

From:
Public Information Division
U. S. COAST GUARD
Washington 25, D. C.

VICE ADMIRAL
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ RUSSELL E. WOOD, USCG

Russell Ernest Wood was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, on November 22, 1903. He was graduated from Union High School, Bremerton, Washington, and received an appointment as a cadet at the Coast Guard Academy on July 26, 1922.

Graduated and commissioned an Ensign on October 17, 1924, he advanced in rank as follows: Lieutenant (jg), October 17, 1926; Lieutenant, October 17, 1928; Lieutenant Commander, October 17, 1932; Commander, July 17, 1942; Captain, June 1, 1943; and Rear Admiral, August 13, 1951, **retired with rank of Vice Admiral, May 14, 1959.**

From the Academy, he served his first assignment as communications officer aboard the Cutter MODOC of the Norfolk Division until March 1927. In that time he sailed on two International Ice Patrols. A month later, after a temporary assignment in the destroyer MANNING, he was ordered to Newport News, Va., to duty in connection with the outfitting and the trial runs of the Cutter NORTHLAND. He transferred with the cutter to her assigned homeport at San Francisco, and served first as her gunnery officer, then navigator until January 1930. With the NORTHLAND he ventured on three Arctic cruises up through Alaskan waters.

In his next assignment, he served as commanding officer of Section Base III, Charleston, S. C., and as Captain of the Port for eighteen months. From July 1931 until December 1932, he served as executive officer of the Destroyer CASSIN stationed at Boston, then was assigned as executive officer aboard the Cutter MCJAVE. In June 1933, he reported to the Academy as instructor in ordnance and gunnery, and as aide to the Superintendent. His service at the Academy included cadet cruises to the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, and South America, with the Cutters SEBAGO and CAYUGA. Gunnery being of special interest to him, in addition to his regular duties at the Academy he compiled a Gunnery Note Book which brought him commendment for its excellence from the Commandant, and was used for a time as a reference book by Coast Guard vessels in preparation for gunnery exercises. He also invented a number of gunnery devices used by the Service.

In June 1937, after a brief assignment aboard the GALATEA of the New York Division, he became the Cutter CAMPBELL's executive officer, and later her commanding officer. From September 1939 to June 1941, he served as Director of the Coast Guard Reserve, and Auxiliary, in the 9th Coast Guard District, Cleveland. Transferred to Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., he served respectively as Assistant Chief Director of the Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary, Assistant Operations Officer, Chief, Antisubmarine Vessel Procurement Division (for which he received a Commandant's citation), and Chief, Ordnance and Gunnery Division until September 1943.

With World War II well underway, in October 1943 he was assigned Commanding Officer of the Destroyer Escort Division 46, of Task Force 66 on trans-Atlantic convoy duty. His flag ship was the ill fated USS MENGES (DE-320), which was torpedoed on May 3, 1944 in the Mediterranean after departing Bizerte on May 1, with the convoy to escort 70 merchant vessels. The disaster happened soon after he had changed his flag ship to the Destroyer PRIDE (DE-323). For his services in the Mediterranean Theater involving air and submarine actions, he received the

(more)

VADM

~~XXXX~~ R. E. Wood, USCG (cont'd)

Legion of Merit with combat Citation.

From June 1944 to October 1945, he served as commanding officer of the troop transport USS GENERAL W. H. GORDON (AP-117), following her commissioning in New York City. (He received the Navy Commendation Ribbon for outstanding performance of duty as commanding officer of the GORDON during the transporting of troops in enemy submarine patrolled areas of the Atlantic and Pacific, from July 29, 1944 to September 2, 1945.)

Returning to Coast Guard Headquarters in October 1945, he served as Assistant Chief, Office of Personnel until August 1948. He was then assigned to a course of instruction at the National War College which he completed in April 1950, and was assigned Chief, Planning and Control Staff at Headquarters. In May 1951 he was designated Deputy Chief of Staff. The following August 13, he was appointed a Rear Admiral. In July 1952, Rear Admiral Wood, took command of the 5th Coast Guard District, Norfolk.

As of 15 May 1956, Rear Admiral Wood ~~assumed~~ assumed the duties of Commander, Western Area and Commander, 12th Coast Guard District, San Francisco.*

In addition to the Legion of Merit (V), Navy Commendation Citation, and Commandant's Citation, Rear Admiral Wood holds the American Defense, and Victory medals, and those of the European, African, Middle-Eastern, Asiatic, and Pacific Theaters.

Married in 1927, to the former Ella Wright Birmingham of Wilmington, N. C., Rear Admiral Wood has one daughter, Mrs. C. H. Clarke of Richmond, Va.

* He was relieved of this post in February 1959 (by Rear Admiral Harold C. Moore, USCG) and retired May 14, 1959, with the rank of Vice Admiral.

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