

= USS Harding (DD @-@ 91) =

USS Harding (DD @-@ 91) was a Wickes @-@ class destroyer in the United States Navy during World War I. She was the first ship named in honor of Seth Harding .

Launched in 1918 , she undertook training exercises off the East Coast of the United States sporadically for several years . In 1919 , she escorted a major transatlantic flight of Curtiss NC seaplane . Later that year , she was selected to be converted into a seaplane tender , and was then used to support naval aviator training off Naval Air Station Pensacola . She took one trip to Veracruz with emergency medical supplies , and was also on hand during aircraft bombing tests against decommissioned German ships , including the sinking of the SMS Ostfriesland . She was decommissioned in 1922 and sold for scrapping in 1936 .

= = Design and construction = =

Harding was one of 111 Wickes @-@ class destroyers built by the United States Navy between 1917 and 1919 . She , along with seven of her sisters , were constructed at Union Iron Works shipyards in San Francisco , California using specifications and detail designs drawn up by Bethlehem Steel .

She had a standard displacement of 1 @,@ 060 tonnes (1 @,@ 040 long tons ; 1 @,@ 170 short tons) an overall length of 315 feet 5 inches (96 @.@ 14 m) , a beam of 31 feet 8 inches (9 @.@ 65 m) and a draught of 8 feet 6 inches (2 @.@ 59 m) . On trials , Harding reached a speed of 35 knots (65 km / h ; 40 mph) . She was armed with four 4 " / 50 caliber guns , three .30 caliber machine guns , and twelve 21 @-@ inch torpedo tubes . She had a regular crew complement of 122 officers and enlisted men . She was driven by two Curtis steam turbines powered by four Yarrow boilers .

Specifics on Harding 's performance are not known , but she was one of the group of Wickes @-@ class destroyers known unofficially as the ' Liberty Type ' to differentiate them from the destroyers constructed from detail designs drawn up by Bath Iron Works , which used Parsons or Westinghouse turbines . The ' Liberty ' type destroyers deteriorated badly in service , and in 1929 all 60 of this group were retired by the Navy . Actual performance of these ships was far below intended specifications especially in fuel economy , with most only able to make 2 @,@ 300 nautical miles (4 @,@ 300 km ; 2 @,@ 600 mi) at 15 knots (28 km / h ; 17 mph) instead of the design standard of 3 @,@ 100 nautical miles (5 @,@ 700 km ; 3 @,@ 600 mi) at 20 knots (37 km / h ; 23 mph) . The class also suffered problems with turning and weight .

Harding was the first ship to be named for Seth Harding . The second Harding was a Gleaves @-@ class destroyer commissioned in 1943 .

= = Service history = =

Harding was launched on 4 July 1918 from Union Iron Works . She was sponsored by the wife of George A. Armes , and embarked under the command of Commander Henry D. Cooke . On 3 February 1919 , she was assigned to the United States Atlantic Fleet and sailed for Newport , Rhode Island via Santa Cruz , California . Transiting the Panama Canal , she arrived on 18 February . Two days later she moved to Boston , Massachusetts and stood out of that harbor on 21 February , to escort George Washington which was transporting President Woodrow Wilson from the Versailles Conference . Two days later she participated in ceremonies in Boston harbor celebrating the arrival of that ship .

Next , she put in for repairs at Norfolk , Virginia until 8 March , when she left for fleet exercises near Cuba . Following this , Harding left for New York , arriving there on 14 April . On 1 May , she departed as part of a group of destroyers acting as a guide for a flight of Navy Curtiss NC seaplanes across the Atlantic Ocean . Harding provided searchlight illumination by night during the first part of the flight ; NC @-@ 1 and NC @-@ 3 made forced landings near the Azores and Harding rendered assistance to NC @-@ 1 before it sank . NC @-@ 4 , the remaining seaplane , arrived at Ponta

Delgada 20 May and as she took off for the last leg of her journey , Harding got underway to provide radio compass signals at sea . After the seaplanes landed at Plymouth , England , to complete the flight on 31 May 1919 , Harding visited Brest , France and the Azores before returning to Newport 18 June . For several months , Harding was based out of Newport and Norfolk on training exercises .

After the end of World War I , the U.S. Navy began to convert surplus ships to support its growing seaplane tender program . Several steamers and minelayers were selected in 1919 , but Harding was the only destroyer , because it was determined that she would require minimal modifications . Following this success , and as aircraft carrier designs advanced , more ships were designed specifically to support naval aviation . Fourteen Clemson @-@ class destroyers were converted to seaplane tenders in 1938 when it was determined that aircraft production was outpacing the development of these ships . During the conversion of Harding , her three .30 caliber machine guns were removed and her crew complement was reduced to 100 officers and enlisted men . Her torpedo tubes may also have been removed . On 13 December 1919 , she reported to the Philadelphia Navy Yard for conversion to a seaplane tender . She completed the conversion at Charleston Navy Yard and on 20 May 1920 , she sailed for duty at Pensacola Naval Air Station . Immediately after this , though , Harding was loaded with medical supplies from the American Red Cross and was ordered to Veracruz , Mexico , where an outbreak of bubonic plague necessitated serum and other supplies . She reached Veracruz on 9 June 1920 and unloaded her supplies . She then steamed for Pensacola , Florida , stopping at Tampico on the way , and arrived in Florida on 13 June .

At Pensacola , Harding was assigned to a seaplane pilot training program . She remained there until 4 August 1920 , after which she operated in the Caribbean area tending seaplanes until 23 February 1921 . She stopped briefly at Philadelphia before heading to Hampton Roads to support bombing tests on surrendered German ships , leaving Norfolk on 21 June . She was present during the bombing tests on SM U @-@ 117 and remained assigned to the tests until the sinking of the German battleship SMS Ostfriesland on 21 July 1921 . Harding was detached from this duty the next day .

Harding subsequently conducted training exercises out of Newport and other East Coast ports until 27 December 1921 , when she arrived at Charleston , South Carolina . Remaining there until 3 April 1922 , she sailed to Philadelphia where she decommissioned 1 July 1922 . Harding was then sold for scrap on 29 September 1936 , to Schiavone @-@ Bonomo Corporation in New York City .