

Welcome Aboard!



**USS WOODROW WILSON
(SSBN 624)**

HISTORY

USS WOODROW WILSON (SSBN - 624) is the first ship of the United States Navy to bear the name of the twenty-eighth President of the United States. Woodrow Wilson was a brilliant constitutional theorist, lawyer, teacher university president, governor of New Jersey, and is considered foremost among our intellectual Presidents. He was a man whose vision and dynamic leadership culminated in the attainment of significant domestic advances and the capable execution of our national commitment in the First World War.

USS WOODROW WILSON is a product of the massive retaliation strategy. She along with her Polaris submarine sisterships, was designed as a reliable and relatively invulnerable strategic force to counter any would be aggressor. Her potent missile cargo contains the savage destructive force of all the bombs dropped by all nations during the Second World War. There is scarcely a point on the surface of the earth beyond the reach of her sixteen missiles. The "Polaris, Guardian of the Peace" philosophy prompted her authorization; original funding and assignment of SSBN - 624 to Mare Island Naval Shipyard at Vallejo, California, occurred on 9 February 1961, and her keel was laid on 13 September of that year. She was launched on 22 February 1963 with Miss Eleanor Axson Sayre, the granddaughter of former President Woodrow Wilson, as sponsor. WOODROW WILSON made her maiden voyage on 20 October 1963.

After completing Builder's Trials and Preliminary Acceptance Trials, the commissioning of USS WOODROW WILSON took place on 27 December 1963 at the Building Yard with Commander (Later Captain) C. N. Mitchell, USN, becoming the Blue Crew Commanding Officer and Commander (Later Captain) W. N. Dietzen, USN, the Gold Crew Commanding Officer. The Honorable Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was the principal speaker.

On 9 February 1964 WOODROW WILSON departed Vallejo for passage through the Panama Canal to join the Atlantic Fleet. Following demonstration and shakedown operations off the Florida Coast and subsequent post-shakedown availability at Charleston Naval Shipyard, WOODROW WILSON departed on her first patrol in July 1964. Upon completion of this patrol she put into Rota, Spain, to join Submarine Squadron SIXTEEN. Twelve Polaris patrols were successfully completed out of Rota.

In May 1967 WOODROW WILSON was transferred to Submarine Squadron FOURTEEN at Holy Loch, Scotland. After completing her seventeenth patrol, she commenced a thirteen month overhaul availability at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company at Newport News, Virginia in May 1968.

In March 1970 WOODROW WILSON completed her first patrol in the Pacific, the eighteenth since being commissioned. Operating out of Guam as part of Submarine Squadron FIFTEEN, WOODROW WILSON continued to carry out her deterrent role and completed 31 patrols.

In July 1973, USS WOODROW WILSON transitted the Panama Canal and joined the Atlantic Submarine Force for overhaul and Poseidon conversion at Newport News, Virginia. At the completion of overhaul she was distinguished by the Board of Inspection and Survey as having the highest quality material condition of any ship to undergo an INSURV Inspection in recent years. USS WOODROW WILSON joined Submarine Squadron EIGHTEEN in August 1976. She is presently homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.



**COMMANDER ALBERT OSCAR HOWARD, JR.
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Commander Albert Oscar HOWARD, Jr., USN, a native of Phenix City, Alabama, graduated with honors from Auburn University in 1960. Upon graduation he attended Submarine School and Nuclear Propulsion School in Groton, Connecticut. He completed Nuclear Power Training at S3G prototype in West Milton, New York in February 1962.

Commander HOWARD was assigned to the USS NAUTILUS where he served as Supply Officer, as Damage Control Assistant, and as Weapons Officer. He qualified in Submarines in June 1963. In August 1963 he reported to the pre-commissioning unit of USS JOHN C. CALHOUN (SSBN-630) at Newport News, Virginia, and served as Electrical Officer through the shakedown and post shakedown availability. He made two patrols as the Blue Crew Main Propulsion Assistant. In January 1966 he reported as Engineer Officer of the USS NATHAN AEL GREENE (SSBN-636) (GOLD) completing 5 patrols.

Commander HOWARD served on the Atlantic Fleet Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board from August 1968 to January 1971. He then attended the Armed Forces Staff College before reporting as Executive Officer of the USS LAPON (SSN-661). After an overhaul lasting 12 months in Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and a six month deployment to the Mediterranean, he commenced Prospective Commanding Officer Training in July 1974. He reported to the USS WOODROW WILSON (SSBN-624) for duty as Commanding Officer of the GOLD Crew in February 1975 in Newport News, Virginia. Commander HOWARD assumed command of the GOLD Crew on October 15, 1975.

Commander HOWARD is married to the former Melanie Ann Parkman of Seale, Alabama. Mrs. HOWARD has a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. They have three sons. The HOWARDS live in Charleston, South Carolina.

CHARACTERISTICS

Length 425 feet

Beam 33 feet

Height 54 feet 10 inches

Displacement

Surfaced 7300 tons

Submerged 8000 tons

Armament 16 Poseidon C3 missiles
4 bow-mounted torpedo tubes

Propulsion Long-Life Water-Cooled Nuclear Reactor

Speed Excess of 20 knots

Test Depth Excess of 400 feet

Complement 14 officers
124 enlisted

Keel laid September 13, 1961

Launched February 22, 1963

Maiden voyage October 20, 1963

Commissioned December 27, 1963

Building Shipyard Mare Island Naval Shipyard,
Vallejo, California

Overhaul Shipyard Newport News Shipbuilding
and Drydock Company,
Newport News, Virginia

