



# USS *Joyce* (DE-317)

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*Edsall* Class Destroyer Escort

Builder: Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, Orange, Texas

Commissioned: 30 September 1943

Decommissioned: 1 May 1946 (USCG crew removed)

Disposition: Reclassified and converted DER-317 on 13 September 1950 and recommissioned on 28 February 1951 (Navy crew). She was decommissioned for the final time on 17 June 1960 and was sold for scrap on 11 September 1973.

Displacement: 1,253 tons standard; 1,102 tons full load

Length: 306' oa

Beam: 36'7"

Draft: 10' 5' full load

Machinery: 2-shaft Fairbanks Morse diesels, 6,000 bhp

Range: 10,800 nm at 12 knots

Top Speed: 21 knots

Complement: 186

Armament: 3 x 3"/50; 2 x 40mm; 8 x 20mm; 3 x 21" torpedo tubes; 2 depth charge tracks; 8 depth charge projectors; 1 hedge hog.

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The USS *Joyce* was named for Philip Michael Joyce. He was born 23 October 1920 in St. Louis, Missouri and enlisted in the Navy 11 July 1940. Selected for an appointment as a midshipman during his preliminary training, he was commissioned Ensign, 28 February 1941. He served on seaplane tender *Langley* (AV-3) until 10 August when he reported to destroyer *Peary* (DD-226) for duty in the Pacific. Following the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan, *Peary* suffered heavy damage during an enemy air attack while moored at Cavite, Philippines, 10 December. Despite this and two subsequent attacks, *Peary* reached Darwin, Australia, effected repairs and commenced antisubmarine patrols. While anchored in Darwin Harbor 19 February 1942, she was destroyed by five bombs which struck her during a devastating enemy raid. Though fighting to the end, *Peary* went down; and ENS *Joyce* perished in a holocaust that only one officer and 30 men survived.

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## Commanding Officers:

LCDR Robert Wilcox, USCG: 30 September 1943 - 5 October 1944

LCDR Benjamin P. Clark, USCG: 5 October 1944 - 14 August 1945

LCDR Hubert G. all, USCGR: 14 August 1945 - 18 December 1945

LCDR John F. Thompson, Jr., USCG: 18 December 1945 - 3 January 1946

LT Charles W. Scharff, USCG: 3 January 1946 - 26 March 1946

LCDR Emmett P. O'Hara, USCG: 26 March 1946 - 1 May 1946

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## Official Coast Guard History:

The Coast Guard-manned destroyer escort USS *Joyce* (DE-317) was built by the Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation in Orange, Texas, and was commissioned under the command of LCDR Robert Wilcox on 30 September 1943. After brief calls at Galveston and New Orleans, for fitting out, the *Joyce*, in October, 1943, underwent four weeks of shakedown and training exercises at Bermuda. She was then assigned to Escort Division 22.

On 2 December 1943, she sailed from Norfolk as part of the escort of a convoy bound for the Mediterranean. The crossing was made without incident. The escorts screened the troop and cargo ships through the Straits of Gibraltar, transferred them to a British escort group and put in at Casablanca. On the westward trip to New York the *Joyce* encountered the worst and most prolonged storm of her career.

Following intensive training at Casco Bay, Maine in late February, 1944, Escort Division 22 assembled, consisting of the Flagship USS *Pooler* (DE-151), with the *Peterson* (DE-152), *Harveson* (DE-316), *Joyce*, *Kirkpatrick* (DE-DE-318), and *Leopold* (DE-319), all of which were manned by Coast Guard personnel. These were to help guard fast convoys between the United States and United Kingdom. On the night of 9 March 1944, 400 miles south of Iceland, the *Leopold*, while investigating a radar target, was torpedoed amidships, and later broke in two and sank. The *Joyce*, four miles distant at the time, was designated rescue ship. Twice, while dead in the water picking up the 28 survivors, the *Joyce* got underway precipitately to evade torpedoes, the screws of which were detected by sonar. Eleven of the crew received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, and the commanding officer, LCDR Wilcox, and two men received commendations from the commander in chief, Atlantic Fleet, for their outstanding performance of duty on this occasion.

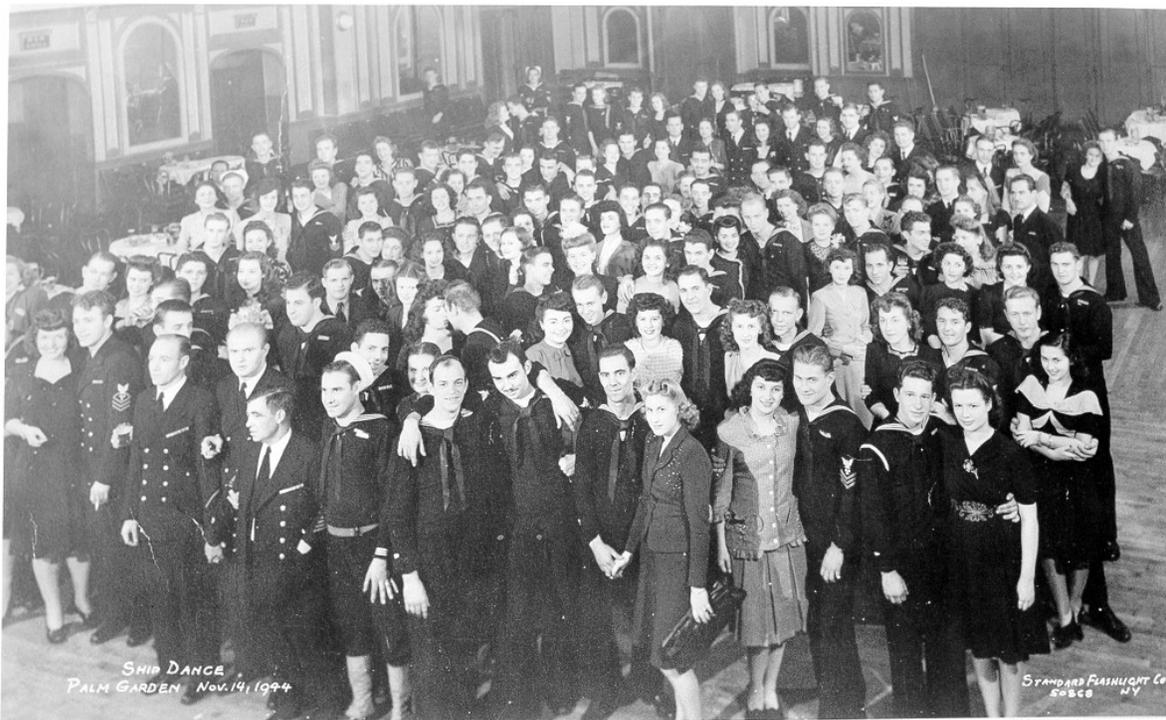
An opportunity to retaliate for the loss of the *Leopold* was afforded the Division on the next outward voyage. On the morning of 16 April 1944, while taking her station in the convoy, the SS *Pan Pennsylvania*, one of the world's largest gasoline tankers, was torpedoed and set aflame. After picking up thirty-one survivors, including the master, the *Joyce* located the submarine [U-550] by sonar and brought it to the surface with one pattern of eleven depth charges. With the aid of the *Peterson* and the Navy-manned USS *Gandy* (DE-764; *Leopold's* replacement), the submarine's guns were quickly subdued. Her crew thereupon abandoned and scuttled her. Thirteen of the submarine's company were picked up by the *Joyce*, including the commanding officer, although one later died of wounds he received during the fire-fight. LCDR Wilcox received the Legion of Merit and the USSR Order of the Fatherland War, 1st Class, and LT John L. Bender, USCGR, Nelson W. Allen, SOM 2/c, USCGR, and Winston T. Coburn, SOM 2/x, USCGR, received the Bronze Star Medal. The *Joyce* made eleven round trips across the Atlantic, celebrating VE Day in mid-ocean on her last return voyage. Her ports of call were Casablanca (12/22/43), Londonderry (3/11/44; 4/26/44; 6/10/44; 7/21/44), Loch Ewe, Scotland and Londonderry (8/31/44), Liverpool (10/17/44); Glasgow, Scotland (12/4/44); Falmouth, England (1/21/45); Portsmouth (1/25/45); Le Havre, France (3/11/45); Southampton (3/12/45); and Birkenhead, England (4/28/45).

While the ship was fitting out at Bayonne, New Jersey, on 19 May 1945, *Joyce* crewman Walter G. Ruding, F 1/c, USCGR, with considerable risk, rescued a yard worker from drowning. He was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. The *Joyce*, with Escort Division 22, departed New York on 4 June 1945 for the Pacific Area, undergoing training en route at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. V-J Day found the *Joyce* still at Pearl Harbor. Her first Pacific mission was the escorting of troop carriers for the initial occupation landing at Sasebo, Japan, on 22 September 1945. While engaged in her second Pacific mission, the escort of troops from Manila to Wakayama, Japan, the *Joyce* was ordered home and sailed from Leyte Gulf on 1 November 1945 for New York, where she arrived on December 10th. Her last voyage was to Green Cove Springs, Florida, where she arrived 21 January 1946, to join the Inactive Reserve Fleet. Here her Coast Guard crew was removed 1 May 1946.

Her ports of call after leaving New York on her Pacific mission were Guantanamo, Cuba (6/10/45); Coco Solo, Canal Zone (6/22/45); San Diego, California (7/1/45); Pearl Harbor, T. H. (7/11/45); Saipan, Marshall Islands (9/11/45); Sasebo, Japan (9/22/45); Leyte, P. I. (10/2/45); Manila, P. I. (10/21/45); Leyte, P. I. (11/2/45); Pearl Harbor, T. H. (11/15/45); San Diego, California (11/23/45); Coco Solo, Canal Zone (12/3/45); New York (12/10/45); and Green Cove Springs, Florida (1/24/46).

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**Photographs:**



"Ship Dance, Palm Garden, Nov. 14, 1944."; Photo No. 50868; photo by Standard Flashlight Co., NY.

The crew of the *Joyce* at a ship's dance on the night of 14 November 1944 at the Palm Garden, New York.

Photo provided courtesy of Charles Friend.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown (copy negative of original photo, "10th Fleet Assessment #5992", now at NARA).

The *U-550* surfaces after being depth charged by the *Joyce*. Her victim, the tanker *SS Pan Pennsylvania*, burns in the background, 16 April 1944.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown (copy negative of original photo, "10th Fleet Assessment #5992", now at NARA).

The *U-550* on the surface after being depth charged by *Joyce* and taken under fire by *Joyce* and the other DEs . Her victim, the tanker *SS Pan Pennsylvania*, burns in the background, 16 April 1944. Note the German crewman gathered on the U-boat's conning tower.



"SINKING OF GERMAN SUBMARINE U-550 (Type IXC40), 16 April 1944. Crewman of U-550 abandon ship after being depth charged, rammed and shelled by escorts of an Atlantic convoy she attacked. Photographed from USS Joyce (DE-317), which rescued 13 of her survivors. Joyce had a Coast Guard crew."; NP 26-G-2556; photographer unknown.



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown (copy negative of original photo now at NARA).



"LAST PLUNGE OF A NAZI RAIDER: U.S. Coast Guardsmen aboard a destroyer escort watch the fatal plunge of a German submarine which was trapped in the Atlantic by American DEs and depth-charged to the bottom. The DEs were Coast Guard and Navy-manned. The Coast Guard ships hauled in 12 German seamen, foundering in the sea, after their undersea vessel had 'tailed up' and vanished forever."; 16 April 1944; CG Photo No. 2551; photographer unknown.



A photo provided by CAPT Robert Wilcox, USCG (Ret.), *Joyce's* commanding officer during her battle with the *U-550*. CAPT Wilcox wrote the following description on the back of the photo:  
"Funeral services on board USS *Joyce* (DE-319) in North Atlantic Ocean, 18 April 1943, for ex-German Navy Machinist Wanz who died aboard *Joyce* from wounds received in fire fight between *U-550* and USS *Joyce*, Gandy and Peterson on 16 April 1944.  
Crewmembers of *Joyce* and *U-550* attended ceremony conducted by C.O. of *Joyce*, LCDR Robert Wilcox, USCG, on voluntary basis. It was well attended. Former *U-550* crew members are off camera below U.S. flag-draped body."



No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown (copy negative of original photo, "10th Fleet Assessment #5992", now at NARA).

Photo of five of the 13 survivors of *U-550* aboard *Joyce*. One of the 13, a "Machinist Wanz," died of wounds he received during the battle.

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#### **DANFS History:**

USS JOYCE (DE-317) was laid down 8 March 1943 by the Consolidated Steel Corp., Orange, Tex.; launched 26 May 1943; sponsored by Mrs. Harold T. Joyce, mother of Ensign Joyce; and commissioned 30 September 1943, Lt. Comdr. R. Wilcox, USCG, in command. After shakedown off Bermuda, JOYCE joined Escort Division 22 for trans-Atlantic convoy escort duty. Sailing from Norfolk 4 December 1943, she helped escort a 100 ship convoy to North Africa. She returned to New York from Casablanca 31 January 1944, then departed 1 March as part of the escort for a fast convoy bound for Londonderry, Northern Ireland. While steaming 400 miles south of Iceland on the night of 9 March, JOYCE braved two attacks from a German U-boat to rescue 28 survivors from the stricken destroyer escort LEOPOLD (DE-319), which was torpedoed while investigating a radar contact. JOYCE steamed at top speed for Londonderry and, arriving 11 March, transferred LEOPOLD's wounded.

A week later, she departed for New York in company with a westbound convoy, which reached the East Coast 28 March. JOYCE departed New York 15 April for her second escort run to Northern Ireland. While screening for a straggler the following morning she was ordered to direct rescue operations for the gasoline tanker SS PAN PENNSYLVANIA, which was torpedoed and set aflame while taking station in the convoy. After picking up 31 survivors, including the tanker's captain, JOYCE detected a submarine by sonar at 0950 and pressed home an attack. She dropped a deadly pattern of 13 depth charges which forced U-550 to the surface, bow first, some 2,000 yards to her stern. A screening escort, GANDY (DE-764), opened fire and rammed the after section of the U-boat. JOYCE, GANDY, and PETERSON (DE-152) shelled the submarine, silenced her deck guns and forced the hapless U-550 to surrender. JOYCE ordered the Germans to abandon ship, but before a boarding party could seize the captured prize, the Germans scuttled her. Only 40 minutes after JOYCE had detected her, she plunged stem first beneath the waves. JOYCE rescued and took prisoner 13 survivors, including the U-boat's skipper, escorted the

convoy safely to Londonderry 26 April, and returned in convoy to the United States where she arrived New York 12 May.

During the next year, JOYCE conducted eight more escort voyages for convoys bound from New York to Great Britain; she returned to New York from her last convoy run 13 May 1945. JOYCE departed New York 4 June and steamed for ASW and gunnery training with units of Escort Division 22 in the Caribbean. Sailing from Guantanamo Bay 20 June, she transited the Panama Canal the 23d and steamed via San Diego for Pearl Harbor where she arrived 11 July for duty with the Pacific Fleet.

She conducted ASW exercises in the Hawaiian operating area until 28 August when she sailed for Saipan Island and Sasebo, Japan, as escort for a convoy of amphibious landing ships. Upon her arrival at Sasebo 22 September, she escorted a convoy of LSTs to the Philippine Islands 3 days later, arriving Leyte Gulf 2 October. She remained in the Philippines on escort duty throughout October and sailed from Guinan, Samar, 4 November with 29 returning veterans for Pearl Harbor. Arriving the 15th, she continued to San Diego 17 November; upon her arrival the 23d she debarked her passengers and received orders to report for duty with the Atlantic Fleet.

Sailing from San Diego the 25th, she passed through the Canal 3 December and put into New York harbor on the 10th. JOYCE remained at New York for an inactivation overhaul until 21 January 1946 when she departed for a 3 day voyage to Green Cove Springs, Fla. She remained there and decommissioned 1 May to become a unit of the Florida Group, Atlantic Inactive Reserve Fleet.

With the outbreak in June 1950 of Communist aggression in South Korea, JOYCE was recalled to active duty; taken to Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, Calif., where she converted to a radar picket escort (DER-317) ; and recommissioned 28 February 1951, Lt. Comdr. J. P. McGrady, in command. Following shakedown along the California coast, she departed 12 May for duty with the Atlantic Fleet; arriving Newport, R.I., 21 June, she joined Escort Squadron 10 and commenced picket duty. She participated in air defense exercises along the New England coast and during the next 8 months made three barrier picket patrols along the Atlantic coast from Newfoundland to Puerto Rico. She steamed from Newport 19 February 1952 in company with Escort Squadron 10 bound for practice barrier patrols in the Caribbean. Cruising the Caribbean from Panama to Trinidad, she returned to Newport 20 March and joined Escort Squadron 16.

After conducting ASW tactics with submarine COBBLER (SS-344) in the Virginia Capes Operating Area, she departed Newport 30 June, joined the Eastern Air Defense Force, and commenced radar barrier station patrols to protect North America from surprise attack. Interrupted only by overhauls and refresher training, these picket patrols continued for 5 years; JOYCE ranged the Atlantic from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland to the Virginia Capes and the West Indies. Departing Newport 17 July 1957, JOYCE sailed with her squadron for duty in the Pacific and, via the Dominican Republic, Panama, and San Diego, arrived Pearl Harbor 18 August. Following 6 weeks of training, she commenced radar picket and ASW patrols from Pearl Harbor to Midway Atoll and the Marshall Islands. She departed Pearl 13 May 1958 and sailed for Eniwetok Atoll where she conducted search and rescue operations at the Eniwetok Proving Grounds Area. Returning to Pearl Harbor 17 June, she resumed her picket patrols until 16 March 1960 when she set sail for the West Coast. Arriving Long Beach 22 March, she entered the Naval Shipyard for inactivation overhaul. JOYCE decommissioned 17 June 1960 and was assigned to the Long Beach Group, U.S. Pacific Fleet Reserve. JOYCE later transferred to the San Diego, Calif., Group, where she remains. JOYCE received one battle star for World War II service.

Stricken from the Navy Register on 1 December 1972, JOYCE was sold for scrap on 11 September 1973.

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**Source:**

From the "Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships," (1968) Vol. 3, p. 571.

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