

# MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



## SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

August 2014



**Tony LaMorte**

### A message from the President

Hello,

Summer is just about over and schools are experiencing an influx of students. Once again we should be more diligent in our driving around schools and especially when we approach stopped school buses unloading their precious cargo. Though summer is winding down, it is still hot and humid - take plenty of H<sub>2</sub>O to keep you going. The Board of Directors and I hope you had a wonderful and joyous summer. The next big thing on the calendar is the holidays, which by the way are coming up quickly. One of our members, Dr. Gordon White, returned early from up North and we were glad to see him arrive and helping out at the Museum. Welcome back Gordon. We hope our members enjoy the rest of the hot weather (what's left of it) and we hope to see you at the Museum.

Tony

### Sometimes Visitors Could Use Assistance

The Museum now has two wheel chairs, two walkers, and one walker with a seat for use by Museum visitors. These items may also be loaned out to Museum members who have a short term need.

### Memoriam

We are saddened to hear of the passing of two World War II USS HIGHLANDS shipmates. Henry Sampley on 10 July and Fred Schaffer on 29 July. Fair winds and following seas Henry and Fred. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Sampley and Schaffer families.

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**Hours of Operation**  
Open: Wednesday through Saturday  
Noon to 4:00 p.m.  
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>



Joseph S. Colello

## The Joseph Colello Story

The story of Colello will probably be somewhat difficult to follow for the casual reader. As a matter of self defense one could also note that it has been, at times, difficult for Colello and not that easy for this reporter. So let's see if we can find an easy starting point.

At 1600 hours on 27 April, 1945 a small draft of communication types came on board USS *Terror*, authorized to serve in Flag Allowance by Cominpac. These signalmen, and radiomen included S1/c Joseph Colello. There can be no doubt that our man was instructed that his battle station would be the mess area and he would go there immediately on a call to GQ.

At 0356 hours on 1 May, 1945, just three days after Colello's arrival, the ship was struck by a Japanese suicide plane laden with two 500 pound bombs. The resulting explosions knocked the ship out of the Pacific War. The resulting human toll was horrific with 48 officers and men killed and another 123 wounded. Among the wounded that day was Joseph Colello who would find himself with the more critically injured being immediately transferred to the hospital ship USS *Samaritan*.

With the determination that he had suffered burns over 80% of his body our man was then taken to the US Army hospital at Saipan. Here he would remain for a couple of months undergoing treatment for his burns. Few of us are familiar with medical treatments of severe burns but Colello has mentioned lying on a hospital bed completely covered, with the exception of eyes, nose and mouth, from head to foot in bandages. After his two month long stay at Saipan he was taken to Hawaii for yet another month of continued treatment and then on to the Oakland Naval Hospital stateside for continued treatment.

It was here that a question was raised for which Colello had no answer. A fellow patient, probably in an attempt to simply open a casual conversation, inquired as to the name of the ship on which he had served. The response to that simple question was quite unexpected. It was simply "I don't know". Not to be denied, the fellow patient sifted through the papers attached to Colello's bed and advised him that he had been wounded while on the USS *Terror* at Okinawa.

## The Joseph Colello Story- cont'd

At this juncture Colello's world was transformed to a life of seemingly endless treatments and procedures all accompanied by a slide into the gray, low vision world labeled "legally blind"; conditions that exist to this very day.

The date is not important but it was probably ten or a dozen years ago when a 'phone call resurrected the matter. The caller may well have been a sister and the essence of her call was," I acquired your book and in it you have what you claim is a complete list of all officers and men who served on the USS *Terror*. My brother, Joe, is not on this list but as I go on to further lists I find on the wounded at Okinawa -- Joseph Colello!"

The lady had posed a frequently asked question and the answer is quite simple. In composing various lists the Admiral's staff was never recorded. These men served, not the ship but the Admiral. They never mustered with the crew and their movements were recorded only in the deck logs. Now, at this point we know that our man was on *Terror* and serving not as ship's company but rather on Rear Admiral Sharp's staff.

As the months gave way to years and the story was in print, time was now given to the exchange of casual small talk and a brief composition of his story for *Terror* folks. In fact two matters remained unresolved. The first of these concerned itself with the manner and means employed to get an ordinary Seaman from stateside or Pearl Harbor to a ship in the middle of the largest invasion of the Pacific War. In conversation Colello simply had no recollection of why he went to the *Terror* or how he had got there. During an idle conversation, Colello mentioned he had some recall of something to do with the US Coast Guard. This was the answer to that riddle. A few days prior to *Terror* being hit, the Treasury Class Coast Guard Cutter *Bibb* appeared on the scene. This ship had previously been outfitted and served as Amphibious Force Flagship. Upon arrival Rear Admiral Sharp hoisted his flag on *Bibb*. As shown in *Terror's* logs some of the Flag personnel were left on *Terror* and were joined by some who came to the scene on USCG *Bibb*.

Here we can resolve the second missing element of our story. During a 'phone call a couple of weeks ago we were reminded that some years back in writing of his ordeal we did not mention how he got out of the shattered mess hall which was engulfed in flames, smoke, smashed bulkheads and broken bodies.

In conclusion, there are many ways one could spin the end of this story so I asked our man to write his own version, which he did. Here is the unedited ending as passed on to me.

"The end of the story is - I was trapped in the dark and could not find my way out, when I heard a woman's voice calling "this way". I followed the voice and finally got out on deck. Someone was standing there and I said where is the woman that got me out? He said there are no women on this ship, you must be wrong. But at the same moment I got hurt, in Albany my mother, girlfriend and her mother were in church saying a Novena for me. So that is my miracle".

Contributed by Allie Ryan

## Anniversaries

4 Aug 1790. Congress created the U.S. Revenue Marine, later became the U.S. Coast Guard.

7 Aug 1782. Inception of the Purple Heart. Purple Heart Day is celebrated annually on the anniversary of the inception of the Purple Heart.

7 Aug 1942. U.S. Marines (1st Marine Division) conducted the first Allied offensive of WWII at Guadalcanal.

2 Aug 1943. PT-109, commanded by LT John F. Kennedy, was rammed by the Japanese destroyer Amagiri and sunk in the Solomon Islands.

6 Aug 1945. First atomic bomb "Little Boy" dropped from B-29 named Enola Gay on Hiroshima, Japan.

9 Aug 1945. Second atomic bomb "Fat Man" dropped from B-29 named Bock's Car on Nagasaki, Japan.

14 Aug 1945. Japanese agreed to unconditionally surrender. V-J Day is declared-Victory over Japan.

4 Aug 1947. U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps established.

23 Sep 1779. CAPT John Paul Jones aboard Bon Homme Richard tells HMS Serapis: "I have not yet begun to fight."

17 Sep 1787. U.S. Constitution approved.

10 Sep 1813. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry commanding his squadron from the USS NIAGARA defeated and captured the entire British squadron in the Battle of Lake Erie.

14 Sep 1814. "Star Spangled Banner" written by Francis Scott Key.

1 Sep 1939. Germany invaded Poland. World War II began.

9 Sep 1942. The Japanese submarine I-25 launched a single engine floatplane piloted by Warrant Officer Nobuo Fujita near Cape Blanco, Oregon. The floatplane dropped two 168 pound incendiary bombs deep into the Oregon forest about 9 miles from Brookings, Oregon.

The Japanese hoped the bombs would start massive forest fires. However they did not take into account earlier heavy rains, consequently the bombs did little damage. The I-25 was sunk almost a year later on 3 Sep 1943 by the USS PATTERSON (DD392) off the New Hebrides Islands.

2 Sep 1945. Japan signed the formal surrender agreement on board the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay. World War II, the most devastating war in human history, was over.

18 Sep 1947. U.S. Air Force Established.

11 Sep 2001. Nineteen Al-Qaeda Islamic Terrorist flew two hijacked commercial planes into the World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon. The fourth hijacked commercial plane headed to Washington, D.C. crashed into a field near Shanksville, PA while courageous passengers fought to overcome the hijackers. The attacks resulted in nearly 3000 killed and at least 10 Billion dollars in damage to property and infrastructure.

## **Anniversaries- Cont'd**

11 Sep 2014. Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. Established by Resolution by President George W. Bush in December 2001. Observed annually on 11 Sep. U.S. Flag to be flown at half mast sunrise to sunset.

19 Sep 2014. National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Established by Congress in 1979. Observed annually on the third Friday of September.

## **Did You Know That**

the Purple Heart began as the "Badge of Military Merit." On 7 Aug 1782 in Newburgh, NY, General George Washington designed a new badge of distinction for enlisted men and noncommissioned officer. They were awarded for any singularly meritorious action. The badge was a figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding. It was pinned to a uniform coat above the left breast

On 7 Jan 1931, Ms Elizabeth Will, an army heraldic specialist, created the design sketch for the present medal of the Purple Heart. It consists of a purple enameled heart within a bronze quarter inch border showing a relief profile of George Washington in continental uniform. Washington's family coat of arms adorns the medal, along with and inscription inside the heart that reads, "For Military Merit."

The Purple Heart Medal is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces that has been wounded or killed, died as a result of a wound in battle, or otherwise designated by the President of the United States. This now includes those persons killed as a result of friendly fire. We celebrate Purple Heart Day on the anniversary of its inception, 7 August. On this day it is our patriotic duty to remember and recognize those people willing to serve our country, no matter the price.

## **Quotable Quotes**

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.---Benjamin Franklin

Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.---John Wayne

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.---C.S. Lewis

This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.---Theodore Roosevelt

There isn't a person anywhere who isn't capable of doing more than he thinks he can.---Henry Ford

## **Stories Wanted**

We would like to publish in the Scuttlebutt short stories of Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personal experiences, and/or short stories of sea services historical events. We are sure there are plenty of stories out there that would be of interest to Scuttlebutt readers. Please email your stories to [navmargrd@gmail.com](mailto:navmargrd@gmail.com) or mail to the Museum.