USS Tennessee Battleship and USS Arizona Battleship

The USS Tennessee was the third ship in the U.S. Navy to be named after the 16th state to enter the union. The ship had heavy masts and a large fire-control top, and along with the other few “Tennessee-class” ships, it was considered to be in the “Big Five” of the pre-WWII battleships.

The battleship was sent to its new base at Pearl Harbor on August 12, 1940. On December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the USS Tennessee was anchored at Battleship Row. The battleship was able to open fire on the enemy planes, but was struck by two bombs and made all the ship’s guns inoperable. In addition, when the neighboring USS Arizona exploded, burning debris flew onto the USS Tennessee and destroyed its entire stern. The battleship found itself stuck between the sunken USS West Virginia and two mooring quays and was freed ten days later and sent to the Puget Sound Navy Yard for repairs.

http://www.pearlharborinhawaii.com/usstennessee.html

There were seven American battleships in Battleship row. These seven battleships were named after states. At 7:55 a.m. sailors noticed airplanes rushing toward them. The men were puzzled and thought it was a drill. Suddenly, a bomb exploded on Ford Island. Three torpedoes hit the side of the USS Oklahoma. A minute later, the USS Arizona was hit with five torpedoes. Other battleships began to be hit as well. At 7:58, with bombs still falling, all officers were alerted by radio that this was not a drill. At 8:08 the Arizona was hit by a bomb that struck an ammunition compartment that was holding about 1,600 pounds of gunpowder. This resulted in an explosion so powerful that it lifted the battleship out of the water and broke it in two. A mangled, flaming wreck, the Arizona sank straight down into the harbor, taking over 1,100 of its crew with it. The wreck showered the nearby USS Tennessee with chunks of metal, burning powder, and oil. This started fires aboard the ship. Some of the crew fought fires while others shot at Japanese planes.

Information from The Attack on Pearl Harbor by Tom McGowen

Summarize the significance of the USS Tennessee Battleship in one to three sentences.

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