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SHIPS NAMED SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO reported at New York 25 August 1917 for duty with the Cruiser and Transport Force, Atlantic Fleet. She served as force flagship until 19 September, then joined a troop convoy group bound for St. Nazaire, France. The cruiser returned to New York 16 October and sailed 13 November with a second convoy. Arriving at St. Croisic, France, 26 November SAN DIEGO sailed a week later for Brest to rendezvous with and act as flagship of two convoy groups bound for France between September and December, 1917.

SAN DIEGO shifted her base to Halifax, Nova Scotia 14 January 1918, and escorted fast British supply convoys out to sea from that port until her return to New York 23 April. She escorted a merchant convoy out to sea from New York and conducted gunnery exercises at Hampton Roads before returning to New York 26 May. SAN DIEGO escorted a British merchant convoy to sea 12 June, and then entered Portsmouth Navy Yard for repairs, departing 18 July to make passage to New York.

Late in the morning of 19 July 1918, SAN DIEGO was on the final leg of her voyage. Zigzagging at 15 knots off Fire Island, Long Island, she struck a submerged mine laid by German submarine U-156. The port engine room quickly flooded, as did adjacent compartments and one of her firerooms. The cruiser heeled to port as flooding rapidly became uncontrollable, and in approximately 20 minutes SAN DIEGO capsized and sank. She was abandoned in excellent order by her crew; Captain Harley H. Christy, her commanding officer, left her only as she was turning over. Thanks largely to the calm discipline showed by SAN DIEGO's crew only six lives were lost; 1183 survivors were picked up, of whom six were injured.

SAN DIEGO's name was struck from the Navy List 26 August 1918.

The second SAN DIEGO (CL-53) was built at Bethlehem Steel Company, Quincy, Massachusetts. Her keel was laid 27 March 1940. She launched 26 July 1941, sponsored by Mrs. Percy J. Benbough, wife of the Mayor of San Diego. The cruiser commissioned 10 January 1942, Captain Benjamin F. Perry commanding.

SAN DIEGO had an overall length of 541 feet, 9 inches; an extreme beam of 53 feet, 2 inches; a standard displacement of 6,000 tons; and a mean draft of 16 feet, 4 inches. Her designed complement was 26 officers and 597 men, and her designed speed was 32 knots. She was originally armed with sixteen 5-inch 38-caliber guns; three 1.1-inch quadruple mounts; eight 20-millimeter antiaircraft guns; six single depth-charge projectors; and eight 21-inch torpedo tubes.

