



Newsletter Issue 61, October 2023

John Paul Jones

Sometimes known as the father of the US Navy, John Paul Jones was born July 6, 1747 in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland. Although he made enemies among America's political elites, his actions in British waters during the Revolution earned him an international reputation which persists to this day. During his engagement with HMS Serapis, Jones uttered, according to the later recollection of his first lieutenant, the legendary reply to a taunt about surrender from the British captain: "I have not yet begun to fight!" After distinguished service in the U.S. Revolutionary War, Commodore John Paul Jones retained his U.S. citizenship and officer rank but held no further appointments in the United States Navy. During 1787-1790 he served as Rear Admiral in the Russian Imperial Navy under commission from Empress Catherine II of Russia. Aboard the 24-gun flagship Vladimir, he took part in the naval campaign in the Dnieper-Bug Liman along the Black Sea. In May 1790, Jones arrived in Paris. He still retained his position as Russian Rear Admiral, with a corresponding pension which allowed him to remain in retirement until his death two years later. John Paul Jones died in Paris and was buried in Saint Louis Cemetery which was sold and forgotten, later used as a garden. His lead coffin was later discovered and taken back to the U.S. to his final resting place at the United States Navel Academy. Today he is remembered on a plaque in Paris on the building that he died in, and a plaque in St Petersburg, Russia.



Fretavel Evader Camp

Throughout the war, the French resistance ran various networks to enable downed Allied pilots to escape and evade their way back to England, usually by crossing the Pyrenees into Spain. But by early 1944 these routes were becoming more and more problematic. Safe houses were being compromised, the provision of food was increasingly difficult, and dangerous choke points were developing. The life span of helpers along the route was only 90 days before capture. British intelligence developed a plan called Operation Marathon, whereby three camps were established in France to house evading pilots in hidden safe camps until they could be liberated by advancing allied units. The camp in the Fretavel Forest by Chateaudun in the middle of France (named Sherwood) housed 152 downed and evading aviators between May and September 1944. Equipment to set up the camp, such as tents, was air-dropped in. Coordinated by three Belgians who had been associated with the Comete Line, the town pulled together to secretly provide food, water, and medical care for months on end. Remarkably, though it was within 100 meters of a road frequented by German vehicles, not a single evader was lost or captured. Almost all were returned to duty and 38 subsequently lost their lives in further combat. The Germans arrested ten locals during the months of the operation and deported them to concentration camps—six did not return. Today there is a monument at the site of the camp commemorating the bravery of the evaders and the brave townfolk who accomplished this extraordinary ruse.



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