

Historical Sketch of the U.S.S. OREGON



The Battleship OREGON was constructed under an Act of Congress, June 30, 1890. Her keel was laid by the Union Iron Works, San Francisco, California, 1891. She was launched in 1893 and put in commission in 1896 at a cost of \$6,280,000. Displacement 10,288 tons; tonnage 5,289; length 351 feet. Her crew consisted of 441 men, 32 officers and 60 marines.

The old OREGON won great fame when she raced 15,000 miles in 68 days from Bremerton, Washington, to Key West, Florida, arriving May 24, 1898, in time to help sink the Spanish fleet. On July 3, 1898, at the Battle of Santiago, she sank the MARIA TERESA, Spanish flagship, and beached the COLON, pride of the Spanish Navy, after a chase of 48 miles.

The Federal Government placed "The Bulldog of the Navy" in the care of the State of Oregon on July 14, 1925, to be preserved as a historical memorial. She was berthed in the Willamette River at Portland, Oregon, where she was visited by thousands of persons annually.

On December 7, 1942, just a year after the Japs struck at Pearl Harbor, the citizens of Oregon held a commemorative service aboard the famous ship along with a parade and a 21-gun salute to the old monarch of the U. S. Navy as a final tribute before she was dismantled in the scrap drive to further the United Nation's march to VICTORY.



Cachet sponsored by Oregon Stamp Society (A. P. S. Branch No. 68) Portland, Oregon

MEMORIAL

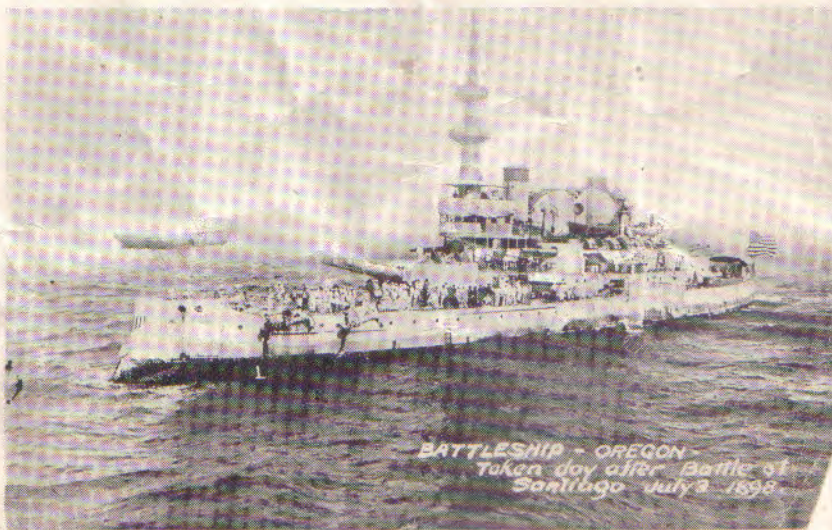
Battleship Oregon
Mast and Park



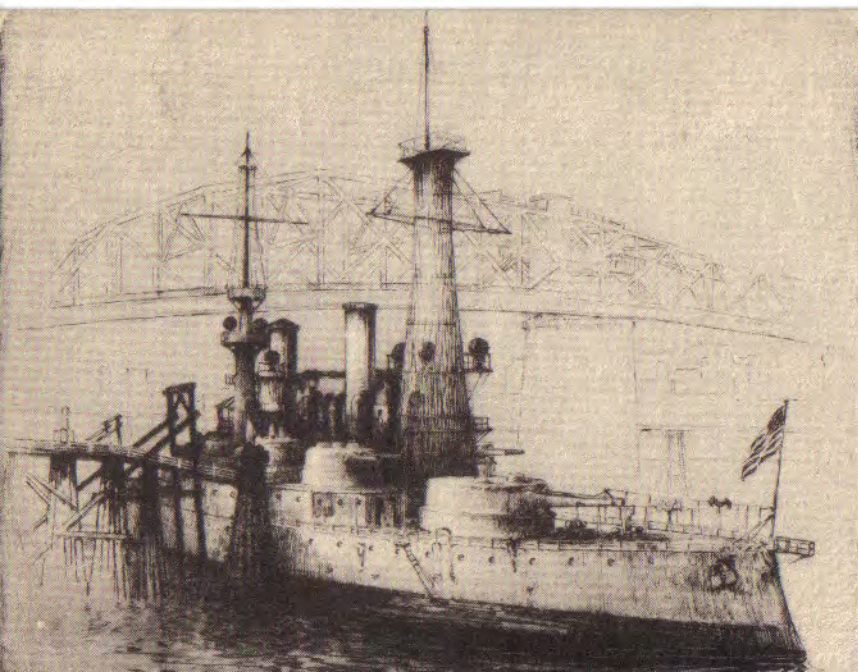
DEDICATION

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1944

2 P. M.



BATTLESHIP - OREGON -
Taken day after Battle of
Santiago July 3 1898



*Patriot
Roll of Honor*

This reproduction is
presented to you for
your loyalty and help
in placing the
Battleship "Oregon"
in Memorial Park as a
national shrine

PROGRAM

BAND SELECTIONS.....	U. S. W. V. Band
INVOCATION.....	Rev. E. A. Smith
OPENING ADDRESS.....	Mr. Marshall N. Dana
PRESENTATION.....	Mr. Tom C. Watson
ACCEPTANCE.....	Acting Mayor William A. Bowes
COLOR CEREMONY.....	U. S. W. V. Band U. S. Navy Color Guard
RETIRE COLOR GUARD AND DISMISS.	



THE "OREGON"

By BEN HUR LAMPMAN

Well she knew when she heard the word,
As the great engines thrummed and stirred,
And the bright foam swirled in her widening wake—
That pride and a vow were both at stake.

Her smoke grew faint on the southern sky,
And they who marked it said "Good-bye"
With a catch in the throat, and a mist that blurred
Their last far glimpse of a ship that heard.

Wreathed in spume was the cruel Horn,
By those fierce seas where the bergs are born;
And lost from the world she passed from Ken
With her freight of guns and fighting men.

Wild in her path the combers rose,
White were her decks with the Polar snows,
But living and lean and fraught with flame,
Fearless into the storm she came

Out of the gale and the ice she fled;
The coast of her quest was a cloud ahead—
And the heart of the ship was glad and high
As she raced for her glorious chance to die.

Men did not haggle her worth that day,
When, garbed in her coat of battle grey,
She ranged by the side of her sister ships
And rang with the shout of her iron lips.

Thunder of fighting about her pealed,
Washed to the decks her target reeled—
And a word flashed under the sea to say
She had kept her faith, in the good old way.

Ah! Kindlier far had it been than this—
Than the wrecker's sledge and the torch's hiss—
Had a shell sped over the tropic wave
And given her sleep—in an ocean grave.

What is the price of an outworn ship?
Bid! We are hucksters at heart and lip,
Who spoke of a price when her smoke grew low,
Those five and twenty years ago.

—From the Oregonian, Feb. 18, 1923.

The keel of the Battleship Oregon was laid November 19, 1891 and she was launched Tuesday, October 26, 1893 at 11:45 A. M. from the Union Iron Works, San Francisco, Cal.

It was not until July 31, 1896 that the Oregon was placed in commission. She cost \$46,380,000 and logged a speed of 16:79 knots per hour on her trial run, although her designers only called for 15 knots.

The Oregon left San Francisco Bay, March 18, 1898, under sealed orders, for the start of her famous run through the Straits of Magellan. This trip of over 14,000 miles in 68 days and the subsequent arrival in condition to fight, set a record never equalled or beaten. It did however show the need of a quick route to the east coast of the United States if we were going to be in a position to defend our shores. The Panama Canal was built as a direct result of this object lesson so graphically shown.

The Oregon on her famous run and at the battle of Santiago Bay was under the command of Capt. Charles Edgar Clark.

Capt. Clark was born Aug. 10, 1843, at Bradford, Vermont.

After the Spanish American War, he was made Rear Admiral and from 1901 to 1904 was Governor of the Naval Home in Philadelphia. He retired August 10, 1905 and died October 1, 1922 in Long Beach, California, at the age of 79.

THE OREGON CARRIED

- 4 13-inch Guns.
- 8 8-inch guns.
- 12 3-inch guns.
- 20 six-pounders.
- 4 four pounders.
- 2 3-inch field guns.
- Weight of a broadside — 6600 pounds.
- Thickness of armor belt — 18 inches.
- Protection of gun positions — 6 to 17 inches.
- Thickness of deck plating — 3 inches.
- The engines were two vertical expansion type, developing a total of 11,110 horsepower.
- Displacement of ship — 10,288 tons.
- Mean normal draft—24 feet.
- Length waterline—348 feet.
- Length overall—351 feet.
- Beam—69 feet 3 inches.

Some idea of the peculiarities of the harbor of Santiago and the position of the fortifications may be of interest. There are hills on either side of the narrow entrance, on one side precipitous and on the other sloping. The picturesque mass of the Morro crowns the abrupt eastern shore, while on the western slope lay the Socapa batteries. Directly at the entrance the channel makes a sharp turn to the right, seeming to hide itself behind the scraggy head-land of the Morro. It becomes visible again as it curves to the left to round Socapa Point, then another bend to the right vanishes behind the high land of Punta Gorda, which, to the eyes of the observer, from the outside would almost seem to close the passage. The city of Santiago lies four miles above this tortuous entrance, so it will be seen if we had been obliged to force our way in to fight the Spanish Fleet, we would have been exposed to the fire from Morro and Socapa batteries, then to the mines in the channel, and to the batteries on Punta Gorda, before we would be able to reach the squadron which was anchored near the city. The batteries had proven of little concern, but the mines would have been a real menace. Capt. Clark learned afterwards that if circumstances had compelled the fleet to force an entrance, it was planned for Admiral Sampson to have the OREGON take the lead. If this had happened how differently the war might have turned out.

No story of the Oregon is complete without mention of the set of silver, presented by the Citizens of the State of Oregon, in 1896. This set is now in the vaults of the U. S. National Bank in Portland for safe keeping. It consists of 1 large and 1 small punch bowl, 2 dippers, 1 large tray and 24 silver glass holders. Each piece is beautifully engraved, the main design being the Beaver. The money was collected in amounts of ten cents from the school children and twenty five cents from adults all over the State. The silver set was made by Feldenheimers and cost \$25,000.

The Oregon arrived in Portland harbor July 14, 1925, and was officially accepted by Governor Walter M. Pierce, in the name of the State of Oregon, who assumed the responsibility for the proper upkeep and maintenance of the ship. The propeller shafts were cut and the engines damaged so as to render the Oregon unfit for duty at sea. This was done under the disarmament treaty after the last World War. The U. S. Government, while

Oregon over to the State, never released its rights or
OWILC P.

In 1925 Mrs. Cora A. Thompson, took over the work of establishing a National War Museum on board the ship. In 1928 she assumed the duties of Secretary and business manager of the Battleship Oregon Commission, a job she still holds. Through the efforts of the United Spanish War Veterans and other patriotic organizations, thousands of war trophies poured aboard the ship and were put in their proper places and cases by Mrs. Thompson. These trophies came from not only the United States but England and Canada. Many were loaned, but the greater part of the collection were donated to the museum.

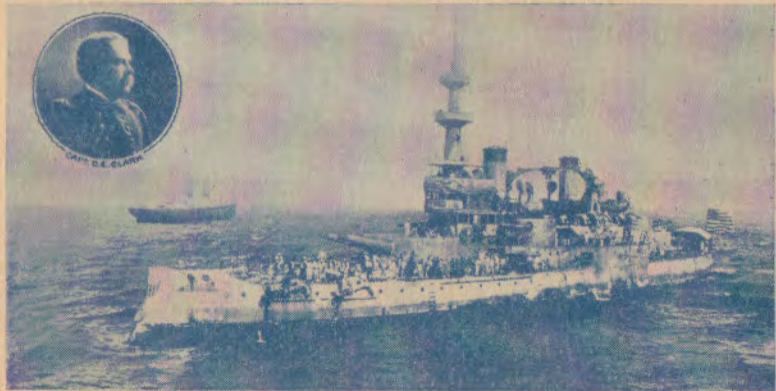
When the Battleship Oregon was taken away to be junked there were over ten thousand trophies in its museum. These were removed and now are on exhibition in the Failing School, in Portland, Oregon.

Battleship Oregon Naval Post 1478 Veterans of Foreign Wars, was formed December 11, 1926, on the Battleship Oregon and was the first organization to use the ship for its home meeting place. This Post sponsored the first ship of Sea Scouts aboard the Oregon in 1928. Most of these boys enlisted in the Navy at the outbreak of World War II and are now scattered all over the globe. Many have given their lives.

The Battleship Oregon was thrown into the scrap pile in 1943, but before being towed away the foremast was removed and presented to the City of Portland. The hull was not broken up for scrap. The holes in the decks left by the removal of the turrets were welded closed and the ship now is once more serving her country.

On October 29, 1944 the Veterans of Foreign Wars, through Mr. Tom C. Watson, a member of Post 81, V. F. W. presented to the City of Portland the flag now flying in the Battleship Oregon Park and the plaque honoring the memory of the "Old Oregon," which were accepted on behalf of the City of Portland by Acting Mayor Wm. A. Bowes. The maganese bronze used in the plaque was once a port hole ring on the ship. It weighs 75 pounds and was donated by the Alaska Junk Co. In order to use this bronze it was necessary to secure a priority from Washington, D. C.

Visit the Battleship Oregon  Portland
OREGON



“Bulldog of the Navy”