



National Commandery OPORDER 2025-12-09

Burial Service for Rear Admiral Morton E “Jim” Toole, USN (Ret.)

Members of the National Commandery of the National Order of the United States will pay tribute to the memory of Jim Toole, our long-time Companion of the Order and National Capital Commandery.

1. Basics: Access Fort Myer via Second Street Gate. ID required. If you don't have one, carpool with someone who does.
2. Proceed one mile to the Old Post Chapel in time to arrive by 10:15 a.m.
3. The service will commence at 11:00 a.m.
4. There is no admission charge.
5. Casual clothes, comfortable shoes. Be aware that **the weather may be cold and dress accordingly.** Service Dress or Full Dress Blue is authorized. Naval Order Blazer is appropriate, too.
6. If you plan to walk, allow sufficient time.
7. A NOUS wreath or a other flowers will be placed.
8. Photography is allowed throughout.
9. We will depart no later than 1 p.m.
10. Those who have time available will **meet for lunch at a place to be determined by those attending.**
11. In the Event of an emergency at the Cemetery, call 911 and notify Event Captain when practical.
12. After-action - Photos and articles to Newsletter and post on social media.



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Remarks at the Memorial Service for Rear Admiral Morton E. “Jim” Toole, USN (Ret.)

Saturday, December 16, 2023; starting 4:30 p.m. , at Capitol Hill Books in Eastern Market.

I am William Steagall, a friend from the Naval Order. I had only come to know Rear Admiral Toole, “Jim”, over the past 5 or 6 years in my role as a leader of the local chapter (Commandery) of the Naval Order of the United States.

It is an Order to which Jim and June have been members for a combined 49 years. Jim since 1993 (30 years) and June since 2004 (19 years).

I should explain about the Naval Order. We are not just a history club with a quarterly magazine and a fancy dinner twice a year. We are a fraternal ORDER of Companions, and that means we look out for each other. More like a fraternity than a subscription to a magazine.

Since he joined in 1993, the leadership of the National Capital Commandery changed 10 times. All of us heard from Jim about what we should have been doing -- but were not doing.

As he did with all of them, with me he tried being gruff. It usually worked. He could do that well.

I came to think of him as the “**Gentle Curmudgeon**” who loved the Naval Order and wanted to make sure we were DOING things. Doing the RIGHT things, but emphasis on DOING, always nudged us forward. Gently.



He wrote the seven minute speech for the “Mast of the Maine” ceremony we use in February each year, which we used over and over, **since the audience was new each year**, only needing to change the date and number of years since the Maine exploded to bring the speech up-to-date.

His speech for Admiral of the Navy George Dewey at the Dewey Crypt of the National Cathedral - the same speech every year, **and to the same audience** (“I don’t need to write a new speech,” he would say. **“The audience is the same as last year**, but they were not listening last year. Or, if they were listening, they don’t remember a damned thing I said.” Then we would all have lunch at the Cactus Cantina across the street.

That was our friend, Jim.

Now, the poem.

Sea Fever, by John Masefield, poet laureate of England and survivor of the Gallipoli Campaign. It was one of Jim’s favorite poems.

Sea-Fever BY JOHN MASEFIELD

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea’s face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull’s way and the whale’s way
where the wind’s like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick’s over.

Thank you.

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