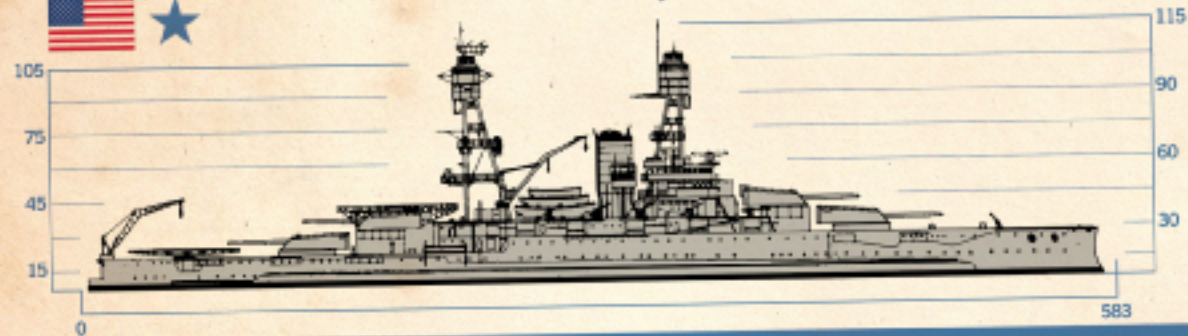


USS Oklahoma (BB-37) "Okie"



NEVADA CLASS BATTLESHIP (1911)

- LENGTH — 583 feet
- WEIGHT — 30,500 tons
- MAIN ARMAMENT — Ten 14-inch guns mounted in 4 turrets
- CREW — 1,270 officers and men
- CASUALTIES — 429 men killed
- MOORED DURING ATTACK — Battleship Row, Berth 7-8, Outboard of the USS Maryland.
- NEVER RETURNED TO ACTIVE DUTY

History

As the Japanese torpedo planes made their initial runs on Battleship Row, the USS OKLAHOMA received much of their attention. It was estimated that 9 torpedoes struck the vessel during the first 10 minutes of the attack. Damage was so extensive that the OKLAHOMA capsized at its berth less than 15 minutes after the first torpedo hit.

Many men were still trapped in the OKLAHOMA after it capsized. Tapping sounds and voices could be heard from within the ship's overturned hull. A rescue party made up mostly of civilian Navy Yard personnel, working tirelessly for nearly 40 hours, cut through sections of the ship's bottom and saved the lives of 33 men. The last man was rescued at 2:30 A.M. on December 9th. Julio De Castro, Joe Bulgo and 18 others from Shop 11 would receive Navy Citations for their heroic efforts "with utter disregard of their own personal safety."



Rescue & Recovery

The sheer size of the OKLAHOMA and the ship's poor condition made salvage questionable. It was important to rid the harbor of this immobilized ship and make the berth at P-8 available for other ships. By May 1942, contractual agreements were made between the Navy and Pacific Bridge Company to complete the job. Turning over the OKLAHOMA, it was said, was the most technically difficult task faced by the salvage division at Pearl Harbor. The righting operation began on March 8, 1943 and took three months to complete. During this period, the grim task of removing nearly 400 bodies was concluded.



In the years before the war, USS Oklahoma was a familiar sight operating in Southern California and Hawaiian waters.

Final Salute

In November 1943, the ship was re-floated and moved into Dry Dock Two for repairs. Work also continued in removing its remaining auxiliary machinery, stores, 14-inch guns and ammunition. With new classes of battleships appearing in the fleet, it was not worth the effort and expense to restore the badly damaged OKLAHOMA to active service. In 1946, she was sold for scrap for \$48,000. In May 1947, the "Okie" left Pearl Harbor for the last time under tow by two tugs. The OKLAHOMA's final end came several days later when she began taking on water. The tow lines were released and she sank to the quiet depths of the Pacific Ocean, 540 miles northeast of Oahu.



Oklahoma Seconds Before Disaster!



UNITED STATES SHIP OKLAHOMA
Shipmen's Practice Squadron
Independence Day

BB-37

Some historians believe it was the Japanese midget sub I-160 that inflicted grave damage with its 2 torpedo hits to the USS OKLAHOMA causing the ship to capsize at its berth.



December 7, 1941



USS OKLAHOMA PROBABLY TOOK 9 TO 11 TORPEDOS



James R. Ward



Francis Charles Flaherty

U.S.S. OKLAHOMA BB-37

Two members of the ship's crew were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously for their actions on December 7, 1941:

Ensign Francis C. Flaherty
Seaman First Class James R. Ward.

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