

= USS Arkansas ( BB @-@ 33 ) =

USS Arkansas ( BB @-@ 33 ) was a dreadnought battleship , the second member of the Wyoming class , built by the United States Navy . She was the third ship of the US Navy named in honor of the 25th state , and was built by the New York Shipbuilding Corporation . She was laid down in January 1910 , launched in January 1911 , and commissioned into the Navy in September 1912 . Arkansas was armed with a main battery of twelve 12 @-@ inch ( 305 mm ) guns and capable of a top speed of 20 @. @ 5 kn ( 38 @. @ 0 km / h ; 23 @. @ 6 mph ) .

Arkansas served in both World Wars . During the First World War , she was part of Battleship Division Nine , which was attached to the British Grand Fleet , but she saw no action during the war . During the interwar years , Arkansas performed a variety of duties , including training cruises for midshipmen and goodwill visits overseas .

Following the outbreak of World War II , Arkansas conducted Neutrality Patrols in the Atlantic prior to America 's entry into the war . Thereafter , she escorted convoys to Europe through 1944 ; in June , she supported the invasion of Normandy , and in August she provided gunfire support to the invasion of southern France . In 1945 , she transferred to the Pacific , and bombarded Japanese positions during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa . After the end of the war , she ferried troops back to the United States as part of Operation Magic Carpet . Arkansas was expended as a target in Operation Crossroads , a pair of nuclear weapon tests at Bikini Atoll in July 1946 .

= = Construction = =

Arkansas was laid down on 25 January 1910 at New York Shipbuilding in Camden , New Jersey . She was launched on 14 January 1911 , after which fitting @-@ out work was effected . The ship was completed by September 1912 , and was commissioned into the US Navy on 17 September at the Philadelphia Navy Yard , under the command of Captain Roy C. Smith . The ship was 562 ft ( 171 m ) long overall and had a beam of 93 ft 3 in ( 28 m ) and a draft of 28 ft 6 in ( 9 m ) . She displaced 26 @, @ 000 long tons ( 26 @, @ 000 t ) as designed and up to 27 @, @ 243 long tons ( 27 @, @ 680 t ) at full combat load . The ship was powered by four @-@ shaft Parsons steam turbines and twelve coal @-@ fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers rated at 28 @, @ 000 shp ( 21 @, @ 000 kW ) , generating a top speed of 20 @. @ 5 kn ( 38 @. @ 0 km / h ; 23 @. @ 6 mph ) . The ship had a cruising range of 8 @, @ 000 nmi ( 15 @, @ 000 km ; 9 @, @ 200 mi ) at a speed of 10 kn ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) .

The ship was armed with a main battery of twelve 12 @-@ inch / 50 caliber Mark 7 guns in six twin Mark 9 gun turrets on the centerline , two of which were placed in a superfiring pair forward . The other four turrets were placed aft of the superstructure in two superfiring pairs . The secondary battery consisted of twenty @-@ one 5 @-@ inch ( 127 mm ) / 51 caliber guns mounted in casemates along the side of the hull . The main armored belt was 11 in ( 279 mm ) thick , while the gun turrets had 12 in ( 305 mm ) thick faces . The conning tower had 11 @. @ 5 in ( 292 mm ) thick sides .

= = = Modifications = = =

In 1925 , Arkansas was modernized in the Philadelphia Navy Yard . Her displacement increased significantly , to 26 @, @ 066 long tons ( 26 @, @ 484 t ) standard and 30 @, @ 610 long tons ( 31 @, @ 100 t ) full load . Her beam was widened to 106 ft ( 32 m ) , primarily from the installation of anti @-@ torpedo bulges , and draft increased to 29 ft 11 @. @ 75 in ( 9 m ) . Her twelve coal @-@ fired boilers were replaced with four White @-@ Forster oil @-@ fired boilers that had been intended for the ships cancelled under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty ; performance remained the same as the older boilers . The ship 's deck armor was strengthened by the addition of 3 @. @ 5 in ( 89 mm ) of armor to the second deck between the end barbettes , plus 1 @. @ 75 in ( 44 mm ) of armor on the third deck on the bow and stern . The deck armor over the engines and boilers was increased by 0 @. @ 75 in ( 19 mm ) and 1 @. @ 25 in ( 32 mm ) , respectively . Five of

the 5 @-@ inch guns were removed and eight 3 @-@ inch ( 76 mm ) / 50 caliber anti @-@ aircraft guns were installed . The mainmast was removed to provide space for an aircraft catapult mounted on the Number 3 turret amidships .

= = Service history = =

Following her commissioning , Arkansas participated in a fleet review on 14 October 1912 for President William Howard Taft . The ship took Taft aboard that day for a trip to Panama to inspect the Panama Canal , which was still under construction . Arkansas began her shakedown cruise after delivering Taft and his entourage to the Canal Zone . On 26 December , she returned to the Canal Zone to take Taft to Key West , Florida . After completing the voyage , Arkansas was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet and participated in fleet maneuvers off the east coast of the United States . Arkansas 's first overseas cruise , to the Mediterranean Sea , began in late October 1913 . While there , she stopped in several ports , including Naples , Italy on 11 November , where the ship celebrated the birthday of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy .

In early 1914 , an international incident with Mexico culminated in the American occupation of Veracruz . Arkansas participated in the occupation , contributing four companies of naval infantry , which amounted to 17 officers and 313 enlisted men . The American forces fought their way through the city until they secured it . Two of Arkansas 's crewmen were killed in the fighting , and another two , John Grady and Jonas H. Ingram , received the Medal of Honor for actions during the occupation . The ship 's detachment returned on 30 April ; Arkansas remained in Mexican waters until she departed on 30 September to return to the United States . While stationed in Veracruz , the ship was visited by Captain Franz von Papen , the German military attaché to the United States and Mexico , and Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock , the commander of the British 4th Cruiser Squadron , on 10 May and 30 May 1914 , respectively .

Arkansas arrived in Hampton Roads , Virginia on 7 October , after which she took part in exercises for a week . She then sailed to the New York Navy Yard for periodic maintenance . After repairs were completed , the ship steamed down to the Virginia Capes area for training maneuvers . She returned to the New York Navy Yard on 12 December for additional maintenance . The repairs were completed within a month , and on 16 January 1915 , Arkansas departed for the Virginia Capes for exercises on 19 ? 21 January . The ship then steamed down to Guantánamo Bay , Cuba for exercises with the fleet . Arkansas returned for training off Hampton Roads on 7 April , followed by another maintenance period at the New York Navy Yard , starting on 23 April .

On 25 June , the repairs were complete , and Arkansas departed for Newport , Rhode Island for torpedo practice and tactical maneuvers in Narragansett Bay , which lasted through late August . On 27 August , the ship was back in Hampton Roads . There , she participated in exercises off Norfolk through 4 October . She then returned to Newport , where she took part in strategic maneuvers on 5 ? 14 October . She went to the New York Navy Yard on 15 October , where she was drydocked for extensive maintenance . The work was completed by 8 November , when Arkansas returned to Hampton Roads . The ship was in Brooklyn for repairs on 19 November , which lasted until 5 January 1916 , when she steamed south to the Caribbean Sea , via Hampton Roads , for winter exercises . She steamed to Mobile Bay on 12 March for torpedo practice , before returning to Guantánamo Bay . She returned to the New York Navy Yard on 15 April for an overhaul .

= = = World War I = = =

The United States declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917 , joining the Allied Powers in World War I. Arkansas was at the time assigned to Battleship Division 7 stationed in Virginia . The ship patrolled the east coast and trained gun crews for the next fourteen months . The ship was sent to Britain in July 1918 to relieve Delaware , which had been assigned to operate with the Grand Fleet in the 6th Battle Squadron since December 1917 . Arkansas departed the United States on 14 July ; while approaching the Royal Navy base in Rosyth , the battleship fired on what was thought to be a periscope from a German U @-@ boat . The destroyers escorting Arkansas dropped depth charges

but did not hit the alleged submarine . Arkansas arrived in Rosyth on 28 July and joined the rest of Battleship Division 9 stationed there . For the remainder of the conflict , Battleship Division 9 operated as the 6th Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet .

On 11 November , the Armistice with Germany that ended World War I went into effect . The terms of the Armistice required Germany to intern the bulk of the High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow , under the supervision of the Grand Fleet . Arkansas and the other American warships participated in the internment ; a combined fleet of 370 British , American , and French warships met the High Seas Fleet in the North Sea on 21 November and escorted it into Scapa Flow . On 1 December , Battleship Division 9 was detached from the Grand Fleet , after which Arkansas departed the Firth of Forth for the Isle of Portland . She then went to sea to meet the ocean liner George Washington , which was carrying President Wilson to Europe . Arkansas and the other American naval forces in Europe escorted the ship into Brest , France on 13 December . After completing the escort , Arkansas sailed for New York City , arriving on 26 December , where the fleet participated in a Naval Review for Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels .

= = = Inter @-@ war period = = =

The peacetime training regimen for Arkansas consisted of individual training , an annual fleet maneuver , and periodic maintenance in drydock . She also participated in gunnery and engineering competitions . After returning to the United States , Arkansas went into drydock at the Norfolk Navy Yard for an extensive overhaul . She then rejoined the fleet to conduct training exercises off Cuba , after which she crossed the Atlantic , bound for Europe . She reached Plymouth on 12 May 1919 , and then took weather observations on 19 May and later served as a reference vessel to guide the Navy Curtiss NC flying boats flying from Trepassey Bay , Newfoundland to Europe . After completing that task , she steamed to Brest on 10 June and picked up Admiral William S. Benson , the Chief of Naval Operations , and his wife . Arkansas carried them back to New York after Benson was finished at the Peace Conference in Paris , arriving on 20 June .

On 19 July , Arkansas departed Hampton Roads to join her new assignment , the US Pacific Fleet , bound for San Francisco . She arrived 6 September , via the Panama Canal , and embarked Secretary and Mrs. Josephus Daniels . She took Daniels and his wife to Blakely Harbor , Washington on 12 September , and the following day , participated in a naval review for President Wilson . On 19 September , Arkansas entered the Puget Sound Navy Yard for a general overhaul . She returned to the fleet in May 1920 for training operations off California . The Navy adopted a hull classification system , and on 17 July , assigned Arkansas the designation " BB @-@ 33 " . She steamed to Hawaii in September , the first time she went to the islands . In early 1921 , Arkansas visited Valparaíso , Chile , where she was received by President Arturo Alessandri Palma ; the ship 's crew manned the rail to honor the Chilean president .

In August 1921 , Arkansas returned to the Atlantic Fleet , where she became the flagship of the Commander , Battleship Force , Atlantic Fleet . Throughout the 1920s , Arkansas carried midshipmen from the United States Naval Academy on summer cruises . She went on a tour of Europe in 1923 ; there , on 2 July , she stopped in Copenhagen and was visited by King Christian X of Denmark . She also stopped in Lisbon and Gibraltar . Another midshipmen cruise to Europe followed in 1924 ; the cruise for the next year went to the west coast of the United States . On 30 June 1925 , she stopped in Santa Barbara , California to assist in the aftermath of the 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake . Arkansas , the destroyer McCawley , and the patrol craft PE @-@ 34 sent detachments ashore to help the police in Santa Barbara . They also established a temporary radio station in the city .

After returning from the 1925 cruise , the ship was modernized at the Philadelphia Navy Yard . She had her twelve old coal @-@ fired boilers replaced with four oil @-@ fired models , which were trunked into a single larger funnel . She also had more deck armor added to protect her from plunging fire , and a short tripod mast was installed in place of the aft cage mast . The modernization was completed in November 1926 , after which Arkansas conducted a shakedown cruise in the Atlantic . She returned to Philadelphia , where she ran acceptance trials before she

could rejoin the fleet . On 5 September 1927 , Arkansas was present for ceremonies unveiling a memorial tablet honoring the French soldiers and sailors who died during the Yorktown campaign in 1781 .

She returned to training cruises in May 1928 , when she took a crew of midshipmen into the Atlantic along the east coast , along with a trip down to Cuba . In June , she participated in a joint Army @-@ Navy coast defense exercise as part of the hostile " attacking " fleet . In early 1929 , Arkansas cruised in the Caribbean and near the Canal Zone . She returned to the United States in May 1929 for an overhaul in the New York Navy Yard . After emerging from drydock , she conducted another training cruise , this time to European waters ; she spent time in the Mediterranean and visited Britain . Arkansas returned to the United States in August and operated with the Scouting Fleet off the east coast . The training cruise for 1930 again went to Europe . She called in Cherbourg , France , Kiel , Germany , Oslo , Norway , and Edinburgh , Scotland . The cruise continued through the end of the year , and in 1931 , the battleship visited Copenhagen , Greenock , Scotland , and Cadiz and Gibraltar in Spain . By September , the ship had crossed the Atlantic , and she stopped in Halifax , Nova Scotia . In February , Arkansas participated in Fleet Problem XII . During the maneuvers , she served as Admiral Arthur L. Willard 's flagship , and she was " sunk " by a submarine . A month later , on 21 ? 22 March , Arkansas conducted exercises with the carriers Lexington and Saratoga .

Arkansas participated in the Yorktown Sesquicentennial celebrations in October 1931 , marking the 150th anniversary of the Siege of Yorktown . She embarked President Herbert Hoover and his entourage on 17 October and took them to the exposition , and returned them to Annapolis on 19 ? 20 October . She then went into drydock for an extensive refit in the Philadelphia Navy Yard , which lasted until January 1932 . During this time , she was under the command of George Landenberger . Arkansas was transferred to the Pacific Fleet after completing the refit ; while en route , she stopped in New Orleans to participate in the Mardi Gras celebration . She operated off the west coast through early 1934 , at which point she was transferred back to the Atlantic Fleet , where she served as the flagship of the Training Squadron .

She conducted another training cruise to Europe in the summer of 1934 . She stopped in Plymouth , England , Nice , France , Naples , Italy , and Gibraltar . She returned to Annapolis in August , after which she steamed to Newport . In Newport , President Franklin Delano Roosevelt reviewed the battleship from the yacht Nourmahal . While there , Arkansas entered one of her cutters in a competition with the British cruiser HMS Dragon for the Battenberg Cup , and the City of Newport Cup ; Arkansas 's cutter won both races . The ship carried the 1st Battalion , 5th Marines to Culebra for a Fleet Landing Exercise No. 1 ( FLEX 1 ) in January 1935 . She returned to training cruise duties in June , and she again took the midshipmen to Europe . Among the stops were Edinburgh , Oslo , Copenhagen , Gibraltar , and Funchal on the island of Madeira . She disembarked the Naval Academy crew in August and began another training cruise to Halifax , this time for Naval Reservists , the following month . A refit was conducted in October after completing the cruise .

Arkansas participated in the FLEX 2 at Culebra in January 1936 , and then visited New Orleans during Mardi Gras . She went to Norfolk for a major overhaul that lasted through the spring of 1936 . After completing the overhaul , the ship took another midshipmen crew to European waters ; she called in the ports of Portsmouth , England , Gothenburg , Sweden , and Cherbourg and returned to Annapolis in August . As in the previous year , she conducted another Reserve training cruise , and then went into drydock for an overhaul in Norfolk . The remainder of the 1930s followed a similar pattern ; in 1937 the midshipmen training cruise went to Europe , but the 1938 and 1939 cruises remained in the western Atlantic .

= = = World War II = = =

At the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 , Arkansas was moored at Hampton Roads , preparing to depart on a training cruise for the Naval Reserve . She departed to transport seaplane mooring and aviation equipment from Norfolk to Narragansett Bay , where the Navy planned to set up a seaplane base . While in Newport , Arkansas picked up ordnance for destroyers and brought it

back to Hampton Roads . After returning to Virginia , Arkansas was assigned to a reserve force for the Neutrality Patrols in the Atlantic , along with her sister Wyoming , the battleships New York and Texas and the carrier Ranger . On 11 January 1940 , Arkansas , New York , and Texas left for fleet maneuvers off Cuba . She underwent an overhaul at Norfolk between 18 March and 24 May . After emerging from her refit , Arkansas conducted another midshipman training cruise , along with Texas and New York , to Panama and Venezuela . In late 1940 , she conducted three Naval Reserve training cruises in the Atlantic .

Over the months that followed , the United States gradually edged toward war in the Atlantic . The ship was assigned to the escort force for the Marines deployed to occupy Iceland in July 1941 , along with New York , two cruisers , and eleven destroyers . The task force deployed from NS Argentia , Newfoundland on 1 July and were back in port by the 19th . Starting on 7 August 1941 , Arkansas went on a neutrality patrol in the mid @-@ Atlantic that lasted a week . After returning to port , Arkansas traveled to the Atlantic Charter conference with President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill , which took place onboard HMS Prince of Wales . While there , the US Under Secretary of State , Sumner Welles , stayed aboard Arkansas . She conducted another neutrality patrol between 2 and 11 September .

Arkansas was anchored in Casco Bay , Maine , on 7 December 1941 , when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and brought the United States into the war . A week later , she steamed to Hvalfjörður , Iceland , and returned to Boston on 24 January 1942 . She conducted training maneuvers in Casco Bay to prepare her crew for convoy escort duties . On 6 March , she arrived at Norfolk to begin overhaul . The secondary battery was reduced to six 5 @-@ inch / 51 cal guns . Also , 36 40 mm Bofors anti @-@ aircraft ( AA ) guns ( in quadruple mounts ) and 26 20 mm Oerlikon AA guns were added , the experience at Pearl Harbor having made the US Navy aware of the need for increased light AA armament . The 3 @-@ inch / 50 caliber gun armament was also increased from 8 guns to 10 . Work lasted until 2 July , after which time Arkansas conducted a shakedown cruise in Chesapeake Bay ; she then proceeded to New York , arriving on 27 July . There , she became the flagship of Task Force 38 ( TF 38 ) , the escort for a convoy of twelve transports bound for Scotland . The convoy arrived in Greenock on 17 August , and Arkansas returned to New York on 4 September .

Arkansas again escorted a convoy to Scotland , returning to New York by 20 October . Thereafter , convoys were sent to North Africa to support the invasion of North Africa . Arkansas covered her first such convoy , along with eight destroyers , on 3 November . She returned to New York on 11 December , where she went into dock for another overhaul . On 2 January 1943 , Arkansas departed New York to conduct gunnery training in Chesapeake Bay . Back in New York by 30 January , the ship 's crew prepared for a return to convoy escort duty . She escorted two convoys to Casablanca between February and April , before returning to New York for yet another period in dry @-@ dock , which lasted until 26 May . Arkansas returned to duty as a training ship for midshipmen based at Norfolk . She resumed her convoy escort duties after four months , and on 8 October , she steamed to Bangor , Northern Ireland . She remained in Ireland through November , and departed on 1 December , bound for New York . After arriving on the 12th , Arkansas went into dock for more repairs , and then returned to Norfolk on 27 December . The ship escorted another convoy bound for Ireland on 19 January 1944 before returning to New York on 13 February . Another round of gunnery drills followed on 28 March , after which Arkansas went to Boston for more dry @-@ dock period .

On 18 April , Arkansas departed for Ireland , where she trained for shore bombardment duties , as she had been assigned to the shore bombardment force in support of Operation Overlord , the invasion of northern France . She was assigned to Group II , along with Texas and five destroyers . Her float plane artillery observer pilots were temporarily assigned to VOS @-@ 7 flying Spitfires from RNAS Lee @-@ on @-@ Solent ( HMS Daedalus ) . On 3 June , she left her moorings , and on the morning of the 6th , took up a position about 4 @,@ 000 yd ( 3 @,@ 700 m ) from Omaha Beach . At 05 : 52 , the battleship 's guns fired in anger for the first time in her career . She bombarded German positions around Omaha Beach until 13 June , when she was moved to support ground forces in Grandcamp les Bains . On 25 June , Arkansas bombarded Cherbourg in support of

the American attack on the port ; German coastal guns straddled her several times , but scored no hits . Cherbourg fell to the Allies the next day , after which Arkansas returned to port , first in Weymouth , England , and then to Bangor , Wales on 30 June .

On 4 July , Arkansas departed Ireland for the Mediterranean Sea ; she reached Oran , Algeria on 10 July , before proceeding on to Taranto , arriving on 21 July . There , she joined the support force for Operation Dragoon , the invasion of southern France . Again , the battleship provided gunfire support to the amphibious invasion along with six Allied cruisers , starting on 15 August . The bombardment lasted for two more days , after which she withdrew , first to Palermo and then to Oran . Arkansas then returned to the United States , arriving in Boston on 14 September , where she underwent another refit that lasted until early November . She then steamed to California via the Panama Canal , and spent the rest of the year conducting training maneuvers . On 20 January 1945 , Arkansas departed California for Pearl Harbor , and then proceeded to Ulithi to join the fleet in preparation for the amphibious assault on Iwo Jima . There , she was assigned to Task Force 54 , which included five other battleships , four cruisers , and sixteen destroyers .

On 16 February , Arkansas was in position off Iwo Jima , and at 06 : 00 , she opened fire on Japanese positions on the island 's west coast . The bombardment lasted until the 19th , though she remained off the island throughout the Battle of Iwo Jima , ready to provide fire support to the American marines ashore . She departed on 7 March , bound for Ulithi , and arrived on 10 March , where she rearmed and refueled in preparation for the next major operation in the Pacific War , the invasion of Okinawa . She departed Ulithi on 21 March and arrived off Okinawa four days later , when she began the bombardment along with the rest of Task Force 54 . The soldiers and marines went ashore on 1 April , and Arkansas continued to provide gunfire support over the course of 46 days throughout the Battle of Okinawa . Kamikazes repeatedly attacked the ship , though none struck her . She left the island in May , arriving in Guam on the 14th . She then proceeded to Leyte Gulf on 12 June , arriving four days later . There , she was assigned to Task Group 95 @. @ 7 , along with Texas and three cruisers . She remained in the Philippines until 20 August , when she departed for Okinawa , arriving in Buckner Bay on the 23rd , by which time Japan had surrendered , ending World War II . Over the course of the war , Arkansas earned four battle stars .

== = Post @-@ war == =

After the end of the war , Arkansas participated in Operation Magic Carpet , the repatriation of American servicemen from the Pacific . She took around 800 men back to the United States , departing on 23 September , and reaching Seattle , Washington on 15 October . She made another three Magic Carpet trips between Pearl Harbor and the continental United States to ferry more soldiers home . During the first months of 1946 , Arkansas lay at San Francisco . In late April , the ship got underway for Hawaii . She reached Pearl Harbor on 8 May , and departed Pearl Harbor on 20 May , bound for Bikini Atoll , earmarked for use as target for atomic bomb testing in Operation Crossroads . On 1 July , Arkansas was exposed to an air burst in ABLE , but survived with extensive shock damage to her upperworks , while her hull and armored turrets were lightly damaged .

On 25 July , the battleship was sunk by the underwater nuclear test BAKER at Bikini Atoll . Unattenuated by air , the shock was " transmitted directly to underwater hulls " , and Arkansas , only 250 yards from the epicenter , appeared to have been " crushed as if by a tremendous hammer blow from below " . It appears that the wave of water from the blast capsized the ship , which was then hammered down into the shallow bottom by the descent of the water column thrown up by the blast . Decommissioned on 29 July , Arkansas was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 15 August . The ship lies inverted in about 180 feet of water at the bottom of Bikini Lagoon and there are many pictures of the wreck on the National Park Service website .

== Awards ==

Mexican Service Medal

Victory Medal with " Atlantic Fleet " and " Grand Fleet " clasps

American Defense Service Medal with " FLEET " clasp and " A " device

American Campaign Medal

European @-@ African @-@ Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two battle stars

Asiatic @-@ Pacific Campaign Medal with two battle stars

World War II Victory Medal

Navy Occupation Medal with " ASIA " clasp