

SHORT LIFE OF BATTLESHIP 27

THE USS MICHIGAN WAS A TRANSITIONAL DREADNOUGHT THAT WOULD HELP ESTABLISH THE UNITED STATES NAVY AS A GLOBAL NAVAL POWER

BY EDWARD FURHLER

Known as Battleship Number 27, she would become the second US Navy vessel to carry the proud name *Michigan* for our 26th State. USS *Michigan* was a *South-Carolina*-class battleship and when she emerged, she was a symbol of America's growing naval power. The second battleship in her class that comprised the first dreadnought battlewagons built for the Navy, she was laid down in December 1906, launched in May 1908, and commissioned into the Fleet on 4 January 1910. A potent weapon when she took to the seas, USS *Michigan* had a main battery of eight 12-inch Mark 5 guns in superfiring twin gun turrets. The class was the first to feature these effective weapons. The secondary battery consisted of 22 3-inch guns mounted in casemates alongside the hull. She also carried a pair of 21-inch

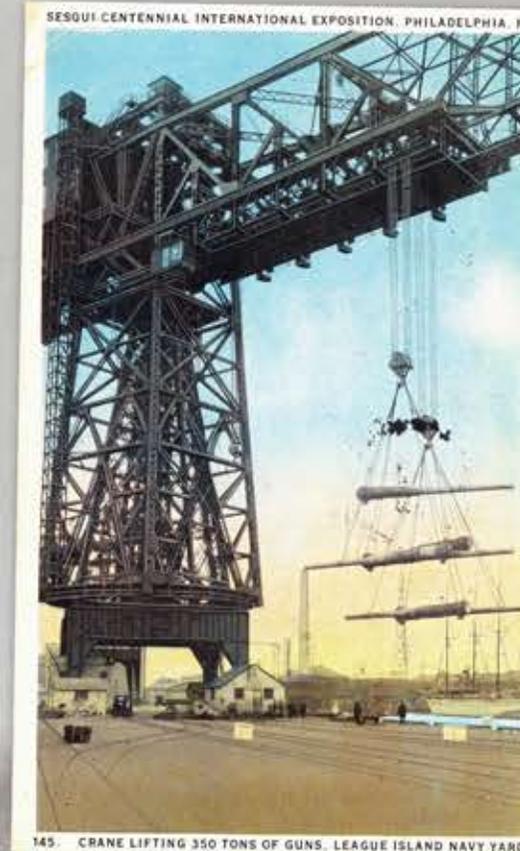
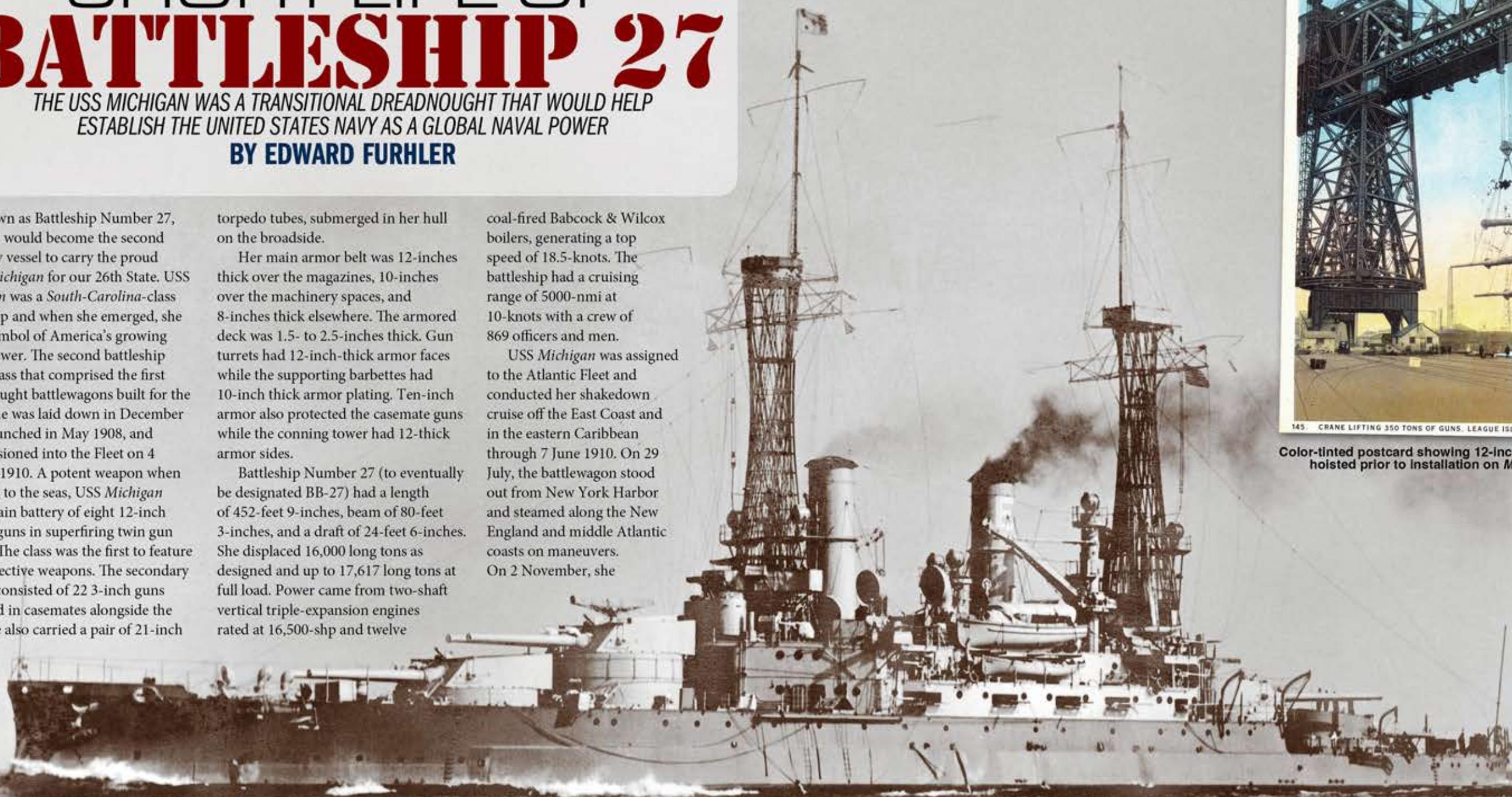
torpedo tubes, submerged in her hull on the broadside.

Her main armor belt was 12-inches thick over the magazines, 10-inches over the machinery spaces, and 8-inches thick elsewhere. The armored deck was 1.5- to 2.5-inches thick. Gun turrets had 12-inch-thick armor faces while the supporting barbettes had 10-inch thick armor plating. Ten-inch armor also protected the casemate guns while the conning tower had 12-thick armor sides.

Battleship Number 27 (to eventually be designated BB-27) had a length of 452-feet 9-inches, beam of 80-feet 3-inches, and a draft of 24-feet 6-inches. She displaced 16,000 long tons as designed and up to 17,617 long tons at full load. Power came from two-shaft vertical triple-expansion engines rated at 16,500-shp and twelve

coal-fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers, generating a top speed of 18.5-knots. The battleship had a cruising range of 5000-nmi at 10-knots with a crew of 869 officers and men.

USS *Michigan* was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet and conducted her shakedown cruise off the East Coast and in the eastern Caribbean through 7 June 1910. On 29 July, the battlewagon stood out from New York Harbor and steamed along the New England and middle Atlantic coasts on maneuvers. On 2 November, she



Color-tinted postcard showing 12-inch guns being hoisted prior to installation on *Michigan*.



On a trial run during 1909 while making 17.40-knots.

USS *Michigan* (Battleship Number 27 to become BB-27) during 1917 off Hampton Roads. The battleship is wearing a horizontal two-paint paint scheme, possibly an experimental camouflage.