin Georgenson. PF-61 was delivered to the Maritime Commission 27 September 1944, ferried to New Orleans via the Sault Sainte Marie Canal and the Mississippi River, and was acquired by the Navy and placed in service 24 October 1944.

Between 29 October and 5 November *Manitowoc* steamed to Boston where she was placed out of service 5 November and converted by the Boston Navy Yard for use as a weather patrol ship. *Manitowoc* commissioned at Boston 5 December 1944 under the command of LCDR J. A. Martin, USCG. During late December and early January 1945, she underwent shakedown off Bermuda. After returning to Boston 20 January 1945, she joined Escort Division 34 for duty as a weather station ship in the North Atlantic.

Departing Boston 2 February, *Manitowoc* reached Argentia, Newfoundland, 5 February. The following day she sailed on her first weather patrol. Equipped with special radio transmitters and specialized meteorological equipment, she relieved *Woonsocket* (PF-32) 8 February and began patrolling her assigned station. During the next 2 weeks she transmitted valuable weather data used to compile weather forecasts for both the North Atlantic and Western Europe in the closing weeks of the Allied defeat of Nazi Germany. Relieved on station 24 February, she returned to Argentia the 26th.

Prior to V-E Day, *Manitowoc* made two more weather patrols in the stormy North Atlantic, which carried her from Newfoundland to Iceland. In addition, she patrolled the sea lanes in her station against German submarines, once the menace of the North Atlantic.

After the end of the war in Europe, *Manitowoc* continued patrols in the North Atlantic where she served primarily as an air-sea rescue ship. Between 29 May and 10 February 1946 she completed seven such patrols, including a 5-day run in mid-November during the return flight to England of Prime Minister Clement Attlee. During an earlier patrol in late July she provided medical aid for the Panamanian merchantman SS *Yemasee*, and while on the same patrol 2 August, her medical officer performed an emergency appendectomy on a seriously ill crewman from the Swedish merchant ship SS *San Francisco*. After returning to Boston from her final patrol 10 February, *Manitowoc* decommissioned at Boston 14 March 1946 and immediately recommissioned on loan as a Coast Guard ship under the command of LT Wesley L. Saunders, USCG.

During the next 5 months *Manitowoc* served in the Atlantic out of Norfolk, Va.,

and in the Gulf of Mexico out of New Orleans. She decommissioned at New Orleans 3 September 1946, was sold to France 25 March 1947, and was delivered to a representative of the French Government 26 March 1947. Commissioned in the French Navy as *Le Brix* (F-15), she served under the French flag until scrapped in 1958.

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. IV, p. 217.

Richard A. Russell. *Project Hula: Secret Soviet-American Cooperation in the War Against Japan*. [The U.S. Navy in the Modern World Series, No. 4.] Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center/U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997, pp. 39-40.

