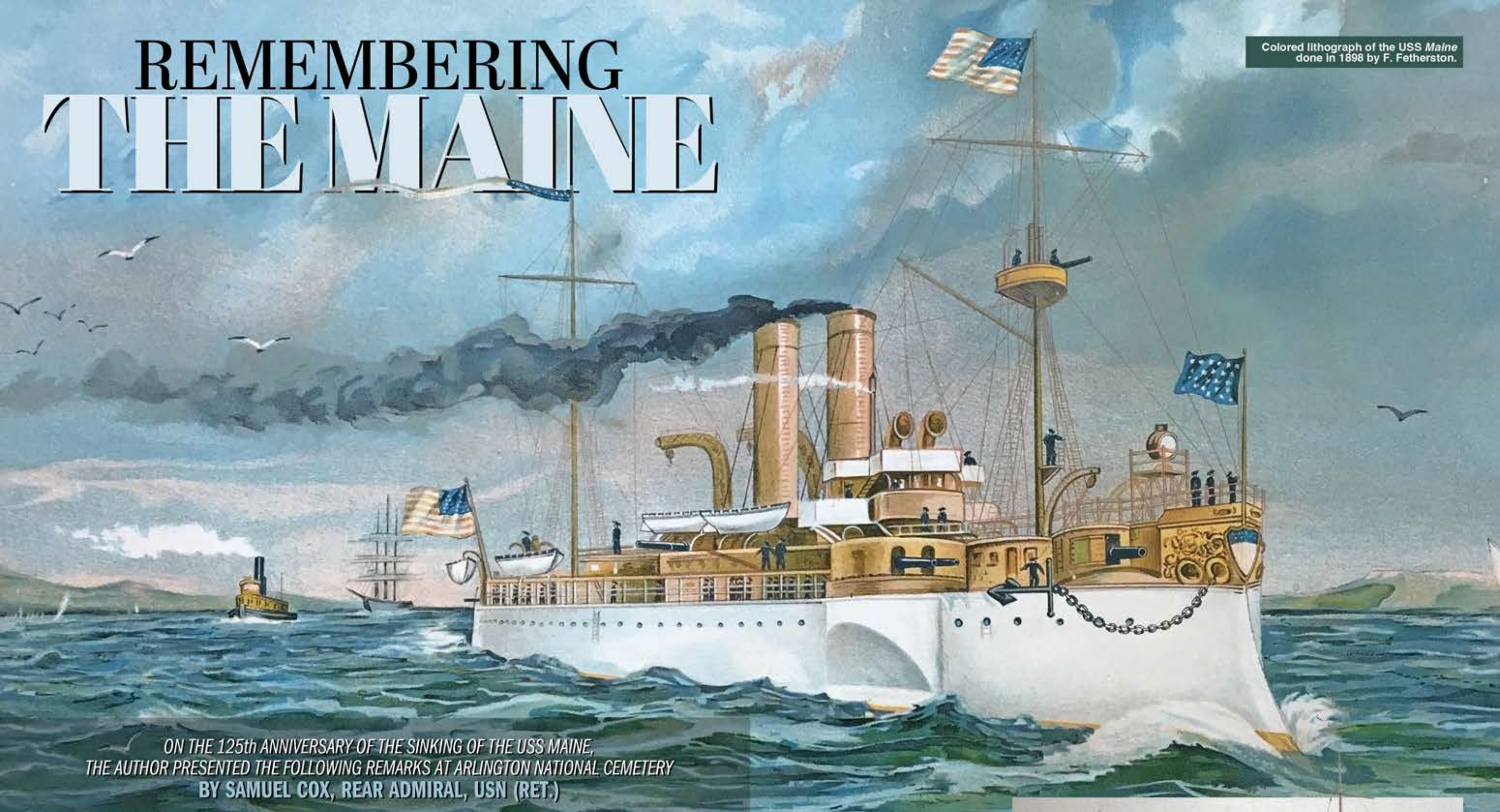


REMEMBERING THE MAINE

Colored lithograph of the USS *Maine*
done in 1898 by F. Fetherston.



ON THE 125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF THE USS MAINE,
THE AUTHOR PRESENTED THE FOLLOWING REMARKS AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
BY SAMUEL COX, REAR ADMIRAL, USN (RET.)

It is an honor to speak about the courage and sacrifice of the crew of the USS *Maine* that terrible night 125 years ago in Havana Harbor, 15 February 1898. Looking around today, it is hard to imagine that this event was as big a national trauma at the time as the attack on Pearl Harbor or as the terrorist attack of 9/11.

Back in 1987, when I was a young intelligence officer lieutenant, I was

assigned as the escort officer for Captain (later Rear Admiral) Artal, the director of naval intelligence for the Spanish Navy. Although not part of the official program, he expressed an interest in seeing Arlington National Cemetery and the US Naval Academy, so I volunteered my weekend time to show him and his daughter Laura around. As we were leaving the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, he looked this

direction and asked, "What is that?"

I said, "Sir, that is the mainmast of the USS *Maine*." I didn't feel the need to elaborate and he just acknowledged with a nod.

Later, at the Naval Academy, he noticed an almost identical mast (except even more battered) and asked, "What is that?"

I figured he probably knew, but I answered, "Sir, that is the foremast of

the USS *Maine*."

This time, Capt. Artal responded, "Well, it is good that we are friends now."

That was certainly the case in 1987, and today. Spain had joined NATO in 1982 and even before that had been very helpful to US Naval Intelligence during the Cold War.

That was definitely not the case in 1898. In his first report back to



USS *Maine* is described as an armored cruiser or second-class battleship.