



Another Ship Named William Wood?

Yes! and you Can Help!

Contact our Government



The following are some resources you can contact. Below them are some helpful addresses you can refer to. And below that, is a history of the Wood, which you may also consider including with your letter/petition. - [Click Here](#) for the 1st response received.

The President:

Honorable Barack Obama (use current)
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Vice President:

Honorable Joe Biden (use current)
Vice President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Surgeon General of the Navy:

Regina Benjamin (use current)
Surgeon General of the Navy
Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
2300 E Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20372-2300

Dir. Of Naval Historical Center:

Rear Admiral Jay A. DeLoach, USN (ret.) (use current)
Acting Director of the Naval Historical Center
And Naval History
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

The following is a sample letter to consider

Dear (President, Senator, Representative, Governor, Secretary, etc.):

I, (your name), as a registered voter in (your precinct or district) of this great (State or Commonwealth) of (your state), and your constituent, on behalf of the William M. Wood Association (DD/DDR 715), request that you recommend to (current Secretary's name), the Secretary of the Navy, the naming of another destroyer after the first Surgeon General of the Navy, Dr. William M Wood. The William M. Wood Association is the voluntary, official organization of those who served on the USS William M. Wood DD/DDR 715. Our Association is one of the most successful Navy Destroyer reunion associations, having located and maintained communications with over 1,500 former crew, including some who reside in (your state), and is consistently listed among those with the highest attendance and activity.

Dr. William M. Wood was a Naval Officer and hero of the War of 1848. At great personal peril he traveled throughout Mexico gathering information on enemy activities that was vital in ensuring victory for the United States and saving American lives. He continued to serve our country throughout the Civil War and beyond, ultimately becoming Surgeon General of the Navy and the personal physician of President Zachary Taylor. A brief biography of his 45 year Naval career is enclosed.

The DD/DDR 715 is the second destroyer to bear Dr. Wood's name. The first, the USS Wood (DD-317), was in service between the two world wars. She was a Clemson class destroyer generally referred to as a four stacker, and one of the few that remained in commission for Pacific Fleet service after the end of WWI. A brief history of the 317 is enclosed.

Our Wood was commissioned in July 1945 and was in service until December 1976, having served our country well for over 31 years from the end of WWII through the end of the Vietnam War. Her complement was approximately 235 officers and enlisted men, and it is estimated that between 3,500 and 4,000 men served aboard the Wood during her active duty. Initially, she was a Pacific Fleet ship, but spent the majority of her service in the Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets. She made 19 Mediterranean deployments including a 3 year extended deployment from 1972 to 1975 where she was home ported in Greece. During the 70's her mission included gathering electronic and other intelligence about the then growing Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean, conducting operations which frequently brought her into dangerously close proximity with the most powerful and advanced warships and aircraft of the Soviet Union. She was instrumental in providing evidence which led to the U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. agreement on the use of the seas. The 715 rests off the coast of Puerto Rico, having been sunk in a Harpoon missile exercise in 1983. A brief history of the DD/DDR 715 is also enclosed.

We in the William M Wood Association believe that naming another ship after Surgeon General Wood is warranted. Doing so would not only honor the memory of an extremely brave man, but would also be a tribute to all of the naval personnel who ensured the freedom of the seas between the two great wars of the last century and during the Cold War era.

Sincerely,
(your name)
Former (your rating and rank) – USS William M Wood (your era)
Member, U.S.S. William Wood Association www.DD715.com

Some History of the Wood you may wish to include with your letter

William Maxwell Wood
(from the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)

William Maxwell Wood—born in about 1809 in Baltimore, Md.—was appointed assistant surgeon on 16 May 1829 and, between 1830 and 1838, served with the West Indies and Home Squadrons, as well as with the Army during the Seminole wars.

He became fleet surgeon with the Pacific Squadron in 1844 and, upon completion of his tour, was about to return to the United States when relations between that country and Mexico became decidedly strained. The commander of the Navy's Pacific Squadron, Commodore John D. Sloat, consequently entrusted certain dispatches to Wood to carry back to the United States with him. Wood volunteered to travel through Mexico and report upon conditions there. Accompanied by the American consul from Mazatlan, Mexico, the former fleet surgeon commenced his journey across Mexico.

Arriving at Guadalajara on 10 May, Wood and his companion found the town "in a high state of agitation" owing to the reception there of the news of the battles between American and Mexican forces at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, on the Rio Grande River. The surgeon immediately wrote a dispatch to Sloat at Mazatlan, and it was delivered in five days—an exceptional occurrence in those days. His message that hostilities with Mexico had actually commenced was the first tidings of that nature that Sloat had received.

Wood meanwhile continued on his journey across Mexico and subsequently arrived at Mexico City to be "startled and shocked by hearing newsboys crying through the streets 'Grand victory over the North Americans.' " He later learned through a trusted friend of the Mexican minister of war that General Zachary Taylor's men had, in fact, annihilated the Mexican Army's choice regiment. Surgeon Wood remained in Mexico City not less than a week and gathered more information which he sent off to Commodore Sloat, apprising him of the situation, via Guadalajara.

Wood continued his mission, as he had since the beginning of it, in civilian clothes—running the risk of being apprehended as a spy—and, while posing as an Englishman, inspected the defenses of the castle at Chapultepec. Continuing on to Veracruz, the surgeon carefully took notes on Mexico, its condition and resources. Ultimately, the physician reached a neutral man-of-war and was taken to the flagship of the American blockading squadron. Sailing on a vessel especially detached for the purpose, Wood carried the vital intelligence information to Washington.

Meanwhile, Commodore Sloat took action. As he later recorded in a letter to Wood, "The information you furnished me at Mazatlan from the City of Mexico, via Guadalajara, (at the risk of your life) was the only reliable information I received of that event, and which induced me to proceed immediately to California, and upon my own responsibility to take possession of that country, which I did on the 7th of July, 1846."

Sloat considered the performance of Wood's journey through Mexico "as an extraordinary feat, requiring great courage, presence of mind, and address. How you escaped from the heart of an enemy's country . . . has always been a wonder to me."

Following the Mexican War, Wood served in the receiving ship at Baltimore and later went to the steamer Michigan, operating on the Great Lakes. He again served as fleet surgeon—this time with the East India Squadron—from 1856 to 1858, and took part in Commodore Andrew H. Foote's attack upon the Chinese Barrier Forts—of "enormous strength . . . built of large blocks of granite . . . heavily armed."—at Canton, China, in response to Chinese attacks upon American shipping.

Wood subsequently served a second tour in Michigan before he became fleet surgeon for the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. While thus serving, Wood witnessed the historic battle of the ironclads USS Monitor and CSS Virginia (the former USS Merrimack) in Hampton Roads; and later took part in the assault and capture of Sewall's Point.

After the Civil War, Wood served at Baltimore in 1866 and 1867 and was President of the Naval Examining Board in 1868 before he became Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in 1870. Appointed medical director on 3 March 1871, Wood retired later that same year and died in Baltimore on 1 March 1880.

USS William M. Wood (DD/DDR-715)
(from the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)

William M. Wood (DD-715) was laid down on 2 November 1944 at Newark, N.J., by the Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Co.; launched on 29 July 1945; sponsored by Mrs. Joseph P. Tracy; and commissioned at the New York Naval Shipyard on 24 November 1945, Comdr. George R. Wilson in command. Following shakedown out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and type training in the Norfolk area, William M. Wood operated in the Caribbean Sea from April to June 1946. In June, she was reassigned to the Pacific Fleet. She arrived in San Diego during the first week in July but departed there a week later bound for Hawaii. The destroyer operated out of Pearl Harbor from mid-July to late

September, when she received orders to duty along the coast of China. The warship arrived in Tsingtao China, near the middle of October and began patrolling the Yellow Sea between northern China and Korea in an effort to stem postwar smuggling. That task lasted until February 1947 when she headed back to the United States, arriving in San Diego early in March. During the following six months, William M. Wood conducted type training along the Pacific coast and underwent a three-month overhaul. In October 1947 the destroyer joined Destroyer Division (DesDiv) 131 in screening Valley Forge (CV-45) on an extended voyage to the western Pacific. In the ensuing seven months, the ships called at Sydney, Australia; Hong Kong; Shanghai and Tsingtao in China, and Yokosuka, Japan. She returned to San Diego with the unit in May 1948 and resumed normal training and upkeep operations which were broken once by a two-month overhaul at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

On 1 April 1949, a new fleet organization was promulgated reassigning William M. Wood to the Atlantic Fleet. The destroyer, however, remained on the west coast until 5 October, when she finally sailed for her new home port, Newport, R.I. She reported for duty with the Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet (DesLant) on 21 October. The warship served DesLant as a school ship training junior officers in gunnery and engineering. In May 1950, the warship participated in a Navy-Marine Corps amphibious exercise conducted on the North Carolina coast. During the following month, she conducted underway training out of Newport. July brought a brief tour of duty in Caribbean waters with a hunter/killer group and a quick visit to Iceland. The destroyer returned to Newport in August but put to sea the next month for the first of many deployments with the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. After two months of duty, however, William M. Wood left the 6th Fleet to resume operations out of United States ports. Following a brief leave and upkeep period at Newport, the destroyer moved south to Pensacola, Fla., where she served for a time as plane guard for Monterey (CVL26) during carrier qualifications. At the conclusion of that assignment, she returned to normal duty out of Newport. In January 1952, she embarked upon her second Mediterranean cruise. That tour of duty lasted seven months during which time she participated in several NATO multinational exercises. That tour of duty also included visits to ports in the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Germany. She returned to Newport in July and, after a voyage to Halifax in company with Midway (CVB-41) late in September entered the Boston Naval Shipyard to begin conversion to a radar picket destroyer. She was placed out of commission on 2 October 1952 and redesignated DRR-715.

William M. Wood completed her conversion to a radar picket destroyer during the summer of 1953 and was recommissioned on 6 June 1953, Comdr. J. S. Slaughter in command. Following a shakedown cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that fall, she began her third tour of duty with the 6th Fleet in November. At the end of several weeks of operations with the 6th Fleet, the radar picket destroyer returned to Norfolk early in February 1954. The following month, she journeyed south to Pensacola, Fla., where she once again plane-guarded for Monterey during carrier qualifications. The summer of 1954 brought the ship a two-month midshipman cruise to European waters where she made port calls at Cadiz, Spain, and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. She returned to Norfolk in August and spent the remainder of 1954 engaged in training operations. In January of 1955, she embarked upon her fourth deployment to the Mediterranean. Again, NATO exercises and port visits at various points along the Mediterranean littoral kept the ship busy. She was in port at Volos, Greece, between 19 and 21 April, during which time the city suffered a series of severe earthquakes. She remained there after the disaster and rendered all possible aid to the victims. Returning to the United States that summer, she entered the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for a major overhaul. That fall, the warship conducted refresher training and then returned to Norfolk to prepare for her upcoming Mediterranean deployment. That tour of duty began in February 1956 and ended the following June. Between June and October, she operated out of Norfolk along the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida conducting air defense exercises. Mounting tensions in the Middle East precipitated an Israeli invasion of the Egyptian Sinai on 29 October, and William M. Wood hastened to the eastern Mediterranean in November to join Task Force (TF) 26 in helping to restore peace and order in that chronically troubled sector of the world. The crisis cooled quickly enabling the warship to return home in time to celebrate the Christmas holidays.

USS William M. Wood (DD/DDR-715), continued
(from the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)

The warship began 1957 with Operation "Springboard," conducted in the West Indies in January and February. In March, she escorted Canberra (CA-70) when that cruiser carried President Eisenhower to Bermuda to confer with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. William M. Wood provided transportation for the members of the press who covered the President's visit. In June, she entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a three-month overhaul. Following that, she conducted refresher training out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for six weeks. In November the destroyer resumed normal duty out of Norfolk with the Atlantic Fleet. She began 1958 the same way she began 1957, with "Springboard" exercises in the Caribbean during January and February. Then in June, at the conclusion of three months of normal Atlantic Fleet duty, the warship embarked upon a Mediterranean cruise. Not long after her arrival in the Mediterranean, fighting erupted in Lebanon. The intensification of the strife prompted the pro-western Lebanese President Chamoun to seek military help from the United States. President Eisenhower responded immediately by sending Marine Corps units ashore in the troubled country and stationing 6th Fleet ships offshore to support them. During the period 14 July and 3 September, William M. Wood spent 40 days on station patrolling off the Lebanese coast. Following brief visits to Izmir, Turkey; Naples, Italy; and Gibraltar, she headed back to Norfolk and arrived there on 30 September. Normal Atlantic Fleet operations, including exercises along the coast and in the Caribbean, ensued.

Over the next decade, William M. Wood continued to alternate 6th Fleet deployments with duty along the Atlantic coast and in the Caribbean area. In August 1962, she returned to the United States from her 10th Mediterranean assignment and resumed operations

out of Norfolk. That employment, however, was interrupted in October when President John F. Kennedy declared the "quarantine" of Cuba in response to the siting of offensive, nuclear missiles on the island. For 57 days William M. Wood participated in the quasi-blockade patrols conducted around Cuba to prevent the importation of further missiles and to ensure the removal of those already there. At the successful conclusion of that mission, the warship resumed normal east coast operations. In February 1963, members of Venezuela's communist insurgent group, the FALN, hijacked the Venezuelan freighter SS Anzoategui, and William M. Wood joined ships from several navies in an international search for the merchant ship. Their efforts proved to be in vain for the terrorists eluded capture, entered the Brazilian port of Belem, and received political asylum. Following her return from her 11th Mediterranean deployment in the spring of 1964, William M. Wood entered the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard on 18 May 1964 to begin a Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization (FRAM) overhaul. During that period, she was converted from a radar picket destroyer back to an all-purpose destroyer. She was redesignated DD-715 on 1 July 1964 and completed her FRAM conversion on 11 March 1965 when she headed back to Norfolk to rejoin the Atlantic Fleet. In the midst of her post-overhaul refresher training a revolution broke out in the Dominican Republic on 24 April. On the 29th, the destroyer received orders interrupting her refresher training, and she hastened to the scene of the conflict to protect foreign nationals caught in the middle and to support an American, and later multinational expeditionary force dispatched to the island by the Organization of American States. The situation was soon stabilized, and William M. Wood began a coastal patrol and surveillance assignment. While so engaged, she picked up 13 foreigners, including some American citizens, who requested evacuation. These people were transferred to Pawcatuck (AO-108) on 7 May; and, the following day, O'Hare (DD-889) relieved her on station off the Dominican Republic. William M. Wood then resumed refresher training and completed it on 20 May. On 18 June, after post-refresher availability at Norfolk, the destroyer embarked upon another tour of duty in the Mediterranean with the 6th Fleet and continued alternating such deployments with normal duty out of Norfolk with the Atlantic Fleet. During 1968, she operated with the antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces attached to the Atlantic Fleet. In May and June of 1968 she participated in the unsuccessful search for the nuclear attack submarine Scorpion (SSN-589) reported missing on 27 May. She closed the year in overhaul at Norfolk.

During her last eight years of active service, William M. Wood made two more routine Mediterranean cruises and then served there on a three-year extended deployment. During the first of her last two normal Mediterranean deployments, which lasted from 12 November 1969 to 22 May 1970, she shadowed two new Soviet ships, Moskva and Leningrad, to gather intelligence on the new hermaphrodite cruisers/ASW carriers. The second of the two cruises lasted from 8 February to 23 July 1971 and consisted of more routine 6th Fleet operations, mostly training exercises both multinational and unilateral.

USS William M. Wood (DD/DDR-715), continued (from the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)
Following almost 13 months of 2d Fleet operations during late 1971 and early 1972, the warship embarked upon an extended assignment to the 6th Fleet on 18 August. Her home port was officially changed to Athens Greece, from which port she operated for almost three years. The warship spent most of her time during that period engaged in training operations with other units of the 6th Fleet and with elements of Allied navies. She also made several forays into the Black Sea for special operations there. In July and August of 1974, she conducted continuous patrols in the vicinity of Crete during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Her extended deployment with the 6th Fleet ended in June of 1975 when she began a long voyage home. The destroyer visited ports in France, Germany, Denmark, England, and Bermuda before arriving back in Norfolk on 23 July. After six months of normal operations out of Norfolk, William M. Wood deployed to the Mediterranean one final time in January of 1976. She returned to the United States that summer and resumed 2d Fleet operations. On 1 December 1976, she was placed out of commission at Norfolk, and her name was struck from the Navy list that same day. She was stripped at Norfolk and [sunk as a target in a Harpoon anti-ship missile test in March 1983.]

USS Wood (DD-317) (from the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)

Wood (Destroyer No. 317) was laid down on 23 January 1919 at San Francisco, Calif., by the Union Iron Works plant of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corp; launched on 28 May 1919; sponsored by Mrs. George Kirkland Smith, the granddaughter of William Maxwell Wood; reclassified DD-317 on 17 July 1920; and commissioned at the Mare Island Navy Yard, Vallejo, Calif., on 28 January 1921, Lt. Comdr. Paul M. Bates in command.

Following commissioning, Wood underwent her trials before mooring at the Santa Fe docks, San Diego, Calif., where she remained as part of the "rotating reserve" into the summer of 1921. The new destroyer then spent the ensuing months, into the late spring of 1922, operating off the coast of southern California on drills and exercises, off the port of San Pedro, and the Coronado Islands.

At the end of that period of activity in June of 1922, Wood shifted northward and reached Seattle, Wash., on 1 July 1922. She spent the 4th of July there before visiting Port Angeles, Wash., with the fleet, for exercises and maneuvers. She then conducted tactical drills and exercises in the Pacific Northwest, touching at Tacoma, Port Angeles, Bellingham, and Seattle before departing Port Angeles on 2 September, bound for Mare Island.

After taking on board ammunition at Mare Island on 5 and 6 September, Wood put to sea, bound for San Diego, Calif., for a machinery overhaul. Upon completion of those repairs, the destroyer rejoined the fleet for rehearsals for short-range battle practices. She then operated on various trials into November.

Over the next nine and one-half years, Wood operated with the Battle Fleet in an active role, while many of her sisters lay in "Red Lead Row" awaiting the call to active service. Breaking her local operations off the west coast, Wood participated in Fleet Problems I through IX—the large scale fleet exercises that were held once a year (except in 1924, when three were held) involving most of the Fleet's active units. During the course of those maneuvers, she ranged from the Caribbean to the Panama Canal and from Hawaii to the coast of Central America. She also ventured as far north as the coast of Alaska.

Highlighting Wood's service in the autumn of 1925 was the cruise with the fleet to Australia as part of Destroyer Division 34. The destroyerr subsequently took part in the search for the downed PN-9 flying boat. In March 1927, during one of the phaseses of Fleet Problem VII, Wood participated in the search for survivors from the lost German steamship Albatros and later that same year, from 27 June to 16 July, Wood supported American peace-keeping forces ashore on Nicaragua.

Decommissioned at San Diego on 31 March 1930, Wood was struck from the Navy list on 22 July. Her hulk was then sold for scrap on 14 November 1930.