

Seaman's Center - St. Nicholas Chapel
101 W. Seventh Street - San Pedro, California - Terminal 1-2562

CLIFFORD HORTON
Executive Director

January 9, 1959

The Rt. Hon. Cecil B. King
House Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman King:

For over 75 years the Seaman's Church Institute has served as a beacon light to the many thousands of merchant seamen who make Los Angeles a port of call. We have recently completed what is considered to be the most beautiful seaman's facility in the world. This facility includes a seamen's club and separate chapel.

According to our information, all branches of service in World War II have a shrine dedicated in their memory with the exception of the merchant marine. In appreciation to the many thousands of seamen who gave their lives in defense of our country it is the feeling of the Board of Directors of the Seaman's Church Institute that our beautiful chapel would make a most appropriate memorial. Therefore, we are requesting your earnest consideration in bringing a bill to Congress, creating the St. Nicholas Chapel of the Episcopal Seaman's Center as a national shrine to the merchant seamen who lost their lives in World War II.

Whatever is required to accomplish this purpose, you may rest assured that we will strive to supply. We are enclosing a fact sheet on the Center for your information.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Clifford Horton
Executive Director

Cliff
Enc.

FRANK CARWELL, President; W. J. HANCOCK, Vice President; CLIFFORD HORTON, Executive Director; ROSE MARA, Secretary; CHARLES SEACY, Treasurer

WORK AWAY FROM HOME FOR ACTIVE MERCHANT SEAMEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES
Funded, with assistance, by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Maritime Services, U.S. Maritime Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

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TO SECRETARY
FEB 20 1959
FOR SIGNATURE
ADVANCE COPY

FEB 27 1959

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Porter 2/17

FEB 27 1959

FEB 17 1959

Emst 2-18

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Dear Mr. King:

As requested in your letter of February 11 with enclosure from Mr. Clifford Horton of Los Angeles, California, we have considered the proposal to create a national shrine at the St. Nicholas Chapel of the Episcopal Seaman's Center.

Matters relating to the commemoration of the part played by the United States Armed Forces in World War II come under the jurisdiction of the American Battle Monuments Commission which is especially charged by law with this responsibility. It is suggested that Mr. Horton address his request to the Chairman of the Commission who is General George C. Marshall, and who may be reached at the Main Navy Building, 18th Street and Constitution Avenue, N. W., Washington 25, D. C.

Your courtesy in bringing Mr. Horton's suggestion to our attention is appreciated.

The original of his letter is being returned enclosed for your use.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Roger Emst

Assistant

Secretary of the Interior

Hon. Cecil R. King
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Copy to: DCCO
Asst. Sec., Pub. Land Mgmt.
Division of Legislation
/ Reg. Director, Reg. Four w/c of inc.
/ Mr. Ben Thompson w/c of inc.
/ Branch of History w/c of inc.
/ Dr. Porter (det.) w/c of inc.

Enclosures

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MAY 19 1959

Hon. Cecil R. King
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. King:

Careful consideration has been given to the proposal of Mr. Clifford Horton of San Pedro, California, to establish the St. Nicholas Chapel of the Episcopal Seamen's Center as a national shrine to the merchant seamen who lost their lives in World War II.

Following the receipt of your letter of April 18, the matter was laid before the Office of the Solicitor for National Parks which ruled that the nature of the proposal would give the American Battle Monuments Commission primary jurisdiction. We then discussed the proposal with the Office of Major General Thomas North, Secretary of the Commission, and learned that they do not contemplate a memorial church or chapel in this Country and that in any case they could not very well designate any existing church or chapel as a World War II memorial. Moreover, they prefer to commemorate the Armed Services as a whole rather than any branch of it, such as the merchant marine.

As it would appear that the St. Nicholas Chapel of the Seamen's Center could not qualify under the plans and program of the American Battle Monuments Commission, we reviewed the history of the Chapel and the Seamen's Center to see if it could meet criteria for establishment as a National Historic Site or National Monument in the National Park System. Our conclusion was that it does not possess the outstanding national historical importance that historical areas in the National Park System must possess. The American heritage in historic sites and buildings is a very rich one and of the many possible historic places or buildings, the Federal Government can afford to preserve and maintain only those of the highest degree of historical importance.

While it does not appear feasible for the Federal Government to designate the St. Nicholas Chapel or any other existing church as a national shrine in honor of the merchant marine seamen who lost their lives in World War II, there is nothing to prevent the Church congregation and the people of San Pedro, California, from

No Enclosure

dedicating special services and even the Church or Chapel itself toward that end. In fact, we believe it would be a fine thing if the congregation of the Chapel would do this.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) E. T. Scoyen

ASSOCIATE Director

Copy to: Major General Thomas North
Sec., American Battle Monuments Comm.
Regional Director, Region Four
Mr. Ben Thompson
Branch of History
Dr. Porter (det.)

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