

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES



Loyal Legion Vignettes



**COMMANDER SAMUEL DANA GREENE, USN
(1840 Maryland - 1884 New Hampshire)**

**By
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Samuel Dana Greene, Lieutenant

Source: The Mariners' Museum Collections

Samuel Dana Greene was born February 11, 1840 in Cumberland, Maryland the son of General George Sears Greene, a native of Rhode Island, and his second wife, Martha Barrett Dana, of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

On September 21, 1855, Samuel entered the navy as an "acting midshipman on probation at the Naval Academy" and graduated in 1859, seventh in a class of 20. Promoted midshipman and ordered to the *USS Hartford* on his graduation, he served on that ship in the East Indies and did not return home until after the outbreak of the Civil War and after his promotion to a lieutenancy on August 31, 1861.

Greene's claim to fame is based upon his connection with the *USS Monitor*, the first Federal ironclad and one of the most celebrated vessels of modern times. During her career of a little less than a year, he served as her only executive officer, under five different commanders; he stood on her deck when she was launched and left it a few minutes before she sank. In the early part of her engagement at Hampton Roads with the *CSS Merrimac* on March 9, 1862, Greene, then 22 years of age, had charge of the turret and also of the guns, every one of which he pointed and fired until he took command of the vessel when Lieutenant John L. Worden, her Commander, was wounded. On the retreat of the *CSS Merrimac*, Greene, after firing a few parting shots at her, withdrew to the *USS Minnesota* which he had orders to protect. The next day he was superseded as Commander by a superior officer. He was subsequently criticized for permitting the *CSS Merrimac* to escape. His conduct, however, was in accord with the orders of both President Lincoln and Assistant Secretary Fox, which confined the *USS Monitor* to a defensive role. Worden recommended him to the department for advancement and commended him for the "great courage, coolness, and skill" with which he handled the guns, and for his earnest devotion to duty throughout the engagement.

Greene was with the *USS Monitor* when she moved up the James River in connection with McClellan's advance upon Richmond and participated in her hard-fought action against Fort Darling. He also was with her when she foundered off Hatteras on the night of December 30-31, 1862. His meritorious conduct during this disaster was called to the attention of the Navy Department and of the Commander-in-Chief of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron by his superior officer. In 1863-1864, he was employed as executive officer of the *USS Florida* in chasing blockade-runners, and during the last year of the war in a similar capacity on the *USS Iroquois*, which was engaged in searching for Confederate commerce destroyers. He was promoted Lieutenant-Commander from August 11, 1865 and Commander, from December 12, 1872. For more than half of the period between 1866 and 1884, he was attached to the Naval Academy, serving, at different times, as instructor in mathematics, head of the department of astronomy, navigation, and surveying, assistant in charge of building and grounds, and senior aid to the superintendent. In 1868-1871, he saw service with the Pacific Squadron. He commanded the *USS Juniata* of the European Station, from 1875-1876; the training ship *USS Monongahela*, from 1876-1877; and the *USS Despatch* on special service, from 1882-1884.

His death, which was by his own hand, occurred on December 11, 1884 at the Portsmouth Navy Yard in New Hampshire where he was stationed as executive officer. The cause assigned for this act was anxiety over an article on the engagement between the *USS Monitor* and the *CSS Merrimac* that he was preparing for publication.

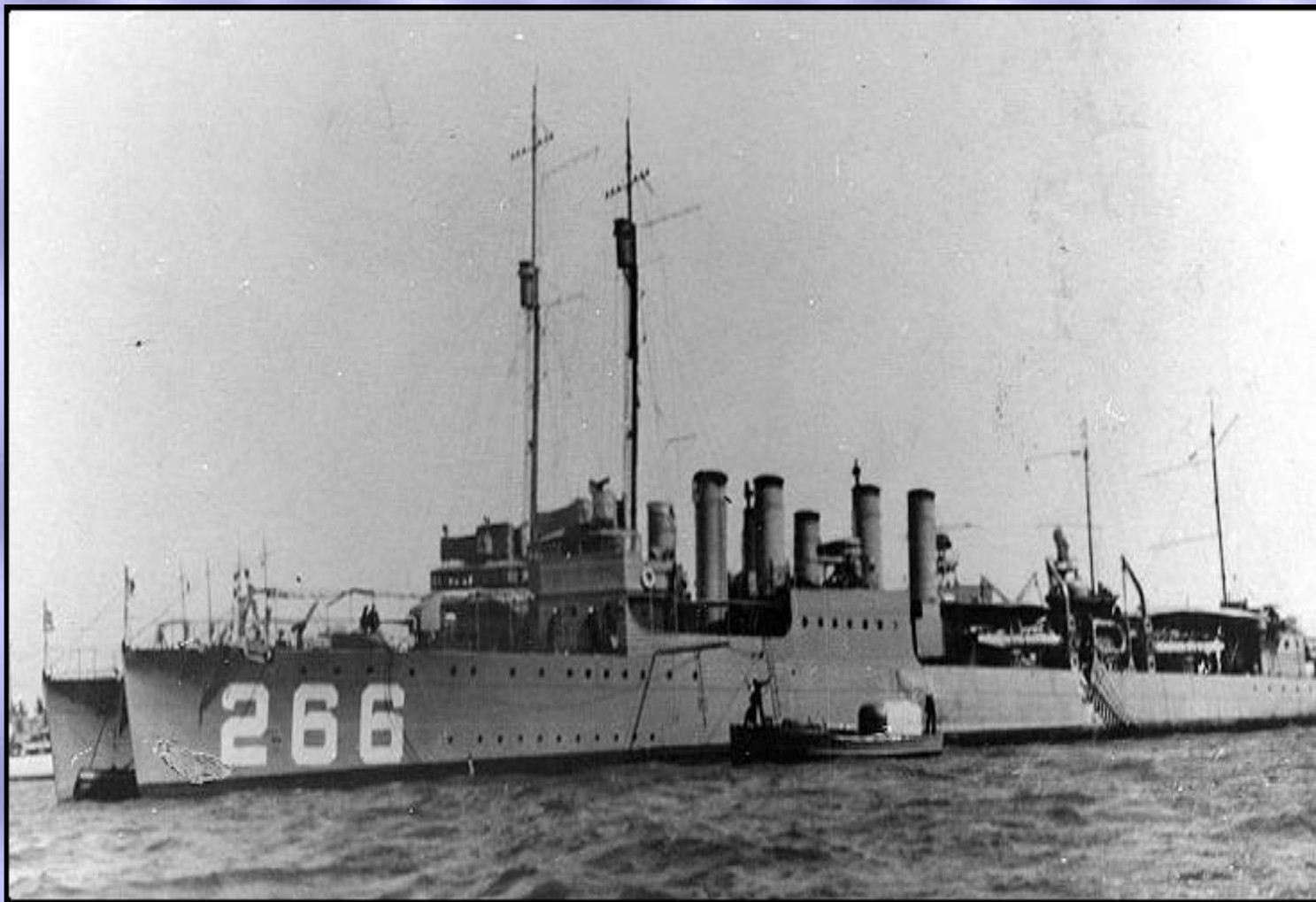
On October 9, 1863, he was married to Mary Willis Dearth of Bristol, Rhode Island, who died in 1874. The eldest of the three children born of this marriage, Samuel Dana Greene, Jr. (1864-1900), entered the Naval Academy and graduated in 1883 at the head of his class. The other children being Mary Richmond (Greene) Conover (1867-?) and Charles de Boketon Greene (1871-?). On November 8, 1876, Greene married a second time to Mary Abby Babbitt, also of Bristol, Rhode Island.

Samuel Dana Greene's father and brother were both Original Companions of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS); they being Brevet Major General George Sears Greene, Brigadier General, USV, NY#5520 and Brevet Major Charles Thurston Greene, 42nd US Infantry, NY#12003.

Descendants of Commander Samuel Dana Greene, and descendants of his siblings, are eligible for hereditary membership in the MOLLUS (founded by Civil War officers on April 15, 1865) and the Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States (founded in 1899 as the auxiliary to the MOLLUS). For more information on either or both organizations, please visit each organization's national website:

[Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

[Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)



USS Greene (DD-226)
circa 1919 - 1922

Source: Naval Historical Center, Photograph #NH70868

The *USS Greene*, a 1215-ton Clemson class destroyer, was built at Squantum, Massachusetts. Commissioned in May 1919 and named for Commander Samuel Dana Greene, she made a cruise to France and England in June and July, before transferring to the Pacific later in the year. In reserve from March 1920 until September of 1921, she was then briefly active along the west coast but decommissioned in June 1922 and remained in that status for the next 18 years.

With the World War II crisis threatening, the *USS Greene* recommissioned in June 1940, was converted to

a seaplane tender and redesignated AVD-13. She went to the Atlantic area in April 1941, supporting seaplanes in the Caribbean and off Brazil until mid-1942. the *USS Greene* operated as a convoy escort from then until late in 1943, also joining the escort carriers *Bogue* (CVE-9) and *Core* (CVE-13) on anti-submarine hunter-killer operations during the latter year. Her cruises with *Bogue* in April-June 1943 resulted in the sinking of three German U-boats and earned the *USS Greene* a Presidential Unit Citation.

The *USS Greene* reverted to the hull number DD-266 from December 1943 to February 1944. She was modified for future service as a high-speed transport during early 1944 and was redesignated APD-36 for that role. In April 1944, the *USS Greene* crossed the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, where she participated in the invasion of Southern France in August. Subsequent Mediterranean escort duties kept her occupied until December 1944, when returned to the United States for transfer to the Pacific.

Arriving in the Western Pacific in March 1945, the *USS Greene* performed escort and other anti-submarine tasks during the Okinawa operation and up to the Japanese capitulation in August. In September of that year, she evacuated former prisoners of war from Japan. A typhoon blew her ashore on Okinawa on October 9, 1945. The old ship was not worth repairing and the *USS Greene* decommissioned in November. Her hulk was destroyed in February 1946.

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Sources:

- 1) Membership Records of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.
- 2) Dictionary of American Biography, Volume 4, pages 573-574, c1931
- 3) US Naval Historical Center

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