

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

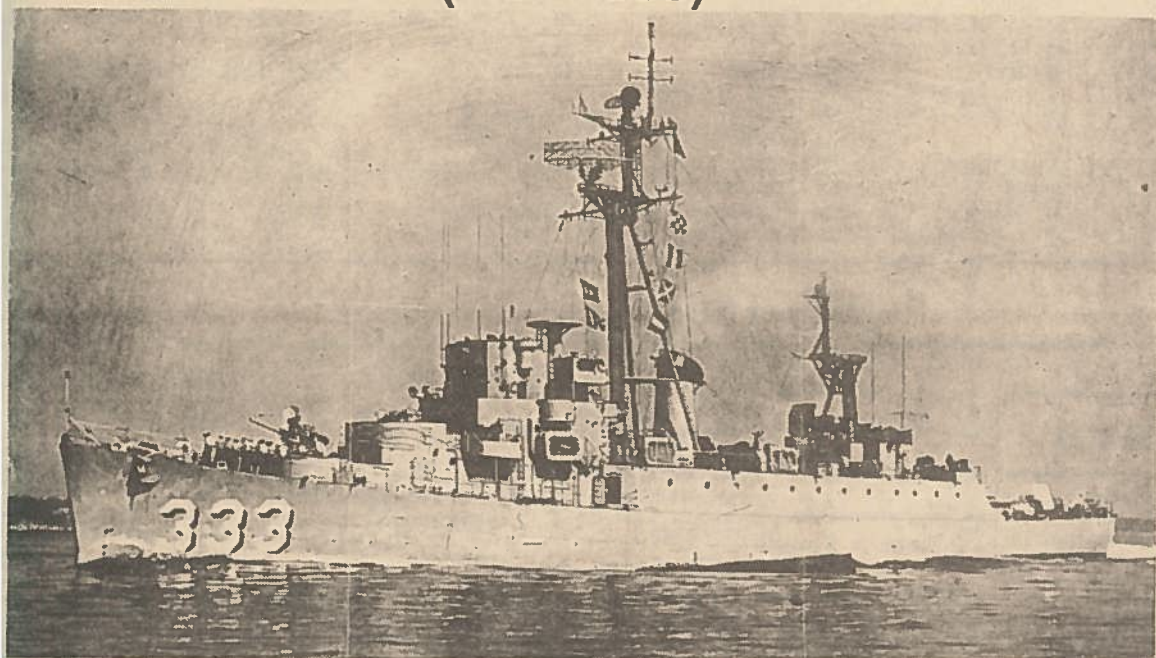
C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XIV

12-2-92

No. 46

## U.S.S. STRICKLAND (DE - 333)



Everett Carlton Strickland, born July 6, 1918, in Waterport was the only Orleans County resident to ever be honored by having a ship named for him in the United States Navy. This history of the Destroyer Escort STRICKLAND has been made possible through the assistance of John D. Pratt, Jr., retired director of the Orleans County Veterans Service Agency.

Ensign Strickland served on the ASTORIA and participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway before he was killed on August 9, 1942 when the ASTORIA was sunk in the Battle of Savo Island.

STRICKLAND was laid down on August 23, 1943 by the Consolidated Steel Corp., Orange, Texas; launched on November 2, 1943; sponsored by Mrs. Everett Strickland, the Ensign's mother; and commissioned on January 10, 1944, with Comdr. A.J. Hopkins in command.

STRICKLAND sailed for Bermuda on her shakedown cruise and thence to Norfolk, Va. She stood out of that port on March 24, 1944 in the screen of convoy consisting of 60 merchant ships and six LST's, en route to Bizerte. The voyage to Gibraltar was uneventful; but, once the Allied ships entered the Mediterranean, they were trailed by German Planes. The Luftwaffe struck late in the evening of April 11th when the convoy was off Cape Bengut, Algeria, with a force of approximately 25 planes making bombing and torpedo runs. STRICKLAND, on the starboard flank of the convoy, splashed a Junker that was making a strafing run on her. During the action, HOLDER (DE-401) was torpedoed and badly damaged. The ship's return to the United States was uneventful and she arrived at New York on May 11th.

STRICKLAND continued on the Norfolk to Bizerte run for five months and, in October, shifted to the North Atlantic lanes, escorting tankers and troop transports to England and France. She continued these runs until mid-May 1945 when she returned to New York to be refitted for duty in the Pacific. She stood out of New York on June 10th for a ten day training period at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and onward routing via the Panama Canal to Hawaii.

STRICKLAND arrived at Pearl Harbor on July 5th and was conducting training exercises when Japan capitulated. She escorted an aircraft carrier to Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, on August 29th, and accompanied three merchant ships from there to Japan, arriving in Tokyo Bay on October 1st. She sailed from there to Guam and, until January 1946, visited Iwo Jima, Truk, and Okinawa. She returned to San Diego on January 25,

1946 and was routed to the east coast for inactivation. STRICKLAND arrived in Philadelphia on February 11th and moved down to Charleston the following month. She remained at Charleston from March 10th to December 5th when she was towed to Green Cove Springs, Fla. The destroyer was decommissioned on June 15th and placed in reserve with the Atlantic Fleet.

In December 1950, the Navy decided to reactivate the ship and convert her into a radar picket escort ship. STRICKLAND was towed to Norfolk on March 29, 1951 for conversion. She was recommissioned as DER-333 on February 2, 1952. After a shakedown off Guantanamo Bay, the destroyer returned to Norfolk for availability from June 1 to 27th; and then reported to Escort Squadron 16 at Newport, R.I., where she began duty with the Eastern Air Defense Command. With her new and complex electronics installation, STRICKLAND worked hand-in-hand with the Air Force in a network of radar stations that were scanning the coasts of the United States. Operating from her home port, the ship served at various picket stations on the North Atlantic seaboard until October 1955 when she was overhauled at the New York Naval Shipyard. With updated radar equipment, STRICKLAND held training off Guantanamo Bay; then returned to Newport on March 18, 1956 for assignment to the picket line. During the summer of 1956, she had the distinction of being the first DER to man a regularly assigned picket station on the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line. She continued her picket duties in the Atlantic until July 1957.

On July 15th STRICKLAND, with four other DER's, stood out of Newport enroute to the Pacific. They arrived at Pearl Harbor, her new home port, on August 18th. The ship then began patrolling picket stations on the Pacific extension of the DEW Line. From October 2, 1957 to March 24, 1958, she was in Pearl Harbor. After installation of stronger radar and communications systems, she returned to her former duties on the barrier stations in the Pacific Ocean until ordered to return to the United States for inactivation. STRICKLAND was decommissioned on June 17th and assigned to the Reserve Fleet. She was struck from the Navy list on December 1, 1972.

STRICKLAND received one battle star for World War II service.

In the past few years former crew members of the STRICKLAND have held reunions. The 1991 gathering was in Wadsworth, Ohio and the 1992 reunion was held in Cumberland, Maryland.

Lysbeth A. Hoffman, O.M.H.  
Carlton Historian