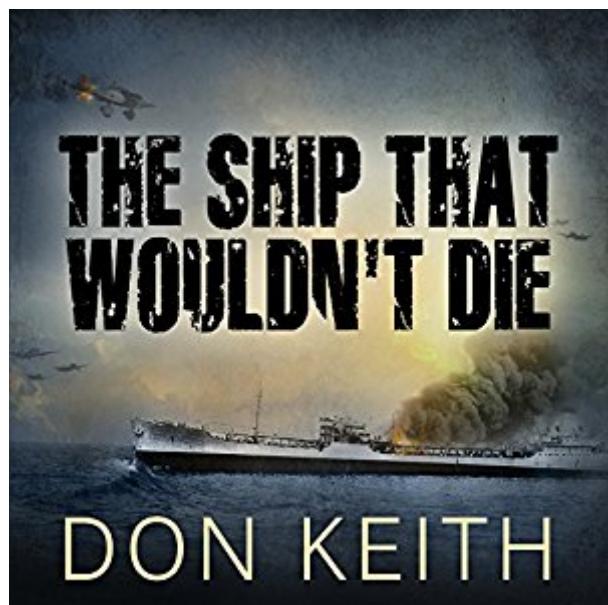


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# The Ship That Wouldn't Die: The Saga Of The USS Neosho - A World War II Story Of Courage And Survival At Sea



## Synopsis

In May 1942, Admiral Jack Fletcher's Task Force 17 closed in for the war's first major clash with the Japanese Navy. The Neosho, a vitally important tanker, was escorted by a destroyer, the Sims. The ships were attacked by Japanese dive bombers, and when the smoke cleared, the Sims had slipped beneath the waves. Scores of sailors were killed or wounded while hundreds bobbed in shark-infested waters. It was the beginning of a hellish four-day ordeal as the crew struggled to stay alive and keep their ship afloat, while almost 200 men in life rafts drifted away without water, food, or shelter. Only four of them would survive to be rescued after nine days. A tale of a ship as tough and resilient as its crew, *The Ship That Wouldn't Die* captures the indomitable spirit of the American sailor - and finally brings to the surface one of the great untold sagas of the Pacific War.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Don Keith is, by his own admission, a storyteller and not the technical historian we usually see in our history textbooks. The Story of the oil tanker Neosho, and her destroyer escort Sims is one that would not be more than one or two lines of any historical text, yet here this gripping saga of the men who lived, served, and died on these two ships is brought to life within the pages of the book. I would have liked to have seen also, the stories of the adversaries these men faced who thought that they would be sending an American carrier to its watery grave but instead faced a replenishment ship and her single escort. The Japanese nevertheless pressed the attack to a successful conclusion by sinking the Sims and mortally wounding the Neosho. Don Keith's recounting of not

only this savage battle, but also her near miraculous escape from destruction during the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor gives the book another dimension of the Neosho's history. A book not for the serious student of history but for those who wish to get a feel for the bravery of the everyday sailors of WWII.

In early May, 1942, the American and Japanese fleets met in the first carrier battle of the Pacific war in the Coral Sea. The oiler USS Neosho was part of the American task force. It was her job to provide oil for the ships as well as aviation gas for the carrier planes. After topping off the American ships, Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher ordered the Neosho and escort destroyer USS Sims to sail out of harm's way away from the coming battle. What happened next can only be considered pure bad luck, for the Japanese planes, in their search for the American carriers, stumbled upon the two American ships. For most of the day, the Neosho and Sims were attacked by scores of Japanese planes; the pilots who mistook the Neosho and Sims to be an aircraft carrier and cruiser. The Sims sank shortly after being attacked, while the Neosho remained on the surface for four more days. Many men jumped overboard after claiming to have heard the order to abandon ship. This order was never given. The actual order was to prepare to abandon ship. Nevertheless, scores of men jumped overboard into the oily, flaming sea. After four days, rescue finally arrived, but not before many men perished in the sea. Author Don Keith has done a very good job of telling the story of the Neosho and Sims. The Neosho, survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was truly a ship that wouldn't die, as evidenced by her remaining afloat for four days. She finally succumbed to shell fire from a rescuing destroyer. This book tells a harrowing tale of survival on the high seas and the heroic efforts of the U.S. Navy to locate the survivors. Highly recommended.

Don Keith is an excellent story teller. He gave enough detail so you could imagine what those men went through but not so much that it made you not want to read on. There were many more heroes than I could have imagined and I was a bit surprised to realize I was having a hard time putting down a book that described the way a relative of mine perished in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Finally, the full story of the Neosho, the ship my father served on at Pearl Harbor and in the battle of the Coral Sea. He was Seaman First Class OSWALD J. FRENETTE. He was a survivor or I would not be here to remember him. After the war he served as a recurring officer in Burlington, VT. I am so grateful that Don Keith took the time and effort to bring this story to life. It is a riveting read. Peter E. Frenettefrenette2@msn.com

This is a very vivid account of what people at war experience, and what many of them do not survive. People who have never seen combat or any military service will gain new understanding. Don Keith has a talent for centering on what "makes people tick," and this book is a fine example of that. It is the story of a ship that was as much of a die-hard as those who served aboard her.

Beyond expectations. Excellent book and gives a side not often heard of also - that about the support ships that carry the "gas" As it was, I was on vacation to Hawaii, and learned more about events about this ship on 07Dec.1941. You won't be disappointed.

This book offers a riveting portrayal of the men who served on board the Neosho, their courageous actions under extreme duress, and the grueling ordeal the survivors endured. But it offers a lot more than just the saga of the Neosho, it also goes into a fair amount of detail on many other aspects of the Battle of the Coral Sea as well, and how those events related to the Neosho and the sailors on board. Don Keith has a crisp, easy to read writing style that puts you right in the middle of the story, yet never resorts to fake sentimentality. He simply lets the events and the men speak for themselves, and boy do they speak! By the time I finished the book, I felt proud of these men, humbled by their actions, amazed at their strength, and reminded that it is our people who have made our country great.

Looks like a well written book by an author who seems to write more about WW2 submarines. This is one story I had not heard of and looking to reading it.

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