

# **Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent**



*Lest We Forget*

## **World War 1**



**1542EA ENGINE ROOM ARTIFICER**

**R. S. WOOD**

**H.M.S. "BAYANO"**

**ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE**

**11TH MARCH, 1915**

## Ronald Sinclair WOOD

### (Ronald SINCLAIR-WOOD)

Ronald Sinclair Wood was born at Port Augusta, South Australia on 29th January, 1883 to parents Alexander Sinclair-Wood & Marion Sinclair-Wood (nee Fawssett).

Ronald Sinclair Wood attended Mount Gambier Grammar School, South Australia.

Alexander Sinclair Wood, father of Ronald Sinclair Wood, died on 16th November, 1911 at Port Pirie, South Australia.

Ronald Sinclair Wood joined the Royal Naval Reserve at the outbreak of World War 1. He had been studying Engineering in England. He was given a service number of 1542 EA & joined H.M.S. *Bayano*.

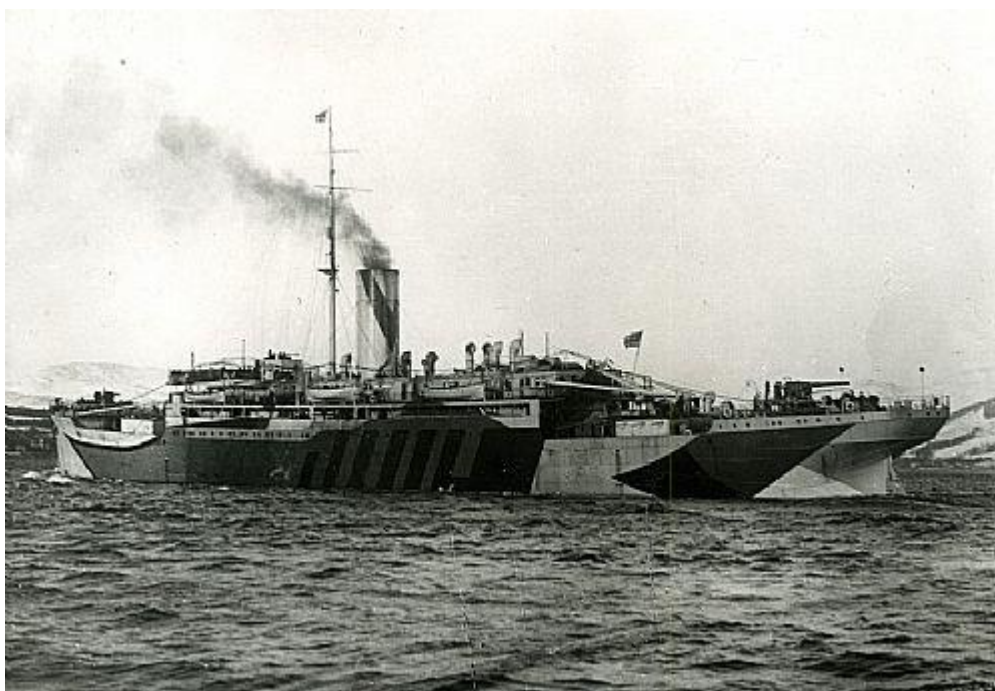
#### **H.M.S. *Bayano***

H.M.S. *Bayano*, built in 1913, was originally a banana boat for the Elders & Fyffes line. At the outbreak of World War I she was drafted into the Royal Navy on 21 November 1914 as an armed merchant auxiliary cruiser.

In the North Channel on her Glasgow to Liverpool route at 05:15 on 11 March 1915, H.M.S. *Bayano* was attacked by the German submarine SM *U-27* about ten miles west of Corsewall Lighthouse, Corsewall Point, Galloway, Scotland. The auxiliary cruiser sank in just five minutes and took the commander, Commander H. C. Carr, and 194 other crew members down with it. Most of the crew was asleep and only 26 men survived to be rescued by the British steamer *Castlereagh*. *Bayano*'s Lieutenant Commander Guy described Captain Carr on the bridge, standing without fear waving goodbye while shouting "Good luck to you boys" before the ship disappeared under the waves.

Residents of the Isle of Man were greatly affected by the sinking as a number of bodies washed up on her shores. The funeral procession for the *Bayano* victims numbered in the thousands even though the victims were not from the island. Also hard hit was the Colony of Newfoundland, then a part of the British Empire. A dozen men from the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve were lost on the *Bayano*.

*(Information & photo of H.M.S. Bayano from Wikipedia)*



**H.M.S. *Bayano* with dazzle camouflage**

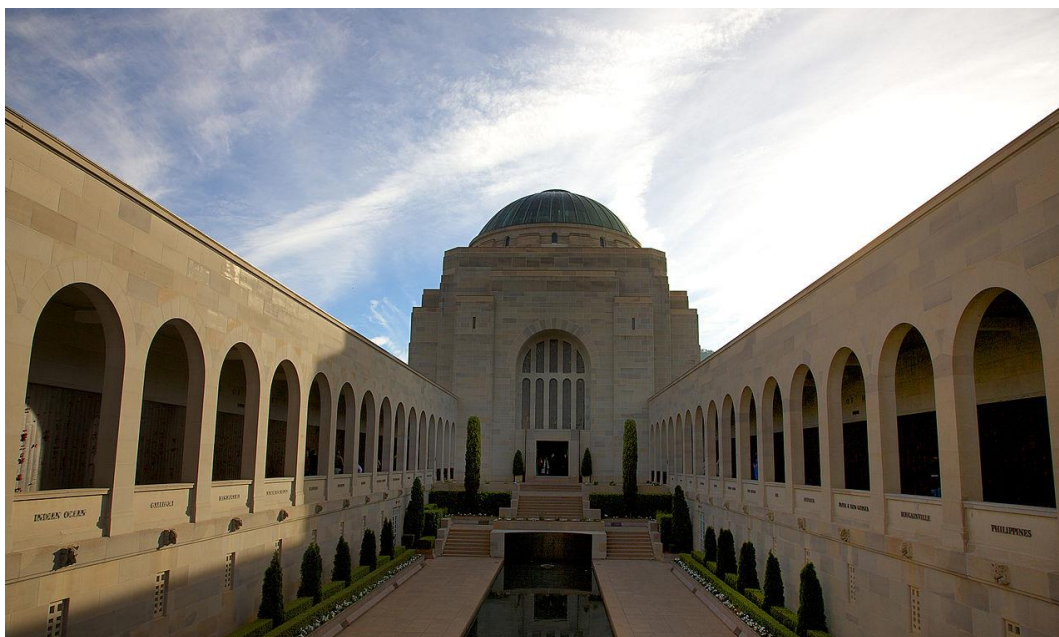
Engine Room Artificer Ronald Sinclair Wood was listed as missing from H.M.S. *Bayano* which sunk on 11th March, 1915 as a direct result of enemy action. His body was not recovered for burial. His father Alexander Sinclair-Woods, of 4 Sydenham Terrace, South Shields was notified of his son's death.

Engine Room Artificer Ronald Sinclair Wood was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records Engine Room Artificer Ronald Sinclair Wood – service number 1542EA, of H.M.S. "Bayano", Royal Naval Reserve. No family details are listed.

At the time of researching, Engine Room Artificer Ronald Sinclair Wood was not remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

\*\*\*UPDATE: The Australian War Memorial have advised (October, 2019) that Ronald Sinclair Wood has now been approved & is now remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book\*\*\*



**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (*Capital Photographer*)



## Newspaper Notices

### DEATHS

SINCLAIR-WOOD – On the 11th March, on H.M.S. Bayano, Ronald Sinclair-Wood, E.R.A., R.N.R., eldest son of Marion Sinclair-Wood, Barton terrace, and the late Alexander Sinclair-Wood.

(*The Journal*, Adelaide, South Australia – 23 September, 1915) & (*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 23 September, 1915) & (*Observer*, Adelaide, South Australia – 25 September, 1915)

& (*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 30 September, 1915)

---

### PERSONAL

The death on a British war vessel of Mr Ronald Sinclair-Wood, R.N.R., has been reported. The deceased was born at Port Augusta. He was educated at the Mount Gambier Grammar School. For two years he was engaged in engineering at the Outer Harbor, and left there to finish his course in England. While in the old country he went through the Parsons' engineering works. He was in the Black Sea when the war broke out. He was preparing for his final examination, but on reaching England enlisted and went into the naval barracks at Portsmouth. Afterwards he joined H.M. auxiliary cruiser Bayano. He was the only Australia among 5000 men in barracks.

(*Daily Herald*, Adelaide, South Australia – 24 September, 1915) & (*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 23 September, 1915) & (*Transcontinental*, Port Augusta, South Australia – 2 October, 1915)

---

### BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

#### THE LATE MR. R. SINCLAIR-WOOD, R.N.R.

News has been received of the death of Mr. Ronald Sinclair-Wood, R.N.R., who lost his life as the result of the torpedoing of a British auxiliary cruiser in the North Sea. Mr. Sinclair-Wood was the eldest son of Mrs. Marion and the late Mr. Alexander Sinclair-Wood, of Barton-terrace, North Adelaide. Born at Port Augusta. He was educated at the Mount Gambier Grammar School, and afterwards joined an engineering firm at the Outer Harbor. He went to England to complete his course of engineering. When the war broke out he was in the Black Sea on the steamer Mars, which got through the Dardanelles in time, and ran for a port in Greece. On reaching England he enlisted, and was on board the Bayano when that vessel was struck by a torpedo. The vessel was blown to pieces and sank in four minutes.



**The late Mr R. Sinclair-Wood**

Of a crew of 216, only 26 were saved. One of the rescued medical officers, who was badly cut about the legs, related that most of the crew were unprepared for the attack. He said he was in his cabin when the vessel was struck. He put on some of his clothes, and stepped from the cabin into the water, the vessel having taken acute list. Another survivor stated that without waiting for orders he rushed to get lifebelts and had distributed several when the captain clapped him on the back and said, 'Good lad! Good lad! Save yourself. The captain then shook hands with the men and stepped on to the bridge. The next moment the ship began to go down with the captain at his post. The survivors were floating about on rafts for some hours before being rescued.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 24 September, 1915) & (*The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, South Australia – 24 September, 1915)

& (*Chronicle*, South Australia – 2 October, 1915)

---

### **Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England**

Chatham Naval Memorial overlooks the town of Chatham, Kent, England. It commemorates more than 8,500 Royal Navy personnel from World War 1 & over 10,000 Navy personnel from World War 2 who were lost or buried at sea.

After the Armistice, the Naval Authorities and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission were determined to find an appropriate way to commemorate naval personnel who had no grave.

An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping.

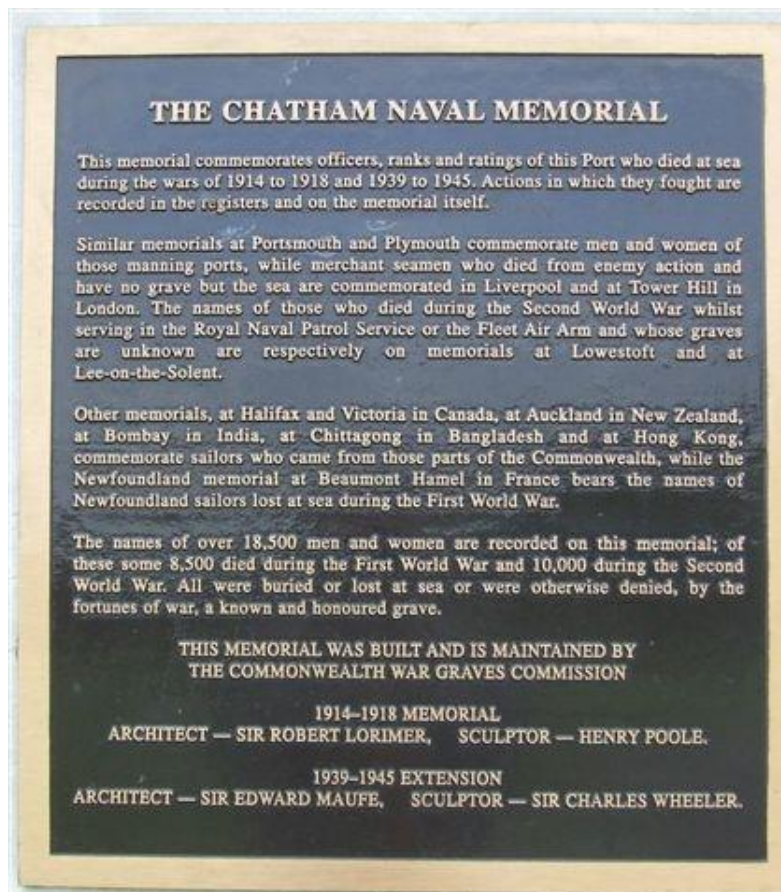
The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, on 26 April 1924.



**Chatham Naval Memorial** (Photo by Clem Rutter)

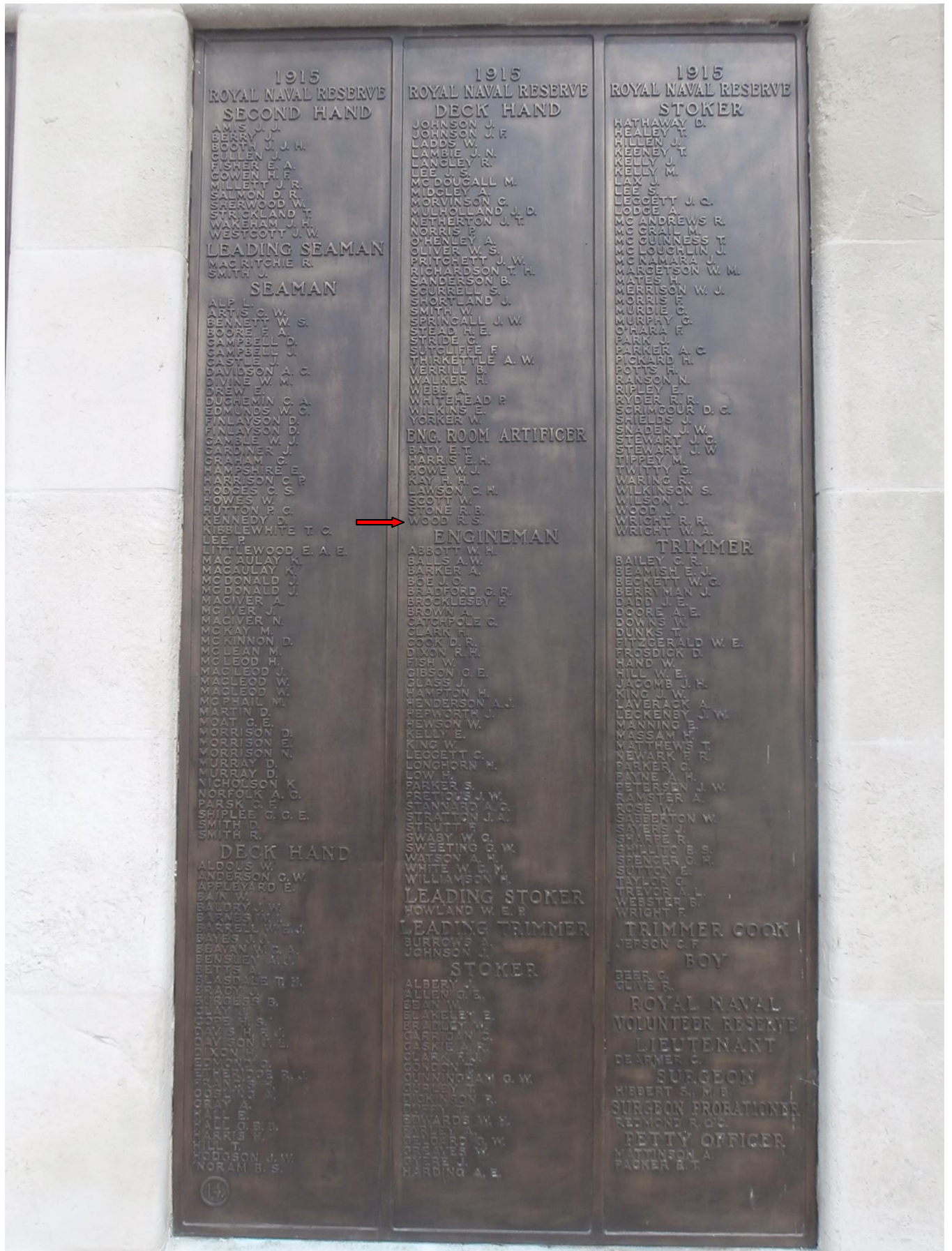


**Chatham Naval Memorial** (Photos from CWGC)

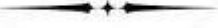


(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)

Engine Room Artificer Ronald Sinclair Wood is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England as he has no known grave - Memorial reference 14.



(Photo by Brad Evans)



Research on the Australians remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England was completed as part of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's "For Those In Peril" project.

*'For Those in Peril' is an initiative to encourage people to research, remember and share local stories of those who left their homes to join the war at sea, whose names are engraved on the Commission's three naval memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.*

*The project has been launched to coincide with the opening of the Poppies: Wave at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial, presented by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, to mark the centenary of the First World War.*



**Poppies: Wave By Paul Cummins, Artist and Tom Piper, Designer**

**at CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial**

**23 August - 19 November, 2017**

*(Photo from 1418 NOW)*



*Poppies: Wave, a sweeping arch of bright red poppy heads suspended on towering stalks, was originally seen at the Tower of London as part of the installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red. It can currently be seen at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial.*



*(Photo from 1418 NOW)*