

# Captain Erner's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday ... Wishes from the Crew

*Photo provided by ETN3 Scuria*



Happy birthday CAPT Erner, from Juneau Alaska

- **Walter Soboleff**

Happy Birthday Captain Erner!!! I was ahead of you by serving aboard the Parks from 1957-1959. She was my first ship and love. I hope you have a wonderful birthday and receive many birthday wishes. God bless you.

- **Jimmie Petty**

To an extraordinarily fine Captain and man,  
Heartiest congratulations and very best wishes on this momentous milestone, Gene.

We're so pleased for you, and we truly value your friendship.

- **Al and Jerian Crosby**

May Captain Erner enjoy another year of God's gift of life !

I am G.A. "Linc" Lincicum, served as a radarman on the Parks at Wonson, Korea in 1953,

then completed my enlistment on the Parks as an ET after attending school at Treasure Island.

I will celebrate my 91st birthday on July 3, God willing.

- **George Lincicum**

Here's hoping you had a great day Captain and many more.

Happy birthday to a true gentleman.

- **John Zeidler**

Congratulations for turning 90 years young. I hope I make it that far. I was a radioman thru decommissioning under your command. You were a great captain and I send my best wishes.

- **RM3 Rebiger.**

Happy birthday Captain enjoy day hopefully see at Texas. Best wishes

- **SMC Hartz** decom crew

Skipper, thank you for being such a great role model during our time together in PARKS, the rest of my navy career and then into my civilian life. Theresa and I valued you and Gerrie as close friends when we were able to relocate to the Monterey Peninsula. We hold dear the many good memories of times we have shared with you. As you know, you saved me from making a disastrous navigational error while entering Yokosuka Harbor in 1973. The way you handled that has served as an enduring example of calm and decisive leadership to me. God bless you with many more years of good health and happiness.

- **Dennis and Theresa Allion**

Happy Birthday Captain Erner!! Reaching the age of 90 is a very significant milestone in one's lifetime. Wish Darla and I could be there to help you celebrate this event but will have to settle for being there in spirit. We will always be grateful to Robby for organizing the Floyd B. Parks reunions. Without them we would never have met some of the many others who served in that fine ship as well as seeing those who served during my time aboard.

Gene, you are one of those people these reunions gave us the opportunity to meet, to know and to call a friend. From your crew we learned what a fine commanding officer you were and about the leadership qualities you possessed. The opportunity to be around you has confirmed these opinions. You had many achievements not only while CO of the Parks but also in the other segments of your Navy and civilian careers. I would have been proud to have served under your inspired leadership. It is nice to be able to call you a friend.

Darla and I wish you all the best, Gene. Hopefully our paths will cross again. We will stay in touch.

- **Keith Knoblock**

Congratulations to you Gene on the celebration of your 90th Birthday! It's been a great experience for Nancy and I to know you and we are grateful for your friendship. We wish you the very best on this, your special birthday!!

- **Kevin and Nancy Reidy**

Happy Birthday Captain,  
Wish I could join you for your 90th. Always enjoy seeing you. Many great memories from the reunions past and hopefully we'll enjoy a Scotch together this September. I will have a Scotch in your honor on your Birthday Sir. Take care and Happy Birthday Captain.

Regards

- **John and Nancy Hall**

Happy Birthday Captain Erner so many great memories that will last a lifetime so glad our paths got to cross again, many thanks to you for being our Captain and friend and bringing us back home safely from Jane and myself and my family, you made a impression on so many lives.

Happy Birthday from

- **Don and Jane Porter 70-73**

Happy birthday Capt. Erner , hope I'm lucky enough to see 90.  
I served under 3 different commanders aboard the USS Floyd B, Parks , and I will say Capt., Erner was one of the most fair and approachable commanders I can remember. He has always been a joy to have at our reunions and we hope to see more of him in the future.

Cheers !!!

- **ETN3 Scuria**

Happy Birthday Skipper,

It was an honor to have you as my first Captain and a friend for the past 50 years. I learned a lot about Leadership from you as a Junior Officer and appreciate the leeway you gave me in running the Supply Department. I have very fond memories of our time together on The Parks. Later in our careers you always took the time to reach out to me and Peg whenever your path crossed with ours. We wish you many more healthy and happy years to come. I salute The Captain of the Super Frame USS FLOYD B PARKS!

- **Peg and Bill Schmidt**



**WWII Museum in New Orleans 2019**

The USS Floyd B. Parks was my first ship and you were my second Skipper. After we returned from the 72/73 WESTPAC, I was a young STG2 with an attitude, and you helped solve the problem with a well deserved reduction to STG3. Your leadership both during the tough times off North and South Vietnam and after our return to San Diego served as an example to me during the rest of my enlisted service and subsequent commissioned service. You are one of the main reasons we still have an active USS Floyd B Parks Association.

Happy 90th

BZ

Fair Winds And Following Seas

- **Jim Smith**





**Having a little fun in New Orleans**



**Washington DC reunion**

Captain Erner Your birthday is a big one. We wish you well and a very Happy Birthday!! It was great to serve with you, and your crew. I was lucky to be a part of the journey on the Parks. I came to the Floyd B on a no cost sailor swap from Norfolk, Virginia. There are many good memories, and you were part of it. Just glad I can look back and be thankful for my navy days. Also, I'm thankful to be an Honored Member of the illustrious crew that Deactivated the USS Floyd B. Parks [DD-884]. Have a fine Decommissioning Certificate, as a Sailor of The Sargasso Sea. And many thanks for the Fresno Bee article about the decommissioning of the Parks & Buckley at the Quay Wall, DESRON 23. You commanded the 'Old Girl' very well! I hope God gives you many blessings, and that you have a Happy Birthday!!!

**- Larry and Linda Larson**



From the New Orleans Reunion 2019

# USS Floyd B. Parks DD - 884



2019

SHIP'S OFFICERS



Have a GREAT one Captain. Welcome to the ninety years or older clan, if the good Lord sees fit & the creek don't rise my often-abused body will turn 91 in eight days.

- Tom Wyatt (Parks 48-56)





Dear Gene,

What a wonderful milestone--how blessed you are! I know your energy has strongly influenced so many who looked to you for guidance and wisdom over the years. Ray and I always looked forward to catching up with you at the reunions.

May you celebrate your 90th with the strength and vigor that has carried you the last 9 decades. A standing ovation is in order! As the saying goes, "Just like classic cars and wine, some things get better with age!" Have the greatest of birthdays and cheers to another year of good health and happy times. Enjoy this very momentous occasion.

Warm regards,

**- Kathy Smith, wife of Ray (FB Parks '67-'69)**

Dear Captain Erner:

As you celebrate your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, I'd like to extend this greeting to you on your special day! As the years roll by, I find myself reflecting more and more on my time in the Navy, particularly the sea tours. I was privileged to serve in three destroyers, a DD (Parks) and two DDGs. I'll admit that I treasure the memories of the days when I was a "destroyer man and ship driver".

As fond as my memories of serving in those commands are, it is my time in the Parks that occupies front and center in my mind's eye. I have never experienced a greater sense of purpose, responsibility, and camaraderie than during my tour in Parks and West Pac 72. It was an incredibly demanding time for all hands – shooting fire missions all day while refueling, replenishing, and rearming all night to be on station and ready for the next day's missions.

And then, there were the nights "up North" hearing "Tinshop, this is Argentina" on the secure circuit and all that involved. In any informed person's judgment, Parks performed in exemplary fashion during that cruise.

The Parks' fine performance was not an accident. Every man and every officer knew his job and performed it well time after time. However, I believe there was something more to it than the collective competence of the officers and crew. I believe that "something" was your leadership. The confidence you instilled along with your calm and assuring demeanor under all conditions elicited outstanding performance from us all. I am truly proud and honored to have served under your command and to have experienced your inspiring leadership. So, even after 50 years, spanning all that time and the events in our lives since, please know that there's a shipmate out here who remembers what you did, how you led and how you made us all better. Gay and I wish you a very Happy Birthday! Congratulations and enjoy your special day!

Sincerely,  
**- Dave and Gay Whitman**

Captain Erner, I want to wish you a very happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. You are truly blessed to be able to spend this day with family and friends amid your many memories and the satisfaction of a life well lived. The list of the people whose lives you have touched and inspired is long and I'm happy to count myself as part of that group. I wish you good health and many more birthdays to celebrate in the future.

I was searching for an appropriate memory of our time together on the PARKS to share with you and finally decided to send you an unsigned poem that was written around Christmas, 1972, in grease pencil on the maneuvering board on the bridge. It's doubtful you ever saw it as it was erased quickly. The bridge on a warship in a war zone has other priorities. I believe the poem captures some of the emotions of a crew engaged in Linebacker operations and with the GOLDSBOROUGH tragedy part of its recent memory. Fortunately, I was able to copy it and put it in my FB PARKS folder (yes, I have one) where it has remained for almost 50 years.

Christmas in the Tonkin Gulf (with apologies to Robert Frost)

Whose ship this is I think I know,  
He'll be home for Christmas though.  
He cannot know, try as he might,  
What it's like to shoot all night.

The Boatswain Mate must think it queer,  
This year there will be no Christmas cheer,  
Between Hon Gio and Hon La Isles,  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his coffee cup a shake,  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
But, alas, no Santa, no sleigh bells,  
The reindeer flee from CD shells.

The Gulf is lovely, dark and deep,  
And I have Christmas day to sleep,  
And miles to go before I see,  
The welcome sight of 1SD.

With all best wishes,  
- **Dennis Moran**

( Chuck Bussell's message to Pam)

It has been a wonderful highlight of my life to have known your father, Capt. Gene Erner! In the short time that I served in the Navy, I served under five different Captains. He was absolutely the BEST!

While we served off VietNam, he always requested more assignments even though we were an older ship. Under his leadership, we always met our commitments.

He gave his officers the opportunities that they needed to improve their skills and abilities including underway replenishment or getting the ship underway.

I was given the task of getting Floyd B underway from Pearl. We did not know at the time that it would be the last time she got underway. It was a difficult maneuver as I had to put the bow against the pier as I swung the stern out in order to back into the channel.

Once in the channel, we had to maneuver to the open ocean, aligning the ranges so as to keep from running aground. I did not have them perfect, but close. We, of course did not run aground, but I felt bad about it for years. Until at a reunion, he told me that what I did was fine. This exemplified to me that not only is he a fine person, but a compassionate and outstanding leader.

I am so grateful that he has been to our reunions getting to know his wonderful personality. At one reunion, I asked him about the blue camo uniform that the Navy had adapted. He told me that it was great as it would turn orange if a sailor happened to fall overboard. OK, what a great retort!

I appreciate that he was so outgoing that my guest, Linda, enjoyed his company and dancing with him! This has become a memorable part of our reunion experiences! Pam, your Dad, has provided so many wonderful exchanges and memories for so many people. We are all so very grateful!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Captain Gene Erner!!!

**- Chuck Bussell**



*PROGRAM*

*Musical Selections*

COMCRUDESPEC BAND

\*\*\*\*\*

*National Anthem*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Invocation*

Lieutenant Commander T. O. ATWOOD, CHC, USNR

\*\*\*\*\*

*Remarks by*

Chief of Staff, Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla ELEVEN  
Captain F. C. COLLINS, USN

\*\*\*\*\*

*Farewell Remarks and Reading of Orders by*

Lieutenant Commander A. H. MITCHELL, Jr., USN  
Commanding Officer, USS DENNIS J. BUCKLEY (DD 808)

Commander E. J. ERNER, USN  
Commanding Officer, USS FLOYD B. PARKS (DD 884)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Decommissioning of United States Ships*

DENNIS J. BUCKLEY (DD 808)  
FLOYD B. PARKS (DD 884)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Presentation of Commission Pennants and National Colors by  
Senior Enlisted and Command Duty Officers*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Acceptance of the Ex-United States Ships*

DENNIS J. BUCKLEY (DD 808)  
FLOYD B. PARKS (DD 884)

by the Accepting Authority

\*\*\*\*\*

*Benediction*

Lieutenant Commander T. O. ATWOOD, CHC, USNR

**DECOMMISSIONING PROGRAM – PROVIDED BY RANDY SCURIA  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM THE ASSOCIATION!!**