



## USS JOHN R PIERCE NEWS LETTER DECEMBER 2012

### REUNION 2012

The 2012 reunion was held in Orlando, Florida. The event was hosted by Ms. Myrna Grady and Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Sigler.

The turnout was excellent and everyone had a wonderful time. There were many outstanding events. Three that I remember the most were:

(1) Memorial Service. Colors were presented by the Navy JROTC color guard unit from Boone High School, Orlando. What a pleasure it was to see these young people representing their school and nation in such splendid fashion. The unit is headed up by Commander Craig F. Rouhier. Once again we had the pleasure of having Jack Pierce provide music for the memorial. This year he was joined by an additional piper and drummer. What an amazing performance. I suspect there was not a dry eye in the crowd. Our own Jimmy Sigler piped us to attention and President Thompson led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(2) The trip to Walt Disney's World Magic Kingdom where the group was invited to participate in the daily flag retreat ceremony. One of our own Richard Brennen was selected to carry the flag. Dick was aboard the Pierce during the Korean War and was wounded when a North Korean shore battery manage to hit the ship. This was the first time a Purple Heart recipient was the main honoree. As we marched down Main Street (behind the band) there was lots of applause and "THANK YOU'S" from the crowd that lined the street. After the event and as we walked through the park, numerous folks came over, shook our hand and again thanked us for our service.

(3) Guest Speaker. The speaker was Mr. Patrick T. Grady, non other than the son of our host Myrna. This was truly an event to remember. From the opening until the closing, Pat has us rolling in the floor. If the old saying "Laughter is the best Medicine" is true then I can guarantee a lot of us left in much better health. WHAT A PERFORMANCE. You can find Pat on the internet at [www.patrickTgrady.com](http://www.patrickTgrady.com).

The 2012 reunion committee sends along the following" ..."**We'd like to thank everyone for attending the reunion and making it such a success.....and for allowing us the opportunity to host it. We thoroughly enjoyed doing it and we thank YOU for that opportunity!"**

There were quite a few pictures taken at the reunion (by the Disney folks), Actually there were 172 of them, but there is a lot of duplication. I selected the 62 best pictures and our webmaster posted them on the [www.ussjohnrpiercedd753.com](http://www.ussjohnrpiercedd753.com) web site. When you get to the main page just look on the left for 2012 Disney Retreat, click on it and you should get the pictures. Any one wanting a copy of the CD please contact me and I will mail you one.

### 2013 REUNION

The 2013 reunion will be held in the Greensboro, NC area. Keith and Nancy Brauer along with Ed and Dee Millett will host the event. Information will be forthcoming as to date, actual location etc. We hope to have all details worked out by May 2013.

## 2012-2013 DUES

Members who pay dues on an annual basis are reminded the 2012-2013 membership dues are due on Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Please mail dues to Carl Cox, 4610 Hominy Ridge Road, Springfield, OH 45502. A number of members have paid dues in advance. If you have a question about your dues please call Carl at 937-969-8246

### REUNION ATTENDEES

Sue Alderman	Frank & Gen Ashby	Leigh & Iona Bartlow
Keith & Nancy Brauer	Gary & Barbara Cleasby	Mr. Carl Cox
Richard & Phyllis Brennen	Dustin & Laurie Giertz	Christina Smith
Frank DePaola	Mary Spencer	Judith Boardman
Vincent Bonpietro	Curtis Cronin	Harvey & Hazel Dempski
Jeffrey & Barbara Ebert	Joyce Ferrell	Cathy Steel
Robert Foster	Barbara (Jo) Foster Suther	Robert Groth
Dennis Hovermale	Dorothy Benson	Roderick & Verlee Kent
Gordon & Penny Laubert	Ronald & Marlene Merriman	Ed & Dee Millett
Lewis & Ann Miller	Ralph & Jerry Mills	Al & Betty Maturo
Dennis Maturo	Rufus Ornduff	Clara Edward
John & Barbara Pierce	Charles & Margaret Metzler	Ronald & Barbara Piper
Kraig Piper	Kenneth Piper	David & Lillian Reed
Randy & Tamara Tharp	Cecil & Dorothy Thompson	John Schosser
Jimmy & Sandra Sigler	Beverly Waite	Robert Wallace
Brenda Fread	Myrna Grady	Loda Wallace
Gary Williams	Jane Krellner	Robert Wilno
Herbert & Bonnie Yablonsky	Charles Yadrosich	Arlene Fasciano

### OSCAR WILLIAM GOEPNER, USN

Did you know a former Commanding Officer of the USS John R Pierce was credited with firing the first shot of World War 2? Commander Oscar William Goepner was the Commanding officer of the USS John R Pierce from April 1949 to July 1950.

In 1940 Lieutenant Goepner was assigned as Executive Officer and Gunnery Officer aboard the USS Ward. On December 7, 1941 approximately one hour prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, LT Goepner gave the order to commencing firing on a Japanese submarine.

While patrolling Pearl Harbor Entrance on Sunday, December 7, 1941, the USS *Ward* attacked an unidentified submarine in the Restricted Area off the Harbor. LT Goepner was the Officer-of-the-Deck.

The facts are as follows:

1. At 0637 the Officer-of-the-Deck said, "Captain come on the bridge". A conning tower with periscope of submarine was visible. She was apparently headed for Pearl Harbor trailing the U.S.S. *Antares*. The *Antares* was standing toward the channel entrance towing a lighter.
2. At 0640 the attack was started. The *Ward* bore down on the submarine while accelerating from 5 to 25 knots.
3. At 0645 the *Ward* opened fire with No. 1 and 3 guns and began dropping depth charges. One shot was fired from each gun. The shot from No. 1 gun missed, passing directly over the conning tower. The shot from No. 3 gun fired at a range of 560 yards or less struck the submarine at the waterline which was the junction of the hull and coning tower. Damage was seen by several members of the crew. This was a square positive hit. There was no evidence of ricochet. The submarine was seen to heel over to starboard. The projectile was not seen to explode outside the hull of the submarine. There was no splash of any size that might results from an explosion or ricochet.

4. Immediately after being hit the submarine appeared to slow and sink. She ran into our depth charge barrage and appeared to be directly over an exploding charge. The depth charges were set for 100 feet.
5. The submarine sank in 1200 feet of water and could not be located with supersonic detector. There was a large amount of oil on the surface where the depth charges exploded.
6. The attack was made at 0645 which was before Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese planes.
7. A dispatch by voice transmission was sent to Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District at 0645 which stated:

"We have attacked, fired upon, and dropped depth charges on a submarine operating in defensive sea areas."

8. The performance of duty by the officers and men during this attack was in accordance with the traditions of this service.

### **Pertinent Information**

**Appearance of submarine:** Cylindrical tube about 80 feet long with small oval shaped conning tower. It had no deck. It was painted dark green and was covered with moss indicating that it had been at sea for a considerable period.

**Behavior during attack:** In spite of the five minute run from the time of sighting and time of attack, the submarine apparently did not see or detect the *Ward*. It was making from 8 to 10 knots and was apparently bent on following the *Antares* into port. Exact distances are not known but at the time of the first shot the range was not more than 100 yards and for the second shot the range was 50 yards or less. The submarine passed very close to our stern.

### A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY PROVIDED BY R. JIM DIEGEL

Sixty years ago on May 15 the John R. Pierce, DD-753 manned by 332 men (314 sailors and 17 officers from 41 States) backed out of Convoy Escort piers at Norfolk, Virginia. The destination of its mission, Korea. The ship served with task forces 77 and 95. Completing its mission the ship returned to Norfolk via the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. Total cruise consisted on circumnavigating the earth.

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### **Albemarle man shares memories, tales from Cuban Missile Crisis**

The USS John R. Pierce (DD-753) wasn't a new ship at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis 50 years ago. The Pierce's chief engineer was able to push a wooden pencil through the World War II destroyer's hull.

As Lt. Thomas Moore signed for documents stamped "top secret" in bold red type, his compact car was being filled with shotguns and explosives.

It was Oct. 22, 1962, and fate had thrust the young naval officer to the forefront of a global crisis that was escalating by the minute. President John F. Kennedy still was hours away from telling the world that the Soviet Union was building nuclear missile sites in Cuba, and the U.S. wouldn't stand for it.

The president ordered a naval quarantine for what became a 500-mile radius around Cuba, effective Oct. 24. He was careful not to use the word "blockade," because under international law, that would have been an act of war.

Kennedy's nighttime address alerted the nation to the Cuban Missile Crisis. By the time the president spoke, Moore already had been enveloped for hours in the unfolding drama.

"On the morning of Oct. 22, I got a telephone call at my Virginia Beach home, and was told to report to the ship immediately," said Moore, a longtime Albemarle County resident who was operations officer aboard the destroyer USS John R. Pierce.

“Before we got under way, I was sent to our flagship to get the operation orders. I drove over in my Austin A40, a ridiculous little compact car. While I was getting the top-secret orders, they were loading grenades, shotguns and ammunition into my car.

“I thought it was hilarious. Here I am carrying explosives in my civilian car down Hampton Boulevard to where our ship was moored. It was illegal as could be.”

Shotguns are the weapons of choice when boarding a ship at sea. Those — and the top-secret orders — revealed that the *Pierce* had been selected as one of the ships that would enforce the quarantine.

The *Pierce* left Norfolk on Oct. 22 and reached its area of operations two days later. The vintage World War II vessel was so old and tired that its chief engineer had pushed a wooden pencil through its hull.

Hearts started beating faster on the afternoon of Oct. 25, when the *Pierce*'s radio operator received a message that the Lebanese merchant freighter *Marucla* was in the area. The ship, chartered to the Soviets, was suspected of carrying prohibited cargo to Cuba.

Moore sighted what he thought could be the freighter. He said the *Pierce* initially was ordered to let it proceed, but a short time later, things changed.

“On the evening of Oct. 25, we received a message to intercept the *Marucla*,” Moore said. “I got in touch with one of our anti-submarine aircraft flying overhead and asked him to take a look at the vessel I thought was the *Marucla*.”

“He illuminated its stern and confirmed it was the ship we were looking for. We reported this, and then came the message that it would be nice if the official boarding ship would be another destroyer, the *USS Joseph P. Kennedy*.”

“Joseph Kennedy was killed during World War II and was the president's older brother. We were directed to follow the *Marucla* until first light, and if the *Kennedy* couldn't make it by then, we were to go ahead and conduct the boarding.”

The *USS Kennedy* kept its four boilers roaring and almost ran out of fuel before arriving shortly after daybreak Oct. 26. Using internationally recognized flag signals, it ordered the *Marucla* to stop and prepare to be boarded.

Navy protocol dictated that the boarding party had to include two officers of a certain rank. To fill this requirement, the *Pierce*'s executive officer, Dwight G. Osborne, became senior officer of the boarding party.

“The *Marucla* was less than a half-mile away,” Moore recalled. “It stopped as soon as we asked it to.”

“A motorized whale boat was dispatched from the *Kennedy* and came by to pick up our executive officer. It then went over to the *Marucla*.”

The party boarded unarmed. “The captain of the *Marucla* was very cooperative and lowered ladders for them,” Moore said. “He greeted the boarding party and took them in for coffee before the inspection. He gave them the run of the ship.”

The inspection turned up 12 trucks and harmless cargo. The ship was allowed to proceed.

“Right after I got the report of the results of the boarding, I suspected they had purposely chosen a ship which wouldn't have had missiles on it so as not to escalate the situation,” Moore said.

“In other words, they would board a relatively innocent ship first to show we were serious, but not one with missiles on it. If we had boarded a ship with missiles on it, we would have had to take it into custody and bring it to a port in the United States.

“So they were careful not to ratchet the situation up immediately. If the boarding didn't have the result they wanted, then they would board the ships with missiles.”

Information declassified a few years ago revealed that the White House had a list of the different Soviet ships headed toward Cuba and their suspected cargo, Moore said. Fortunately, it took only one boarding to get the hoped-for results.

“The Soviets’ reaction to the boarding was very close to immediate,” said Moore, a vendor of homemade pies at Charlottesville’s City Market. “Not too much later we could see on radar that all the inbound Soviet ships were turning around and heading back.”

The crisis ended Oct. 28, 1962, 50 years ago today, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev announced over Radio Moscow that he’d agreed to move the missiles from Cuba. By then, Kennedy had agreed not to invade the tiny country off the tip of Florida. The deal came less than two years after the young president approved the ill-fated “Bay of Pigs” invasion of southern Cuba.

It often has been said since that Khrushchev blinked. Perhaps closer to the truth, both men blinked. That was the picture painted at a recent lecture Moore attended at the University of Virginia, where Khrushchev’s son Sergei, a senior fellow and professor at Brown University’s Watson Institute of International Studies, spoke. He said his father worried that Cuban leader Fidel Castro “was a hothead,” Moore said.

“Khrushchev said his father didn’t want nuclear war, for certain,” Moore said.

“Everybody thinks the U.S. came out on top, but in reality we gave up our missile sites in Turkey. And we promised not to attack Cuba. Khrushchev said his father felt it was an equal exchange.”

Early next month, Moore will host a reunion at his home for eight of his Pierce shipmates.

“We all still have very strong recollections of those days,” Moore said. “Between the Kennedy and the Pierce, we had a great deal to do with ending the crisis.”

### NEW MEMBERS

Name	Rate/Rank	Years on Board
Vincent J. Bonpietro	TMSN	1955-59
Loda W. Wallace	SN	1955-57
Ronald Merriman	MM3	1962-64

### TAPS

NAME	RATE/RANK	YEARS ON BOARD	DATE OF PASSING
Frank T. Frary, Jr.	EM2	1944-46	July 27, 2011
John F. Evans	SM2	1962-64	August 29, 2011
James A. Bois	SN	1944-46	April 23, 2012
Francis D. Kinney	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	June 19, 2012
Raymond A. Boswell	EMFN	1954-56	July 16, 2012
Robert A “Doc” Olsen	FC2	1944-46	July 19, 2012

### SPECIAL REQUEST

Former crew member Roy Alvin Cope is seeking former shipmates who served on the USS John R Pierce DD753 who might have been diagnosed with Mesothelioma or Asbestosis. Please contact his Daughter:

Michele Cope Boone (Daughter)  
Roy Alvin Cope  
2608 Oaklawn Court  
Albemarle NC 28001  
704-322-2609  
[michele82564@aol.com](mailto:michele82564@aol.com)

**USS JOHN R PIERCE DD-753 TREASURER REPORT AUG 31, 2012**

Income:		Expenses:	
Annual Dues:	\$420.00	Newsletter	\$67.22
Reunion:	\$6258.00	Reunion	\$3224.00
Interest (Checking)	\$1.61	Web Hosting	\$106.39
Interest (Savings)	\$5.37	Postage & Supplies	\$223.73
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$6,684.98</b>		<b>\$3,621.34</b>

	Mar 31, 2012	Aug 31, 2012
Checking	\$6,476.35	\$9,534.62
Savings	<u>\$21,534.27</u>	<u>\$21,539.64</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,010.62</b>	<b>\$31,074.26</b>

**2012 Orlando Reunion Financial Report**

	Income		Expenses
Pre-Registration	\$6,344.00	Banquet	\$2474.48
Raffle	\$416.00	Tour	\$3224.00
Collected at Reunion	<u>\$104.00</u>	Tour Postage	\$30.91
		Tour Bus	\$510.00
		Hospitality Room	\$745.81
		Memorial	<u>\$175.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6864.00</b>		<b>\$7160.20</b>

**USS JOHN R PIERCE DD-753 TREASURER REPORT NOV 30, 2012**

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Reunion:	\$606.00	Reunion	\$3,936.20
Annual Dues:	\$270.00	Ships Store (Hats)	\$450.00
Interest (Checking)	\$0.57	Printer Supplies	<u>\$50.28</u>
Interest (Savings)	<u>\$2.71</u>		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$879.28</b>		<b>\$4,436.48</b>

	Aug 31, 2012	Nov 30, 2012
Checking	\$9,534.62	\$5,974.71
Savings	<u>\$21,539.64</u>	<u>\$21,542.35</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$31,074.26</b>	<b>\$27,517.06</b>



Dorothy and I hope everyone had a very HAPPY THANKSGIVING. We wish everyone a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR. SEE YOU IN NORTH CAROLINA.....



**HATS ARE AVAILABLE**

**At the 2012 Orlando reunion, several members inquired about purchasing a John R Pierce hat. We closed the ships store a couple of years ago. However, due to the number of inquiries it was decided to purchase hats and offer them to the membership.**

**Hats are now avail (made in the USA) and the cost will be \$15.00 including shipping and handling. Please use the following form to order the hats and make your check out to USS JOHN R PIERCE DD753 SAILORS ORG.**

**Hats will be shipped on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.**

**Please use the following form to order hats.**

-----**(cut here)**-----

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of hats** \_\_\_\_\_ **X \$15.00 =** \_\_\_\_\_

-----**(cut here)**-----

**Please mail to:**

**Ed Millett  
31657 Siham Road  
Lewes, DE 19958**