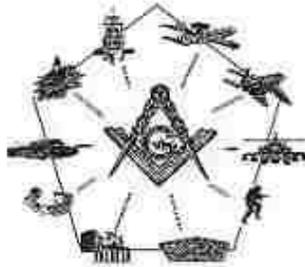


# *Sinclair Inlet Chapter No. 80 National Sojourners, Inc*



**Bremerton, Washington**

Our website address is: [www.telebyte.com/masons/sojourn/index.htm](http://www.telebyte.com/masons/sojourn/index.htm)

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## Sep 2017 Newsletter

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### Chapter Officers 2017-2018

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### Hero Camp Officers 2017-2018

Commander	HCMC Joseph MacIntyre	360-275-0589	haggis@wavecable.com
Chief of Staff	MM1 Orville Stoner, Sr.	360-782-2385	ovstoner@comcast.net
Adjutant	Mr. Charles Yankosky	206-780-0563	cyankosky@yahoo.com

### Meeting Notice!

We will meet at VFW Post #239, 190 Dora Ave, Bremerton on Friday, 8 Sep. Social hour and dinner begin at 1800, meeting at 1900 hours. Ladies and guests are always welcome at the meeting and are urged to attend.

The associated Lewis and Clark Camp of the Heroes of '76 meets immediately following the Sojourner meeting and is open to all Heroes.

Don't forget to wear your Medals!

### Pac Beach Encampment 6-8 Oct 2017

The Pac Beach Heroes Encampment at the U.S. Navy's Pacific Beach Resort & Conference Center is coming up the weekend of Oct. 6-8. Deadline for registration is 15 Sep 2017. If you wish to attend you must do both: make housing reservations with the Conference Center 1-360-276-4414, and register for the event with Bro. Gerald Earl 425-353-5315 [G.Earl@msn.com](mailto:G.Earl@msn.com). The Saturday evening banquet (\$30) can be either prime rib or chicken cordon bleu. The farewell Sunday breakfast is \$16.

## Collisions At Sea

In the early morning of 17 Jun 2017 the guided missile destroyer *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG-62) collided with *MV ACX Crystal*, a Philippine registered container ship, 56 nautical miles SW of Yokosuka, Japan. Three compartments of destroyer were flooded, 7 crewmen were missing, and the captain CDR Bryce Benson, along with several other injured sailors, were evacuated to Naval Hospital Yokosuka in stable condition. The *Fitzgerald* returned to Yokosuka under its own power. The crew were able to steer the “Fighting Fritz” using a magnetic compass and back-up gear.

The accident happened, reportedly, at 2:30 am. Four to 500 ships use this route every day. The container ship, 4 times the size of the *Fitzgerald*, was not badly damaged. The bulbous bow of the container ship, which sticks out below the water line, gouged a 12 foot underwater hole on the destroyer’s starboard side. Sleeping quarters for 116 of the ship’s crew were opened to the sea in no time. A machinery space and radio room were also flooded. The captain’s cabin was destroyed. Swift damage control by the crew kept the ship afloat.



28 sailors escaped from the flooded portion of the ship and several rescue attempts were made before the water tight doors were closed and the flooded area sealed off. It took 25 minutes to rescue the captain, who, with his cabin gone, was hanging from the side of the ship. Rescuers had to tie themselves together

and make a harness to fetch him. The injured captain was help to the bridge but then sent to the hospital and the executive officer took over. Former commander of the *Barry* (DDG-52), Adm. James Stavridis, Ret., said that normally a water-tight door would never be sealed unless you know all of your shipmates have escaped. But if the ship is in danger of sinking then all lives are endangered. The command to close doors would be given by the Damage Control Officer on orders from either the Captain or the officer in charge. When the damaged ship returned to port, divers recovered the bodies of the 7 missing sailors from the flooded compartments. The *Fitzgerald* suffered the greatest loss of life since the *USS Cole* was bombed in Yeman’s Aden harbor in 2000.



How could a 30 knot destroyer with 300 crewmen and the most advanced electronics in the world collide with a lumbering cargo ship? The accident was under investigation by the U.S. Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard, Japan Transport Safety Board and the Philippines government. Investigators would use records from the destroyer’s Aegis system, as well as the container ship’s electronic recorder to find out.

Experts speculated the collision could have been caused by radar failure or negligence on the part of night lookouts on either or both ships. There could have been a lack of communication (naval and merchant vessels using different radio frequencies), or a misunderstanding of who had the right-of-way. Ships meet at sea travelling from all points of the compass and confusion can lead to wrong decisions as to who should “stand-on” or “give-way.” Under international maritime traffic rules the ship on the right, the container ship, gets to “stand-on” or proceed. The ship on the left, the destroyer, must “give-way.” Ships don’t have any brakes. A 30,000 ton displacement merchant ship, according to IMO (Int’l Maritime Organization)

rules, travelling at 15 knots, takes 2 and a half miles to stop and one half mile radius to turn around. A decision as to who has the right-of-way must occur far in advance. If not all they can do is reduce the angle of impact due to the forward momentum of the ships. So writes Bryan McGath, former captain of *USS Bulkeley* (DDG-84), in *War On The Rocks*.



The captain of the container ship said the accident happened at 1:30 am, even though it wasn't reported to the Japan Coast Guard until 2:25 am. It appears the *ACX Crystal*, coming from behind, tried to pass the *Fitzgerald* on the starboard (right) side. This is suggested by the *Fitzgerald's* mashed starboard side and the *ACX Crystal's* port bow damage. Shipping data from Thomson, Reuters, Eikon showed *ACX Crystal*, under charter to Japan's Nippon Yusen KK, made a full U-turn between 12:58 am and 2:46 am. Capt. Ronald Advincula, of the *ACX Crystal*, said the destroyer was on a course to cross his bow and he tried to signal her with flashing lights. The container ship steered hard to starboard (right), but hit the *Fritz* ten minutes later at 1:30 am. The container ship's captain said there was confusion on his bridge and his ship sailed on another 6 nautical miles before turning around and going back to the scene of the collision.

On 17 Aug 2017 Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. William Moran, announced that the *Fitzgerald's* captain, CDR Bryce Benson, and the Executive Officer and Command Master Chief had been "detached for cause." "As the *Fitzgerald* travelled south from home port Yokosuka, in the early morning hours of 17 June, the area became congested with marine traffic. The bridge team lost situational awareness. The collision was deemed avoidable and both ships showed poor seamanship. Flawed watch stander teamwork and inadequate leadership contributed to the collision. After the collision the sailors responded with urgency, determination and creativity to save their ship. There was inadequate leadership by Executive Officer

CDR Sean Babbitt. Master Chief Petty Officer Brice Baldwin erred by lack of watch tender preparedness."

In the early morning of 20 Aug 2017 the *Fitzgerald's* sister ship *USS John McCain* (DDG-62), collided with an oil tanker near the Straits of Malacca. 10 sailors were missing and 5 injured. Reportedly the *McCain* had lost steering just before the collision. The *McCain*, enroute to visit Singapore, collided with *MV Alnic MC*, a Liberian-registered tanker carrying 12,000 tons of oil from Taiwan to Singapore. *McCain* headed for port under her own power. Divers later found remains of some of the missing sailors in flooded compartments.



In May the Aegis guided missile cruiser *USS Lake Champlain* (CG-57) collided with a South Korean fishing boat in the Sea of Japan. The cruiser tried to alert the fishing boat by radio but the fishing boat did not have one.

In February the Aegis guided missile cruiser *USS Antietam* (CG-54) ran aground on the Japanese coast damaging her propellers and spilling oil.

On 23 Aug 2017 U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Joseph Aucoin was fired as Commander of the 7th Fleet "due to loss of confidence in his ability to command."



Aucoin was due to retire in a few weeks. He was relieved by Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift. Firing a 3-star officer for operational reasons in peace time was considered unprecedented, Aucoin, a flight officer in 5 fighter squadrons, flew 150 combat missions. He commanded an air wing on the carrier *Kitty Hawk* and a carrier strike group based in Bremerton, WA. He was also the past Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Systems.

The Navy, where good seamanship is expected, was shocked by these collisions. There have been 4 accidents involving U.S. Navy ships since January. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson ordered an “operational pause” for its fleets worldwide to ensure safe and effective operations. 4-star Adm. Phil Davidson of Fleet Forces Command will review 7th Fleet culture, operations, and mission readiness, focusing on navigation, mechanical systems, and bridge training and management.

## Chap. 80 Meeting Dates for 2017-2018

8 September 2017

13 October 2017

10 November 2017

8 December 2017

12 January 2018

9 February 2018

9 March 2018

13 April 2018

11 May 2018

2 June Installation (tentative)

## What Can Happen



Only the stern half of destroyer *USS Frank E. Evans* (DD-754) is still afloat after being cut in half by Australian carrier *HMAS Melbourne* in the South China Sea on 3 Jun 1969. 74 men were lost when the forward half of the ship sank

