

NR Copy

NHL 1/14/86

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic USS Alabama (BB 60)

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Battleship Parkway \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Alabama code 01 county Mobile County code 097

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name USS Alabama Battleship Commission

street & number Battleship Parkway

city, town Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Alabama

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Department of the Navy

street & number Naval Sea System Command

city, town Washington state DC 20362

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title none has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	N/A original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

USS Alabama (BB 60) is the fourth of four South Dakota class battleships laid down in the 1930s and 1940s. She was built by the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia. Her keel was laid on February 1, 1940 and she was launched on February 16, 1942. USS Alabama was commissioned on August 16, 1942.

The design of the South Dakota class was influenced by the same limitations as the previous North Carolina class, because it, too, was intended to meet Washington Treaty limits. The chief difference was that the South Dakota class, including USS Alabama, was designed from the start to carry a 16-inch main battery. To accommodate the heavier armour needed for a 16-inch battery and keep the required weight under 35,000 tons, the waterline length of the South Dakota class was shortened from that of the North Carolina class while the beam remained the same. This change meant that the South Dakota class has a much fuller hull form than the North Carolina class. More powerful engines were also installed to maintain the same fast speed obtained by the North Carolina class.<sup>1</sup>

USS Alabama is painted grey on metal surfaces exposed to the elements with the exception of a black stack cap and black "boot topping" at the waterline. Three quarters of the ship's deck is covered with teak laid on a bituminous base and bolted to the deck. USS Alabama was built with two explosively-driven catapults on the stern port and starboard, for launching observation airplanes. One of these was removed and discarded during the ship's inactive period. One catapult is still in place with a fully restored OS2U Kingfisher airplane in place.

Specific ship data concerning USS Alabama is:

Length Overall	679 feet
Maximum Beam	108 feet
Design Displacement	35,000 tons
Full Load Displacement	42,500 tons
Boilers	8-Foster Wheeler
Turbines	4 sets, Westinghouse
Fuel Oil Capacity	6,959 tons
Maximum Speed	28 knots
Armament	9 16-inch/45 caliber Mark 6 guns 20 5-inch/38 caliber Mark 12 guns Various combinations of 40 mm and 20 mm antiaircraft guns
Crew	2,300 wartime

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	architecture	education	X military	social/
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates 1942-1945 Builder Architect Norfolk Naval Shipyard  
Portsmouth, Virginia

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### General Statement: The Role of the Battleship in World War II

The first modern battleship had its inception with the launching of HMS Dreadnought by Great Britain in 1906. HMS Dreadnought was the world's first all-big-gun, fast, heavily armoured capital ship and her launching made all the major ships in all other navies obsolete. The design features of HMS Dreadnought were rapidly copied by other navies and by 1914 the modern gun heavily armoured battleship dominated naval warfare.

Battleships fought their first and only decisive action of World War I in the Battle of Jutland in May 1916. Although the British fleet won the day and forced the Germans to retire to the safety of their ports, the German design and construction of battleships was shown to be superior. After the Battle of Jutland, the Germans never again risked their battleships in open conflict with His Majesty's fleet but turned instead to unrestricted submarine warfare.

After the end of World War I the battleship continued to dominate naval strategy. In an effort to reduce the expenditures required to fund new battleships, the United States, Britain, France, Japan and Italy agreed to a moratorium on new battleship construction in 1922 at the Washington Naval Conference. As a result of this agreement, new American battleships in construction were broken up and scrapped. No new battleships were built until 1936 when USS North Carolina was authorized by the Congress.

During these years the nature of naval power was changing as a result of the perfection of the airplane and the introduction of a new capital ship utilizing this new weapon--the aircraft carrier. Supporters of air power argued that the battleship as the principal capital ship of the navy was obsolete because of the long reach of naval aircraft. This view was strengthened early in World War II when the British carried out a carrier strike on the Italian battle fleet at Taranto on November 11, 1940. Subsequent Japanese carrier strikes on the American battlefleet at Pearl Harbor and on the British ships HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse confirmed the new order of naval strategy.

While the rise of the aircraft carrier forever altered naval strategy it did not totally eclipse the importance of the battleship. In both the Atlantic and the Pacific, old American battleships carried out extensive bombardments on enemy held shores while new generations of fast American battleships escorted aircraft carriers and provided them with a dense thicket of anti-aircraft fire when necessary.

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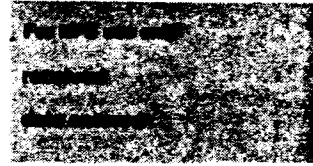
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USS Alabama is in excellent condition and retains her World War II integrity. USS Alabama was decommissioned by the navy in 1947 and remained unaltered until the time of her transfer to the State of Alabama as a war memorial in 1964. In 1983 the navy removed some spare parts from USS Alabama for the reactivation of the Iowa class battleships.

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Both old and new American battleships saw heavy service during the war, providing cover for other ships and eventually bombarding the Japanese home islands in 1945. When the war in the Pacific ended on September 2, 1945, the surrender of the Japanese was signed on board the battleship USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Harbor. Although replaced by the aircraft carrier as the principal capital ship of the navy, the battleship saw important and useful service during World War II, and contributed to the eventual American victory.

USS Alabama represents American battleships that fought against Japan in World War II for the following reasons:

1. USS Alabama is representative of the South Dakota class of American battleships that fought against Japan in World War II. Built later than the North Carolina class, the South Dakota class represents the continued American preparation for World War II and the development of a more advanced battleship design.
2. Beginning in 1943, USS Alabama saw continuous action in both the European and Pacific Theaters of operation. USS Alabama earned nine battle stars for her World War II service. USS Alabama also earned the Navy Occupation Service Medal Pacific, for the period of 2 to 23 September 1945.
3. USS Alabama is in excellent condition and retains all of her World War II integrity.