

ADDRESS

by

COMMODORE DUDLEY W. KNOX, U. S. N. (Ret.)

THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON

SOCIETY OF SPONSORS

of the

UNITED STATES NAVY

at

THE MAYFLOWER HOTEL

Washington, D. C.

6 May 1947

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Madam President,
Distinguished Guests,
and the Society of Sponsors:

Admiral King has asked me to convey his very great regret that he is unable to address you here today. With such charming and loveable hostesses, I would not be a true sailor if I did not gloat somewhat at my gain in taking his place.

You asked him to come as President of the Naval Historical Foundation. I have been privileged to have been closely associated with that Society for a good many years. I can assure you that the interest of the Society of Sponsors in our work and your material aid have been very stimulating and very warmly appreciated.

The Naval Historical Foundation was organized 21 years ago. Our principal object was the rescue from loss or destruction of manuscript records and relics that are of value in perpetuating the history of our Navy and Merchant Marine. Other objects were the diffusion of knowledge in these fields, and the fostering of patriotism.

I am glad to say we have accomplished much. We have a large collection of manuscript and books. The number of our prints and paintings makes them among the largest of such collections in the field of marine art. It is today of first interest to the early naval historian. As for museum objects our collection has a wide diversity ranging from ship models to decorations, uniforms and weapons. Nearly all of these materials have been donated and are receiving very good care.

Our activities are closely linked with similar functions of the Navy Department. Our manuscript and books are readily available to it for reference. Our museum objects and numerous pictures will be available for exhibit in the proposed naval museum to be constructed in Washington by the government.

A primary purpose of this museum will be educational, and for the benefit of the public at large.

In a modest way due to restricted funds, the Foundation has also published rare and interesting old documents. Among these are the first Navy Regulations of 1775, a recruiting broadside issued by Paul Jones in 1777, and a contemporary French map of the naval and military operations near Yorktown in 1781. We are about to publish Admiral Dewey's account of his operations leading to the capture of Manila in 1898. This carefully prepared account, in which the Admiral was assisted by Commander Nathan Sargent gives many details never before published. The document has been unavailable for many years and was recently given us by the Admiral's son, Mr. George C. Dewey.

Another recent effort along educational lines is the exhibit of naval materials. At the moment the Foundation is arranging such an exhibit for the Society of the Cincinnati. For the first time since 1802 they are holding a general meeting in Washington, beginning next Thursday at Anderson House. The decisive influence of naval power in the Revolution is too little understood. We have assembled our own collection of materials dealing with that war and added objects very kindly lent from other sources. I understand that the exhibit is open to the public and suggest that some of you may find it interesting.

Heretofore we have devoted principal attention to early periods of maritime history and many opportunities remain for work therein. Now we have a challenge and an opportunity given by the war just ended. Its importance and scope is many times greater than all previous wars combined. It calls for correspondingly expanded efforts on our part towards the preservation of its history and the splendid traditions it has set. Among the important items

already acquired is Vice Admiral Sherman's original of the Japanese surrender documents, signed on board the battleship MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay, that the Admiral most generously gave us.

The Naval Historical Foundation feels greatly indebted to you for your long-sustained interest and assistance in its work. We also have felt a reciprocal interest in the Society of Sponsors. Your objectives are akin to ours. You perpetuate naval history and tradition in an inspiring way that helps to build and keep alive naval morale. The service counts you among its best friends--friends of the spirit--the spirit of our Navy and our country.