



The Fierce Pierce

USS JOHN R. PIERCE SAILORS ORGANIZATION, INC.

VOLUME 17

ISSUE 2

JUNE 2007

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Circulation Editor: Beverly DesRoches

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is upon us and I hope this news letter finds everyone in good health. It has been eight months since our last reunion with only four to go for the next one. Hope to see you there. By the time you receive this news letter Memorial Day will have come and gone. The following is a history of this most precious day.

**Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service.**

There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day. There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War: a hymn published in 1867, "Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping" by Nella L. Sweet carried the dedication "To The Ladies of the South who are Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead" (Source: Duke University's [Historic American Sheet Music, 1850-1920](#)). While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. It is more likely that it had many separate beginnings; each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860's tapped into the general human need to honor our dead, each contributed honorably to the growing movement that culminated in Gen Logan giving his official proclamation in 1868. It is not important who was the very first, what is important is that Memorial Day was established. Memorial Day is not about division. It is about reconciliation; it is about coming together to honor those who gave their all.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his [General Order No. 11](#), and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war). It is now celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May (passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 - 363) to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays), though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "[In Flanders Fields](#)," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led,  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies.

**USS JOHN R PIERCE DD-753 TREASURER REPORT**

2/28/2007	<b>Opening Balance</b>			<b>\$23,557.80</b>
	<b>Income</b>	Annual Dues	\$495.00	
		XFR In	\$1,000.00	
		Tax Rebate	\$124.00	
		Ships Store	\$49.00	
		Interest	\$189.93	
	<b>Sub Total</b>		\$1,857.93	<b>\$25,415.73</b>
	<b>Expenses</b>	Reunion 07		
		Mail	\$99.50	
		Web Master		
		Ships Store	\$757.73	
		SVC Chg		
		Checks		
		XFR Out	\$1,000.00	
	<b>Sub Total</b>		\$1,857.23	<b>\$23,558.50</b>

5/31/2007	<b>Closing Balance</b>			<b>\$23,558.50</b>
	Feb 28, 2007	May 31, 2007	Closing	
	Closing			
MMI	\$7,220.48		\$6,231.33	
CHK	\$1,150.67		\$1,961.44	
1	\$2,176.97		\$2,193.40	
2	\$7,873.01		\$7,968.21	
3	\$5,136.67		\$5,204.12	
Total	<b>\$23,557.80</b>		<b>\$23,558.50</b>	

Mail all dues to: Vince Pendolino      Dues are still \$15.00 per year and \$150.00  
 13175 SW 3rd Court      for lifetime. Make checks payable to:  
 Ocala, FL 34473      J.R. Pierce DD753 Sailors Org.  
 E-mail: [dd753ocalavince@wildblue.net](mailto:dd753ocalavince@wildblue.net)

**NEW MEMBERS**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>RANK</b>	<b>YEARS ON BOARD</b>
<b>ODIS L HIBLER</b>	<b>SN</b>	<b>53-55</b>
<b>JAMES C. WILLIS</b>	<b>EN3</b>	<b>68-69</b>
<b>LEGETTE ZORN</b>	<b>SK1</b>	<b>59-60</b>
<b>RONALD OWENSBY</b>	<b>GMG3</b>	<b>68-69</b>
<b>GARY WILLIAMS</b>	<b>BM3</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>DON KNOCHE</b>	<b>BT3</b>	<b>71-73</b>
<b>THOMAS CERAFIGE</b>	<b>RM2</b>	<b>65-74</b>

**DECEASED MEMBERS**

**CDR J. W. Foust      James Stoddard      William Grady      James Theiss**

**PJ's CORNER**  
**Irish Soda Bread**

4 C. all-purpose flour	¼ C. sugar
½ C. raisins	½ tsp. salt
6 T. shortening	1 egg, slightly beaten
Cinnamon-Sugar	1 ¼ C. buttermilk
2 T. butter or margarine, melted	1 ½ tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder	1 T. caraway seeds

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda & Salt. Cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in raisins & caraway. Combine buttermilk & egg; add to crumb mixture. Turn onto a lightly floured surface & knead gently 5-6 times. Divide dough in half; shape into two balls. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet. Pat each ball into a 6-inch round loaf. Using a sharp knife, cut a 4-inch cross about ¼" deep on top of each loaf. Brush with butter & sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar. Bake at 375°F., for 40-45 min. or until golden brown.

The following was written by a member of my writing group and read to those attending our  
The Following was written by a member of my writing group and read at our Memorial Day Service

The Spirit of America

By

Sharon Ann Dragneff

*I wafted in on freedom's wind and made my way through the labyrinthine ways of history*

I walked with the Patriots against the Red Coats at Concord Bridge. Asa Pollard, first man to fall at Bunker Hill was beside me. I folded bandages out of petticoats and aprons and wrapped rotting flesh of frost-bitten feet. I stood by General Washington as he crossed The Delaware in the freezing night. T'was I who rang that Liberty bell. T'was I who paced the floor of Constitution Hall and witnessed that great signing!

*Yea ,and verily I was there!*

I walked with my brothers through the War Between the States. I felt the heat of Sherman's blistering devastation; the sting of grapeshot in my chest. Satan's home is indeed here – in the stench of death!

*Yea,and verily I was there!*

I was with Father, son and brother on the Arizona in Pearl Harbor. I was in Iwo and Guada Canal. I have walked through cold, silent fog in the Argonne Forest. I was in Hitler's concentration camps... and I was in Nuremberg.

*Yea, and verily I was there!*

I Walked through Korea, resting at a MASH Unit. I trod the Ho Chi Minh trail and waited with the men suffering in the Hanoi Hilton.

*Yea, and verily I was there!*

Now, I walk the desert sands of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. I continue to be found in front lines where ever they are; and I pull my cloak a little closer to me against those who would wrench freedom from my grasp.

*Yea, and verily I am here!*

Yes, I am prepared to walk mile upon mile, for I am in the torrents of the rain. In the warm sun, after the rainbow, I sing across the mountain tops and lie in the sweetness of grassy meadows. I am the painted leaves of fall and the first soft snow of winter. I am that pastel Easter Sunday morning and the fireworks on the Fourth of July; for I am The Spirit of Freedom. I soar with the eagles and I walk where ever freedom is challenged.

### I AM THE SPIRIT OF AMERICA

Gene Slavin started a chronology of our Korean tour. Below are some of my memories and we invite members to share their thoughts. I did make a few notes, but was too young to consider history.

#### CHRONOLOGY

#### DESTROYER SQUADRON 2 AND DESTROYER DIVISION 21 IN KOREA 1952

- May 15 Departed Norfolk for Far East and world cruise.
- May 30 San Diego.
- June 6 Pearl Harbor.
- June 9-20 Stops in Midway Island, Yokosuka, Japan.
- June 22 Joined Destroyer Division 21 for screening duty with seventh fleet.
- June 23 Task Force 77 launches 290 aircraft to bomb hydroelectric plants (fourth largest in the world) at Suiho, North Korea along the Yalu River. TF 77 includes four aircraft carriers
- June 27-30 Joined USS Iowa, USS Helena and USS Rogers to shell factories near Songjin.
- July 21 Joined TF 95 for shore bombardment and patrol duty. Bombard Kojo and Kosany with USS Soley DD707, BB Iowa and CA Helena.
- July 27 USS Pierce DD753 destroys a train.
- July 27 USS Strong under fire. No damage or casualties.
  
- July 27 I had watch on the bridge as Messenger. Through the twelve power binoculars mounted on the wing of the bridge, I watched shells being lobbed at a train at the entrance to a tunnel. To me, it looked as if one of the slow moving five inch projectiles went down the stack of the train and the train disappeared.

We teamed up with the battleship USS Iowa, with the cruiser USS Helena and destroyer USS Rogers as escorts to shell factories Songjin. We were 3,000 yards behind the Iowa when their 16-inch guns boomed out a salvo. Up until then escort duty was boring. All the action was taking place beyond our purview. We were warned to stay off the open deck, when the battle ship was firing, but I looked out of the hatch of my General Quarters station in Mount 53, the twin 5-inch gun mount on our fantail. The Iowa was a few degrees to our starboard and at least 3,000 yards away from us. All three guns of one of their gun mounts fired. The explosion made a spectacular flash. A few seconds later the sound and concussion reached us like a sonic boom. All that was awesome enough, but what amazed me most was how far and how fast the ship moved in the opposite direction as those guns hurtled three 1800-pound projectiles toward their unseen target far inland. That ship must have been pushed at least one hundred yards to port. Until then the law that every action has a re-action was an abstract.

August 5 Our ship's log is routine until the 0800-1200 watch when we relieved the HMS St. Brides Bay F600 of Package 2 patrol at 1022 with Lt. McKinley as Officer of the Deck (OOD). Package 2 was a 220 yard stretch of single rail road track between 2 tunnels in the Songjin area. Yang Do Island is slightly northeast of Songjin.

Our next assignment was to protect a Republic of Korea (ROK) intelligence center on Yangdo Island a small island about 5,000 yards from shore in Wonson Harbor. The harbor is halfway up the east coast of North Korea. We also were to interrupt rail traffic along the coast.

August 6 USS JR Pierce DD753 comes under attack while destroying another train in Songjin.

6 August 1952, 1830 hours. Gunnery officer Lt. Luther Frye and Ensign Keach were on the bridge. Ens. Keach, from Baldwin, Maine was my division officer. I must have had the early dog watch that evening. The 1600 to 2000 watch is cut in half so the shifts can be changed. I stepped into the after compartment to shower. With the water running, I thought I heard an odd noise from our starboard, then another noise, like Whump, Whump. "I'll bet those bastards are firing at us," I said to the Stewards Mate in the next stall. Just then the PA system rang, GONG! GONG! GONG! "This is no drill! General Quarters, all hands, man your battle stations. This is not a drill."

#### CHRONOLOGY (CON'T)

I rushed down to my compartment just below my gun mount, put on my dungarees, shirt and shoes and ran to my General Quarters station in Mount 53 on the main deck. I put on my asbestos gloves, but the empty shell casings came so fast I could not catch them all as they got ejected from the gun breech. We got off about 40 rounds as the ship shuddered up from ten knots to 32 knots in about four minutes. The left hand gun did all the shooting as the right hand hoist jammed.

As we escaped enemy fire we assessed the wounded and damage. We secured from General Quarters and slowed to standard speed. I stepped into the after shower where the Stewards Mate was sitting on a large tool box. His shirt was off and his torso was peppered with small red holes with white chicken fat around the holes from shrapnel.

"You all right?" I asked.

"I'm not hurting too bad," he said. "The British Doctor looked at me. Said he had to patch up Ensign Keach first. Mr. Keach got a deep head wound."

"Man, he's my division officer," I said. "I hope he's going to be OK. Where were you when you got hit?"

"I was on my way to the ward room near sick bay when a bunch of shrapnel came through the overhead and got me and Doc Webber. One of the guys was trying to get down that inboard hatch to the forward engine room and got hit in the foot. I think his name is Callais."

"Right through the overhead?" I said. "That must have been when they were aiming for the economizers. They pre-heat the water going into the boilers. They're above Sick Bay."

The assistant gunnery officer, Ensign Keach was the most severely wounded. The last we saw of him he was being lowered over the side in a stretcher to our motor whaleboat. He was on his way to the Hospital ship after being treated by Doctor Ian McKay. We later learned the good doctor was fresh from medical training in London. He was transferred from HMS St. Brides Bay to attend Ensign Keach. British ships carry doctors. American Destroyers do not. Our Chief Hospital Corpsman, Webber and eleven other sailors were treated for wounds resulting from the battle.

With gaping holes in both stacks and another in our bow, we cranked up 32 knots and settled into a steady vibration. Twenty-four hours later we were in Sasebo for repairs.

Back on our routine watch schedule, we hashed over what had happened. The comic relief had to do with the engine order telegraph. Staring at the top, it reads "Ahead 1/3, 2/3, Standard, Full and Flank with the manufacturer's name, Bendix Corp. last at the bottom. When the Captain called General Quarters, he called out, "All ahead BENDIX."

Being a target of enemy fire did give me pause to think about my mortality. I had spent my eighteenth birthday at sea, but was still invincible. Too naïve to be afraid in battle and too young to fully appreciate the unique sights and sounds of Japan.

Sometime later Lt. Frye was reflecting on our battle and how pure fate plays a role. The North Koreans had painstakingly moved 105's and 90 mm cannons into the hooch's over time. They chose the hour, after chow when most of us were loggy with full bellies. They could see we were barely keeping way on our ship; moving so slowly that our boilers must be cold and that would slow our escape. The weather was a perfect summer day, warm and sunny with a gentle breeze. The sun was low in the western sky over the mountains. The shoreline was in shadow with the bright sun in our eyes. There were a few thatched roof hooch's dotted here and there on the shore line, like something out of an oriental travel magazine. When they began firing at us, they aimed for our bow and for our stacks. Inside the thin outer skin of our smoke stacks are the economizers that preheat water going to the boilers. Damage to them would effectively put us dead in the water. That got me thinking about the vicissitudes of fate, or chance. Clearly the reason youth is used for cannon fodder is we have no fear. We just do not consider death in the equation.

Editor

USS JOHN R PIERCE DD-753 REUNION – OCT 2-7, 2007 NORFOLK, VA  
RESERVATION FORM TOURS AND MEALS PLEASE PRINT

Registration Fee \$10.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Shipmate Name/Rank (As on Name Tag) \_\_\_\_\_ Years on Board \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

OCT 2: 1200-1700 Registration table open. 1200-2200 Hospitality room open

OCT 3: Norfolk Botanical Garden's \$17.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OCT 3: 0900-1200 Registration table open  
1300-1630 1300 board buses for Botanical Gardens scheduled to return  
at 1630, dinner on your own. 1100-2200 Hospitality room open.

OCT 4: 000-2200 Hospitality room open. Free day, dinner on your own.

OCT 5: Memorial Service, Maritime Center \$12.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OCT: 5 0915-1020 0915 Board buses for Memorial Service on board USS  
Wisconsin BB-64, arrive at 1000, service at 1020  
1050-1215 Tour National Maritime Center (Food available)  
1220-1630 1220 board buses for Navy Yard, arrive 1330, scheduled  
to return 1630, there is no walking at the Navy Yard, dinner on own.  
(Picture ID required, please remember to bring one)  
1630-2200 Hospitality room open

OCT 6: 0900-1015 Executive Meeting

1030-1230 General Meeting

1245-1600 Hospitality room open

1645-1800 Cash Bar, Photos

1800-2200 Dinner Banquet \$27.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meal: Garden Salad with assorted dressing

London Broil \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Cordon Bleu \_\_\_\_\_ Filet of Flounder \_\_\_\_\_

(Please indicate number of meals)

Baked Potato (Sour cream/Butter on the side)

Vegetable Medley Apple Pie

Warm rolls and butter

Iced tea and coffee (Regular or Decaffeinated)

OCT 7: Departure and goodbyes. Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE ALL CHECKS AND MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO:  
USS JOHN R PIERCE DD753 SAILORS ORGANIZATION INC**

**PLEASE MAIL TO**

**USS JOHN R PIERCE DD753 REUNTION**

**C/O ED MILLETT**

**P. O. 344**

**NASSAU, DE 19969**

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