

The Honorable Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy
Office of the Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

November 29, 2010

Dear Secretary Mabus:

We are writing to request that you consider naming a current or future generation destroyer for Commodore Joel Abbot, a hero of the War of 1812, a fitting acknowledgment as the Navy gears up for a bicentennial commemoration of the conflict.

Commodore Abbot was presented with a sword and promoted by Congress during the War of 1812 for bravery prior to and during the naval engagement on Lake Champlain. Commodore Thomas Macdonough, then in command of the naval forces on Lake Champlain, sent for Midshipman Abbot and asked if he was willing to die for his country. "Certainly, sir; that is what I came into the service for," was the answer. Abbot entered the enemy's lines, taking the risk of being hanged as a spy in case of capture, discovered a cache of masts and spars that were to be used to fit out the British fleet, set them on fire and thwarted the British naval buildup.

In December 1818, he was placed in charge of a 30-gun pirate craft, the "Mariana," captured off the African coast. On the voyage to Boston part of his crew mutinied, and the pirates broke free of their shackles. Lt. Abbot regained command of his crew, kept the mutineers at bay, and brought his ship safely into port.

He later commanded the USS Macedonian on the expedition to Japan, eventually succeeding Commodore Perry as commander of the East India Squadron. He fought pirates and Red Coats and even African slavers and was believed to be the only officer on a first name basis with Commodore Matthew Perry.

While many of the newer DDG 51 class ships have been named for modern military heroes, there is ample precedent for naming a ship of the class after a historic naval officer, including USS John Paul Jones, DDG 53, USS Farragut, DDG 99, and USS Decatur, DDG 73.

Honoring Commodore Abbot with a destroyer would continue a proud Navy heritage. The first USS Abbot (DD-184) was a Wickes-class destroyer in the service of the United States Navy until traded to Britain at the beginning of World War II. It was launched on 4 July 1918, sponsored by Miss Louise Abbot, great-granddaughter of Commodore Abbot, and commissioned on 19 July 1919.

The second USS Abbot, a Fletcher-class destroyer, was laid down at the Bath Iron Works on 21 September, 1942, launched 17 February, 1943, and commissioned 23 April, 1943. Mrs. Grace Abbot Fletcher, great-granddaughter of Commodore Joel Abbot, sponsored her.

USS Abbot served with distinction during WWII. She received 13 Citations and 8 Battle Stars throughout her lifetime. In addition, Abbot distinguished herself during the Cold War, in the European-African-Middle Eastern Area, the Mediterranean, China, Korea, Lebanon, and the Cuban Blockade. USS Abbot was decommissioned in 1974.

At the USS Abbot (DD629)'s September reunion in Portland, Maine, we veterans of conflicts from WWII to the Cuban Missile Crisis resolved to ask you for help in achieving our goal. Members of the Abbot/ Fletcher families were our honored guests at a formal dinner the last night of our reunion. Some family members are still employed in the defense industry. They displayed the sword Congress awarded to Commodore Abbot. We were also privileged to view the log- book, in his hand, from his East Asia voyage.

Please take a moment to visit our website at <http://abbot.us>, for an in-depth look at the proud history of Commodore Abbot, the ships bearing his name, and the men who served on them.

We are hopeful that the proud name Abbot, in the not too distant future will again grace the transom of a new destroyer in defense of our great country. Thank you in advance for considering our request.

For the surviving shipmates of the USS Abbot and in memory of those no longer with us,

Respectfully submitted,

George S.K. Rider