



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
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2 January 1963

Commander V.L. Homer, USN
Officer in Charge, Mare Island Annex
U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot
Concord, California

Dear Commander Homer:

We are taking up the MARION bell which you reported in your letter of 17 December on the records of the Curator for the Navy Department. Your alert attention to the recovery of this fine relic displays a splendid sense of historic values.

We are enclosing historical information regarding USS MARION and are ordering photographs which you may arrange with your display; these photos will be forwarded as soon as reproduced (about four weeks).

If you desire at any time to terminate the display or your activity goes out of commission, notify the Curator and we will undertake arrangements for the display of the MARION bell at an appropriate location such as a town (Marion, Indiana, Marion, Ohio, etc.) with the same name.

The recovery, display and reporting of this fine bell is very much appreciated. Enclosed are several of our brochures on historic subjects in which you will be interested as well as information on the Naval Historical Foundation which you are cordially invited to join.

Sincerely yours,

F. Newbloom

F. Newbloom
Captain, USN (Ret)
Asst Director of Naval History

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP-09B9)
SHIPS' HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF SLOOP-OF-WAR MARION

USS MARION, a 16-gun sloop-of-war, was built by the Boston Navy Yard during 1838-1839. A record of her name origin has not been found but she was no doubt named in honor of Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" hero of the American Revolutionary War. During 1872-1875 MARION was rebuilt with live oak timber into a new steam sloop-of-war which served the Navy until 1907.

As a sailing sloop-of-war, MARION was first armed with sixteen 32-pounder guns. She had a length between perpendiculars of 117 feet; a beam of 32 feet; maximum draft of 15 feet, 6 inches; and 566 tonnage. When rebuilt into a new steam sloop-of-war, she displaced 1,900 tons, her length was increased to 216 feet between perpendiculars; beam 37 feet and draft 16 feet, 6 inches. Her steaming speed was a little more than 11 knots and she was originally armed with one 11-inch smooth bore pivot gun; six 9-inch smooth bore broadside guns; one 60-pounder; one 12-pounder Howitzer and one .50 caliber Gatling gun.

MARION was placed under command of Commander William J. Belt and departed Boston for the Brazil Station on 10 November 1839. She returned from this duty to Boston on 25 May 1842, then being under Commander Louis M. Goldsborough. After service with the Home Squadron under Commander William Armstrong and Lieutenant Thomas Brent, she cruised along the coast of Africa under Commander Lewis E. Simonds, sailing on 24 September 1845 and returning to Boston on 13 September 1848.

MARION's next foreign duty was under Commander William M. Glendy who took her to the East Indies and return 29 January 1850- 20 June 1852. She twice served on the West African Station before the outbreak of the Civil War and put to sea from Portsmouth, New Hampshire on 14 July 1861 in search of Confederate cruisers. The following year she was turned over to the U.S. Naval Academy where she was a Cadet Practice Ship for eight years.

MARION was broken up in the Portsmouth Navy Yard (Kittery, Maine) during 1871-1872 for rebuilding with live oak timber into a new steam sloop-of-war of greatly changed dimensions. Though officially listed as rebuilt, she was actually a new ship. Her engines were built in the Boston Navy Yard and she was first commissioned on 12 January 1876, Commander Robert F. Bradford, USN, in command.

SLOOP-OF-WAR MARION

MARION operated along the eastern seaboard until 23 June 1876 when she departed Key West, Florida to join the European Squadron in the Mediterranean. She was the flagship of Rear Admiral John Lorimer Worden's European Squadron from 14 July 1876 - 19 April 1877 and returned to New York from the Mediterranean on 19 January 1879 to prepare for service along the coast of South America. Under Commander Francis M. Bunce, she arrived in Rio de Janeiro from New York on 1 February 1880 and remained on station until 14 November 1881. She then set course for Montevideo, Uruguay on a humane expedition that took her by way of Cape Town, South Africa and into the South Indian Ocean as far as Heard Island. Here MARION rescued the crew of the American whaling bark TRINITY from the barren shores where they had been stranded for some fifteen months.

MARION returned to Montevideo from the South Indian Ocean on 22 May 1882 to resume her duties on the South Atlantic Station. She arrived in the Portsmouth Navy Yard from South America on 7 December 1882, under Commander Silas W. Terry and was placed out of commission on the 21st.

MARION was recommissioned on 15 January 1885 for service with the Asiatic Squadron, Commander Merrill Miller, USN, (later Commandant of the Mare Island Navy Yard), in command. She set course from Norfolk on 7 March 1885, passing through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal to reach Hong Kong on 21 July 1885. The following years were spent among the various ports of Japan, China and Korea. On 3 September 1887 she left Yokohama, Japan astern to cross the Pacific Ocean to Panama where she arrived on 1 November for duty on the Pacific Station. Commander Miller was relieved on 24 November 1887 by Commander N. Mayo Dyer and MARION spent some time along the coast of Nicaragua and Guatemala before her arrival in Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, on 13 February 1888. She remained in Hawaiian waters until 10 April then cruised between the principal ports of Korea, China and Japan before her return to San Francisco on 1 May 1890 for repairs in the Mare Island Navy Yard. She was placed out of commission at Mare Island on 22 May 1890.

MARION was recommissioned on 27 April 1891 for duty with the Asiatic Squadron, Commander James R. Bartlett, USN, in command. She departed San Francisco on 3 July 1891 on a cruise that took her to Port Townsend, Washington, and Alaska, into the Bering Sea, thence by way of Hawaii to Yokohama, Japan which she reached on 2 November 1891. While on Asiatic Station, 21 July 1892, Commander Bartlett was relieved by Commander Charles Vernon Gridley who was to earn fame in the Battle of Manila Bay as the Captain of Admiral Dewey's flagship OLYMPIA.

SLOOP-OF-WAR MARION

Commander Gridley took MARION to waters of Java, Borneo and the Philippines and reached San Francisco from the Hawaiian Islands and Japan on 12 June 1894. Here, on 9 July 1894, Ensign Edward W. Eberle, who was later to become Admiral and Chief of Naval Operations, was detached from MARION and granted three months leave. The steam sloop-of-war was placed out of commission by Commander Gridley the following day for repairs in the Mare Island Navy Yard.

MARION was recommissioned on 16 September 1895, Commander Dennis W. Mullan, in command. The following years were spent with the Pacific Squadron largely among the South American ports of Peru, Chile, and Panama. During this time, Commander Mullan was relieved by Commander George M. Book on 23 April 1896. She returned to San Diego from South American waters on 7 February 1897 and left on the 27th for Honolulu where Commander Book was relieved by Commander James G. Green on 10 May. Returning to San Francisco on 19 September 1897, MARION was decommissioned for the last time on 11 December 1897. The following years found her on loan to the State of California for the training of Naval Militia. Her name was stricken from the Naval Register on 7 March 1907 and she was ordered sold.