

= USS Rhode Island (BB @-@ 17) =

USS Rhode Island (BB @-@ 17) was the last of five Virginia @-@ class battleships built for the United States Navy , and was the second ship to carry her name . She was laid down in May 1902 , launched in May 1904 , and commissioned into the Atlantic Fleet in February 1906 . The ship was armed with an offensive battery of four 12 @-@ inch (300 mm) guns and eight 8 @-@ inch (200 mm) guns , and she was capable of a top speed of 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) .

The ship 's career primarily consisted of training with the other battleships of the Atlantic Fleet . Rhode Island took part in the cruise of the Great White Fleet in 1907 ? 09 , and thereafter largely remained in the Atlantic . In late 1913 , she cruised the Caribbean coast of Mexico to protect American interests during the Mexican Revolution . After the United States entered World War I in April 1917 , Rhode Island was assigned to anti @-@ submarine patrols off the east coast of the US . Starting in December 1918 , after the end of the war , the ship was used to repatriate American soldiers . She carried over 5 @,@ 000 men in the course of five trips . She was briefly transferred to the Pacific Fleet in 1919 before being decommissioned in 1920 and sold for scrap in 1923 under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty .

= = Design = =

Rhode Island was 441 feet 3 inches (134 @.@ 49 m) long overall and had a beam of 76 ft 3 in (23 @.@ 24 m) and a draft of 23 ft 9 in (7 @.@ 24 m) . She displaced 14 @,@ 948 long tons (15 @,@ 188 t) as designed and up to 16 @,@ 094 long tons (16 @,@ 352 t) at full load . The ship was powered by two @-@ shaft triple @-@ expansion steam engines rated at 19 @,@ 000 indicated horsepower (14 @,@ 000 kW) and twelve coal @-@ fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers , generating a top speed of 19 knots (35 km / h ; 22 mph) . As built , she was fitted with heavy military masts , but these were quickly replaced by cage masts in 1909 . She had a crew of 812 officers and enlisted men .

The ship was armed with a main battery of four 12 inch / 40 Mark 4 guns in two twin gun turrets on the centerline , one forward and aft . The secondary battery consisted of eight 8 @-@ inch (203 mm) / 45 guns and twelve 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) / 45 guns . The 8 @-@ inch guns were mounted in four twin turrets ; two of these were superposed atop the main battery turrets , with the other two turrets abreast the forward funnel . The 6 @-@ inch guns were placed in casemates in the hull . For close @-@ range defense against torpedo boats , she carried twelve 3 @-@ inch / 50 guns mounted in casemates along the side of the hull and twelve 3 @-@ pounder guns . She also carried two 1 @-@ pounder guns . As was standard for capital ships of the period , Rhode Island carried four 21 in (530 mm) torpedo tubes , submerged in her hull on the broadside .

Rhode Island 's main armored belt was 11 in (279 mm) thick over the magazines and the machinery spaces and 6 in (152 mm) elsewhere . The main battery gun turrets (and the secondary turrets on top of them) had 12 @-@ inch (300 mm) thick faces , and the supporting barbettes had 10 in (250 mm) of armor plating . The conning tower had 9 in (230 mm) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Rhode Island was laid down at the Fore River Shipyard in Massachusetts on 1 May 1902 and was launched on 17 May 1904 . The ship was completed less than a year later , on 19 February 1906 . The ship conducted an extensive shakedown cruise and sea trials before steaming to Hampton Roads , where she was assigned to the 2nd Division of the 1st Squadron , Atlantic Fleet on 1 January 1907 . She left Hampton Roads on 9 March 1907 , bound for Guantanamo Bay , Cuba . There , she and the rest of the 1st Squadron conducted maneuvers and gunnery training . After the conclusion of these exercises , she returned to the east coast of the United States for a cruise to Cape Cod Bay . On 8 December , Rhode Island returned to Hampton Roads , where she and fifteen other battleships held a naval review at the start of the cruise of the Great White Fleet . The battleships were joined by transports and a squadron of torpedo boats . On 16 December ,

President Theodore Roosevelt reviewed the fleet before it departed on the first leg of the trip .

The fleet cruised south to the Caribbean and then to South America , making stops in Port of Spain , Rio de Janeiro , Punta Arenas , and Valparaíso , among other cities . After arriving in Mexico in March 1908 , the fleet spent three weeks conducting gunnery practice . The fleet then resumed its voyage up the Pacific coast of the Americas , stopping in San Francisco and Seattle before crossing the Pacific to Australia , stopping in Hawaii on the way . Stops in the South Pacific included Melbourne , Sydney , and Auckland . The fleet then turned north for the Philippines , stopping in Manila , before continuing on to Japan where a welcoming ceremony was held in Yokohama . Three weeks of exercises followed in Subic Bay in the Philippines in November . The ships passed Singapore on 6 December and entered the Indian Ocean ; they coaled in Colombo before proceeding to the Suez Canal and coaling again at Port Said , Egypt . The fleet called in several Mediterranean ports before stopping in Gibraltar , where an international fleet of British , Russian , French , and Dutch warships greeted the Americans . The ships then crossed the Atlantic to return to Hampton Roads on 22 February 1909 , having traveled 46 @, @ 729 nautical miles (86 @, @ 542 km ; 53 @, @ 775 mi) . There , they conducted a naval review for President Theodore Roosevelt .

After the conclusion of the review , Rhode Island steamed to New York for an overhaul at the New York Navy Yard . During the overhaul , on 8 March , the ship was assigned to the 3rd Division , 1st Squadron . After emerging from the dry dock , she resumed her normal peacetime routine of maneuvers with the rest of the squadron , gunnery practice , and training cruises . In February 1910 she was sent on a cruise in the Caribbean . The ship was reassigned to the 4th Division , 1st Squadron on 20 October , and two weeks later she and the rest of the squadron held a naval review in Boston for President William Howard Taft on 2 November . The ships then crossed the Atlantic to visit European ports ; Rhode Island went to Gravesend . During the cruise , the fleet conducted large scale battle and reconnaissance training . Rhode Island and the rest of the ships recrossed the Atlantic and stopped in Guantanamo Bay on 13 January 1911 .

The ship then resumed her peacetime routine , which lasted for the next three years , punctuated only by a cruise to Key West , Florida and Havana and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba in June ? July 1912 . Upon her return , she was reassigned temporarily as the flagship of the 3rd Division on 17 July . This duty was short @-@ lived , and on 1 August the divisional commander transferred his flag to her sister ship New Jersey . On 28 June 1913 , Rhode Island again became the divisional flagship , and this stint lasted until 18 January 1914 . In late 1913 , the US Navy began to become increasingly involved in the Mexican Revolution ; in late 1913 , Rhode Island cruised off Veracruz , Tampico , and Tuxpan to protect American nationals in the country . In February 1914 , the ship left the area and stopped in Guantanamo Bay for two weeks before continuing on to the United States to return to her normal routine .

The ship went on two cruises to show the flag in the Caribbean , the first from October 1914 to March 1915 , and the second from January to February 1916 . During this period , she served as the flagship for the 4th Division , 1st Squadron , from 19 December 1914 to 20 January 1915 . On 15 May 1916 , she was reduced to the fleet reserve at the Boston Navy Yard , and formally removed from the Atlantic Fleet the following day . From 24 June to 28 September , she served as the flagship of the Commander in Chief , Reserve Force , Atlantic Fleet . Rhode Island was placed back in commission on 27 March 1917 , as tensions with Germany rose dramatically as the result of the German unrestricted submarine warfare campaign that had been launched earlier in the year . The United States declared war on 6 April , and on 3 May , the ship became the flagship of Battleship Division 3 , Atlantic Fleet . The ship 's crew underwent extensive training to bring the ship up to combat readiness before she was assigned to anti @-@ submarine patrols off Tangier Island , Maryland . She was based out of Hampton Roads into 1918 .

In April , Rhode Island was transferred to Battleship Division 2 , and in June , she conducted torpedo proving trials . At the end of the war in November , the ship was assigned to the operation to transport American soldiers back from France . The first trip started on 18 December ; Rhode Island and Virginia steamed to Brest , France , where they arrived on 30 December . The two ships took on 2 @, @ 043 men between them during a three @-@ day stay in the port . Over the course of four further trips , the last of which ended on 4 July 1919 , she carried more than 5 @, @ 000 men to

Boston . On 17 July , she was assigned as the flagship of Battleship Squadron 1 , Pacific Fleet . She left Boston five days later and cruised down to Balboa , at the entrance to the Panama Canal . After transiting the canal , Rhode Island steamed north , to Mare Island Navy Yard , where she remained through 1920 . On 30 June , she was decommissioned and placed in reserve . According to the terms of the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty , Rhode Island was sold for scrap on 1 November 1923 and broken up . The ship 's bell is preserved on display at the Rhode Island State House .