

= USS Florida (BB @-@ 30) =

USS Florida (BB @-@ 30) was the lead ship of the Florida class of dreadnought battleships of the United States Navy . She had one sister ship , Utah . Florida was laid down at the New York Navy Yard in March 1909 , launched in May 1910 , and commissioned into the US Navy in September 1911 . She was armed with a main battery of ten 12 @-@ inch (305 mm) guns and was very similar in design to the preceding Delaware @-@ class battleships .

Florida was one of the first ships to arrive during the United States occupation of Veracruz in early 1914 , and part of her crew joined the landing party that occupied the city . She was assigned to United States Battleship Division 9 after the American entrance into World War I in April 1917 ; the division was sent to Europe to reinforce the British Grand Fleet . During the war , Florida and the rest of her unit , reassigned as the 6th Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet , conducted patrols in the North Sea and escorted convoys to Norway . She saw no action with the German High Seas Fleet , however .

Florida returned to normal peacetime duties in 1919 . She was heavily modernized in 1924 ? 1926 , including a complete overhaul of her propulsion system . She remained in service until 1930 , when the London Naval Treaty was signed . Under the terms of the treaty , Florida and Utah were removed from active service . Therefore , Florida was decommissioned in 1931 and scrapped the next year in Philadelphia .

= = Design = =

Florida was 521 ft 6 in (158 @.@ 95 m) long overall and had a beam of 88 ft 3 in (26 @.@ 90 m) and a draft of 28 ft 6 in (8 @.@ 69 m) . She displaced 21 @,@ 825 long tons (22 @,@ 175 t) as designed and up to 23 @,@ 033 long tons (23 @,@ 403 t) at full combat load . The ship was powered by four @-@ shaft Parsons steam turbines rated at 28 @,@ 000 shp (20 @,@ 880 kW) and twelve coal @-@ fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers , generating a top speed of 20 @.@ 75 kn (38 @.@ 43 km / h ; 23 @.@ 88 mph) . The ship had a cruising range of 5 @,@ 776 nmi (6 @,@ 650 mi ; 10 @,@ 700 km) at a speed of 10 kn (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . She had a crew of 1 @,@ 001 officers and men .

The ship was armed with a main battery of ten 12 @-@ inch (305 mm) / 45 caliber Mark 5 guns in five twin Mark 8 gun turrets on the centerline , two of which were placed in a superfiring pair forward . The other three turrets were placed aft of the superstructure . The secondary battery consisted of sixteen 5 @-@ inch (127 mm) / 51 caliber guns mounted in casemates along the side of the hull . As was standard for capital ships of the period , she carried a pair of 21 @-@ inch (533 mm) torpedo tubes , submerged in her hull on the broadside . The main armored belt was 11 in (279 mm) thick , while the armored deck was 1 @.@ 5 in (38 mm) thick . The gun turrets had 12 in (305 mm) thick faces and the conning tower had 11 @.@ 5 in (292 mm) thick sides .

= = Service history = =

Florida was laid down at the New York Navy Yard on 9 March 1909 . She was launched on 12 May 1910 , and commissioned into the US Navy on 15 September 1911 . She spent the next several months on training cruises in the Caribbean and off Maine , after which she moved to Hampton Roads to join the Atlantic Fleet . She arrived on 29 March 1912 , and was made the flagship of the 1st Battleship Division (BatDiv) . For the next two years , she participated in the normal routine of peacetime exercises with her division and squadron and with the entire Atlantic Fleet . She also conducted extensive gunnery training and took midshipmen from the US Naval Academy on midshipman training cruises .

In early 1914 during the Mexican Revolution , the United States intervened in the fighting and occupied Veracruz . Florida and her sister Utah were the first capital ships to arrive in Veracruz , on 16 February . These two ships and Prairie landed a total contingent of over a thousand Marines and bluejackets to begin the occupation of the city on 21 April . Over the next three days , the Marines

battled Mexican defenders in the city and suffered ninety @-@ four casualties (19 dead) , while killing hundreds of Mexicans in return . Fourteen men from Florida 's crew won the Medal of Honor for their actions during the battle . In July , Florida departed Mexican waters to return to normal fleet operations , and in October , she was reassigned to the 2nd Battleship Division .

= = = World War I = = =

On 6 April 1917 , the United States declared war on Germany over its unrestricted submarine warfare campaign . Florida participated in wartime readiness exercises in 1917 , before steaming across the Atlantic with Battleship Division 9 . The division , which consisted of Florida , New York , Wyoming , and Delaware , left the United States on 25 November . The division was sent to European waters to reinforce the British Grand Fleet in the North Sea . After arriving in Scapa Flow , Battleship Division 9 became the 6th Battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet .

Starting in late 1917 , the Germans had begun to use surface raiders to attack the British convoys to Scandinavia ; this forced the British to send squadrons from the Grand Fleet to escort the convoys . On 6 February 1918 , the 6th Battle Squadron and eight British destroyers escorted a convoy of merchant ships to Norway . While on the operation , Florida 's lookouts reported spotting a U @-@ boat , though the commander of Wyoming later argued that this and others issued by the rest of the squadron were false reports . The squadron was back in Scapa Flow on 10 February ; Delaware escorted two more such convoys in March and April . During the March convoy , Florida , Wyoming , Texas , and four destroyers became separated from the convoy in heavy fog , and only relocated it the following morning when the fog had lifted . The squadron returned to Scapa Flow on 13 March .

On 22 ? 24 April , the German High Seas Fleet sortied to intercept one of the convoys in the hope of cutting off and destroying the escorting battleship squadron . Florida and the rest of the Grand Fleet left Scapa Flow on 24 April in an attempt to intercept the Germans , but the High Seas Fleet had already broken off the operation and was on its way back to port . On 30 June , the 6th Squadron was cruising in the North Sea in support of a mine @-@ laying operation ; while on patrol , Florida and several other ships fired on what they incorrectly believed to be U @-@ boat wakes . By early November , the Spanish Flu pandemic had spread to the Grand Fleet ; Florida was the only ship of the American contingent not to be quarantined for the virus . On 20 November , Florida and the rest of the Grand Fleet rendezvoused with the High Seas Fleet , which was then interned in Scapa Flow , following the Armistice with Germany that ended the war . Shortly thereafter , Florida was replaced with the newly commissioned Nevada .

Florida then joined the passenger ship SS George Washington on 12 December , which was carrying President Woodrow Wilson on his way to France to participate in the peace negotiations . The ships arrived in Brest , France on 13 December , after which Florida returned to the United States . She was present during the Victory Naval Review in the North River in New York City at the end of December .

= = = Inter @-@ War Period = = =

Florida returned to normal peacetime duties in January 1919 , when she arrived in Norfolk on the 4th . She steamed to the Azores to take weather observations for Navy seaplanes that were to make the first aerial crossing the Atlantic . In August 1920 , Florida was present during the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrims ' landing at Provincetown , Massachusetts . In December 1920 , she made a good @-@ will cruise to South America with US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby aboard and over the next three years conducted amphibious operation training with the Marine Corps in the Caribbean . Florida also participated in the normal routine of exercises and midshipman cruises . During this period , she was made the flagship of the Commander , Control Force , US Fleet .

In early 1924 , Florida took part in the Fleet Problem III maneuvers , where she and her sister Utah acted as stand @-@ ins for the new Colorado @-@ class battleships . In June 1924 , Florida was taken out of service for a modernization at the Boston Navy Yard , which lasted from 1 April 1925 to

1 November 1926 . During the reconstruction , her deck armor was strengthened and anti @-@ torpedo blisters were installed to increase her resistance to underwater damage . Her secondary battery was rearranged to improve its efficiency , and four of her 5 @-@ inch guns , which were mounted in sponsons , were removed . She was also reboilered with four White @-@ Forster oil @-@ fired models that had been removed from the battleships and battlecruisers scrapped as a result of the Washington Naval Treaty . Her Parsons turbines were replaced with new Curtis geared turbines and her two funnels were trunked into one stack . The rear lattice mast was replaced with a pole mast , which was moved further aft . Her two submerged torpedo tubes were also removed .

Florida remained in service for a few years in her modernized form , and participated in joint Army @-@ Navy coast defense exercises in June 1928 . Under the terms of the London Naval Treaty of 1930 , which reduced the battle fleets of the signatory countries , she was to be disposed of , along with her sister Utah and either Arkansas or Wyoming (Wyoming would be the second affected vessel , demilitarized in May 1931 for use as a training ship) . She was accordingly decommissioned on 16 February 1931 at the Philadelphia Naval Yard , and was broken up in Philadelphia later that year . The one @-@ ton ship 's bell was saved and transported to the University of Florida in Gainesville , where it was first installed in a clock atop a classroom building . The clock was removed in the early 1950s and the bell was put in storage . In 1960 , it was installed atop the stands in the north end zone at Florida Field , where it was traditionally rung by either cheerleaders or fans at the conclusion of a victory by the Florida Gator football team . As the stadium underwent successive expansions and renovations , the bell was moved to a location under the north end zone concourse and then was removed from the stadium in 1992 . It has been restored and is now housed in the lobby of the Museum of Florida History .