

Three Earlier *Iowas*

Four United States warships have been named for Iowa — three of which have been of the battleship class. Since the Hawkeye State is only a century old, and since only sixty-four battleships have been constructed by our government, Iowans can well be proud of this signal honor.

The first warship named for Iowa was a twin-screw sloop dating back to Civil War days. It was originally named the *Ammonoosuc*, and was constructed in the United States Navy Yard in Boston at a cost of \$1,231,685 in 1864. The *Ammonoosuc* was one of several craft built to sweep Confederate raiders of the *Alabama* type from the sea. The *Ammonoosuc* was 335 feet long, 44 feet breadth of beam, 22.8 feet in depth, and had a normal displacement of 3,200 tons. The name of the vessel was changed to the USS *Iowa* on May 15, 1869, and although she seems to be the first craft thus named for Iowa, no particular comment appears to have been made in Iowa newspapers.

The career of the first *Iowa* was relatively unimportant, she being laid up in the Boston Navy Yard from 1870 to 1883. In 1882 she was inspected and found unfit for further service and stricken from the Navy Register. On September

27, 1883, she was sold for \$44,605 at Boston, to the firm of Hubel and Porter of Syracuse, New York.

The second *Iowa* was one of the earliest battleships, having been constructed at Philadelphia between 1893 and 1896 at a cost of \$5,871,000. She was one of seven battleships — the *Maine*, *Texas*, *New York*, *Indiana*, *Massachusetts*, *Oregon*, and *Iowa* — that had been built by the United States prior to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.

At the time of her launching the second *Iowa* was called the “queen of warships” by an enthusiastic newspaper correspondent. She was 360 feet long, 72 feet wide, and displaced over 11,000 tons. “As an example of the American naval architect’s skill,” one Iowa editor declared, “she is an achievement of which we should well be proud, and a namesake in which any state might glory.” On June 19, 1897, the silver service, purchased with an appropriation of \$5,000 by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, was presented to the ship at Newport, Rhode Island, by C. G. McCarthy, State Auditor of Iowa, whose brief speech included this wish:

While we hope that our navy shall never turn from the face of any enemy, may we not indulge the larger hope that this stately *Iowa* and the other battleships and the cruisers — armored and unarmored — shall somehow find a place as messengers of peace rather than of war — be

heralds of human progress rather than foemen in international strife.

However desirable this wish was, it was not destined to be fulfilled. Less than a year later the Cuban situation and the sinking of the *Maine* brought on the Spanish-American War. The *Iowa* was stationed outside the harbor of Santiago, Cuba, where the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera had taken refuge. On the morning of Sunday, July 3, 1898, the *Iowa*, which lay opposite the mouth of Santiago harbor, fired a shot from a small gun and raised the signal: "The enemy is attempting to escape." In the fierce fighting that followed the *Iowa* crippled the *Maria Teresa*, sank two Spanish destroyers, and then with her sister battleships crushed the *Oquendo* and the *Vizcaya*. Captain Eulate of the sinking *Vizcaya* surrendered to Captain Robley D. Evans aboard the *Iowa*. Later Admiral Cervera and his staff were transferred to this gallant namesake of the Hawkeye State.

The next twenty years of the *Iowa* were uneventful, and in 1919 the name *Iowa* was erased from the records and the old battleship was designated merely as "B S 4." On March 23, 1923, the second *Iowa* was used as a target for the *Mississippi*, the new "queen of the navy."

The third battleship *Iowa* was under construction when, by the terms of the Washington Treaty of 1922 limiting naval armament, construction was

cancelled. The unfinished hull was later used for target practice.

The compilation on the opposite page affords some unusual comparisons of an old battleship — the second *Iowa* — with the most modern battleship, heavy cruiser, and destroyer, the name of each being associated with Iowa.

The following list of early battleships offers a still further basis of comparison.

EARLY UNITED STATES BATTLESHIPS

Name	Completed	Tons	Name	Completed	Tons
1 Maine	1888	6,682	16 Georgia	1906	14,948
2 Texas	1889	6,315	17 New Jersey	1906	14,948
3 New York	1893	8,200	18 Rhode Island	1906	14,948
4 Indiana	1895	10,288	19 Virginia	1906	14,948
5 Massachusetts	1896	10,288	20 Connecticut	1906	16,000
6 Oregon	1896	10,288	21 Louisiana	1906	16,000
7 Iowa	1896	11,340	22 Kansas	1907	16,000
8 Kearsarge	1900	11,540	23 Minnesota	1907	16,000
9 Kentucky	1900	11,540	24 Nebraska	1907	14,948
10 Alabama	1900	11,565	25 Vermont	1907	16,000
11 Wisconsin	1901	11,565	26 New Hampshire	1908	16,000
12 Illinois	1901	11,565	27 Michigan	1909	16,000
13 Maine	1902	12,500	28 So. Carolina	1909	16,000
14 Missouri	1903	12,500	29 Delaware	1910	20,000
15 Ohio	1904	12,500	30 North Dakota	1910	20,000

In their day these battleships served the nation just as gallantly as the *Iowa*, the *Wisconsin*, the *New Jersey*, and the *Missouri* today.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN