

Sinclair Inlet Chapter No. 80 National Sojourners, Inc



Bremerton, Washington

Our website address is: www.telebyte.com/masons/sojourn/index.htm

May 2018 Newsletter

Chapter Officers 2017-2018

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Hero Camp Officers 2017-2018

Commander	CMDCM Joseph MacIntyre	360-275-0589	haggis@wavecable.com
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Meeting Notice!

We will meet at VFW Post #239, 190 Dora Ave, Bremerton on Friday, 11 May. 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!

Highlights of the 13 Apr. Meeting

Vice Pres. Orville Stoner, Sr. opened chapter at 1930. Bro. Joseph MacIntyre made a Motion that we open nominations for officers for the coming year. The Motion was seconded. Proposed officers for next year were: President – Bro. Orville Stoner, 1ST Vice Pres. – Bro. Henry Carman, Secretary – Bro. Charles Yankosky, Marshall/Chaplain – Bro. Wendell Dutt, Color Bearer – Bro. Peter Dawson (in name). Bro. Wendell moved, and it was seconded, that we accept the nominations as proposed. Bro. Joe

moved that the slate of officers be elected by acclamation. Approved.

Unfinished Business: Bro. Richard Dexter talked to Bremerton High School about this year's JROTC awards. Awards night for Bremerton is Thursday, May 24 from 5 to 6 pm at the High School. A scholar had not yet been chosen. The instructor teaches civics and was interested in having our Chapter do a "Build the Flag" ceremony. On May 24 Bro. Richard and his wife will be on vacation. Bro. Joe suggested that Bro. Tom Dangelo, who will be presenting the Scottish Rite Americanism Award, present our award also. South Kitsap High School's NJROTC Wolf Battalion has their award ceremony on Tuesday, May 15 at 17:00 in the Main Theater.

New Business: Pres. Robert Monroe has been updating the Pacific Beach registration information. Bro. Wendell will soon have it on the NW area website. Robert will be the registrar. Bro. Dick Dexter wanted a list of members so he could phone tree them before the next meeting. Bro. Joe MacIntyre suggested that if we go to Grand Lodge in Wenatchee this year, Chapter 80 could be the color guard in Colonial uniform for the opening of Grand Lodge. Bro. Bill Biscomb and team did a "Build the Flag" on the Bainbridge Island this past Thursday. One of the Senior Center ladies has contacts with other Islanders. Bro. Dick Dexter did "Old Glory" at Tahoma National Cemetery yesterday and he will do one tomorrow at a church memorial service.

HEROES: Bro. Joe MacIntyre opened a Heroes' camp for officers to be elected. He brought along a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Some motions and nominations were made and a motion was made to rescind a motion. Bro. Bill Biscomb finally moved to retain the current slate of officers for Heroes Camp. The motion was seconded and approved. Bro. Joe brought an auction item, a dinner bib. Lewis & Clark camp has the Pac Beach degree next year.

WW2 Shipwrecks in Java Sea Gone

Kyle Mizokami National Interest from Nov. 2016

Some 10 shipwrecks of Allied warships sunk in battle with the Japanese have been scavenged or are gone. Between 27 Feb and 1 Mar, 1942 a fleet of

American, British, Dutch, Australian (ABDA) warships tried to turn back a Japanese onslaught to invade Java. The Allied fleet was defeated in the 1ST Battle of the Java Sea on 27 Feb and the survivors were wiped out in the 2ND Java Sea and Sunda Strait battles on 1 Mar. Ten ships and 2,200 Allied sailors were lost. Japanese losses were minimal. The Japanese landed on Java on 1 Mar and the Dutch surrendered on 12 Mar.

Divers rediscovered 3 British ships: cruiser *HMS Exeter* (2008) and destroyers *HMS Encounter* (2008) & *HMS Electra* (2003). Also found were Dutch cruisers *HNLMS DeRuyter* (2002), *HNLMS Java* (2002), and destroyer *HNLMS Kortenaer* (2002). American sub *USS Perch* was found in 2006. When divers went back in 2016 some wrecks had been scavenged and there was only a depression in the sea bed where others had been.

HMS Exeter, a victor in the River Plate battle with German pocket battleship *Graf Spee*, was hit by a Japanese 8-inch early in the 1ST Java Sea and had to retire. She was trying to reach Ceylon for repairs, via the Sunda Strait on 1 Mar, escorted by destroyers *HMS Encounter* and *USS Pope*. Unfortunately they happened upon a large Japanese invasion force landing at Banten Bay in west Java, instigating a 2ND Java Sea battle. *Exeter* was surrounded by 4 Japanese heavy cruisers and dispatched by Long Lance torpedoes from a Japanese destroyer. The cruisers 8 inch guns got *Encounter* and *Pope* was sunk by Japanese carrier planes.

In the 1ST Java Sea Battle, Japanese destroyers fired 92 Long Lance torpedoes and got only one hit. Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer* was blown in half and sank fast. *HMS Electra* got into a duel with 2 Japanese destroyers and lost. Being set on fire, her crew had to abandon ship. 1ST Java Sea lasted from 4 pm until midnight on 27 Feb. Dutch Admiral Karel Doorman appeared to be heading back to Java. But after dark he turned around and went after the Japanese troop transports again. About midnight he found the Japanese force, which launched another salvo of Long Lance torpedoes. Cruisers *DeRuyter* and *Java* were hit and sunk. Admiral Doorman went down with his flagship *DeRuyter*. Only 111 men from both ships were saved. Surviving cruisers *USS Houston* (CA-30) and *HMAS Perth* quit the battle and went back to Java.

USS Perch (SS-176) had been so heavily wrecked by depth charges from Japanese destroyers that she couldn't even dive with any assurance of ever coming up again. With the coming of daylight on 3 Mar, and Japanese destroyers closing in, *Perch's* captain ordered the crew to open all sea valves and abandon ship. She went down before the Japanese could capture

her. I looked up “The Loss of the *Perch*” on Youtube on Yahoo and spent half an hour watching a dramatization from the 1958 syndicated TV show “The Silent Service,” hosted by RADM Thomas M. Dykers. The *Perch*’s commander was played by actor Jack Lord, 10 years before his Hawaii Five-O fame.

On 28 Feb. USS *Houston* and HMAS *Perth* were ordered to Tjilatjap on Java’s south coast, by way of the Sunda Strait. Capt. Hector Waller, a veteran of both World Wars, was the senior officer and led the squadron with from *Perth*. It was expected that only Australian corvettes would be patrolling the strait. At 23:00 *Perth* encountered a ship in Banten Bay, and thinking she was Australian, signaled her. The ship made an unreadable reply with the wrong colored light, fired torpedoes and sped away. Waller ordered *Perth* to reply with her guns. Unknown to the Allied squadron was the fact that, at 22:00, the Japanese 16TH Army had begun debarking from 55 transports in Banten Bay. Escorting the invasion force, which had sailed from Cam Ranh Bay in French Indochina, were 3 Japanese cruisers and 9 destroyers. In a fierce battle that lasted several hours until after midnight on 1 Mar., both *Perth* and *Houston* were sunk and both Captains Waller of *Perth* and Rooks of *Houston* were killed. *Houston* lost 696 killed, 368 captured and *Perth* lost 375 killed, 307 captured. In the confusion of the battle, the destroyers were firing Long Lance torpedoes everywhere, sinking 2 of their own transports, including the one carrying their commanding general. Gen. Hitoshi Imamura had t jump overboard, but was saved by a small boat.

Capt. Albert Rooks of *Houston*. was fatally wounded by shrapnel from a shell that hit the bridge. But not before the captain had given the order to Abandon Ship. A Chinese cook that the crew called Buddha, tried to aid him. Buddha wailed, “Captain dead. *Houston* dead. Buddha die too.” After several Long Lance hits *Houston* went down. The last that the survivors in the water saw of *Houston* before she disappeared under the waves was a Marine in the foremast firing a machine gun at everything Japanese. The next day the *Houston* survivors were conscripted to help unload the transports. There were draft animals to do this, but the animals had been on one of the transports that had been sunk.

Afterward *Houston*’s survivors, along with British and Australian POWs were used as slave labor to build the Burma railroad. American subs were sinking all Japanese shipping carrying supplies to Japanese troops in Burma. The Japanese figured the safest bet would be to build a railroad between Rangoon and Saigon. The *Houston* crew got to cut through the jungles and mountains of Burma. They weren’t rescued until the war was almost over.



(Top) USS *Houston* under fire in Sunda Strait. (Bottom) Japanese postcard of *Houston* being sunk by Long Lance torpedoes.

Capt. Albert Rooks (1891-1942) was from Colville, Wash. and his wife and son lived in Seattle. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1914 and served aboard cruisers, subs, battleships and destroyers. He rose in rank from Lieutenant (1921), to Lt. Commander (1925), to Commander (1936) and to Captain (1940). He also taught at the Naval Academy and Naval War College. In July 1940 he was promoted to captain of the *USS Houston*, flagship of the Asiatic Fleet. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. In 1944 the Fletcher Class destroyer *USS Rooks* (DD-804) was named for him. Built at Todd Shipyard in Seattle, she was sponsored by his widow Mrs. Edith R. Rooks. *USS Rooks* was decommissioned in 1962, turned over to Chile, and served until being scrapped in 1983.



*The President of the United States
in the name of
The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to*

***ROOKS, ALBERT HAROLD**

Rank and Organization: Captain, U.S. Navy. Born: 29 December 1891, Colton, Wash. Appointed From: Washington.

Citation:

For extraordinary heroism, outstanding courage, gallantry in action and distinguished service in the line of his profession, as commanding officer of the U.S.S. Houston during the period 4 to 27 February 1942, while in action with superior Japanese enemy aerial and surface forces. While proceeding to attack an enemy amphibious expedition, as a unit in a mixed force, Houston was heavily attacked by bombers; after evading 4 attacks, she was heavily hit in a fifth attack, lost 60 killed and had 1 turret wholly disabled. Capt. Rooks made his ship again seaworthy and sailed within 3 days to escort an important reinforcing convoy from Darwin to Koepang, Timor, Netherlands East Indies. While so engaged, another powerful air attack developed which by Houston's marked efficiency was fought off without much damage to the convoy. The commanding general of all forces in the area thereupon canceled the movement and Capt. Rooks escorted the convoy back to Darwin. Later, while in a considerable American-British-Dutch force engaged with an overwhelming force of Japanese surface ships, Houston with H.M.S. Exeter carried the brunt of the battle, and her fire alone heavily damaged 1 and possibly 2 heavy cruisers. Although heavily damaged in the actions, Capt. Rooks succeeded in disengaging his ship when the flag officer commanding broke off the action and got her safely away from the vicinity, whereas one-half of the cruisers were lost.