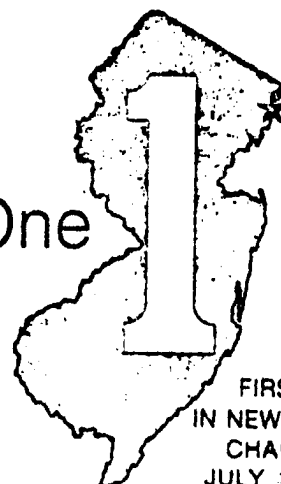


507-1314
3-11-64



Sergeant Clendenon Newell
American Legion Post Number One
399 Broad Ave. • Leonia, New Jersey 07605.



FIRST I
IN NEW JE
CHARTER
JULY 14.

CREW OF THE U.S.S. INTREPID

SEPTEMBER 4, 1804

OFFICERS

CAPTAIN RICHARD SOMERS
LIEUTENANT HENRY WADSWORTH
LIEUTENANT JOSEPH ISREAL

From U.S.S. Constitution

William Harrison
Robert Clark
Hugh McCormick
Jacob Williams
Peter Penner
Issac Downs

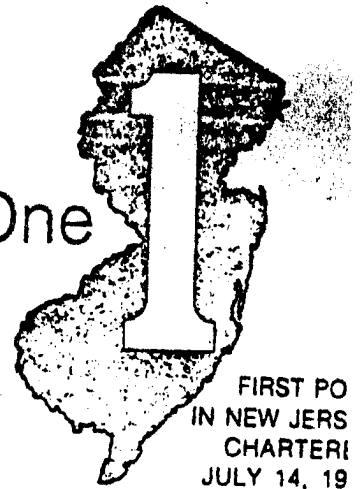
From U.S.S. Nautilus

James Simmons
Thomas Tompline
James Harris
William Keith

SOURCE: Commander Spear
Historian U.S.S. Constitution
U.S. Navy Museum
Washington, D.C.



Sergeant Clendenon Newell
 American Legion Post Number One
 399 Broad Ave. • Leonia, New Jersey 07605



FIRST PO
 IN NEW JERS
 CHARTERED
 JULY 14, 19

In 1785 our Navy was disbanded. From 1785 to 1794 we had no Navy at all. Congress authorized the building of six Frigates in 1794, but work was stopped for lack of funds, until 1797 when they were completed and our most famous ship was launched, the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION. At this time in history the United States had a treaty with the Government of Tripoli for safe passage through the Mediterranean Sea. Not happy with the small tribute being paid by the United States, and the lure of unprotected American commerce the Pasha of Tripoli in 1801 declared war on the United States. In answer to this challenge Commodore EDWARD PREBLE in the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION was sent to the Mediterranean in command of squadron. THIS WAS OUR FIRST FOREIGN WAR!!!

The most daring act of those days, was the cutting out of the PHILADELPHIA. This Frigate had gone aground off Tripoli on an uncharted reef and had been boarded and captured by the Tripoli Pirates. Preble appointed a young Lieutenant STEPHEN DECATUR in command of the Ketch INTREPID to sneak in under the guns of Tripoli and burn the Philadelphia so that she could not be used by the Pirates. This Decatur did, against great odds, burning

-2-

the hulk and escaping almost untouched under the blazing guns of the fort in the harbor. Also on board with Decatur was James Lawrence and Thomas Mcnough.

Further along in the war the INTREPID was chosen again, because of her shallow draft, to sneak into Tripoli harbor again, and became a floating mine, a fire ship, to destroy and damage as much of the enemy shipping and gunboats as possible.

Captain Somers volunteered to take the INTREPID in with Lieutenant WADSWORTH volunteering as second in command. They asked for volunteers among the men and in an overwhelming response, ten men were chosen to go with them. Their escape was to be made in two long boats.

They decided to go in on the night of September 4, 1804, Conditions were favorable, as it was a dark night, they were to enter from the Western entrance of the harbor and had an Easterly breeze. Moments before they left a Lieutenant Joseph ISRAEL went on board the INTREPID with a message from Commodore Preble, while on board, he begged to go on the mission, and permission was granted. This gives 13 men all volunteers, who went into Tripoli harbor aboard the INTREPID. There was three enemy gunboats guarding the harbor. This did not stop these men, they went in anyway. The moment they entered the harbor, they were spotted by the Pirates and were immediately fired upon.

From here on in we go on theory.

-3-

We do know that at 9:47 p.m. the INTREPID blew up. We do have eyewitness reports that a light was seen racing across the deck, like someone carrying a torch running across the deck seconds before she blew up. It is unlikely the Pirates boarded the ship and blew her up, because they were badly in need of ammunition and would have captured the vessel. The most accepted theory is, that escape became impossible and that the magazine was intentionally exploded rather than allow the vessel to be captured. It has always been believed that Somers and his companions were capable of this act -- they expressed the determination not to allow the capture of themselves or the vessel.

All 13 bodies were recovered two days later so mangled as to make identification impossible...

From the American Legion Magazine we do know that five graves are duly marked.