

THE CUSHING ASSOCIATION

The Honorable John Phelan
 Secretary of the Navy
 1000 Navy Pentagon
 Washington, DC 20350-1000

Ref: (1) Chairman, USS CUSHING Association ltr dtd 17 September 2007
 (2) Wayne P. Hughes Jr. CAPT, USN (ret.) ltr dtd 03 December 2009
 (3) Chairman, USS CUSHING Association ltr dtd 08 February 2010

Encl: (1) Chairman, USS CUSHING Association et. al. ltr dtd 01 March 2019

Mister Secretary,

We, the members of the USS CUSHING Association, respectfully renew the Association's requests made in references (1) through (3) and enclosure (1) (the most recent request) to name a sixth fighting warship after Commander William Barker Cushing.

THE MAN. He could rightly be considered our Navy's first "Special Operations" fighter. On the night of 27-28 October 1864, then-Lieutenant Cushing and his 15 men quietly sailed up the Roanoke River, deep inside Confederate waters, and made a small-boat "commando"-style attack on the Confederate ironclad ALBEMARLE with a 14-foot-long spar torpedo. Of these 15 men, only Cushing and one other sailor escaped; 2 were killed by the torpedo's explosion and 11 were captured. ALBEMARLE, having had a giant hole blown in its side, sank at once.

For this spectacular attack, he received the formal "Thanks of Congress" in December 1864, the most junior and youngest officer ever to receive such an honor. While 14 other naval officers were formally thanked in this manner during the war, Cushing was one of only two who were promoted to the next higher rank as a result. The other?: John L. Worden, who commanded the USS MONITOR and himself had 4 warships named after him. When Cushing was promoted to Commander in 1872, he was the youngest officer promoted to that rank up to that time. He died in 1874 from the severe injuries he sustained during his famed attack.

THE SHIPS. We've had five ships named after this one man. The 1st CUSHING was a motor torpedo boat, the first of its class. The 2nd CUSHING was a destroyer that served during World War I. The 3rd CUSHING was sunk in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal in November 1942. A 4th CUSHING was at once commissioned to honor the 3rd; she served from 1944 until 1960, earning eight battle stars. The 5th CUSHING served from 1979 to 2005 and was the last and most upgraded SPRUANCE-class destroyer to be decommissioned.

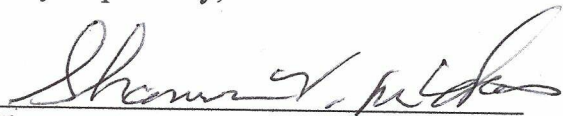


If a sixth ship is named CUSHING, that will tie Cushing with Edward Preble, the famous Captain of USS CONSTITUTION; it will put him ahead of the others with 5 ships named after them: David Glasgow FARRAGUT, Stephen DECATUR, William BAINBRIDGE, James LAWRENCE and OLIVER HAZARD PERRY. All these brave men died as Captains, Commodores or Admirals, while CUSHING died as a Commander. He is still the lowest ranking officer ever to receive the honor of having the most ships named after him. That is a true attestation to the stature Cushing has held for more than 150 years. Yet the last ship to bear his name was decommissioned more than 20 years ago!

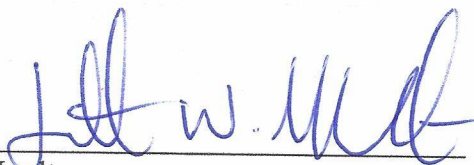
AN OPTION – THE OTHER CUSHINGS. There is a precedent for naming warships after more than one person. The most famous is of course USS THE SULLIVANS, named after the five brothers who died on USS JUNEAU, which sank during the same battle the 3rd CUSHING was sunk in. This remarkable coincidence is sending us (and you) a message: name the 6th CUSHING after the three CUSHING brothers. Why? Because they all died of their wounds, fighting the enemy. Alonzo Hersford Cushing, a Major commanding Battery A, 4th US Artillery, was killed alongside his guns on Cemetery Ridge in Gettysburg on July 3rd, 1863. Lieutenant Howard Bass Cushing was killed in action by Chiricahua Apache under Chief Coshise in southeastern Arizona near Fort Huachuca in 1871. Alonzo CUSHING was awarded a Medal of Honor in 2014, 151 years after he was killed. It was the longest wait of any Medal of Honor recipient. Perhaps Secretary of War Hegseth and Army Secretary Driscoll might enthusiastically support naming a ship after all three brothers? To our knowledge, this would become the *first* ship to be named after officers in both the Army and Navy!

We earnestly hope another fighting warship (perhaps another destroyer?) is soon named CUSHING or THE CUSHINGS, preferably one of a class that is already being built so that surviving members of the 4th and 5th CUSHING can attend the commissioning.

Very respectfully,



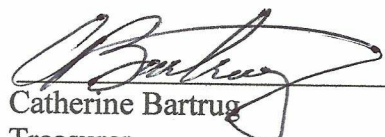
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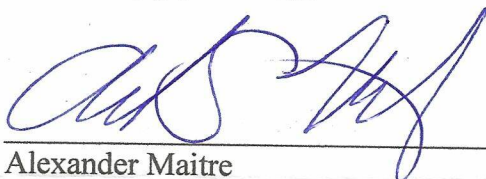
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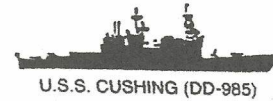
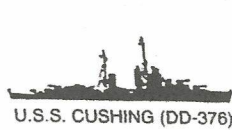


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Copy to:
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THE CUSHING ASSOCIATION

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March 1st, 2019

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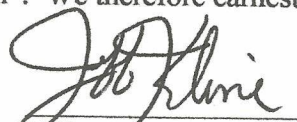
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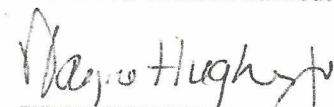
Sir,

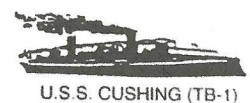
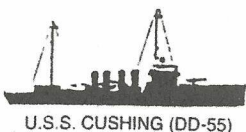
We, the members of the USS CUSHING Association, respectfully renew the Association's requests made by enclosures (1) through (3) to name a sixth *fighting* warship after William Barker Cushing.

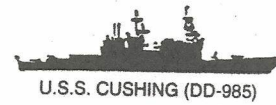
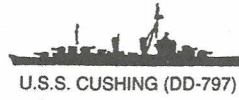
As the Navy recommits to winning combat against peer adversary surface combatants, we hope that the smug confidence of the interwar period 1919-1939 that resulted in the deaths of so many cruiser- and destroyer-men at the hands of a well-trained naval foe 1941-1945 (including 70 men from USS CUSHING (DD 376), sunk in night action in Iron Bottom Sound 13 November 1942) will not be repeated. As modern anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles threaten obsolescence of large warships, threatening our maritime supremacy to a degree not seen since the end of the Cold War, "old is new again". We therefore earnestly hope another CUSHING is soon named.


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