

USS ARIZONA - A BRIEF HISTORY

FROM CONSTRUCTION (KEEL LAID @ NEW YORK NAVY YARD, (MARCH 16, 1914)

TO SINKING AT PEARL HARBOR (DECEMBER 7, 1941)

BETTER KNOWN FOR THE SINKING AND AFTERMATH THAN ALL OF THE YEARS BEFORE OR AFTER

PEARL HARBOR

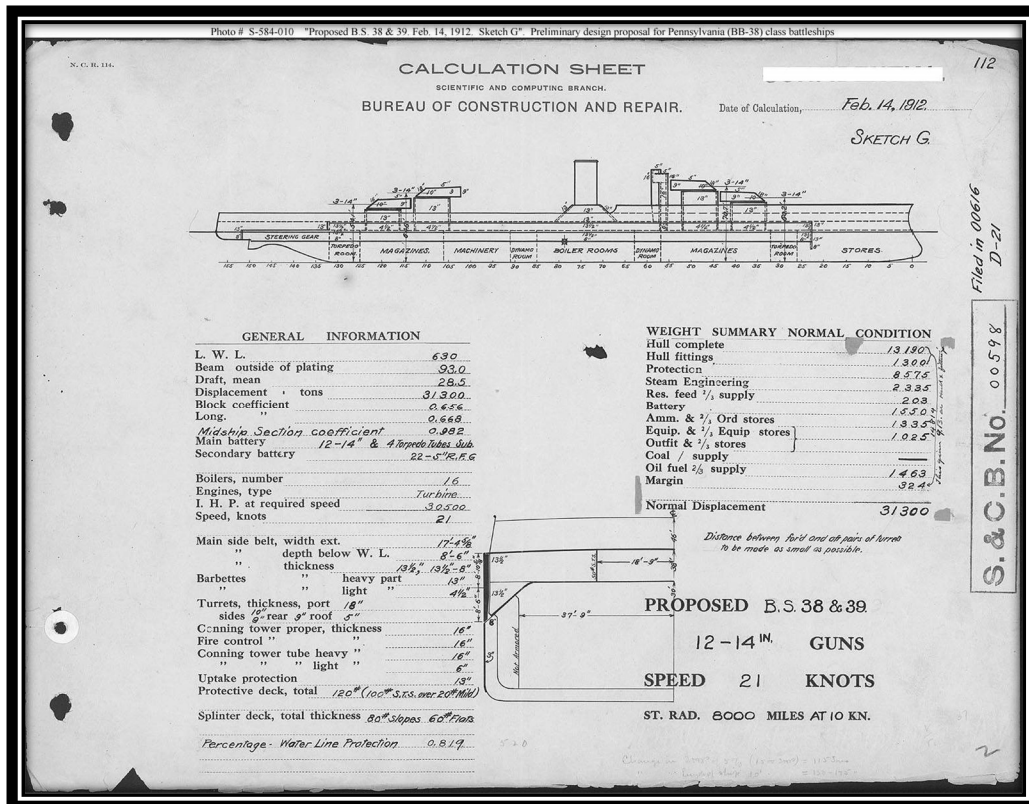
SHE NEVER FIRED A SHOT AT ANY ENEMY

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The USS Arizona In Her Glory Days-Refurbished And Ready For Battle (that never happened)

THE BEGINNING



The "Calculation Sheet" for Battleships # 38 & # 39 (USS Arizona) dated February 14, 1912

A DAY OF INFAMY



The below link will take you to a 29-minute video that will provide much information and insight into what took place on that fateful day in December 1941 and will also provide the obituary of one of the best-known military ships in our history, the Battleship USS Arizona and the men that served aboard her...of which 900 remain aboard her to this day.

TO VIEW - COPY AND PASTE THE BELOW LINK INTO YOUR BROWSER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdaDQb4M9Fo>

BUILDING & SHAKEDOWN

On March 16, 1914, the New York Navy Yard laid down the keel to begin construction of **battleship number 39**, which would later be named Arizona (Original speculation was that the ship would be named the North Carolina, the home state of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels). The Pennsylvania class (consisting of Arizona and Pennsylvania) formed the next step of the US Navy's response to the naval arms race that had begun in 1906 when the Royal Navy completed the HMS Dreadnought. **The ship was launched on June 19, 1915.** Miss Esther Ross, of Prescott, christened the ship, along with the traditional champagne, with a bottle of the first water to pass over the spillway of Roosevelt Dam, which was completed in 1911 but which took until April 15, 1915, to fill. Construction continued on the floating hull and **the ship was commissioned on October 17, 1916.**

Arizona experienced considerable problems with her engines during her trials, to the extent that the blades were stripped from one of her turbines, requiring months in dry dock to replace. The work was finished in March 1917, and Arizona served with the Atlantic Fleet as a gunnery training ship during World War I. **Coal was more plentiful than oil in Great Britain during the war, and the modern oil-fired boilers on Arizona prevented her from joining the other U.S. battleships serving with the British Grand Fleet.**

SERVICE: 1918 – 1941

In November 1918 Arizona sailed for Europe to join Battleship Division Six serving with the British Grand Fleet, one week after the signing of the armistice. On December 12, she put to sea with the rest of her division, to rendezvous with the transport George Washington, which was carrying President Wilson to the Paris Peace Conference. Arizona was part of the honor escort that arrived at Brest, France the next day with the president. On the 13th she sailed from Brest with 238 homeward-bound veterans on board and arrived in New York on the day after Christmas.

During the years between the world wars, Arizona carried on with the routine of a Navy ship in peacetime, conducting training, gunnery practice, fleet exercises, cruises, and routine shipyard maintenance. Among the events of interest during this time were:

- A.** In 1920 the Arizona began to carry airplanes on board for scouting and spotting the fall of shells from the ship's guns.
- B.** In early March 1924 Madeline Blair stowed away on the Arizona and wasn't discovered until April 12th. She was attempting to ride to San Pedro (on the way to Hollywood) and was providing favors to crewmen in return for shelter and food. She was discovered after a Chief Radioman happened to overhear a sailor remark on her presence.

As a result, the court-martial of the men involved was held and twenty-three men were sentenced to prison, the longest for ten years.

C. Arizona received a thorough modernization beginning in 1929. The entire superstructure was replaced, including the lattice or cage masts which had been in place since construction. Torpedo bulges were fitted, as was additional horizontal armor for *protection from air attack*. *New boilers and turbines were fitted, the torpedo tubes were removed and new tripod masts replaced the cage masts.* The work was completed in March 1931.

D. Upon completion of the modernization, Arizona carried President Hoover on a vacation cruise in the Caribbean.

E. On March 10, 1933, Arizona was anchored at San Pedro when the Long Beach earthquake struck. The ship provided a shore party that helped patrol the area, provided communications, set up first aid stations, and provided food and shelter for those made homeless by the earthquake.

F. The Warner Brothers movie "Here Comes the Navy" used Arizona as one of its locations during the spring of 1934. The film starred James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, and Gloria Stuart. The movie was one of the nominees for the Academy Awards in 1935.

As relations between the U.S. and Japan declined and the possibility of fighting in the Pacific became more likely, operations at Pearl Harbor were designed to prepare the fleet for war.

On October 22, 1941, while conducting exercises with Oklahoma and Nevada, Arizona was struck on the port side by Oklahoma. A V-shaped hole, four feet wide by twelve feet long was opened in the torpedo bulge. Arizona was in dry-dock at Pearl Harbor for a few weeks to repair it.

DECEMBER 7, 1941

Japanese aircraft appeared in the air over Pearl Harbor just before 8:00 am on this Sunday morning. The color detail was on deck in anticipation of raising the flag at the stern at 8:00. Arizona came under attack almost immediately, and at about 8:10 received a hit by an 800-kilogram bomb just forward of turret two on the starboard side. Within a few seconds, the forward powder magazines exploded, gutting the forward part of the ship. The foremast and forward superstructure collapsed forward into the void created by the explosion and turrets one and two, deprived of support, dropped more than 20 feet relative to their normal position. The explosion ignited furious fires in the forward part of the ship.

The majority of the crew members were either killed by the explosion and fire or were trapped by the rapid sinking of the ship. Many of the survivors displayed remarkable courage in assisting their shipmates to safety. Lieutenant Commander Samuel G. Fuqua was awarded the Medal of Honor for his role in leading the rescue of other survivors. It was also awarded posthumously to Rear Admiral Isaac Kidd and Captain Franklin Van Valkenburgh.

CASUALTY FACTS

A. 1,177 members of the USS Arizona crew died....

B. Over 900 members of the 1,177 who died remain in the ship...

C. There were 38 sets of brothers who served onboard this battleship, including 3 sets of 3 brothers and a set of twins. Of the 79 brothers, 63 died during the attack.....

D. 49.3% (1,177) of all those who lost their lives on December 7, 1941 (2,388) were aboard the USS Arizona.....

E. The breakdown of those who died is as follows. US Navy (1,998), US Marines (109), US Army (233) & Civilians (48)

F. Many lists of the casualties show only "UNKNOWN" for their "STATE OF RESIDENCE". My best determination is that about 24 Sailors from Arkansas went down with the ship....

G. The huge drops of oil that continue to come to the surface are known by many as "Her Black Tears"

During the following months and years of World War II, the destruction of Arizona came to symbolize the reason the U.S. was fighting, as in this poster showing the ship's collapsing foremast silhouetted against the explosion of the ship's magazines.

As recounted by William Manchester:

"Remember Pearl Harbor" became an American shibboleth and the title of the country's most popular war song, but it was the loss of that great ship that seared the minds of navy men. Six months later, when naval Lieutenant Wilmer E. Gallaher turned the nose of his Dauntless dive-bomber down toward the Akagi off Midway, the memory of that volcanic eruption in Pearl Harbor, which he had witnessed, flashed across his mind. As the Akagi blew up, he exulted: "Arizona, I remember you!"¹

SALVAGE OF THE SHIP AND BUILDING THE MEMORIAL (Salvage was not possible due to the damage)

After the attack, the ship was left resting on the bottom with the deck just awash. In the days and weeks following, efforts were made to recover the bodies of the crew and the ship's records. Eventually, further recovery of bodies became fruitless, and the bodies of at least 900 crewmen remained on the ship.

She was so badly damaged by the magazine explosion that she was not thought fit for service even if she could be salvaged, unlike many of the other sunken ships nearby.

During 1942 salvage work to recover as much of the ship as was practical began. The masts and superstructure were removed for scrap and the two turrets aft were salvaged for use at shore batteries on Hawaii. The forward part of the ship had received the most damage, and only the guns of turret two were removed. Both forward turrets were left in place, although the guns from Turret II were salvaged and later installed on the battleship Nevada in the fall of 1944 after having been straightened and relined. Nevada later fired these same guns against the Japanese islands of Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

On December 1, 1942, the ship was stricken from the registry of U.S. Navy vessels.

In the years immediately following the end of World War II, the wreck was largely ignored. In 1950 the tradition of raising and lowering the colors over the ship daily was started, and momentum gradually began to build toward providing a memorial for the ship and those who died on her.

In 1958 legislation was passed authorizing the Navy to erect a memorial and allowing it to accept donations toward that goal. Among the many noteworthy contributions were several generous ones from Hawaii's legislature and a 1961 concert by Elvis Presley which raised \$ 50,000 for the fund.

In 1960 construction began and the memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1962. In 1980 a visitor's center on shore was opened and the Navy turned the operation of the memorial over to the National Park Service. During the 1980s, the Park Service conducted a detailed survey of sunken Arizona and other sites of historical interest related to the Pearl Harbor attack.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is commonly—but incorrectly—believed that Arizona remains perpetually in commission, like the USS Constitution. Arizona is under the control of the National Park Service, but the U.S. Navy still retains the title. Arizona retains the right, in perpetuity, to fly the United States flag as if she were an active, commissioned naval vessel.

The wreck of Arizona remains at Pearl Harbor to commemorate the men of her crew lost that December morning in 1941. On 7 March 1950, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet at that time, instituted the raising of colors over her remains. Legislation during the administrations of Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy resulted in the designation of the wreck as a national shrine in 1962. A memorial was built across the ship's sunken remains, including a shrine room listing the names of the lost crew members on a marble wall. The national memorial was administratively listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 15 October 1966.



Aerial view of the USS Arizona Memorial, showing the wreck and oil seepage from the ship's bunker

The ship herself was designated a National Historic Landmark on 5 May 1989. Upon their death, survivors of the attack may have their ashes placed within the ship, among their fallen comrades. Veterans who served aboard the ship at other times may have their ashes scattered in the water above the ship.

Seventy-three years after her sinking, oil still leaks from the hull, with more than 2.3 quarts (2.18 l) escaping into the harbor per day. The Navy, in conjunction with the National Park Service, has recently overseen a comprehensive computerized mapping of the hull, being careful to honor its role as a war grave. The Navy is considering non-intrusive means of abating the continued leakage of oil to avoid the further environmental degradation of the harbor. When she sank Arizona had 1.4 million gallons of oil on board.

SOME ARTIFACTS FROM THE ARIZONA



The salvaged Bell of the USS Arizona. The 1,820-pound bell is one of two salvaged from the USS Arizona and is housed in the "bell tower" of the University of Arizona Student Union Memorial Center. The University of Arizona Student Union Memorial Center



***** The restored 16,000-pound anchor *****





Ship superstructure which was salvaged and is on display at the Arizona State Capitol Museum.



The U.S. flag flew on the battleship when it sank.



The silver service (silverware) was donated to the USS Arizona by the citizens of Arizona in 1919. This service is composed of 59 distinct pieces and is on display at the Capitol Museum.



The restored gun barrel from the USS Arizona.



The last surviving gun from the battleship USS Arizona lies rusting at a U.S. Navy storage yard in Virginia. Secretary of State Ken Bennett is trying to raise \$500,000 to transport the gun, along with a gun from the battleship USS Missouri, to display outside the State Capitol.

PROLOGUE



BROOKLYN NAVY YARD – JUNE 19, 1915

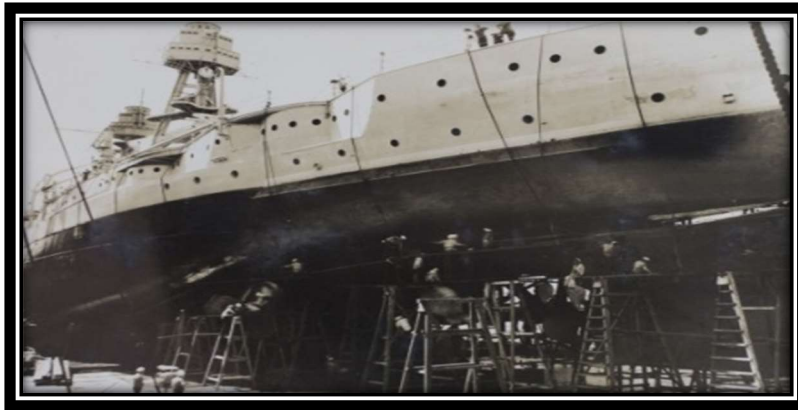
"I christen thee Arizona"

Esther Ross strained to hear as a man in Navy whites repeated once more the steps required to christen a battleship.

He motioned toward two bottles, one filled with sparkling wine from Ohio, one with water from Roosevelt Lake in Arizona, and then toward the prow of the ship, a vessel soon to take its place at sea as the mightiest battleship in the world.

The ship wore a red coat on this day, a temporary one of primer that would be covered soon with the flat gray of a battleship. Its hulk towered over the grandstand. The hull measured 600 feet and the center beam was almost 100 feet across.

The noise grew on the stand. Tens of thousands of people had gathered near the Brooklyn Navy Yard along the East River in Brooklyn. From the platform, the crowds looked like a sea of straw hats and frilly bonnets. Five bands played patriotic music. Workmen pounded away at supports beneath the hull, which sat on the slideways above the surface of the water.



Miss Ross, as the New York papers called her, was 17 years old, the daughter of William Ross, a prominent pharmacist back home in Prescott. When the Navy announced it would name its new battleship after the 48th state, Ross decided he wanted his daughter to serve as a sponsor at the christening. He and his friends persuaded Gov. George Hunt to select Esther.



Esther Ross, of Prescott, was 17 when she traveled to New York City to christen the USS Arizona on June 19, 1915. In the weeks leading up to her trip, every night after school she would practice christening by breaking syrup bottles filled with water against a fence in the back of her house. She and her parents stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria in Manhattan.

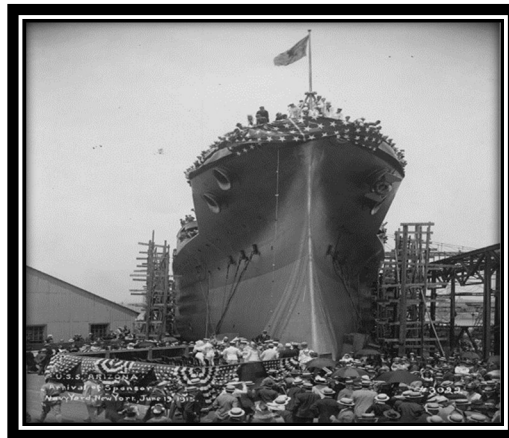
For months, she had practiced her duties every day after school, smashing syrup bottles full of water against a fence behind the house.

Now she stood on a platform, the great ship towering over her, the Williamsburg Bridge stretching across the river in one direction, the 60-story Woolworth building, the tallest skyscraper in the world, in the other. She wore a white hat with a white plume and clutched a bouquet, jostled at times by her maids of honor, her mother, the governor, and the secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels.

The Navy had agreed to break with tradition and use two bottles, one filled with champagne, the other with water — a concession, the big city reporters confided, to prohibitionists back in Arizona. The bottles had been encased in decorative silver-and-copper baskets and suspended on ropes for the ceremony.

At a little after 1 p.m., an Episcopal bishop delivered a prayer. A few minutes later, on order from the chief naval constructor, crews removed the last holding blocks and the hydraulic levers nudged the ship, stern first, into the river.

On that morning in 1914, many members of the ship's final crew were not in attendance. Many were not yet born.



HER DESTINY - TO NEVER FIGHT IN BATTLE

The USS Arizona, as she was ultimately outfitted, would carry 12 14-inch guns, guns that would never be fired in the war. She would lay in stores of more than 100 tons of gunpowder in a forward magazine stocked for battle, but would never launch a single shell toward an enemy target. She would not join a battle at all until her final moment 26 years later.

But in that defining moment, she would draw the United States into a global conflict, one that would distinguish a generation and change the course of history.

Twenty-seven years after Esther swung the two bottles toward the ship's prow, the ship would sit, moored safely in Hawaii's Pearl Harbor, and become the center of the Japanese attack that pulled the United States into World War II.

One thousand, one hundred seventy-seven members of Arizona's last crew would forever seal their fates to that of the ship named for the desert state. They would die in the attack.

Three hundred thirty-five men would escape death.

And as the ship rested beneath the water of Pearl Harbor, in the decades that followed, it only grew larger in meaning.

A nation knew Arizona as the catalyst for a world war, a nuclear war, a cold war, and generations of peace that came with the vigilance and burdens of a superpower.

The crewmen who witnessed that final morning and lived knew Arizona as something else. A narrow miss, a repository of memories — a tragedy to be forgotten, one that never could be.

SEVEN OF THOSE MEN REMAIN TODAY

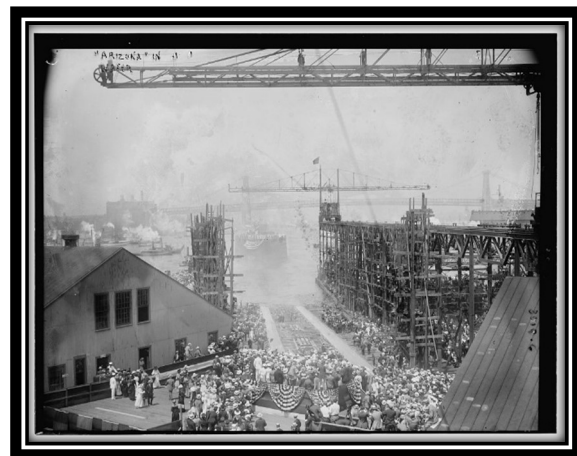
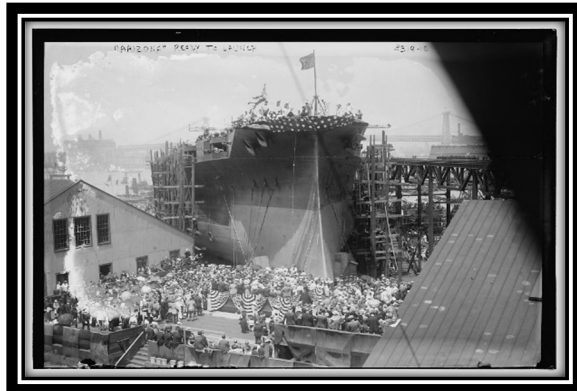
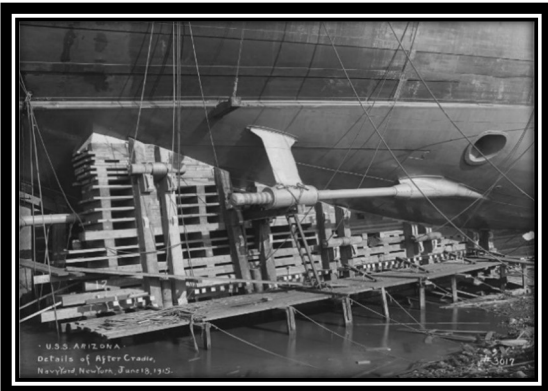
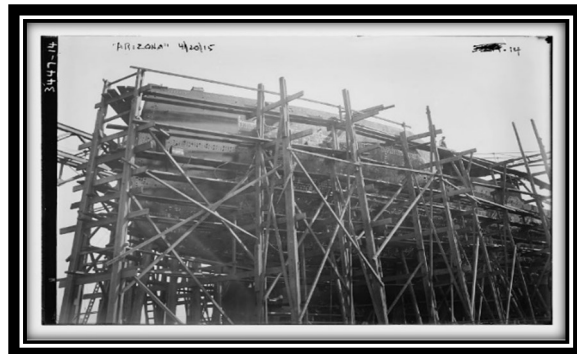
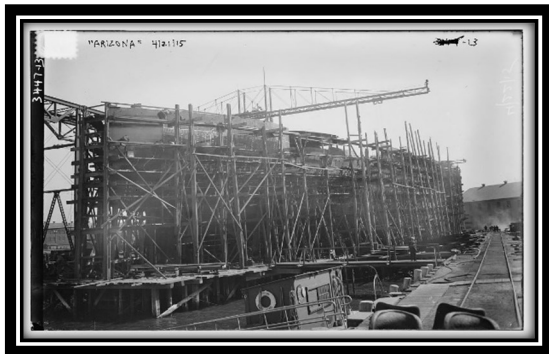
One was born just a few months after workers bolted together the first steel plates for the ship's hull.

Most were teenagers when they boarded the ship more than seven decades ago.

In the years since surviving the attack, they have led parades, attended anniversary memorials, and accepted accolades. They still miss their fallen friends.

For each of them, this singular life journey began the day they first saw that same hulking steel shadow that loomed over the crowd in a Brooklyn shipyard – **the first day they saw the USS Arizona.**

THE FOLLOWING PICTURES ARE ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE USS ARIZONA FROM THE BEGINNING OF HER CONSTRUCTION TO HER SINKING AT PEARL HARBOR 26 YEARS LATER







Arizona Being Cut Up After Pearl Harbor - One of Her Salvaged Guns

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