

= USS Connecticut (BB @-@ 18) =

USS Connecticut (BB @-@ 18) , the fourth United States Navy ship to be named after the state of Connecticut , was the lead ship of her class of six battleships . Her keel was laid on 10 March 1903 ; launched on 29 September 1904 , Connecticut was commissioned on 29 September 1906 as the most advanced ship in the U.S. Navy .

Connecticut served as the flagship for the Jamestown Exposition in mid @-@ 1907 , which commemorated the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Jamestown colony . She later sailed with the Great White Fleet on a circumnavigation of the Earth to showcase the US Navy 's growing fleet of blue @-@ water @-@ capable ships . After completing her service with the Great White Fleet , Connecticut participated in several flag @-@ waving exercises intended to protect American citizens abroad until she was pressed into service as a troop transport at the end of World War I to expedite the return of American Expeditionary Forces from France .

For the remainder of her career , Connecticut sailed to various places in both the Atlantic and Pacific while training newer recruits to the Navy . However , the provisions of the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty stipulated that many of the older battleships , Connecticut among them , would have to be disposed of , so she was decommissioned on 1 March 1922 and sold for scrap on 1 November 1923 .

= = Design = =

The design that evolved into the Connecticut @-@ class battleship was conceived on 6 March 1901 when Secretary of the Navy John Davis Long asked the Board on Construction for a study of future battleship designs . When this was completed , different bureaus supported different designs .

The Board on Construction favored a ship on which 6 @-@ inch (152 mm) and 8 @-@ inch (203 mm) guns would be replaced by 24 newly designed 7 @-@ inch (178 mm) guns , which were the most powerful guns with shells that could be handled by one person . In addition , the ships would mount twenty @-@ four 3 @-@ inch (76 mm) anti @-@ torpedo boat guns . The main armor would be thinner overall because it would be distributed over the entire length . The Board 's favored design would result in a ship weighing 15 @,@ 560 long tons (15 @,@ 810 t) displacement .

The Bureau of Construction and Repair , however , proposed a modified Virginia @-@ class battleship with sixteen 8 @-@ inch guns , twelve in turrets and four in casemates ; the casemate guns were later eliminated , leaving twelve 8 @-@ inch , twelve 6 @-@ inch , and eight 3 @-@ inch guns on a ship of 15 @,@ 860 long tons (16 @,@ 110 t) . This design was later rejected because the reduction in anti @-@ torpedo boat guns was too drastic .

Although one of the two designs had been rejected , the debate did not end . In November , the Board decided on a different plan , with eight 8 @-@ inch guns mounted in four waist turrets and 12 7 @-@ inch guns . This arrangement was chosen because the 8 @-@ inch gun could penetrate medium armor on battleships , and the 7 @-@ inch gun was capable of rapid fire . The new design also had heavier armor and a thicker belt than the first design . Two ships of this plan , Connecticut and Louisiana , were authorized on 1 July 1902 , and three more were added on 2 March 1903 : Vermont , Kansas , and Minnesota . New Hampshire was authorized on 27 April 1904 .

= = Launch = =

Connecticut was laid down on 10 March 1903 and launched on 29 September 1904 by the Brooklyn Navy Yard . She was sponsored by Miss Alice B. Welles , granddaughter of Gideon Welles , Secretary of the Navy during the American Civil War . A crowd of over 30 @,@ 000 people attended the launch , as did many of the Navy 's ships . The battleships Texas , Massachusetts , Iowa , Kearsarge , Illinois , Alabama , Maine , and Missouri were at the ceremony , along with the protected cruisers Columbia and Minneapolis and the auxiliary cruiser Prairie .

Three attempts to sabotage the ship were discovered in 1904 . On 31 March , rivets on the keel plates were found bored through . On 14 September , a 1 ? in (3 @.@ 5 cm) bolt was found driven

into the launching way , where it protruded some 5 in (11 cm) . Shortly after the Connecticut was launched on 29 September , a hole 1 in (2 @. @ 5 cm) in diameter was discovered drilled through a ? in (1 @. @ 6 cm) steel keel plate . The ship 's watertight compartments and pumps prevented her from sinking , and all damage was repaired . The incidents prompted the Navy to post armed guards at the shipyard , and an overnight watch was kept by a Navy tug manned by Marines who had orders to shoot to kill any unauthorized person attempting to approach the ship .

As Connecticut was only 55 % complete when she was launched , missing most of her upper works , protection , machinery and armament , it was two years before Connecticut was commissioned on 29 September 1906 . Captain William Swift was the first captain of the new battleship . Connecticut sailed out of New York for the first time on 15 December 1906 , becoming the first ship in the US Navy to ever go to sea without a sea trial . She first journeyed south to the Virginia Capes , where she conducted a variety of training exercises ; this was followed by a shakedown cruise and battle practice off Cuba and Puerto Rico . During the cruise , she participated in a search for the missing steamer Ponce .

On 13 January 1907 , Connecticut ran onto a reef while entering the harbor at Culebra Island . The Navy did not release any information about the grounding until press dispatches from San Juan carrying news of the incident reached the mainland on 23 January . Even then , Navy authorities in San Juan claimed to be ignorant of the situation , and , that same day , the Navy Department itself said that they only knew that Captain Swift thought she had touched bottom and that an examination of the ship 's bottom by divers had revealed no damage . The Navy amended this the next day , releasing a statement that Connecticut had been only slightly damaged and had returned to her shakedown cruise . However , damage to the ship was much more serious than the Navy admitted ; in contrast to an official statement saying that Connecticut had only " touched " the rocks , she actually had run full upon the reef when traversing " a course well marked with buoys " in " broad daylight " and did enough damage to probably require a dry docking . This apparent attempt at a cover @-@ up was enough for the United States Congress to consider an official inquiry into the matter .

On 21 March , the Navy announced that Swift would be court @-@ martialled for " through negligence , causing a vessel to run upon a rock " and " neglect of duty in regard to the above " . Along with the officer of the deck at the time of the accident , Lieutenant Harry E. Yarnell , Swift faced a court martial of seven rear admirals , a captain , and a lieutenant . He was sentenced to one year 's suspension from duty , later reduced to nine months ; after about six months , the sentence was remitted on 24 October . However , he was not assigned command of another ship .

Connecticut steamed back to Hampton Roads after this , arriving on 16 April ; when she arrived , Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans , commander of the Atlantic Fleet , transferred his flag from Maine to Connecticut , making her the flagship of the fleet . President Theodore Roosevelt opened the Jamestown Exposition on 25 April , and Connecticut was named as the official host of the vessels that were visiting from other countries . Sailors and marines from the ship took part in various events ashore , and foreign dignitaries , along with the governors of Virginia and Rhode Island , were hosted aboard the ship on 29 April . Evans closed the Exposition on 4 May on the quarterdeck of Connecticut . On 10 June , Connecticut joined in the Presidential Fleet Review ; she left three days later for an overhaul in the New York Naval Yard . After the overhaul , Connecticut conducted maneuvers off Hampton Roads and target practice off Cape Cod . She was ordered back to the New York Naval Yard once again on 6 September for a refit that would make her suitable for use as flagship of the Great White Fleet .

= = Flagship of the Great White Fleet = =

Connecticut left the New York Naval Yard on 5 December 1907 and arrived the next day in Hampton Roads , where the Great White Fleet would assemble with her as their flagship . After an eight @-@ day period known as " Navy Farewell Week " during which festivities were held for the departing sailors , and all 16 battleships took on full loads of coal , stores , and ammunition , the ships were ready to depart . The battleship captains paid their respects to President Theodore

Roosevelt on the presidential yacht Mayflower , and all the ships weighed anchor and departed at 1000 . They passed in review before the President , and then began traveling south . After steaming past Cape Hatteras , the fleet headed for the Caribbean . They approached Puerto Rico on the 20th , caught sight of Venezuela on the 22nd , and later dropped anchor in Port of Spain , the capital of Trinidad , making the first port visit of the Great White Fleet . With the torpedo boat flotilla that had left Hampton Roads two weeks previously , and five colliers to fill the coal bunkers of the fleet , Port of Spain had a total of 32 US Navy ships in the harbor , making it " [resemble] a U.S. Navy base " .

After spending Christmas in Trinidad , the ships departed for Rio de Janeiro on 29 December . A ceremonial Brazilian escort of three cruisers met the task force 12 nmi (14 mi ; 22 km) outside Rio , and " thousands of wildly cheering Brazilians lined the shore " ; 10 days of ceremonies , games , and festivities followed , and the stopover was so successful that the visit was the cause of a major boost in US ? Brazilian relations . The fleet left Rio on 22 January 1908 , still heading south , this time bound for the coaling stop of Punta Arenas , Chile .

Four cruisers from Argentina , San Martin , Buenos Ayres , 9 De Julio , and Pueyrredon , all under the command of Admiral Hipolito Oliva , sailed 300 nmi (350 mi ; 560 km) to salute the American ships on their way to Chile . The fleet arrived at Punta Arenas on 1 February and spent five days in the town of 14 @, @ 000 . Heading north , they followed the coastline of Chile , passing in review of Chilean President Pedro Montt on 14 February outside Valparaíso , and they were escorted to Callao in Peru by the cruiser Coronel Bolognesi on 19 and 20 February . Peru 's president , José Pardo , came aboard Connecticut during this time , as Rear Admiral Evans was quite ill and could not go ashore . After taking on coal , the ships steamed for Mexico on 29 February , passing in review of the cruiser Almirante Grau , which had Pardo embarked , before leaving .

Arriving in Mexico on 20 March , the fleet underwent three weeks of target practice . Rear Admiral Evans was relieved of command during this time , as he was completely bedridden and in constant pain , so on 30 March , Connecticut set sail north at full speed . She was met two days later by the schooner Yankton , which took the admiral to a hospital . Connecticut traveled back south to rejoin the fleet , and Rear Admiral Charles M. Thomas took Evans 's place on Connecticut as the commander of the fleet , which continued its journey north , bound for California .

On 5 May , Evans returned to Connecticut in time for the fleet 's sailing through the Golden Gate on 6 May , although he was still in pain . Over one million people watched the 42 @-@ ship fleet sail into the bay . After a grand parade through San Francisco , a review of the fleet by Secretary of the Navy Victor H. Metcalf , a gala reception , and a farewell address from Evans (who was retiring due to his illness and his age) , the fleet left San Francisco for Seattle , with Rear Admiral Charles Stillman Sperry as commander . The ships all underwent refits before the next leg of the voyage . The fleet left the West Coast again on 7 July , bound for Hawaii , which it reached on 16 July .

Leaving Hawaii on 22 July , the ships next stopped at Auckland , Sydney , and Melbourne . High seas and winds hampered the ships for part of the voyage to New Zealand , but they arrived on 9 August ; festivities , parades , balls , and games were staples of the visits to each city . The highlight of the austral visit was a parade of 12 @, @ 000 U.S. Navy , Royal Navy , and Commonwealth naval and military personnel in front of 250 @, @ 000 people .

After stopping at Manila in the Philippines , the fleet set course for Yokohama , Japan . They encountered a typhoon on the way on 12 October , but no ships were lost ; the fleet was only delayed 24 hours . After three Japanese men @-@ of @-@ war and six merchantmen escorted the Americans in , festivities began . The celebrations culminated in the Uraga , where Commodore Matthew C. Perry had anchored a little more than 50 years prior . The ships then departed on 25 October . After three weeks of exercises in the Philippines ' Subic Bay , the ships sailed south on 1 December for Singapore ; they did not stop there , however , passing outside the city on 6 December . Continuing on , they stopped at Colombo for coal from 12 ? 20 December before sailing on for the Suez Canal . It took three days for all 16 battleships to traverse the canal , even though it was closed to all other traffic . They then headed for a coaling stop at Port Said , Egypt , after which the fleet split up into individual divisions to call on different ports in the Mediterranean . The First Division , of which Connecticut was a part , originally planned to visit Italy before moving on to Villefranche , but Connecticut and Illinois were quickly dispatched to southern Italy on a

humanitarian mission when news of an earthquake reached the fleet . Seamen from the ships helped clear debris and unload supplies from the U.S. Navy refrigerated supply ship Culgoa ; Admiral Sperry received the personal thanks of King Victor Emmanuel III for their assistance .

After port calls were concluded , the ships headed for Gibraltar , where they found a conglomerate of warships from many different nations awaiting them " with decks manned and horns blaring " : the battleships HMS Albemarle and Albion with the cruiser HMS Devonshire and the Second Cruiser Squadron represented Great Britain 's Royal Navy , battleships Tsesarevich and Slava with cruisers Admiral Makarov , Bogatyr and Oleg represented the Imperial Russian Navy , and various gunboats represented France and the Netherlands . After coaling for five days , the ships got under way and left for home on 6 February 1909 .

After weathering a few storms , the ships met nine of their fellow U.S. Navy ships five days out of Hampton Roads : four battleships (Maine , Mississippi , Idaho , and New Hampshire ? the only sister of Connecticut to not make the cruise , two armored cruisers , and three scout cruisers . Connecticut then led all of these warships around Tail @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Horseshoe Lightship on 22 February to pass in review of President Roosevelt , who was then on the presidential yacht anchored off Old Point Comfort , ending a 46 @,@ 729 nmi (53 @,@ 775 mi ; 86 @,@ 542 km) trip . Roosevelt boarded the ship after she anchored and gave a short speech , saying , " You 've done the trick . Other nations may do as you have done , but they 'll follow you . "

= = Pre @-@ World War I = =

Following her return from the world cruise , Connecticut continued to serve as flagship of the Atlantic Fleet , interrupted only by a March 1909 overhaul at the New York Navy Yard . After rejoining the fleet , she cruised the East Coast from her base at Norfolk , Virginia . For the rest of 1909 , the battleship conducted training and participated in ceremonial observances , such as the Hudson @-@ Fulton Celebration . In early January 1910 , Connecticut left for Cuban waters and stayed there until late March when she returned to New York for a refit . After several months conducting maneuvers and battle practice off the New England coast , she left for Europe on 2 November to go on a midshipman training cruise . She arrived in Portland , England on 15 November and was present during the 1 December birthday celebration of Queen Alexandra , the queen mother . Connecticut next visited Cherbourg , France , where she welcomed visitors from the town and also hosted commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the French Navy Vice @-@ Amiral Laurent Marin @-@ Darbel , and a delegation of his officers . While there , a boat crew from Connecticut engaged a crew from the French battleship Charles Martel in a rowing race ; Connecticut 's crew won by twelve lengths . Connecticut departed French waters for Guantánamo Bay , Cuba on 30 December , and stayed there until 17 March , when she departed for Hampton Roads .

Connecticut was the leader of the ships that passed in review during the Presidential Fleet Review in New York on 2 November ; she then remained in New York until 12 January 1912 , when she returned to Guantánamo Bay . During a March overhaul at the Philadelphia Naval Yard , the battleship relinquished her role as flagship to the armored cruiser Washington . After the overhaul 's completion , Connecticut 's activities through the end of 1912 included practicing with torpedoes in Fort Pond Bay , conducting fleet maneuvers , and battle practice off Block Island and the Virginia Capes . Stopping in New York , Connecticut conducted training exercises in Guantánamo Bay from 13 February to 20 March ; during this time (on the 28th) , she once again became the Atlantic Fleet flagship for a brief and final time when she served in the interim as Rear Admiral Charles J. Badger transferred his flag from Wyoming to Utah . After taking on stores in Philadelphia , Connecticut sailed for Mexico and arrived on 22 April ; she was to patrol the waters near Tampico and Vera Cruz , protecting American citizens and interests during disturbances there and in Haiti .

On 22 June 1912 , Connecticut departed Mexican waters for Philadelphia , where she was dry docked for three months of repairs . Upon their completion , Connecticut conducted gunnery practice off the Virginia Capes . On 23 October , Connecticut became the flagship of the Fourth Battleship Division . After the division passed in review before Secretary of the Navy George von Lengerke Meyer on the 25th , Connecticut left for Genoa , Italy , where she remained until 30

November . The battleship departed Italy for Vera Cruz and arrived on 23 December . She took refugees from Mexico to Galveston and carried officers of the Army and representative from the Red Cross back in the opposite direction .

On 29 May 1914 , while still in Mexico , Connecticut relinquished the duty of flagship to Minnesota , but remained in Mexico until 2 July , when she left for Havana . Arriving there on 8 July , Connecticut embarked Madison R. Smith , the US minister to Haiti , and took him to Port au Prince , arriving five days later . Connecticut remained in Haiti for a month , then left for Philadelphia on 8 August and arrived there on 14 August .

Connecticut then went to Maine and the Virginia Capes for battle practice , after which she went into the Philadelphia Naval Yard for an overhaul . After more than 15 weeks , Connecticut emerged on 15 January 1915 and steamed south to Cuba , where she conducted training exercises before returning to Philadelphia . She remained there until 31 July , when she embarked 433 men from the Second Regiment , First Brigade , of the United States Marine Corps for transport to Port au Prince , where they were put ashore on 5 August as part of the US occupation of Haiti . Connecticut delivered supplies to amphibious troops in Cap Haïtien on 5 September and remained near Haiti for the next few months , supporting landing parties ashore , including detachments of Marines and sailors from Connecticut under the command of Major Smedley Butler . After departing Haiti , Connecticut arrived in Philadelphia on 15 December and was placed into the Atlantic Reserve Fleet .

= = World War I = =

As part of the US response to Germany 's unrestricted submarine warfare , Connecticut was recommissioned on 3 October 1916 . Two days later , Admiral Herbert O. Dunn made her the flagship of the Fifth Battleship Division , transferring his flag from Minnesota . Connecticut operated along the East Coast and in the Caribbean until the United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917 . For the duration of the war , Connecticut was based in York River , Virginia . More than 1 @, @ 000 trainees ? midshipmen and gun crews for merchant ships ? took part in exercises on her while she sailed in Chesapeake Bay and off the Virginia Capes .

= = Inter @-@ war period = =

At the close of the war , Connecticut was assigned to the Cruiser and Transport Force for transport duty , and from 6 January ? 22 June 1919 she made four voyages to return troops from France . On 6 January , she left Hampton Roads for Brest , France , where she embarked 1 @, @ 000 troops . After bringing them to New York (arriving on 2 February) , Connecticut traveled back to Brest and picked up the 53rd Pioneer Regiment , a company of Marines , and a company of military police , 1 @, @ 240 troops in all . These men were delivered to Hampton Roads on 24 March . After two months , Connecticut made another run overseas : following a short period of liberty in Paris for her crew , she embarked 891 men variously from the 502nd Army Engineers , a medical detachment , and the Red Cross . They were dropped off in Newport News on 22 June . On 23 June 1919 , after having returned over 4 @, @ 800 men , Connecticut was reassigned as flagship of the Second Battleship Squadron of the Atlantic Fleet , under the command of Vice Admiral Hilary P. Jones .

While based in Philadelphia for the next 11 months , Connecticut trained midshipmen . On 2 May 1920 , 200 midshipmen boarded the ship for a training cruise . In company with the other battleships of her squadron , Connecticut sailed to the Caribbean and through the Panama Canal in order to visit four ports @-@ of @-@ call : Honolulu , Seattle , San Francisco , and San Pedro Bay (Los Angeles and Long Beach) . After visiting all four , the squadron made their way back through the canal and headed for home . However , the port engine of Connecticut gave out three days after transiting the canal , requiring New Hampshire to tow the battleship into Guantánamo Bay . The pair arrived on 28 August . The midshipmen were debarked there , and Vice Admiral Jones transferred his flag from Connecticut to his new flagship , Kansas . The Navy repair ship Prometheus was dispatched from New York on 1 September to tow Connecticut to Philadelphia ; they arrived at the

Navy Yard there on 11 September .

On 21 March 1921 , Connecticut again became the flagship of the Second Battleship Squadron when Rear Admiral Charles Frederick Hughes took command . The ships of the squadron departed Philadelphia on 7 April to perform maneuvers and training exercises off Cuba , though they returned to take part in the Presidential Review in Hampton Roads on 28 April . After participating in Naval Academy celebrations on Memorial Day , Connecticut and her squadmates departed on a midshipman cruise which took them to Europe . On 28 June , Connecticut hosted a Norwegian delegation that included King Haakon VII , Prime Minister Otto Blehr , the Minister of Defence , and the First Sea Lord of the Royal Norwegian Navy . After arriving in Portugal on 21 July , the battleship hosted the Civil Governor of the Province of Lisbon and the Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Portuguese Navy . Six days later , Connecticut hosted the Portuguese president , António José de Almeida . The battleship squadron departed for Guantánamo Bay on 29 July and , after arrival there , remained for gunnery practice and exercises . Connecticut , leaving the rest of the squadron , departed for Annapolis and disembarked her midshipmen on 30 August , then proceeded to Philadelphia .

Connecticut departed Philadelphia for California on 4 October for duty with the Pacific Fleet . After touching at San Diego on the 27th , she arrived on 28 October at San Pedro , where Rear Admiral H.O. Stickney designated her the flagship of Pacific Fleet Training . For the next few months , Connecticut cruised along the West Coast , taking part in exercises and commemorations . Under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty , which set tonnage limits for its signatory nations , the Navy designated Connecticut for scrapping . Getting under way for her final voyage on 11 December , she made a five @-@ day journey to the Puget Sound Navy Yard , where she was decommissioned on 1 March 1923 . On 1 November , the ex @-@ Connecticut was sold for scrap to Walter W. Johnson of San Francisco for the sum of \$ 42 @,@ 750 .