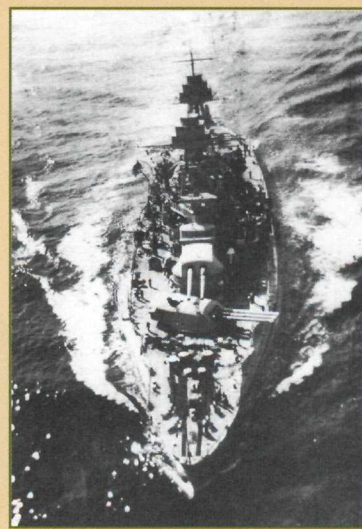


HISTORY OF THE SHIP

In May of 1916, the USS *Oklahoma* was the 37th battleship commissioned by the United States Navy. After her sea trials, she joined the Atlantic Fleet and saw duty on the Eastern Seaboard where she protected convoys during World War I. In the years leading up to World War II, she cruised the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as well as the Mediterranean Sea.

In October of 1936, the battleship was transferred to the Pacific Fleet. She operated for four years out of her homeport in San Pedro, California, before being moved to Pearl Harbor on December 6, 1940. Her last mooring took place on December 5, 1941, when she took her place with six other battlewagons in a location that would forever be known as "Battleship Row."

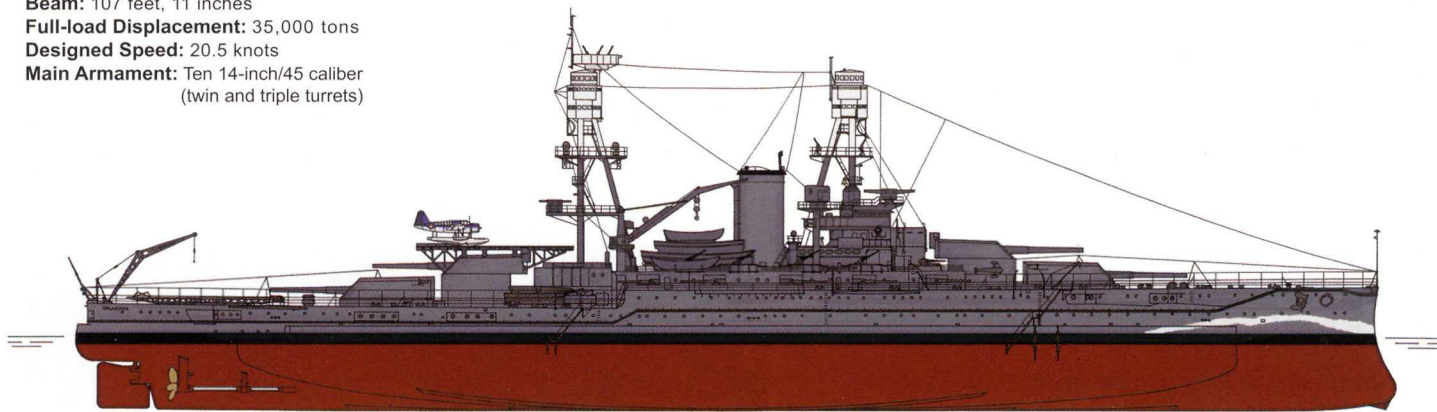
In 1944, the *Oklahoma* was salvaged and raised at Pearl Harbor. Because new battleships of greater strength and size had been added to the fleet, she was denied future service and decommissioned. In 1947, she was sold for scrap but sank in a storm while being towed to the West Coast.



Above: The ship at sea, 1927

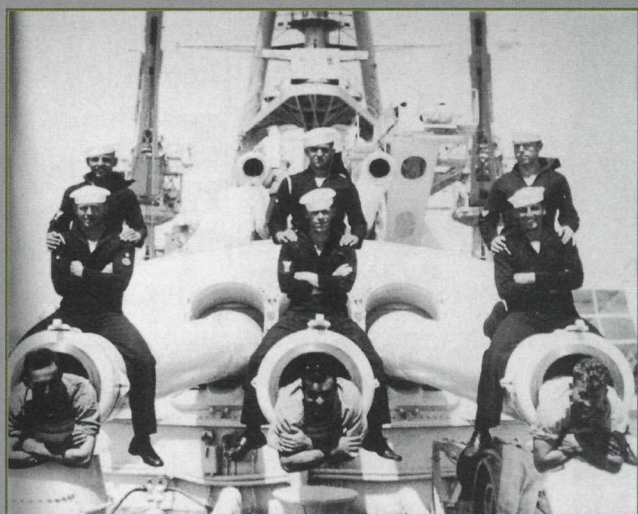
Commissioned: 2 May 1916
Decommissioned: 2 May 1944
Length: 583 feet
Beam: 107 feet, 11 inches
Full-load Displacement: 35,000 tons
Designed Speed: 20.5 knots
Main Armament: Ten 14-inch/45 caliber
(twin and triple turrets)

USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37)



Battleship Profile - 1941

LIFE ABOARD



Above: Sailors proudly pose on the ship's 14-inch guns

To the crew, she was affectionately known as "The Okie." A battleship was a small town gone to sea, her inhabitants mostly young and far from home. One crewmember, USS *Oklahoma* survivor and author, Stephen Bower Young, wrote: "*Despite the passage of time, it seems like yesterday. My mind sees clearly the shipmates I knew so well as they emerged, laughing and talking from a hatch, portside, main deck, aft, of the Oklahoma. It is a time for morning quarters for muster, and at the urging of their petty officers, the white-uniformed sailors good-naturedly form into double ranks. They stand at ease...squaring round hats over suntanned faces...their talk is animated and they turn in my direction. Then a cloud grows darker and I see those certain few less clearly.*"

Death of a Battleship

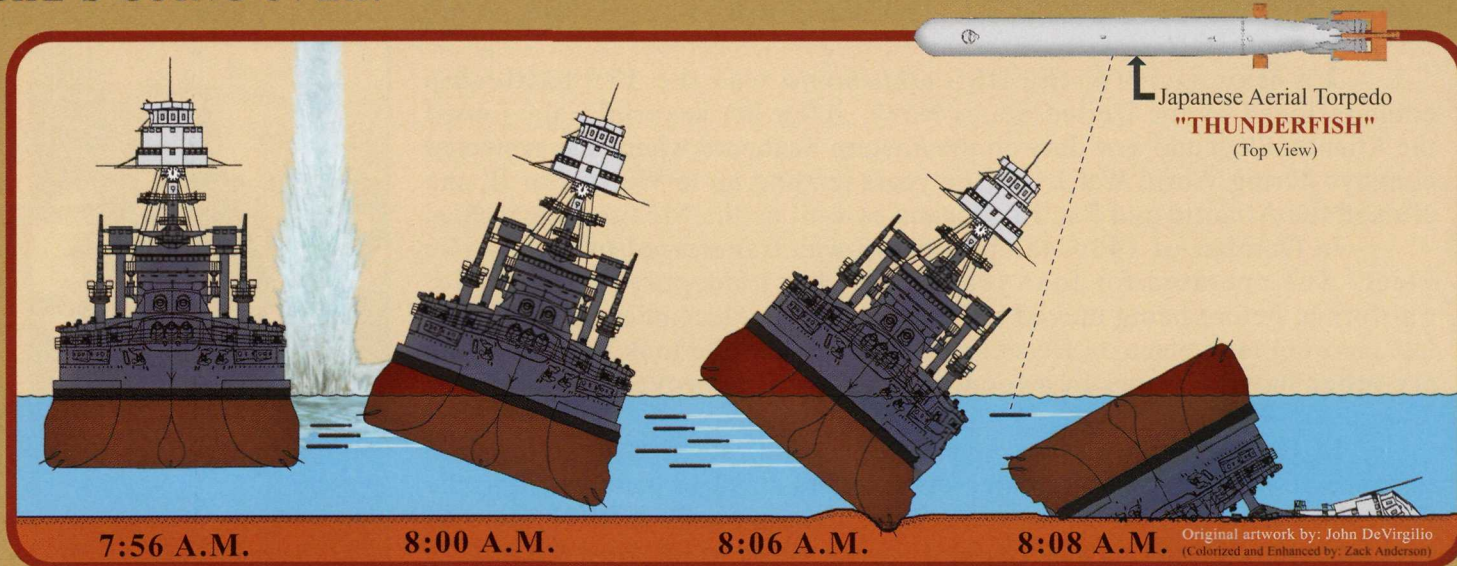
7 December 1941

USS Arizona Memorial
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii



Courtesy of Tom Freeman, Artist
SM & S Naval Prints

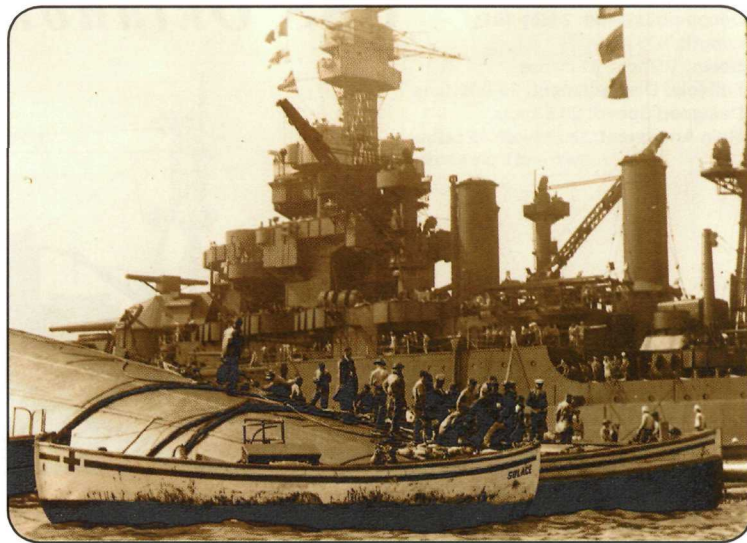
"SHE'S GOING OVER!"



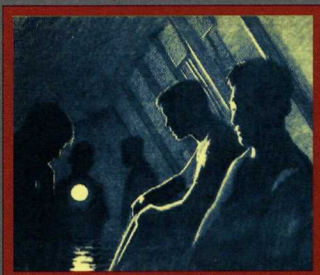
Above: At 7:56 A.M., a second salvo of torpedoes was dropped against Battleship Row. This graphic depicts the dramatic aerial attack and the capsizing of the USS *Oklahoma* after being hit by as many as nine torpedoes.

TRAPPED AT PEARL HARBOR

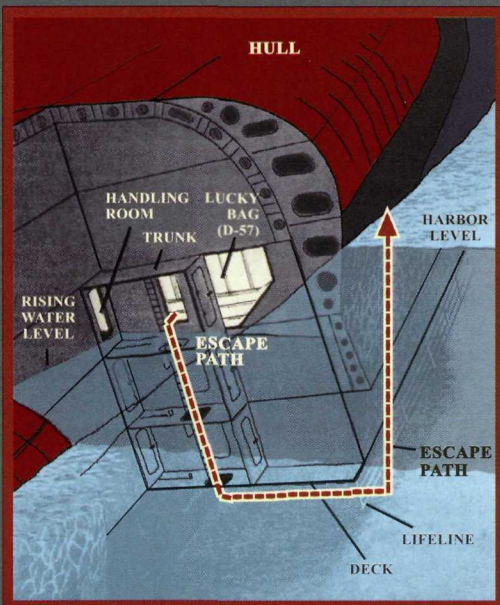
The *Oklahoma* capsized at 8:08 A.M., approximately 12 minutes after the first torpedo hit. Hundreds of men were trapped below her decks. They found themselves in a bizarre world turned upside down, in pitch-black darkness, as compartments filled with water. Death came to 429 officers, sailors and Marines, marking the second greatest loss of life at Pearl Harbor. But not all were lost. Some men waited in compartments for rescue, while others began thinking of ways to escape their watery tomb.



ESCAPE AND RESCUE



Above: The hours passed by slowly for those trapped below decks. Using hammers and wrenches, they pounded on bulkheads to draw attention to would-be rescuers. For those in compartment D-57, time was running out as the air grew foul and the water steadily rose.



Original escape diagrams by: James Bryant

Of the 14 men trapped in D-57, three made a daring escape. They swam nearly 20 feet down the trunk space, 35 feet out of the hatch and across the upside down deck, and finally ascended almost 30 feet to the water's surface. Ordinary men with extraordinary courage swam approximately 90 feet to freedom. Over the next two days, 32 men would be pulled from the hull of the *Oklahoma*. Eleven came from D-57, a storage compartment known as the "Lucky Bag."

Brochure design by: Daniel A. Martinez and Zack Anderson