

August 29th, 2008

Dear Friends and Families of the U.S.S. MURPHY DD603 & the QUINCY CA71,

I designed a piece and wrote a poem, both entitled 'The Eternal Port,' for you, my inspiration. Although I was quite busy snapping pictures at our reunion in Rochester, NY, August 13-17th, 2008 and perhaps, agitating you ☺ with my constant presence, I did enjoy meeting and spending time with many of you.

Long before you came to Rochester, I had been researching your past. Some would argue that what you have done is merely past and you are nothing more than some piece of history. I wholeheartedly disagree with that assessment!

Though your stories and your lives spent for the cause of freedom are heroic, you each are living legends and symbols of the freedom, we all enjoy today. Your very presence upon this planet invokes deep awe, and commands respect. Within your eyes burn patriotism and love for this country, and it shines out and spills out and pours over all who are in your presence.

I will never know and many will never know all that you have done, but we can know WHY? Memories are the true legacies we leave to others, not the events, the times, dates or even that we have lived or that we are alive, but WHY & HOW we live. This is why you are more than histories of the past. You are our present and you are our future. Who are you?

You are more than sailors, for there are no sailors without mothers and fathers, wives and families. I am deeply honored to have been a part of this reunion and to be with you. For this cause, I dedicate the works, 'The Eternal Port,' to you.

It is my sincerest hope that the CD and everything on it will be a blessing to you. Although it is NOT the best that you deserve, it is the best that I could do. As Bob Hope used to sing and say, "Thanks for the Memories!"

Until we meet again at some other port of call or at The Eternal Port, just know that you will always be found in my heart, at the Port of Fond Recall.

Humbly,

Dahni (Don) Hayden