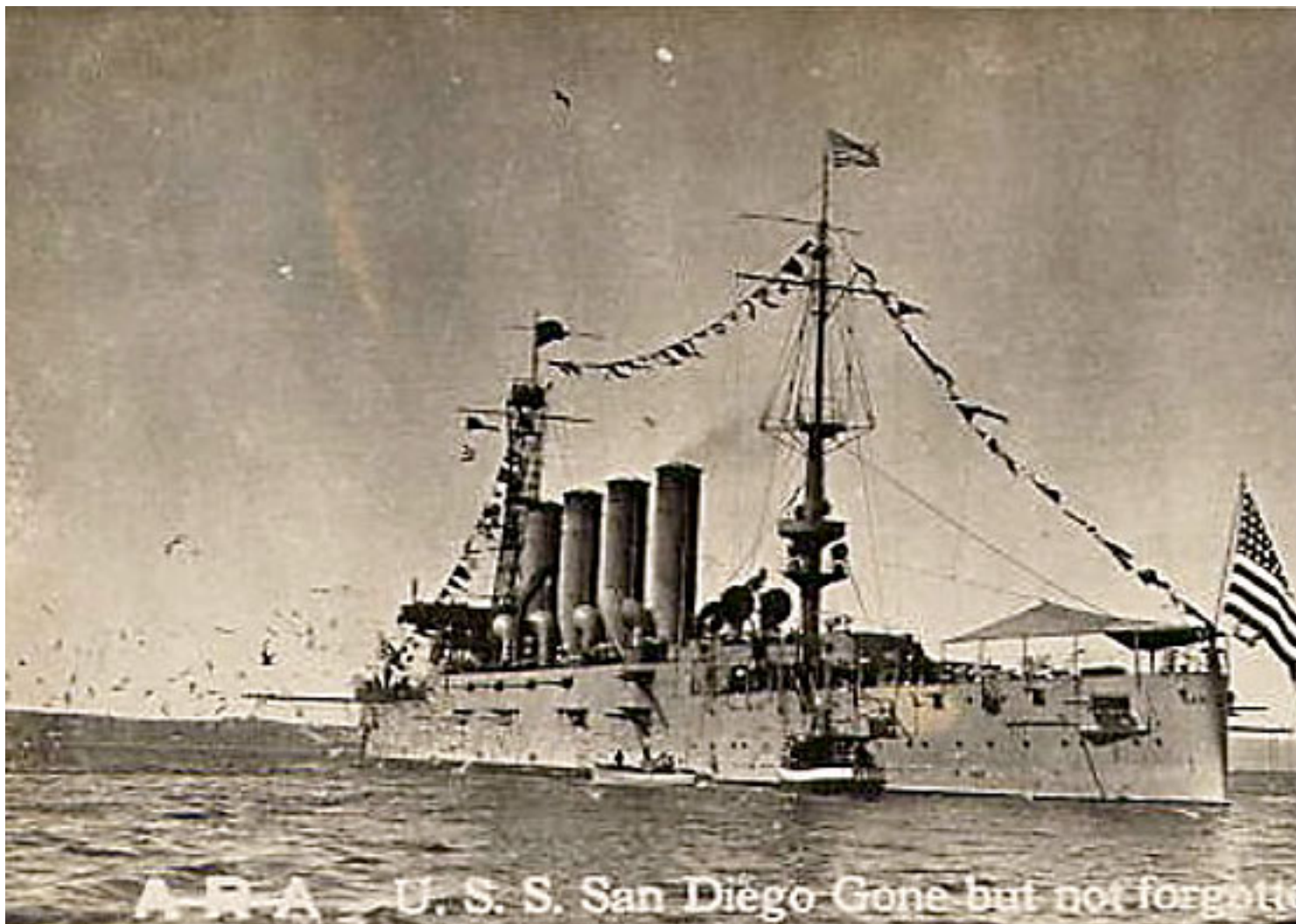


SS San Diego-Navy Cruiser 1918



The Armored Cruiser 6 was originally named the USS California, the ship that would later be renamed to the USS San Diego. She was built for the United States Navy by the Union Iron Works of San Francisco, California. This shipyard also built the USS Olympia almost ten years before. The Olympia is available for tours at its Philadelphia, Pennsylvania dock. The hull of the ACR6 was launched April 28, 1904 almost two years after the keel was laid. It was 503 feet long and had a beam of almost 70 feet. The ship weighed about 15,000 tons fully outfitted and loaded for duty. Two eighteen foot diameter propellers were driven by two steam powered engines. These four cylinder engines were supplied steam by sixteen boilers. These engines could produce 25,000 horse power. ACR6 was commissioned into the United States Navy on August 1, 1907 as the USS California. In addition to two torpedo tubes, she carried four 8-inch, fourteen 6-inch, and eighteen 3-inch guns. She operated in the Pacific Ocean, visiting many ports including the Philippines, China, Japan, Hawaii, Peru, and Guam. In January of 1911, she is designated the flagship of the Pacific fleet. On September 1, 1914, the ship is renamed the USS San Diego. This was done as a result of a new policy of naming battleships after states. Shortly after, a boiler explosion kills nine crewman during a full speed run in the Gulf of California. The USS San Diego left the water of the Pacific Ocean and entered the Atlantic Ocean via the Panama Canal for the first time during July 1917. She served in the Atlantic as a convoy escort, at one time stopping at the port in La Croisie, France. After removal of some of her 6-inch guns in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the San Diego steams to New York to meet up with a transatlantic convoy. At 11:05 a.m. most the crew of the San Diego felt a dull thud which originated from the port side engine room. The crew that worked in this area must have experienced a large explosion as bulkheads were smashed in. The ocean soon followed and within 20 minutes the USS San Diego gently rolled over and was gone, along with six of her crew. It is amazing that 1,177 of the ship's crew and officers were able to abandon ship in a such a short time. The German submarine U.156 is credited with sinking the USS San Diego. The submarine laid mines in the area where the cruiser was lost. Unfortunately we will never know the details of the U.156 operations, as the submarine was sunk on her return voyage after entering a mine field. The USS San Diego today lies upside down about eleven miles southeast of Fire Island inlet, Long Island, New York at Loran 26543.4 43693.2 in 115 feet of sea water. The weight of the massive armor belt along with the hull and it's contents crushed the superstructure into the sand soon after she sank. The hull is relatively intact, its keel is at seventy feet and the sand is at around 115 feet. The ship rests upside down with a list to the port side. This angle allows more light on the starboard side, which commonly called 'the light side'. The port side is called 'the dark side' because of the shadow in which it resides. The sand line is higher on this side because of the list. The stern has started to collapse, but the propeller shafts, which are the diameter of 55 gallon drums, hang out into space at the seventy foot mark. The propellers were removed in the early sixties, however one was lost while on its way to Staten Island, New York. A bilge keel on each side on the hull runs a good length of the ship. These were attached to give the ship stability. They now give divers a line of reference for navigating the wreck. Along 'the light side', the 3-inch guns can be found sticking out from their mounts in the hull. Many holes exist at various locations around the hull. These can give advanced divers the opportunity to investigate the San Diego's dark interior. The inside doesn't resemble a ship, but rather a junk yard of collapsed machinery, bulkheads, and ship stores. Penetration of the wreck requires special skills and equipment. Hallways and rooms ranging in size from small to very large can quickly silt out, reducing visibilty to zero. Six divers have died on this wreck. It is the most popular dive site in New England, attracting hundreds of divers

every year. The US Navy has a policy for removing artifacts from sunken aircraft and shipwrecks. This is an extract from the information found at: <http://longislandgenealogy.com/shipwrecks.html>