

## **DAVID RALPH PARKER, JR.**

**Today I am privileged to write about one of my “heroes”—a double hero as a matter of fact. Dave Parker answered the call immediately after Pearl Harbor and as a Naval Officer participated in the landings in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and Normandy. If you recall, we were not welcomed warmly in any of those places. That accounts for hero#1 and it seems appropriate that I would be writing this profile while aboard ship in the South Pacific.**

**Dave is a native North Carolinian as were his parents before him. His father was raised in Hertford in Eastern North Carolina and was the youngest of eleven children. There are still a lot of Parkers in Eastern Carolina. His mother was the former Eunice Anderson who was the eldest of seven children. Dave had lots of aunts and uncles! His father was in the furniture business in High Point and Dave was born and raised there. His mother taught school at the Normal School for girls, which eventually became UNC-Greensboro. Dave was the third child in the Parker family and has two older sisters and a younger sister.**

**Dave’s father and mother were graduates of Guilford College and his father was a Trustee of that institution. Dave entered college at Guilford at the age of 16 and graduated with a degree in economics in 1941. After graduation he went to work for the E.F. Craven Construction Company (for \$.30/Hr). They were in the construction equipment business and a dealer for Detroit Diesel. He remained with E.F. Craven until 1965 with some time out from 1942-1945 for some extra curricular activities.**

**After Pearl Harbor he joined the Navy V-7 program and was sent to Ohio State for Diesel school. He was commissioned an Ensign and sent to Amphib School at Little Creek, Va. Things were moving fast and he found himself Landing Craft Officer on LCI-211, a 157 ft. ship manned by three officers and twenty-three men. He entered the war as Engineering Officers of LCI-211 and he was the Commanding Officer when the ship was turned over to the British after the invasion of Normandy.**

**LCI-211 joined a major convoy that landed in Algeria. After the German collapse in Africa, he participated in landings in Salerno, Sicily, then Anzio, Italy and finally at Normandy in France. These landings were all opposed and difficult campaigns. At Normandy his ship was on the right flank of the invasion force and carried some of the troops that secured Pont-Du-Hoc.**

**Dave returned to the States in December of 1944. Before his departure in 1942 he had become engaged to Mary, a classmate at Guilford College, and they were married shortly after his return. He was discharged in 1945 and returned to the Craven Company where he progressed to become V.P. of Sales. David and Mary had five children, four sons and a daughter. Two sons are medical doctors, one is a psychologist, and one is a yacht broker. His daughter teaches school in Wilmington. His children have provided him 12 grandchildren.**

**In 1959 Dave and a few of his friends had an idea that building yachts could be a good business. They provided the capital and the business was started. Five years later the President of the company passed away and the investors convinced Dave that he should step in and run this new company. Dave became President of Hatteras Yachts in 1965 and held that position until he retired in 1985. The yachts were being built at High Point and moved by truck to the coast. As yachts became bigger there was a need to build yachts on the coast so Hatteras built a facility in New Bern, NC for that purpose. When it was completed it was the largest yacht building facility in the world.**

**From 1985-1990 Dave managed the Rue Hatteras Dealership in Stuart, FL and he fully retired and moved to Wilmington in 1990.**

**Music has always been important in Dave's life. He played trombone while in school, sang in his church choir, sang in the Messiah, and toured as a member of the Guilford a capella choir. In the Navy he was a member of the Midshipmen's Choir where he sang in Norman Vincent Peale's Riverside church in New York. He loved singing in pick-up quartets.**

**Dave's wife Mary passed away in 1995, and shortly after her passing Dave joined the Cape Fear Chordsmen. This is where Dave became my hero for the second time. He was 75 years old but he had a wonderful voice and a flawless ear. He taught that great voice to blend and to be the foundation of a quartet and an anchor of the Chordsmen bass section. He formed "Beach Music" with Richard Millard, Andre Brillaud and Tom Head. This quartet practices weekly, enjoys the hobby immensely and has performed more "gigs" in the last six or seven years than all the rest of the Chordsmen quartets put together. Dave has recently relinquished his position in Beach Music to Lou Leiner but he still performs with them on occasion and he continues to be a stalwart in the bass section. It is a pleasure to sing near him because he is always on pitch and always knows the words and notes.**

**David married Francis and they are both extremely active in many organizations that benefit our community. Mother Hubbard Cupboard is one organization that benefits enormously from the involvement of Dave and Francis. Dave doesn't do much yachting these days and he retired from tennis, but he still holds his own on the golf course and is always available to sing a tag! We are privileged to count Dave Parker among the terrific guys that make the Cape Fear Chordsmen such a great organization.**