Monday Maritime Matters: Memorial Day 2010

Description

The day was perfect. Relatively cool by Florida standards and clear. Plenty of shade under the old oak tress next to the Bay Pines Cemetery. 3000 chairs were put out, as 2500 last year wasnâ€™t enough. The Boy Scouts in attendance still were busy pulling out more chairs as the ceremony began @ 1000. Veterans and family members and friends/supporters filled the area, with many obviously long time friends, and others just greeting those around them and making new ones.

Representative Bill Young (R-FL) gave the speech, honoring those who had given their all so we could all come to such a celebration by choice, and not as demanded by a government such as that of North Korea. He spoke of the many cemeteries around the planet, where US service personnel remain to this day, buried in the countries where they fought to ensure freedom for us and others.

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I took the opportunity to meet some interesting pieces of history. These three Marine vets had seen many things:



I was introduced to Major Lindbloom, USAAF, a B-17 pilot who was shot down over Czechoslovakia and spend 6 months in a POW camp. He stayed with the damaged plane long enough to ensure it cleared a town and crashed into the forest instead. Iâ€™m told the town placed a monument to him to

commemorate his act of selflessness.

A Marine near me, with miniature jump wings on his ballcap noting â€œIwo Jima Survivorâ€• had been with the Raiders in the Soloman Islands, a unit deactivated, then he was placed in the 5th Marine Division, along with his shipmates from the Raider Battalion, for their combat experience. On Day 4, he looked up after a mortar attack to check on his men and one more rounds came in and ended his combat career. Heâ€™s become the accidentally appointed historian of the Para-Marines and has plenty of pictures and files he and his wife are scanning and placing on the web.

On Sunday, I walked among the headstones and read many names and dates and annotations. This one (sorry for the cell phone picture quality), caught my attention, so Iâ€™ll place it here for the history of it:

Clarence F Swanson



Cox US Navy PVT Marines
WWII 9/29/1909 â€“ 6/29/1997

Then there was the Navy Chaplin who spent time with the Marines and Army, and now is a disabled vet, the man who worked on F8U Crusaders, and the one who was on destroyer tenders in the Pacific.

All with the backdrop of the 29.166 American flags placed on the graves in the well trimmed grass nearby to compliment stories of men who didnâ€™t make it, or have since passed away. It was fitting for the day.

Category

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Tags

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