

Pyro

The Greek word for fire.

(AE-1: dp. 7,025; l. 482'9"; b. 60'11"; dr. 20'11"; s. 13 k.;
cpl. 289; a. 2 5", 4 3", 4 40mm., cl. *Pyro*)

The first *Pyro* (AE-1), an ammunition ship, was laid down 9 August 1918 at the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Wash.; launched 16 December 1919; sponsored by Mrs. G. A. Bissett, wife of Comdr. Bissett, the Construction Officer at Puget Sound Navy Yard; and commissioned 10 August 1920, Comdr. J. S. Graham in command.

After shakedown *Pyro* was assigned to the Naval Transportation Service. She departed Puget Sound 18 September 1920 on her first voyage to the east coast, arriving New York one month later. Her principal operations were conducted between ports which extended from Puget Sound on the west coast to as far north as Boston on the east coast. Her most frequent ports of call included Mare Island, San Francisco, San Pedro, San Diego, Balboa, Guantanamo Bay, Norfolk, Philadelphia, and New York. Besides ammunition and explosives, she also carried general cargo and some passengers.

By April 1924 *Pyro* completed five additional runs to the east coast from California ports. Her Pacific operations took her as far as the Philippine Islands. Upon return from the east coast 22 April 1924 she put in at Bremerton and decommissioned at the Puget Sound Navy Yard 10 September.

Pyro recommissioned 1 July 1939, Comdr. R. S. Haggart in command. Assigned to the Naval Transportation Service, she resumed transport of ammunition, general cargo, and passengers, making five voyages to the east coast and five to Pearl Harbor by August 1941. She was assigned to Commander, Base Force, Train Squadron 8, Pacific Fleet 22 August 1941. Departing Mare Island 1 October, she arrived Pearl Harbor one week later to commence operations in the Hawaiian area.

Pyro was moored at West Loch in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked 7 December 1941. She suffered no serious damage and was credited with damaging one Japanese plane. Four days later she departed Pearl Harbor for San Francisco, and carried ammunition from the west coast to Pearl Harbor until 30 September 1942. On 17 October she departed San Francisco for Alaskan waters where she issued a load of mines to smaller ships to be planted as a defense for the base at Adak. She returned to San Francisco 19 November.

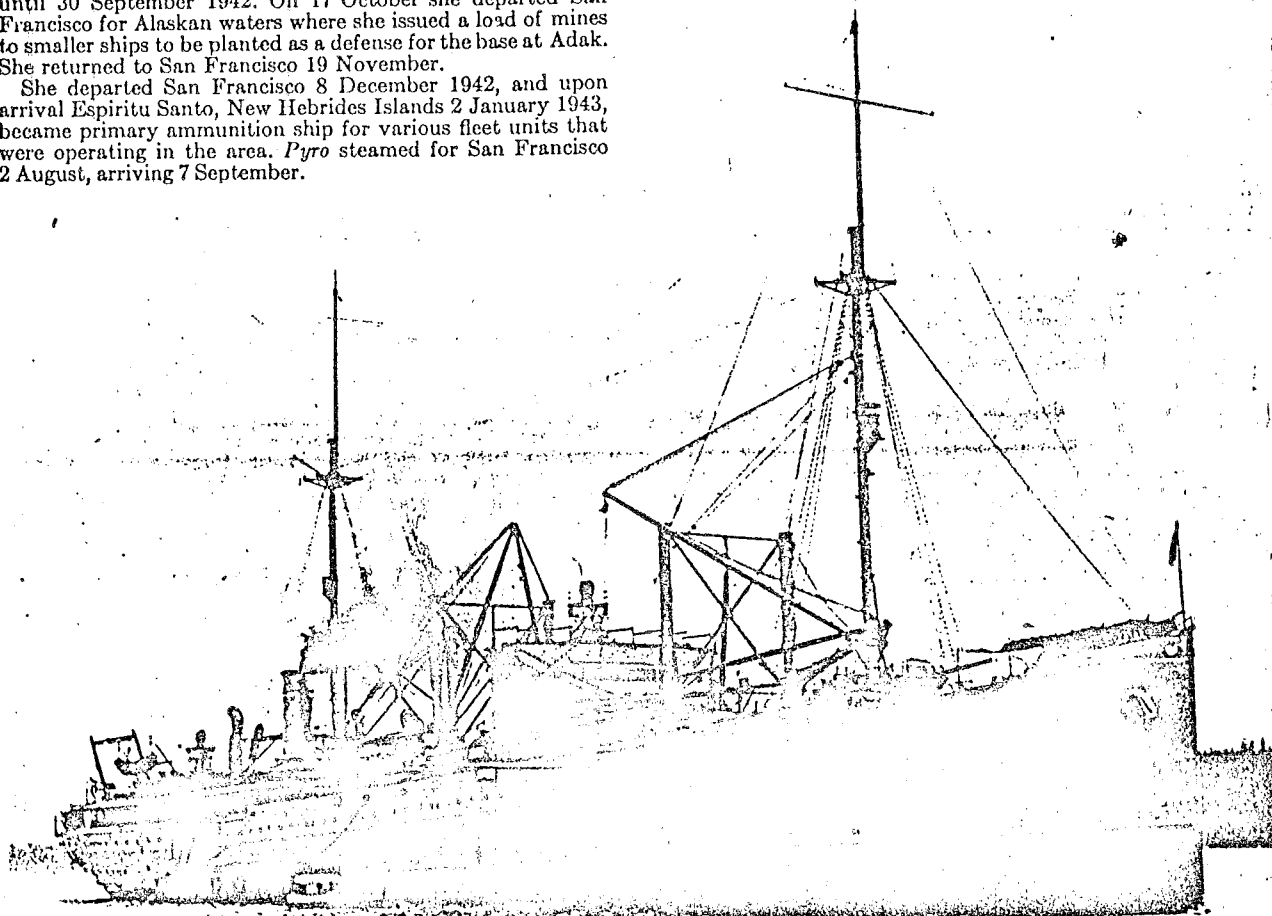
She departed San Francisco 8 December 1942, and upon arrival Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands 2 January 1943, became primary ammunition ship for various fleet units that were operating in the area. *Pyro* steamed for San Francisco 2 August, arriving 7 September.

Departing San Francisco 11 November 1943 for Brisbane, Australia, she reported to Commander, Service Force, 7th Fleet 7 December 1943. From that date until 8 April 1944, *Pyro* transported ammunition from Australia, New Caledonia, and the New Hebrides to Milne Bay, New Guinea. From 13 April through 12 July 1944 she replenished combatants engaged in the Admiralty Islands and Hollandia campaigns at various New Guinea harbors.

Pyro arrived Sydney, Australia 18 July 1944 for six weeks of repairs, returning 9 September to the new base of operations at Hollandia, where units of the fleet assembled for the invasion of Leyte. The ammunition ship remained at Hollandia until 3 November when she steamed to Seadler Bay, Manus Island; Admiralty Islands for emergency repairs and reloading, returning to Hollandia 1 December 1944. She steamed for Leyte Gulf 19 December, arriving one week later and remaining in the Philippine area replenishing combatants until 4 August 1945. *Pyro* then steamed for the Admiralty Islands for repair and overhaul.

She departed the Admiralty Islands 17 October with a load of serviceable ammunition for transfer to the United States. After embarking troops enroute at Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, she arrived Seattle 21 November 1945. She remained there until 17 February 1946 and then steamed for San Francisco Bay, arriving the next day. After discharging her ammunition, she returned to Seattle 2 April. *Pyro* decommissioned at Seattle 12 June and was struck from the Navy List 3 July. She was turned over to the War Shipping Administration 14 July 1946, and in March 1950 she was sold to the National Metal and Steel Co. for scrapping.

Pyro earned one battle star for World War II service.



USS *Pyro* (AE-1).