

## Great Ships of The U. S. Navy

### U.S.S. Constellation

The *USS Constellation* was constructed in 1854 as a sloop-of-war, or corvette, and was the second United States Navy ship to carry this famous name. The original frigate was disassembled down to the keel on 25 June 1853, in Gosport Navy Yard in Norfolk, Virginia, and she was rebuilt as a faster, heavy sloop-of-war.

From 1855 to 1858, *Constellation* performed largely diplomatic duties as part of the US Mediterranean Squadron. She was flagship of the US African Squadron from 1859 to 1861. She disrupted the African slave trade by interdicting three slave ships and releasing the imprisoned slaves. The last of these was captured at the outbreak of the American Civil War: *Constellation* overpowered the slaver brig *Triton* in African coastal waters. *Constellation* spent much of the war as a deterrent to Confederate cruisers and commerce raiders in the Mediterranean Sea.

After the Civil War, *Constellation* saw various duties such as carrying famine relief stores to Ireland and exhibits to the 1878 Paris, France Exposition Universelle. She also spent a number of years as a receiving ship (floating naval barracks). After being used as a practice ship for Naval Academy midshipmen, *Constellation* became a training ship in 1894 for the Naval Training Center in Newport, Rhode Island, where she helped train more than 60,000 recruits during World War I.

Decommissioned in 1933, *Constellation* was recommissioned as a national symbol in 1940 by President Franklin Roosevelt. She spent much of the Second World War as relief (i.e. reserve) flagship for the US Atlantic Fleet, but spent the first 6 months of 1942 as the flagship for Admiral Ernest J. King and Vice Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll. *Constellation* was again decommissioned on 4 February 1955, and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 15 August 1955—about two weeks and one hundred years from her first commissioning. She was taken to her permanent berth—Constellation Dock, Baltimore, MD, and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963. She is the last existing American Civil War-era naval vessel and was one of the last sail-powered warships built by the US Navy.

A \$9-million restoration project was completed in July 1999. In 2004, *Constellation* made her first trip out of Baltimore's Inner Harbor since 1955. The trip to the US Naval Academy in Annapolis marked the ship's first trip to the city in 111 years. Tours are regularly available, self-guided or with the assistance of staff. Nearly all of the ship is accessible. A cannon is demonstrated daily.

[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Constellation\\_\(1854\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Constellation_(1854))]

