



# USS WILHOITE

DE-DER 397



## APRIL MAY JUNE NEWSLETTER - 2024

### HELP - HELP - HELP - HELP

I don't know if any of you have had a bad year, but so help me around here it has had been awful.

Starting out with a cracked cheekbone from a fall then a sidewalk and head meeting then that broken hip in two places. Then a tornado hit in my area. My beautiful maple tree broke in half and fell (thank goodness) on corner of house instead of right in middle of duplex. Have not heard about damage but lots and lots of limbs came down. Before city got them picked up it looked like a forest around here. No power for 2 1/2 weeks and no internet for 4 weeks. I Just today Saturday got it back. I was beginning to think I was not going to be able to get a newsletter out rest of year. Some beautiful homes are not standing and if they are they have a tree in front of of them. This is first tornado that I have lived through and I sure don't want to do another one. I just want to shed a bunch of tears to see such beautiful trees are gone now. Our area had a lot of them. I've still got big big limbs hanging and waiting on someone to cut them down. They are in my back yard and my kids did not want me back there because some of the bigger ones are just barely hanging.

It's time for me to let go and surely there is someone out there that can step up and take this job.

It is getting harder and harder for me to see my screen and it takes me forever to get something typed.

You don't have to do what I do. You can pick your own style that you want.

"Smooth Sailing"

Liz

**These listed have sent in their dues and the Association THANKS YOU FOR PAYING YOUR 2024 CONTRIBUTIONS! This helps pay postage for mailing!!!**

**I'm sending this to several of our most loyal contributors that as far as I know have not sent in their 2024 dues. If you have, please let me know. Have not heard anything from Dana in some time so I don't if she has received any dues or not. September will be here before you know it and it will be time for 2025.**

Alcorn Michael and Dana (2024)

Berry David (2024)

Caldwel John and Brenda (2024)

Candor Raymond (2022)

Compton Ed (2023)

Cusato Paul (2023)

Dougher Thomas (2022)

Dutchuk John (2024)

Dyson Al (2022)

Frederiksen Geri (2023)

Gennetti Fred (2024)

Gergens Steve (2025)

Hackenberg Richard (2023)

Hagee Charles (2023)

Hawes Eugene (2022)

Heller Richard (2022)

Horch Linda (2023)

Huff Roland (2023)

Huml Vincent (2023)

Hydro John (2024)

Johnson Martha (2025)

Knight James (2023)

Layton Geoffrey (2022)

Long Leroy (2023)

Marcotte Donald G.(2024)

Markley Ray (2023)

Mauldin Connie (2022)

Morlock Fred (2022)

Morrissey Tom (2025)

Mullin James (2024)

Murphy Obie (2024)

Owens William & Marilyn (2024)

Parker David (2024)

Payson David (2023)

Payton Johnny (2023)

Rider Elisabeth (2024)

Pohl Art (2023)

Robinson Lee (2024)

Rott Ray (2024)

Shanahan, Jr. John (2023)

Shuck Donald L. (2024)

Silhan Peter (2024)

Smith Raymond (2023)

Syverson Norris (2023)

Thompson Ross (2024)

Throm Larry (2023)

Torriglia Paul (2027)

Valiant Martha (2024)

Walker John

West Helen

Wickizer Larry (2025)

Yonkofski Ben (2024)





**Don't forget that Gene Strickland and Bill Endter are in a rest home. You might think about dropping them a note. I don't hear anything from either one of these gentlemen. If someone does, please let me know. If you know of someone that is in rest home, let me know, I'll send them a newsletter.**

**John I think you told me one time you were going to have open heart surgery. Did you have it? If so how are you doing?**

### **A Funny**

By the time a Navy pilot pulled into a little town, every hotel room was taken. "You've got to have a room somewhere," he pleaded. "Or just a bed, I don't care where." "Well, I do have a double room with one occupant, a Marine pilot," admitted the manager, "and he might be glad to split the cost. But to tell you the truth, he snores so loudly that people in adjoining rooms have complained in the past. I'm not sure it'd be worth it to you."

"No problem," the tired Navy pilot assured him. "I'll take it." The next morning the Navy Pilot came down to breakfast bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. "How'd you sleep?" Asked the manager. "Never better." The manager was impressed. No problem with the other guy snoring, then?" "Nope, I shut him up in no time." Said the Navy pilot. "How'd you manage that?" asked the manager.

"He was already in bed, snoring away, when I came in the room, I went over, gave him a kiss on the cheek, said, 'Goodnight, beautiful,' ...and he sat up all night watching me."

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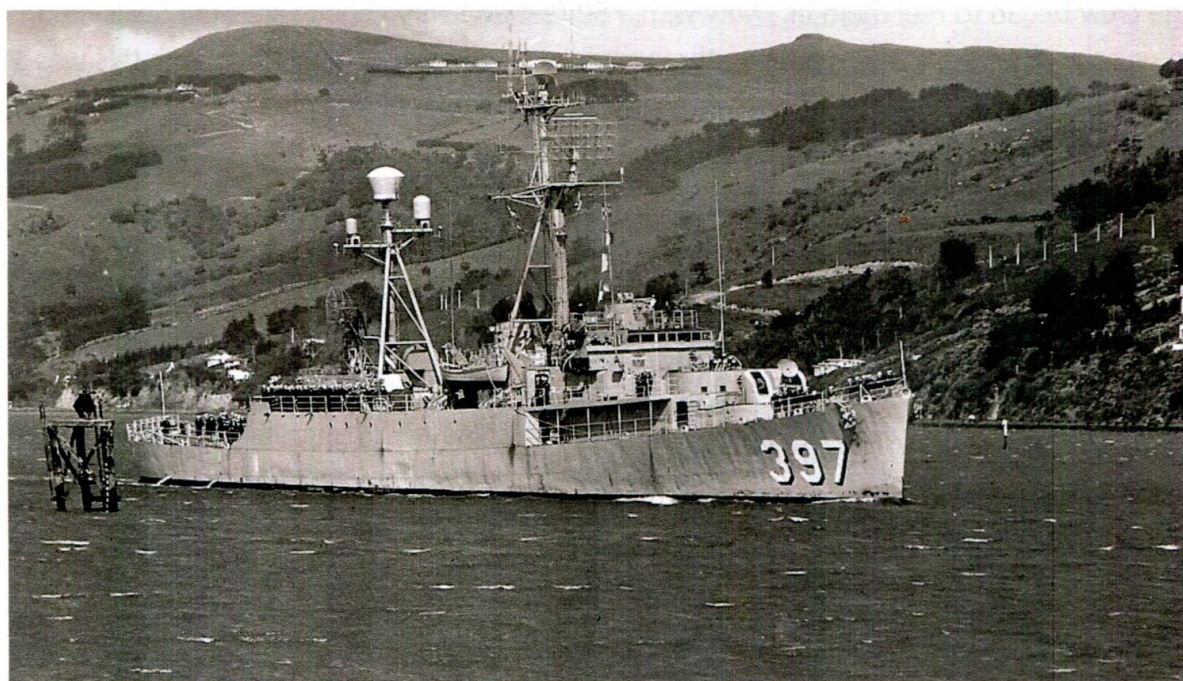
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# NAVY NEWS



# AND STORIES



## **STRIKE ONE, STRIKE TWO, STRIKE THREE, YOU'RE OUT**

Sent to us by Frank Roche (We sure miss him)

This does not describe a trip to a baseball game but the task assigned to the U.S. Navy Seals on the night of 12 April 2009. Described as "untrained teenagers with pistols and AK-47's" four Somali pirates took the U.S. civilian ship MAERSK ALABAMA hostage.

After offering himself as hostage to gain his crew's release Captain Richard Phillips of Burlington, Vermont boarded a lifeboat with the four pirates. The USS Bainbridge arrived a few hours later, the USS Boxer and USS Halyburton arrived a few days later. On 11 April 2009 NAVY SEALS parachuted from C-17's and boarded the Bainbridge.

Now out of fuel and drifting out to sea the pirates allowed a tow line from the Bainbridge to be attached to the lifeboat. Big mistake. Unknown to the pirates and under the cover of darkness the Bainbridge crew began to reel them in. Now within 80 feet and very choppy seas the Seals fired almost in unison. The result: three pirates, three rounds, three dead bodies. Although this was a task in the international spotlight the Seals do many, many more assignments that will never be known. A tip of the hat to all US Navy Seals for a job well done.

P.S. The fourth pirate is lucky there are only three strikes in baseball.

May the sun  
bring you new  
energy by day.  
May the moon  
softly restore  
you by night.  
May the rain  
wash away  
your worries.  
May the breeze  
blow new strength  
into your being.  
May you walk  
gently through the  
world and know  
its beauty all the  
days of your life.

# **I am a Tin Can Sailor**

**By Michael R. Morawey, 2008**

I am a tin can sailor; you surely know the breed,  
Fight'em at sea and fight'em ashore, that was our creed,  
Rusted and creaky, our destroyer was tough,  
Through many seas, we ploughed our way, mostly when it was rough.

I am a tin can sailor; we took on all who came,  
Down those bloody seaways, we fought in courage to fame,  
Though often shattered, bone and blood forged anew in steel,  
Our ships stood tall, From Sunda Straits to Samar, with God our final appeal.

I am a tin can sailor; we battled under sun, stars and moon,  
Bloodied, shredded by steel and fire, prayers lifted to God, please end it soon!  
We squeezed off rounds, fifty's and twenty's, till barrels burned red,  
We stood so long, strapped to our guns: Were we living? Were we dead?

I am a tin can sailor; my ship hurts, paint blistered, her decks too hot to walk,  
We took some big rounds, torn so bad men cried; choked, they couldn't talk,  
Our great ship, hammered and holed, hope all bent and broke,  
She foundered and shook and rolled over in battle's grim smoke.

I am a tin can sailor, now manning a different ship,  
Down in Davy Jones locker, I've taken that final trip,  
Now me and my shipmates, brave were we all,  
Have a new ship to man; we answered the call.

I am a tin can sailor; I see my love crying,  
Above a quiet grave, stars and stripes flying,  
And on that white and gleaming stone, you'll see these words cut deep,  
Here lies the dream of a sailor, who somewhere, unknown, lies asleep.

He is a tin can sailor; this prayer I lift to the sky, as a tree,  
We stand alive, because he and his own, died to keep us free,  
For us and his country, for this and the flag, his all he gave,  
For this land of the free; the home of the brave.





## **US Navy Submarine First In World Fitted With Silent Caterpillar Drive**

Submarines use stealth to dominate the seas, presenting an illusive yet deadly threat. Now U.S. Navy submarines will take stealth to a new level. American submarines will now be fitted with magnetohydrodynamic drive.

American submarines will further extend their advantage in the undersea domain. In the first of its kind, the U.S. Navy has fitted a new form of propulsion, magnetohydrodynamic drive (MHD), to a Virginia class submarine. This promises to make the submarine virtually undetectable, the holy grail of naval warfare.

The Magnetohydrodynamic drive is being developed under the PUMP program by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), first reported in 2023. Water passing through it is accelerated by means of a magnetic field using superconducting magnets. This is often likened to the way a caterpillar crawls leading to the colloquial term 'caterpillar drive'.

The first boat to be fitted with the new propulsion will be the USS Montana (SSN 794). This Virginia Class attack submarine was commissioned into the U.S. Navy in June 2022. Although still a new boat, she has been brought into Groton, Connecticut, for the Modifications.

It is likely to be particularly stealthy as there are no moving mechanical parts. This will make the submarine particularly difficult to detect using passive sonar which listens for noises emitted by the targeted submarine. Sonar operators searching for the USS Montana will likely hear noises which are indistinguishable from natural phenomenon, such as seismic activity.



## US NAVY ACTIVITY (cont)

Instead of a traditional propeller at the stern, the new propulsion will be entirely within the submarine's hull. According to British experts the only external clues are likely to be the water intake doors in the bow. These will resemble torpedo tube shutters but larger, approximately the diameter of a submarine launched ballistic missile. But mounted horizontally, which is unusual for those missiles.

The new propulsion may be fitted to more submarines if the trials are successful. These are likely to include new build Virginia class attack submarines and the future 'SSN X' type. It is unlikely to be fitted to the Columbia Class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) however as this would likely constitute a first strike capability. There is no reason to make a nuclear deterrent submarine so stealthy if it is only intended for retaliatory strikes.

USS Montana is expected to undergo sea trials on the Penobscot River in Maine. This will make it more difficult for the Russian Navy to observe the tests.

The caterpillar drive propulsion is still in its infancy. Whether the Penobscot River will be the end of the story, or the beginning of a new chapter, remains to be seen. Either way Montana will remain unseen.

## A TRUE STORY

A pilot glanced outside his cockpit and froze. He blinked hard and looked again, hoping it was just a mirage. But his co-pilot stared at the same horrible vision. "My God, this is a nightmare," the co-pilot said. "He's going to destroy us," the pilot agreed.

The men were looking at a gray German Messerschmitt fighter hovering just three feet off their wingtip. It was five days before Christmas 1943, and the fighter had closed in on their crippled American B-17 bomber for the kill.

Brown's Crippled B-17 Stalked by Stigler's ME-109



The B-17 Pilot, Charles Brown, was a 21-year-old West Virginia farm boy on his first combat mission. His bomber had been shot to pieces by swarming fighters, and his plane was alone, struggling to stay in the skies above Germany. Half his crew was wounded, and the tail gunner was dead, his blood frozen in icicles over the machine guns.



## A TRUE STORY (cont)

But when Brown and his co-pilot, Spencer "Pinky" Luke, looked at the fighter pilot again, something odd happened. The German didn't pull the trigger. He stared back at the bomber in amazement and respect. Instead of pressing the attack, he nodded at Brown and saluted. What happened next was one of the most remarkable acts of chivalry recorded during World War II.



Luftwaffe Major Franz Stigler

Stigler pressed his hand over the rosary he kept in his flight jacket. He eased his index finger off the trigger. He couldn't shoot. It would be murder. Stigler wasn't just motivated by vengeance that day. He also lived by a code. He could trace his family's ancestry to Knights in 16th century Europe. He had once studied to be a priest. A German pilot who spared the enemy, though, risked death in Nazi Germany. If someone reported him, he would be executed. Yet, Stigler could also hear the voice of his commanding officer, who once told him: "You follow the rules of war for you--not your enemy. You fight by rules to keep your humanity."

Alone with crippled bomber, Stigler changed his mission. He nodded at the American Pilot and began flying in formation so German anti-aircraft gunners on the ground wouldn't shoot down the slow-moving bomber. The Luftwaffe had B-17's of its own shot down and rebuilt for (secret missions and training). Stigler escorted the bomber over the North Sea and took one last look at the American Pilot. Then he saluted him and peeled his fighter away and returned to Germany.

"Good luck", Stigler said to himself. "You are in God's hands now." Franz Stigler didn't think the big B-17 could make it back to England and wondered for years what happened to the American Pilot and crew he encountered in combat.

As he watched the German fighter peel away that December day, 2nd Lt. Charles Brown wasn't thinking of the philosophical connection between enemies, he was thinking of survival as he flew his crippled plane, filled with wounded, back to his base in England and landed with one of four engines knocked out, one failing and barely any fuel left. After his bomber came to a stop, he leaned back in his chair and put a hand over a pocket Bible that he kept in his flight jacket, then he sat in silence.

Brown flew more missions before the war ended. Life moved on. He got married and had two daughters, supervised foreign aid for the U.S. State Department during the Vietnam war and eventually retired to Florida.



## **A TRUE STORY (cont)**

Late in life, though, the encounter with the German Pilot began to gnaw at him. He started having nightmares, but in his dream there would be no act of mercy. He would awaken just before his bomber crashed.

Brown took on a new mission. He had to find that German Pilot. Who was he? Why did he save my life? He scoured Military Archives in the U.S. and England. He attended a Pilot's Reunion and shared his story. He finally placed an Ad in a German Newsletter for former Luftwaffe Pilots, retelling the story and asking if anyone knew the pilot.

On January 18, 1990, Brown received a letter. He opened it and read: "Dear Charles, all these years I wondered what happened to that B-17, did she make it home? Did her crew survive their wounds? To hear of your survival has filled me with undescribably joy."

He had left Germany after the war and moved to Vancouver, British, Columbia. He became a prosperous businessman. Now retired, Stigler told Brown that he would be in Florida come summer, and "it sure would be nice to talk about our encounter". Brown was so excited, though, that he couldn't wait to see Stigler. He called Directory Assistance in Vancouver and asked whether there was a number for a Franz Stigler. He dialed the number and he picked up "My GOD, ITS YOU!" Brown shouted as tears ran down his cheek.

Brown had to do more. He wrote a letter to say, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU on behalf of my surviving crew members and their families appears totally inadequate."

The two pilots would meet again, but this time in person, in the lobby of a Florida hotel. One of Brown's friends was there to record the summer reunion. Both men looked like retired businessmen. They were plump, sporting neat ties and formal shirts. They fell into each others arms and wept and laughed. They talked about their encounter in a light jovial tone. The mood then changed. Someone asked Stigler what he thought of Brown. Stigler sighed and his square jaw tightened and he began to fight back tears before he said in heavenly accented English, "I love you , Charlie."

Stigler had lost his brother, his friends and his country. He was virtually exiled by his countrymen after the war. There were 28,000 pilots who fought for the German Air Force and only 1,200 survived. The war cost him everything. Charlie Brown was the only good thing that came out of World War II for Franz. It was the one thing he could be proud of. The meeting helped Brown as well, says his oldest daughter, Dawn Warner.

Brown and Stigler became pals. They would take fishing trips together. They would fly-cross country to each other homes and take road trips together to share their story at schools and veterans' reunions. Their wives, Jackie Brown and Hiya Stigler became friends.

Brown's daughter says her father would worry about Stigler's health and constantly check on him. "It wasn't just for show,' she says." They talked about once a week. As his friendship with Stigler deepened something else happened to her Father, Warner says " The nightmares went away."



### **A TRUE STORY (cont)**

Brown had written a letter of thanks to Stigler, but one day he showed the extent of his gratitude. He organized a reunion of his surviving crew members along with their extended families. He invited Stigler as a Guest of Honor.

During the reunion, a video was played showing all the faces of the people that now lived-children, grandchildren, relatives-because of Stigler's act of chivalry, Stigler watched the film from his Seat of Honor.

"Everybody was crying, not just him, Warner says."

Stigler and Brown died within months of each other in 2008. Stigler was 92 and Brown was 87. They had started as enemies, became friends, and then something more.

After he died. Warner was searching through Brown's library when she came across a book on German fighter jets. Stigler had given the book to Brown. Both were country boys that loved to read about planes.

Warner opened the book and saw an inscription Stigler had written."

"In 1940, I lost my only brother as a night fighter. On the 20th of December 4 days before Christmas I had the chance to save a B-17 from destruction, a plane so badly damaged, it was a wonder that she was still flying. The pilot Charlie Brown is for me as precious as my brother was.

Thanks Charlie

Your Brother Franz



Charles and Jackie Brown on Left  
Franz Stigler and Hiya on right



Franz Stigler on left and  
Charles Brown is on right

This is something I got in mail one day and it is something I think about happening in our beloved America. We all have trials and need the help of our Lord and Saviour. We all need a lot of prayer for our country. Look what is happening to Israel and the same thing could happen to us.

### **A PRAYER**

"For me, prayer is an aspiration of the heart, it is a simple glance directed to heaven, it is a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as joy, finally it is something great supernatural, which expands my soul and unites me to Jesus".