

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Philadelphia
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) (Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
U.S.S. Olympia

AND/OR HISTORIC:
U.S.S. Olympia

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pier 11 North, North Delaware Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Philadelphia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
003

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Philadelphia CODE: 101

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Cruiser Olympia Association, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pier 11 North

CITY OR TOWN:
Philadelphia

STATE:
Pennsylvania

CODE:
42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Dept. of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:
Philadelphia

STATE:
Pennsylvania

CODE:
42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Philadelphia

STATE:
Pennsylvania

CODE:
42

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The U.S.S. Olympia, built by the Union Iron Works of San Francisco 1890-1893, was the largest of the four newly-authorized protected cruisers. The protected cruiser differed from the unprotected cruiser in its greater displacement, protective deck plating, and larger main battery. The Olympia has a 5,870 ton displacement, measures 340' at the water line, and has a 53' beam. Her twin-screw, triple-expansion engines generated over 17,300 horsepower, and on her trial run she reached the speed of 21.7 knots, faster than any previous U.S. cruiser. Her cruising range was 6000 miles. In addition to the steam power, she had an auxiliary sail rig for a two-masted schooner. The Olympia had a complement of 395 men and 33 officers.

The Olympia's main battery of four eight-inch rifles was housed in a pair of cylindrical armored turrets, a unique arrangement among U.S. protected cruisers. Her secondary battery consisted of ten five-inch rapid-fire guns, as well as ten one and six pound rapid-fire guns and six torpedo tubes. Her heavy protective deck ranged from two to nearly five inches in thickness. Below the deck, the cellular structure of coal bunkers and cofferdams filled with water-excluding cellulose was designed to prevent flooding if the plating should have been pierced.

Today at Pier 11 North on the Delaware River at Philadelphia the Olympia has been restored to her 1898 appearance. The eight-inch gun turrets which were removed in 1916 have been replaced with exact facsimiles, built according to the ship's original plans. The original engines still exist, as do the sailor's quarters on the berth deck, and the admiral's and captain's quarters on the main deck. The original teak deck covering has been replaced with an artificial all-weather covering. Pier 11 North, North Delaware Avenue, Philadelphia.

The boundary of the Olympia is the ship itself.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) c. 1898

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When the United States Congress authorized the construction of four ships in the new class--protected cruiser--in 1888, the U.S. Navy ranked poorly among the world's navies. The U.S.S. Olympia, built by the Union Iron Works of San Francisco, 1890-3, and commissioned in 1895, was the largest and most heavily armed of the four protected cruisers, with a faster trial speed than any previous U.S. cruiser. In 1898, as Commodore George Dewey's flagship, the Olympia led the Asiatic Squadron to its stunning victory over the Spanish fleet in Manila, marking the emergence of the U.S. Navy (the Great White Fleet) as one of superior power surpassing most other navies and in serious competition with the dominating fleets of Germany and Great Britain.

Today the Olympia rests at berth on the Delaware River at Philadelphia, maintained by the Cruiser Olympia Association as the oldest surviving steel ship of the U.S. Navy, and the last of the Great White Fleet.

HISTORY

Soon after being commissioned in 1895, the Olympia was ordered to the Asiatic Station in the Far East. Through the efforts of Theodore Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, George Dewey, a distinguished veteran of the Civil War, was appointed Commodore of the Asiatic Squadron. The Olympia was selected as his flagship, and on January 3, 1898 his pennant was raised above her for the first time. Tension between Spain and America was growing and the Spanish fleet outnumbered the U.S. Navy. What the panicky U.S. leaders did not know was that the outwardly powerful Spanish navy was composed of obsolete and ineffective ships manned by poorly trained crews. The Asiatic Squadron consisted of the four new protected cruisers: the Olympia, the Baltimore, the Boston, and the Raleigh, as well two gunboats, the Concord and the Petrel and the revenue cutter McCulloch. The Spanish admiral Patricia Montojoy Pasaron guarded the Philipines with a squadron of seven cruisers and gunboats.

Washington ordered Dewey to Hong Kong on February 25, where he was to prepare for battle. Once in Hong Kong, the commodore drydocked his ships,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

S. Sydney Bradford, "U.S.S. Olympia," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, August 20, 1963.
 John D. Alden, The American Steel Navy (Annapolis, 1972).
 George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey, Admiral of the Navy (New York 1913).
 Frank Freidel, The Splendid Little War (Boston, 1958).
 Murat Halstead, Full Official History of The War With Spain (Chicago, 1899).
 U.S. Navy Department, "History of U.S.S. Olympia" (Washington, D.C., 1957).
 Richard S. West, Jr. Admirals of the American Empire (Indianapolis, 1948).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		UTM	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "		0 ' "	0 ' "	
				18.488100.442370		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than 1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard F. Greenwood Survey Historian, Landmark Review Project.

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Sites Survey, Landmark Review Project** DATE: **11/12/74**

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L. Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **11**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____
 Title _____
 Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
 Designated: **Jan. 29, 1964**
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
 Boundary Certification:
 Date: **Jan 7 1975**
 Chief, Tech. & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST:
 Boundary Witness:
 Keeper of the National Register
 Date: **1/5/75**
 Director, OAHF

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had them scraped and painted gray. Every effort was also made to rid the vessels of woodwork, stores and personal belongings, indeed anything that could interfere in battle. On the Olympia, extra protection was placed around ammunition hoists and exposed guns. Prophetically, Dewey wrote his siter on April 18 that his fleet was ready, and that "I believe we will make short work of Spanish reign in the Philippines."¹

By April 21, war between America and Spain was inevitable. Three days later the Navy Department cabled Dewey that war existed, and that "You must capture (the Spanish) vessels or destroy (them)."² Forced to leave Hong Kong within twenty-four hours because of neutrality laws Dewey took his ships to Mirs Bay, thirty miles from the British colony, where for two days they practiced with their guns. At 2:00 P.M. on April 27 the Olympia led the seven-ship fleet from the China coast, with her hand lustily playing "El Capitan." Sailing at only eight knots, in order to save coal, America's bold but lonely fleet headed toward the Philippines.

Manila learned of Dewey's departure by a cable from the Spanish consul at Hong Kong. Instead of rousing the Spanish to action, the news seems to have simply deepened a defeatist attitude. Even when the admiral of the Spanish fleet learned on April 30 that the Americans had been seen off the islands, he did not cancel a party.

While the Spanish enjoyed the party, Dewey's fleet, in battle order, entered Manila Bay. At 9:42 P.M., April 30, the call to general quarters rang out on the Olympia. The ship was cleared for action and the men stood at their guns as the ship sailed past Corregidor. Only a few shots flew from that rock, aimed at the vessels behind Dewey's flagship. Hunting the enemy, the Americans finally spied the Spanish at Cavite, some distance below Manila. At 5:15 A.M., May 1, a shore battery opened fire, without effect.

A bright sun rose behind Dewey, presaging a hot day, in all respects. Turning parallel to the enemy fleet, Dewey gave the order to fire at 5:41 A.M. Charles V. Gridley, captain of the Olympia, instantly signaled to a bugler, who blew the call to action, and the vessel's signal officer hoisted to the foretruck the flag signal, "Engage." A blossom of smoke mushroomed from Olympia's forward turret as an eight-inch gun sent the first shell toward the enemy. With that, the whole squadron opened fire.

Sailing at six knots, with the range varying from 2,000 to 5,600 yards, the American fleet poured shot at the enemy. Five times the Olympia led the column past the confused Spanish. Hot outside, it was a furnace below decks. The heat was so awful in the Olympia's fire and engine rooms that men's hair was singed. Being the lead ship, the Olympia was

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an excellent target. Near 7:00 A.M. the Reina Christina attempted a sortie, but accurate, intense fire from the Olympia forced her to retreat. Because of a report that ammunition was running low, Dewey withdrew at 7:35 A.M.

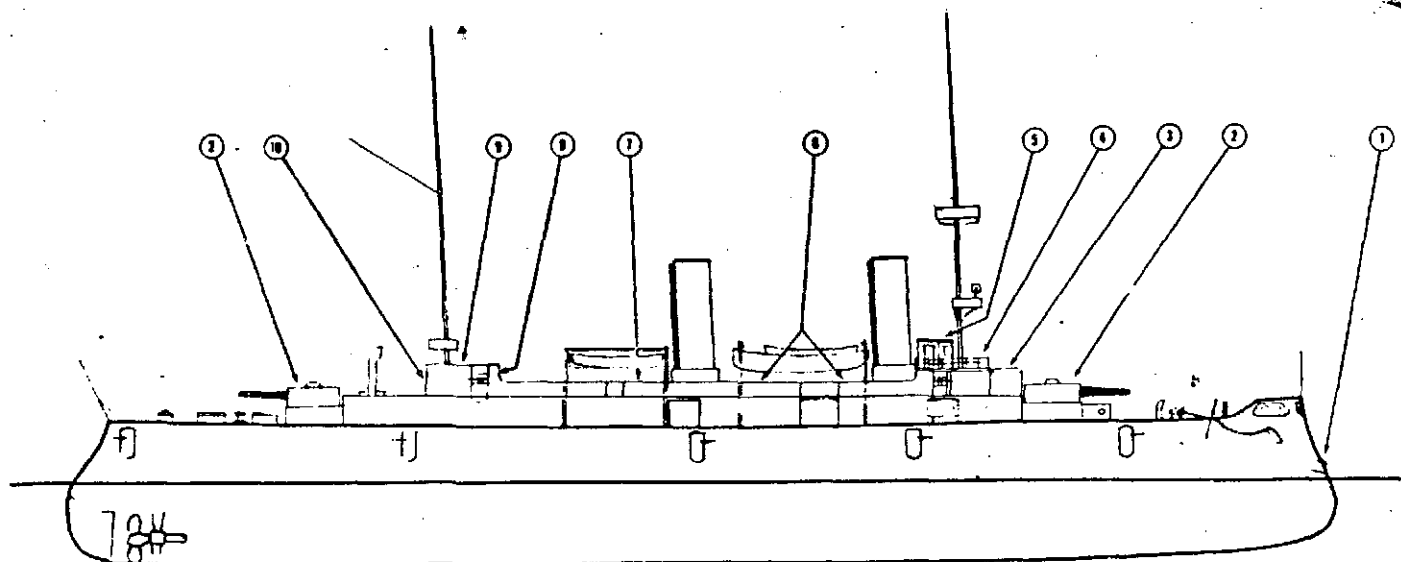
Although the report on ammunition proved erroneous, Dewey did not resume action until 11:16 A.M. Forty-four minutes later, at 12:30 P.M., the enemy surrendered.

It was an amazing triumph! The Spanish fleet had been utterly destroyed the American fleet hardly damaged. Gridley's report of damage to the Olympia reads more as if he were reporting on storm damage than battle wounds. One American had died from heatstroke enroute to Manila while over 300 Spanish had been killed or wounded. After the victory of Manila Bay, the Olympia served in the ensuing blockade and mop-up actions.

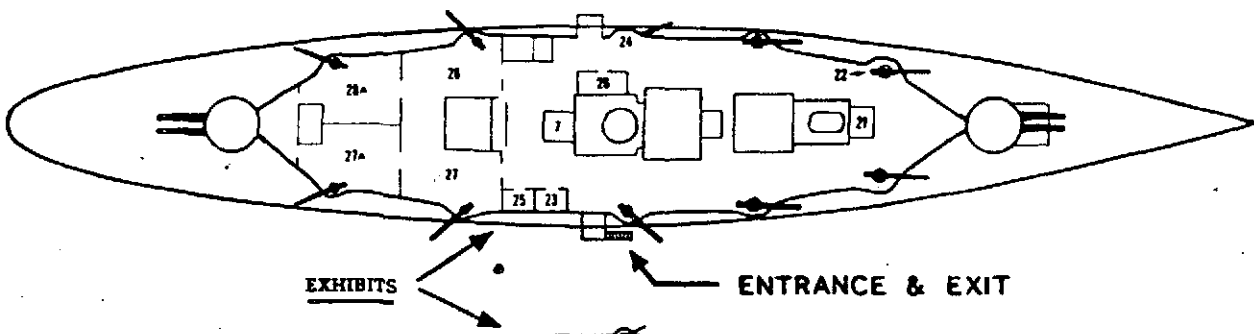
Following the war's close, the Olympia operated off of the East Coast of the United States, then as the flagship of the Carribbean Squadron, and later as a midshipman cruise ship. At the end of World War One, she sailed in the expedition to Murmansk, and returned to the United States in 1921, carrying the body of the Unknown Soldier. After one final midshipman cruise, the U.S.S. Olympia was decommissioned in 1922. In 1955 she was acquired by the Society of Founders and Patriots, and then by the Cruiser Olympia Association, which restored her and currently maintains her. By virtue of her survival she is now the oldest extant steel-hulled ship of the U.S. Navy, as well as the sole remainder of the nearly 150 ships of the Great White Fleet.

¹ 'Richard S. West, Jr., Admirals of American Empire (Indianapolis, 1948) 199.

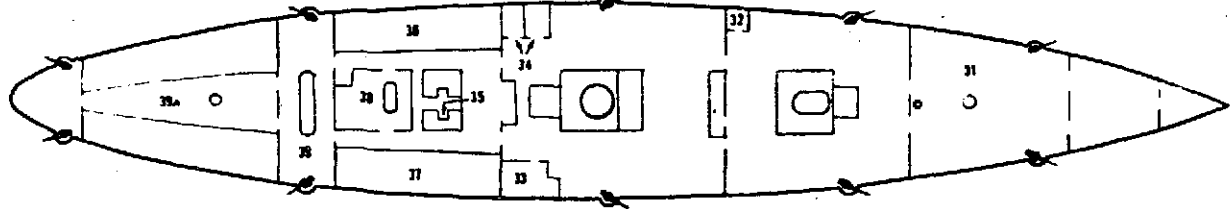
2 'Murat Halstead, Full Official History of the War With Spain (Chicago, 1899), 283.



MAIN DECK



BERTH DECK



TOPSIDES

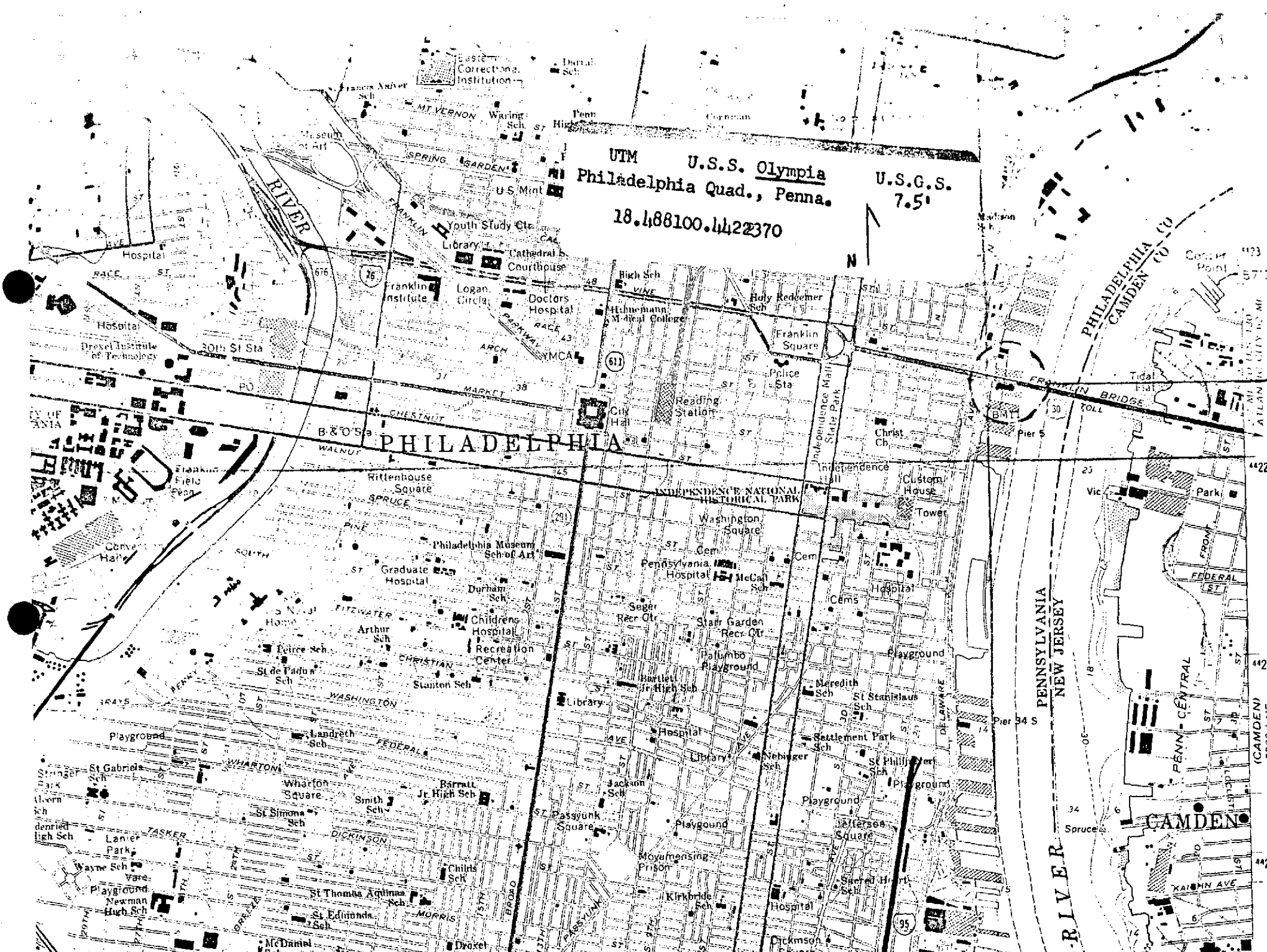
- 1. Bow Torpedo Tube
- 2. 8-inch Gun Turrets
- 3. Conning Tower
- 4. Forward Bridge — where Commodore Dewey stood during battle.
- 5. Wheel House
- 6. Hammock Nettings — storage for crew's hammocks.
- 7. Hatch to Lower Decks.
- 8. Hand Steering Wheels
- 9. Flag Office

MAIN DECK

- 21. Hatch to Berth Deck (inside)
- 22. 5-inch Gun
- 23. Captain's Office
- 24. Ship's Store
- 25. Captain's Pantry
- 26. Bake Shop
- 27. Captain's Cabin
- 27A. Captain's Stateroom
- 28. Admiral's Cabin
- 28A. Admiral's Stateroom

BERTH DECK

- 31. Sick Bay and Dispensary
- 32. Print Shop
- 33. Machine Shop
- 34. Public Toilets
- 35. Ladder to Starboard Engine Room — access to After Fire Room.
- 36. Warrant Officers' Rooms
- 37. Junior Officers' Rooms (removed)
- 38. Warrant Officers' Mess
- 39. Ward Room



UTM U.S.S. Olympia
Philadelphia Quad., Penna.
U.S.G.S. 7.5

18.486100.4422370

PHILADELPHIA

PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY

PHILADELPHIA CO
CAMDEN CO

CAMDEN

423
573
4422
421
5963 (NE)
420