



**The Maryland Society  
Sons of the American Revolution  
John Paul Jones Chapter**

**U. S. Naval Academy History Department  
General Horace Porter Award  
26 May 2021**

The history of John Paul Jones, our chapter namesake, reads more like romance than reality. He was the master of the sea when on the water, a truly great seaman; and on land he was adept in the realms of diplomacy. John Paul Jones was a most flamboyant and colorful commander of ships in the new Continental Navy. His lieutenant's commission was the earliest granted by Congress, and he was the first to raise the Grand Union flag on a naval ship. In a letter to the President of the Continental Congress he wrote, "I hoisted with my own Hand the Flag of Freedom the First time that it was displayed on board the Alfred on the Delaware." Later, his ship, the Ranger, became the first under the American Flag to receive a formal naval salute to our flag by the French Squadron at Quiberon Bay, February 14, 1778.

His battles were won not by his ships, which were often out manned and gunned, but by his genius. Employing the feeble vessels given him or which he, with Benjamin Franklin's help, procured from the French, sailed forth boldly to strike the English in their own waters. He captured some sixty vessels from the foremost naval power of the day, driving fear into the merchants of London who depended on the seas for their wealth and prosperity. Jones mounted a small but effective first and only invasion of England since William the Conqueror at the port of Whitehaven. He seized large quantities of arms and military stores, sent back to America to bolster our forces, and destroyed more than a million dollars' worth of enemy property on the sea. He took hundreds of prisoners whose capture was used to force an exchange and release of American prisoners. Congress later thanked him by resolution for "his bold and successful enterprises to redeem from captivity the Citizens of these States who had fallen under the power of the enemy." Congress awarded him a gold medal to commemorate his decisive victory over HMS Serapis, and awarded him the privilege of the floor of both Houses; King Louis XVI of France knighted him, and presented him with a gold sword, Catherine the Great of Russia created him an admiral. His exploits were a lesson to his contemporaries, an inspiration to his successors, and he is remembered today "the Father of the U. S. Navy".

Yet due to the unfortunate times of his death in Revolutionary France his grave in Paris lay lost for nearly a century. It was not until General Horace Porter, as the U.S. Ambassador to France, became obsessed with finding and retrieving this great American hero of the Revolution that John Paul Jones body was returned in honor to the nation he played such a valiant part in creating.

Horace Porter was a Son of the American Revolution. His paternal Grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Porter served in the Revolutionary War. Horace was a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, and served as an Ordinance officer in the Civil War. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry in the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, where according to the citation: "While acting as a volunteer aide, at a critical moment when the lines were broken, rallied enough fugitives to hold the ground under heavy fire long enough to effect the escape of wagon trains and batteries." He later became the personal secretary of General Grant, and continued in that position when Grant became President. Horace was nominated by President Andrew Johnson to brevet Brigadier General in 1866, which was confirmed by Congress.

General Porter served as the President General of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution from 1892 until 1896. He was appointed Ambassador to France under Presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt in the early 1900's, and it was during his service as Ambassador that Horace became intrigued with finding the grave and remains of John Paul Jones. He also spent over \$36,000 of his own money in that enterprise, a small fortune in today's dollars, and six years of research and investigation into what happened to the little cemetery where Jones had been buried. He found it had been sold by the early Revolutionary French government, and the land redeveloped. John Paul's grave was eventually found, and they were able to identify the remains as those of our national hero.

President Roosevelt sent four cruisers including the U.S.S. Brooklyn as an honor squadron to bring home the long-lost naval hero. Final memorial ceremonies were held in Dahlgren Hall on 24 April 1906. However it took seven more years before the beautiful crypt and chapel were completed for his final resting place in 1913. General Porter's efforts are honored in the Chapel Crypt by a bronze plaque.

The U.S. Naval Academy History Department and the John Paul Jones Chapter of the Maryland Society, Sons of the American Revolution created the General Horace Porter award in April of 1977. It is named after General Horace Porter because of his steadfast determination to locate and have the remains of John Paul Jones returned to the United States. The award is given to a Midshipman whose work in the History Department is considered most worthy of the efforts of these two America heroes, and in hopes of inspiring other young Americans in helping to build an even brighter future for our nation.

It is our honor today to give this award to MIDN 1/C Kelly Alksinnis for her outstanding efforts in service to the Naval Academy History Department, both in her academics as well as her leadership with Monuments Mids, and especially in her assistance with the curatorial and exhibits staff at the Naval Academy Museum, and as an exceptional guide there through her extensive knowledge of both our collections, and Naval History. As they say in the fleet, Bravo Zulu!