

## US BATTLESHIP NAMES AND NUMERICAL DESIGNATIONS

**THE CONVENTIONS FOR NAMING** and numbering US battleships developed very shortly after the first US battleships, the USS *Texas* and the USS *Maine*, were commissioned in 1895. Beginning with the *Texas* and the *Maine*, almost all US battleships have been named for US states. The sole exception was the USS *Kearsarge* (BB-5), which was launched in 1898 and was named for a sloop-of-war that served with distinction in the American Civil War. Eleven states have had battleships named for them twice, and only Montana, Alaska, and Hawaii have never had battleships named for them.

Beginning with the third US battleship, the USS *Indiana* (BB-1), which was commissioned in 1895, US battleships have also been designated with a number—for example, the *Indiana* was initially also known as Battleship #1. In 1920, the US Navy modified these designations by prefixing battleship numbers with the letters *BB*. There have been seventy-one *BB* designations applied, although fourteen of the designated ships never became active. The USS *Washington* (BB-47) and six battleships of the first South Dakota class (BB-49 through BB-54), which were intended to be launched in the early 1920s, were canceled after the United States agreed to limit the size of its fleet in 1922 as part of the Washington Naval Treaty. Two Iowa-class battleships, the USS *Illinois* (BB-65) and the USS *Kentucky* (BB-66), both of which began construction during World War II, were not completed, and five proposed Montana-class battleships (BB-67 through BB-71) were canceled before construction was begun.