

USS BRISTOL DD857 VETERANS WINTER 2018-2019 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

President’s Message.....1

Iceland Bars.....2

Photos of Vietnam 1960s.....3

What is a Vet?.....3

Splinters in her crotch.....4

In Memoriam.....5

A day which will live in infamy..6

USS New York.....7

Navy Corpsman.....9

Shipmate Anecdotes.....11

Is sex work?.....12

USS Hudner.....12

Il Silenzio.....15

Naval Aviator Accounted For From Vietnam War.....16

Worse than you thought: inside the secret Fitzgerald probe the Navy doesn’t want you to read.....17

One More Day.....19

Hunter-Killer.....21

Wounded Sailors Safe.....21

A story of “Bad Angel” airplane.....22

LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT – SPRING 2019

Shipmates:

Our 20th reunion was held in Savannah, Ga. with a total of 43 attendees, of which 20 attendees were shipmates. It was great to see everyone, especially shipmates that we haven’t seen for some time. We also enjoyed seeing Floyd Van Wie who is doing well after an accident at his hunting cabin. Don Marcus also managed to get to the reunion after losing the sight in one eye due to surgery. Everyone managed to keep up with the crowd and enjoyed the camaraderie.

All went off as planned except for some problems with the hotel which was severely understaffed. Thanks to the efforts of our treasurer Tony Molnar we were able to get a refund from the hotel which was divided among the attendees.

Once again, long time member Dan Esposito, donated a case of wine for the hospitality room and we thank him for that. All the members in attendance donated nice gifts for the raffle, which is always enjoyed and helps our association.

At our organizational meeting, with no nominations from the floor, a motion was made to re-elect all the present officers to

their current positions for another year.

The Officers are Paul Ratcliffe – President; Paul Kallfelz – First Vice President; Duane Haugan – Second Vice President; Tony Molnar – Treasurer; Marty Walsh – Secretary.

The appointments are Don Tanner – Master at Arms; Ed Lynch – News Letter Editor and Walter Marczak – Chaplain.

All of us appreciate your vote of confidence and are very proud to be the leadership of such a great organization. We will do our best to keep the Association going forward.

The membership voted to have Lancaster, Pa as our twenty-first reunion location. The Hotel accommodations and dates will follow. REMEMBER, attendance is crucial to keep the Association healthy so try your best to come to the Lancaster reunion and enjoy getting together with your former shipmates. Check the Bristol website for updated information.

I wish everyone health in the coming year and I am looking forward to a great twenty-first reunion.

Paul Ratcliffe, EM2, President

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Iceland's bars run out of beer trying to serve drunk US sailors and Marines

By: [J.D. Simkins](#) 1 day ago
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The city of Reykjavik, seen here from Hallgrímskirkja, was invaded by thirsty American sailors and Marines who nearly caused the city to run out of beer. (J.D. Simkins/Staff)

Founding Father and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, once quipped, "Beer, if drunk in moderation, softens the temper, cheers the spirit and promotes health."

The military never got that memo.

A national crisis hit Iceland this week when a force of 7,000 American sailors and Marines who know nothing about the third president's propensity for alcoholic self-restraint invaded the country's capital city of Reykjavik, flexed an unquenchable thirst for frosty suds and swiftly drained much of the city's beer supply.

Upon arrival, sailors and Marines taking part in NATO's [Trident Juncture](#) exercise wasted no time getting wasted, [Iceland Magazine reported](#), with most making a beeline straight from the ship to the closest bar to locate, close with and destroy beers.

Bar owners tried to accommodate the onslaught of American patrons, but "they were fighting an overwhelming force," said local blogger, Eiríkur Jónsson.

Give me your tired, your thirsty, your huddled masses yearning to drink beer.

Wave after wave of dehydrated sailors and Marines strolled into town, filling local establishments for four days straight in search of that old, familiar embrace of sweet inebriation.

One restaurant, Sæta Svinið — good luck pronouncing that — was one of the first to run out of beer. Bar owners tried borrowing from other businesses that were better stocked, but the Americans were too many.

By: J.D. Simkins
As other bars quickly began drying up, owners who said they had never experienced such an alcoholic assault put out a beer distress signal.

One of Iceland's local breweries, Ölgerð Egils Skallagrímssonar, answered the call and immediately began working overtime to distribute emergency beer shipments that could furnish the parched Americans with sustenance.

Ölgerð Egils Skallagrímssonar — the king in the North.

When the ships finally departed Reykjavik, the city with a population of about 120,000 in a country with just under 340,000 was finally able to breathe.

Iceland had survived the assault, the Americans had drank their fill and there have yet to be any reports of overindulgent debauchery — a true success story.

In the United States:



[Drunken British sailors are invading Florida and beating each other up, because why not?](#)

British sailors from the Royal Navy's prized new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth arrived in the northeast Florida port of Jacksonville Beach Wednesday.

This article contributed by Marty Walsh.

I woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning last night by somebody pounding on the front door. I got up and went to the door where a drunk guy, standing in the pouring rain, asked for a push. I told him "No way! It's 3 O'clock in the morning and I'm not coming out in this rain storm" and I slammed the door.

Nettie asked, who was at the door. I told her it was some drunk guy wanting me to give him a push. She asked me if I helped him and I said no, I didn't. It's the middle of the night and the rain is coming down in buckets! She reminded me about earlier this year when we broke down and those two guys helped us get going again. "You should have helped him. Shame on you!!"

So I decided to put on a raincoat and go out to see if the guy still needed a push. It was so dark I could barely

see so I called out "Hey, are you still out there?" He said "Yes" and I asked him if he still needed a push. He said "Yes, please!! Oh, thank you!!" I couldn't see him so I hollered out "Where are you?" He said "Over here . . . on the swing!!"

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Photos of Vietnam (1960s)

Courtesy of Joe Gucheck



Just found this, I knew I took one but now it's found. Pretty good print so scanned well. Taken

Quilts of Honor

These great men are all Veterans who attended the Quilt of Valor Ceremony Sunday 11-11-2018.

See ussbristoldd857.org

On the home page you will see a short video of our shipmate, Earl "Charlie" Weaver receive his Quilt of Honor.

ABOUT QUILTS OF HONOR

In 2005 we began our journey, one that would lead us to form a nonprofit organization called Quilts of Honor.

Between 2005 and April 2010, Gail and our volunteers worked with an organization providing patriotic quilts to those service members touched by war. Since Gail was a veteran of the Vietnam era and had played Taps for the fallen, she did not want any of our warriors to be forgotten.

During those years, Gail and her friends worked fervently piecing and quilting quilts for our Military. The Navy Seals asked for a special quilt to be given to President Bush. The "Presidential" quilt was finally presented to him in 2007 having been delayed by hurricane Katrina. In the fall of 2007, "The Warrior" quilt, painted by Linda Hasbrook and quilted by Gail, was presented to the Pentagon and installed in the "9/11 Memorial Display Case." In June 2009, Gail along with her parents Bob and Virginia, left Valley Springs to travel across America to a special presentation of quilts to the Marine Corp's 3/8 at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. As they drove across America, they picked up quilts from quilters wishing to also honor our military. They began their journey with 200 quilts and arrived at Camp LeJeune with over 1,300 quilts. In August 2009, the "Lady Warrior" quilt was presented to the Women's Memorial at Arlington Cemetery.

In April 2010, Gail's passion and mission for providing comfort and healing to our warriors and veterans had grown ever stronger. With the help of those who had stood beside her, Quilts of Honor was formed, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing healing, loving quilts to those who have served in harms way protecting our freedoms.

We hope you will join us to honor members of our active military and

veterans by showing them how much we appreciate their sacrifice and service with our "Quilted Hugs of Gratitude." Our hope is that these quilts will provide comfort, love and healing to those who have given so much.

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WHAT IS A VET?

Some Veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in their eye.

Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg - or perhaps another sort of inner steel: a soul forged in the refinery of adversity.

Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

A Vet may be:

The cop on the beat who spent six months in Iraq sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel. Or the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

Or the nurse, medic, or corpsman who fought against futility trying to save countless broken and injured young men and went without sleep for a year in Da Nang.

Or the POW who went away one person and came back another.

Or a person who goes through life with the haunting memories of his buddies who didn't come back AT ALL.

Or the Quantico Drill Instructor that has never seen combat - but has

saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

Or the parade riding damaged soldier, marine, sailor or airman who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

Or the career army quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by, but who made so many positive contributions to the war effort.

Or the school teacher who sailed in submarines for months at a time never seeing daylight or a breath of fresh air, who voyaged into enemy waters only to be hunted.

Or is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

So a Vet is ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being, a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

Then there are the missing and lost who no one knows what really happened. They are represented and held in tribute by the three unidentified heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

So those Vets who served placed their lives on the line to be a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say Thank You. That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU".

Remember, November 11th is Veterans Day.

One fine man probably summarized it best...

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag.

Father Denis Edward O'Brien, USMC

Stay Safe, Be Well... and Please Take Time to Remember.

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Splinters in her crotch

A woman from Los Angeles, who was a tree hugger, a liberal Democrat, and an anti-hunter, purchased a piece of timberland near Colville, WA. There was a large tree on one of the highest points in the tract. She want to see of the natural splendor of her land, so she started to climb the big tree.

As she neared the top, she encountered a spotted owl that attacked her.

In her haste to escape, the woman slid down the tree to the ground and got many splinters in her crotch. In considerable pain, she hurried to a local ER to see a doctor. She told him she was an environmentalist, a Democrat, an anti-hunter and how she came to get all the splinters.

The doctor listened to her story with great patience, and then told her to go wait in the examining room and he would see if he could help her. She sat and waited three hours before the doctor reappeared.

The angry woman demanded, "What took you so long?" He smiled and then told her, "Well, I had to get permits from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management before I could remove old-growth timber from a "recreational area" so close to a waste treatment facility. I'm sorry, but due to ObamaCare...they turned you down.!"

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

This piece contributed by Charlie Weaver

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In Memoriam

Eugene F. "Gene" Pettibone

Raised in Hornell, Gene also resided at one time in Alfred Station and Fillmore. He attended Hornell High School before he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After spending a year with the Army, he enlisted with the U.S. Navy and proudly served his country from 1948 to his honorable discharge in 1969 attaining the rank of Chief Petty Officer, Gunnersmate and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal (Bronze Star), the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Fifth Navy Good Conduct Award. Some of the time he spent with the Navy was during the Korean War and he was stationed aboard the USS Bristol, USS O'Hare, the USS John R. Perry and the USS Voge. Gene loved traveling the world during this time. After his active duty he served with the Navy Fleet Reserves.

After returning to Hornell in 1969 he became employed with the former SKF Corp. and Steuben Trust Company. In 1972 he partnered with his father-in-law and co-owned and operated along with his wife, Roy Allen's Service Station and Allen's Car Wash and Laundromat on Main Street in Hornell until they retired in 1997.

Gene was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Hornell, a life member of the Arthur H. Cunningham American Legion Post No. 440 in Hornell, the Hornell Sportsmen's Club, the Hornell Area Family YMCA and was a former member of the Cpl. J.J. Mooney VFW Post No. 2250 also in Hornell.

He was an avid bowler and sponsored and bowled on a league team, ""Allen's Car Wash"" and went on to win many tournaments.

Throughout the years he and his wife Audrey would spend time

traveling to Navy Reunions and he would often corresponded with other Navy veterans on special occasions. He loved the NY Yankees and enjoyed watching their games



on television. He also enjoyed trips to the casino with his family. Feeding and watching the birds and squirrels in his backyard at his home on Glen Avenue brought Gene immense joy.

Gene will be remembered most of all for being a loving husband, father and friend. He was a very charitable and generous man who was always willing to anonymously help others in need.

His loving family includes his three children, Gail (Timothy) Moore of Hornell, Martin (Irasema) Pettibone of Rochester and Ann (Mark) Domingos of Hornell; his four grandchildren, Jessica (Michael) Hess of Hornell, Edward McNelis (Tessa) of Sterling, N.J., Samuel (Katie) Moore of Streetsboro, Ohio and Jacob Moore of Hornell; his two great-grandsons, Kolby and Riley Hess; his sister, Carol (Herbert) Bayne of Almond; as well as his nieces, nephews and cousins

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Shipmate Vincent Izzo PN2 1953-55 passed away on 5/9/18.

Palm Beach Gardens, FL - Vincent Anthony Izzo, "Pop", passed peacefully in the company of his loved ones early on May 9th, 2018. A Korea era veteran sailor, husband to Celia, father to 6, grandfather to 18, and great-grandfather to 12, his wealth was in his family and in his soul. He shared the riches of his heart with everyone, and in turn was loved by all. Burial will be at First Presbyterian Church, 352 Sycamore Ave., Shrewsbury, NJ 07702

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William J. Mazejka, Jr.

WORCESTER - William J. Mazejka Jr., 81 of Worcester died on Sunday, December 31, 2017 in St. Vincent Hospital. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Linnea (Carlson) Mazejka. He also leaves three sons,

John W. Mazejka and his wife Michelle of Charlton, Brian M. Mazejka and his wife Monique of Salem, NH and Scott A. Mazejka of Westfield; seven grandchildren, Stephanie, Kimberly, Jackson, Luke, Trevor, Thomas and Jessica and a great granddaughter, Dakota Rose. He was predeceased by his brother Robert Mazejka. Bill was born in Worcester the son of William J. and Melania (Sobol) Mazejka, Sr.

A lifelong Worcester resident he worked as a tool and die maker for Wright Line Company for many years before retiring in 2001. He graduated from Worcester Boys' Trade School and Worcester Junior College. He served in the [US Navy](#) on the USS Bristol and was later a member of the Tin Can Sailors Association. He also was a longtime member of the PNI Club. He was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He loved being with his family and spending time with his grandchildren.

Harold E. Schulman PHM3 1946-47 (Reported by Tony Molnar)

I have just been notified that shipmate Harold E. Schulman PHM3 1946-47 passed away on November 6, 2018.

He will be honored at our reunion in the Fall.

Editor's Note: I received a letter from Elaine Schulman on 31 December 2018. The following is a transcript of that letter

12-25-18

Dear Edward & Tony.

Harold Schulman died Nov. 6, 2018.

I want to thank you & Tony for sending all the news about the Bristol. Hal loved reading them over and over. Thank you for sending. He was always reading over and over again.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and New Years.

Elaine Schulman

Sorry for repeating—

.....

**I am a warrior,
I fight not for glory or fame,
For they are momentary.
I fight for those who can't.
I fight for justice, the oppressed
and the down trodden.
And if I should lose my life for
these just causes,
Then I have no regrets,
For I serve to protect the
innocent.
It matters not where or when,
For evil knows no boundaries.
Be it fire, flood or the threat of
tyranny, I will not flee.
Justice is my weapon. Faith my
shield and Hope my armor.
Cry not at my passing for it was
my Honor to fight for you.
Shed not tears of sorrow but tears
of Joy,
For now, I stand with God.**

A Day, Which Will Live In Infamy

Shortly before 8:00 A.M. on the quiet Sunday morning of [December 7, 1941](#) the Japanese Fleet issued the order --Tora, Tora, Tora - attack! The peaceful calm was forever shattered by the brutal and unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Naval forces as they sent over 350 fighter planes, bombers and torpedo planes emblazoned with a stark red disc representing the rising sun to rein death down from the skies.

The Japanese plan was simple, destroy the Pacific Fleet. Pearl Harbor was caught unprepared and off guard, and in under two hours the Japanese had destroyed or incapacitated the bulk of the US battleships at anchor leaving over 2,400 dead.

The USS Arizona was dealt a death blow when a massive 1,800 pound bomb smashed through her decking and exploded her forward ammunition magazine. The ship sank with more than 1,177 men inside. Of the Arizona dead, only 229 were eventually recovered. The remainder of her crew remains entombed forever standing watch.

The next casualty was the USS Oklahoma struck by multiple torpedoes causing her to capsize with over 400 sailors aboard losing their lives. Thirty-two sailors were rescued from the hull thanks to the heroic efforts of a crew of workers led by civilian Julio de Castro, a Hawaiian native. The Oklahoma was eventually righted, however, was too damaged to be returned to service.

By the time the attack was over, every battleship in Pearl Harbor-USS Arizona, USS Oklahoma, USS California, USS West Virginia, USS Utah, USS Maryland, USS Pennsylvania, USS Tennessee and USS Nevada-had sustained over

significant damage and in total 188 US aircraft were destroyed with another 159 damaged out of just over 400 planes in the Pacific Fleet.

This devastating attack led to the declaration of war by the United States and incurred the mighty wrath of the U.S. forces. So even though the Pacific Fleet was crippled, the resolve of our great forces prevailed.

Seventy five years after that “date that will live in infamy” only a small group of survivors remain, most well into their 90’s. However, their spirit and resolve lives on strong in the new generation of warriors who protect us from harm and sacrifice so very much so that we may enjoy the great freedoms for which they sacrifice so greatly.

[Please take a moment to reflect upon the sacrifices our troops past and present have made for us all.](#) Our troops still serve far from home and with Christmas just around the corner, won’t you take a moment out of your day to thank and honor those who still serve with a remembrance from home this season?

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USS New York – A Living, Breathing Symbol

From the very moment I stepped on board New York, I sensed that there was something different about this ship. It is true that she is fairly new and clean, she is on her maiden deployment, and is the [namesake](#) for the [great state of New York](#), but there is something else entirely different about New York that you will not be able to find anywhere else, but on the grounds where the Twin Towers once stood. This is something in the hearts of those who were forever affected 11 years ago, a

solemn promise that we will “Never Forget.”

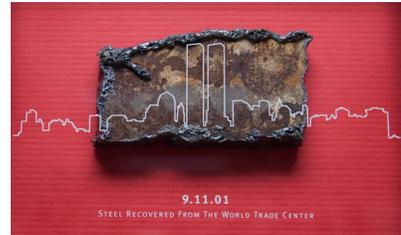
Not only is there seven and a half tons of steel from the World Trade Center in our bow stem, but in every corner of New York, there are tokens of remembrance; from pictures of fallen New York City policemen to a New York Fire Department firefighter’s helmet. When the days get monotonous and the crew becomes weary, sometimes all it takes is to look up, and instead of seeing only lagging, you see a symbol of something bigger than yourself. New York was not built to be a vessel of mourning, but rather a living, breathing symbol of what our country has come together to build in the days after. New York is 26,000 tons of power projection. Our presence is now serving halfway across the world, and with every nautical mile we travel, we are able to share not only the ship’s story, but the stories of the many Americans who either gave their lives or shared in the grief.

“We all serve to never forget, and serve in order to maintain a strong legacy of warfighting first.”

Every Sailor and Marine has a purpose, a commitment and an obligation to our country. We all serve to never forget, and serve in order to maintain a strong legacy of warfighting first. 9/11 is not just a memory, but a reason to continue our desire to [serve](#)—to be ready as we operate forward to defend our great country. And that’s what my crew aboard USS New York and I are doing.

Thank you to all who serve and to all who support our efforts in making our country’s Navy the most effective global force for good in history.

Visit our Facebook page: [USS New York \(LPD-21\)](#).



Artist Concept of the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) in New York harbor. Provided by Naval Sea Systems Command (RELEASED)



ATLANTIC OCEAN (Oct. 29, 2009) Logistics Specialist 1st Class Frank Lewis, left, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Angel Candelaria, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Steven Cochrane, and Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Nathaniel Mitchell pose around the crest of the amphibious transport dock ship Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) New

York (LPD 21). All four Sailors are from New York and are supporters of the New York Yankees during the World Series. (U.S Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cory Rose/Released)



NEW YORK (Nov. 2, 2009) The amphibious dock landing ship Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) New York (LPD 21) transits New York Harbor past the World Trade Center site. The ship has 7.5 tons of steel from the World Trade Center in her bow and will be commissioned Nov. 7 in New York City. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric M. Durie/Released)



NEW YORK (Nov. 2, 2009) The amphibious dock landing ship Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) New York (LPD 21) enters New York Harbor. The ship has 7.5 tons of

steel from the World Trade Center in her bow and will be commissioned Nov. 7 in New York City. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Eric M. Durie/Released)



NEW YORK (Sept. 8, 2011) Crew members aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), upper right, man the rails and present honors while passing The World Trade Center and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum as the ship arrives in Manhattan. The crew of New York will participate in numerous events throughout the city honoring the victims and responders from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Aboard are family members of victims and first responders from 9/11, along with the crew and Marines assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. New York was built with 7.5 tons of steel recovered from Ground Zero. New York is scheduled to be pier side in Manhattan Sept. 8-9 and will anchor in the Hudson River Sept. 10-12. On Sept. 11, New York will transit from its anchorage i



n the Hudson River to a location

within sight of the World Trade Center. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Randall A. Clinton/Released)

ARABIAN SEA (June 18, 2012) Marines pilot an amphibious assault vehicle with the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) in the background while operating in the Arabian Sea. New York, with the embarked 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is part of the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group. New York is deployed in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zane Ecklund/Released)



ARABIAN SEA (June 9, 2012) The amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), right, aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), and the guided-missile cruiser USS Cape St. George (CG 71), transit in formation. The ship's are on deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Colby Neal/Released)

From the very moment I stepped on board New York, I sensed that there was something different about this ship. It is true that she is fairly new and clean, she is on her maiden

deployment, and is the namesake for the great state of New York, but there is something else entirely different about New York that you will not be able to find anywhere else, but on the grounds where the Twin Towers once stood. This is something in the hearts of those who were forever affected 11 years ago, a solemn promise that we will “Never Forget.”

Not only is there seven and a half tons of steel from the World Trade Center in our bow stem, but in every corner of New York, there are tokens of remembrance; from pictures of fallen New York City policemen to a New York Fire Department firefighter’s helmet. When the days get monotonous and the crew becomes weary, sometimes all it takes is to look up, and instead of seeing only lagging, you see a symbol of something bigger than yourself. New York was not built to be a vessel of mourning, but rather a living, breathing symbol of what our country has come together to build in the days after. New York is 26,000 tons of power projection. Our presence is now serving halfway across the world, and with every nautical mile we travel, we are able to share not only the ship’s story, but the stories of the many Americans who either gave their lives or shared in the grief.

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order to maintain a strong legacy of warfighting first. 9/11 is not just a memory, but a reason to continue our desire to serve—to be ready as we operate forward to defend our great country. And that’s what my crew aboard USS New York and I are doing.

Thank you to all who serve and to all who support our efforts in making our country’s Navy the most effective global force for good in history.

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Navy Corpsman: Carrying the Legacy

18 December 2018 By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class James Lee, Defense Media Activity

The screams of the wounded and dying filled the stale room as medical workers rushed to check for pulses, resuscitate the unconscious and stop the bleeding. The darkness was pierced by red and green lights that illuminated pools of blood on the floor. Nervous hands scrambled to find the proper medical equipment amid the chaos of the combat environment that surrounded them, working frantically and disregarding their own safety.

Fortunately, none of this is real; it’s a simulated casualty exercise, part of the training every future Navy hospital corpsman undergoes. The rate is actually the largest and most decorated in the Navy.

“We walk through the hallways and see the faces of all those who have given up their lives just to be part of that legacy,” said Seaman Patricia-Chase Sewell, corpsman “A” school student. “I can’t imagine a greater honor, just the pride of being able to be here — and recognizing that this is something that thousands of people want to do but can’t.”

Sewell explained that she left college after two years of studying nursing to be part of something much bigger than a degree. It was more important for her to follow in the footsteps of past corpsmen.

“I couldn’t imagine doing anything other than serving other people and helping other people,” said Sewell. “I can be in the military. I can wear the uniform and do something that I’m proud of and always will be proud of.”

Navy hospital corpsmen attend 14-week “A” school at the Medical Education and Training Campus in Joint Base San Antonio — Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In the last few years, the curriculum, which is developed by Navy Medicine Education, Training and Logistics Command, has been revamped to more closely align it with the needs of the modern, expeditionary Navy and Marine Corps.

HMI Joy Lewis, an “A” school instructor, said the biggest difference in the school has been the renewed sense of ownership by the Navy, Navy medicine and the Hospital Corps. She said the instructors have gotten better at

molding the next generation of corpsmen as well.

“The changes here at hospital corpsman 'A' school have always been for better medicine and to better understand how to treat personnel on a ship or on the ground with forces in the Marine Corps,” agreed HM2 Briana Bartholomew, an instructor. “So we've incorporated a lot of the modern-day medicine and techniques in order for us to have the best medicine.”

When she went through the school years ago, for example, the curriculum did not allow the students to practice the techniques they learned during lectures. Instead, corpsmen had to get hands-on experience on the job.

“We went from an environment where it was a lot of sitting down and listening to lectures, and we discussed things that they may do,” said Lewis. “We changed that toward about 60 percent practical, so they're sitting in labs every day. They learn how to use a tourniquet, treat a patient and stop bleeding instead of talking about something that they may do someday.”

“Now, they understand how a system works through lessons they learn, by lectures on how a medical procedure works, and why they clean or sterilize the way they do,” added Bartholomew. “Then they work on mannequins, practice looking for a pulse and utilize needles.”

Along with the medical training, Bartholomew tries to instill in her students the values of leadership, motivation and love for the Navy. She wants her students to understand why they do the things they do, and step up when needed.

“My favorite thing about being an instructor is that I'm entrusted to be a mentor and a role model for the students that are coming into the Navy for the first time,” said Bartholomew. “Being entrusted to be a role model here, I find that a lot of students look up to us a lot. I never got looked up to before, so I feel like their hero. I want to strive to make sure that they understand everything that's here.”

According to Bartholomew, the most challenging part is motivating Sailors, and teaching them that they will often be the sole providers of medical care for the men and women with whom they are stationed.

“They're entrusting their lives to us,” said Bartholomew. “They're putting their lives in our hands. And if we have their lives, we need to make sure we're putting in 110 percent in everything.” To reflect that, the school's structure has undergone a revamp as well. HM1 James Gafford, a tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) instructor, previously taught “A” school for two years. He said instruction has evolved from teaching both Navy corpsmen and Air Force medics in a joint environment, to focusing on the needs of the individual services.

“We moved into blocks, and with those blocks, we were able to really take a look at what the fleet is looking for as far as the performance of the corpsmen we were pushing out to them,” he said. Additionally, the course used to be heavily focused on providing care in medical treatment facilities (MTF). Now, the school has an increased emphasis on field training. Gafford explained that TCCC is a five-day course that trains students to provide medical support during combat. It teaches trauma life support in the field, and covers casualty drags, hemorrhage control, chest needle decompression, CPR, splinting and pressure dressings on medical dummies.

Because corpsmen don't always have access to all the equipment available in an MTF, students in the course have to rely on the equipment they will be carrying on their backs.

“Up until right now, they're taught to think in a medical treatment facility type of way,” said Gafford. “Well, here, we have to change their way of thinking just a little bit from combat medicine to ground medicine.”

Bartholomew added that another improvement to the program is that students are being eased into their roles in the fleet by going to naval hospitals or clinics after graduation. They're able to work with patients under supervision as part of Hospital Corpsman Skills Basic course, a three-month class to ensure corpsmen understand everything.

“The quality that we actually get, the response that we get from the fleet coming back to us to let us know, 'Hey, they are doing a good job,' has been higher than we've ever seen before,” said Bartholomew. “It's nice to know and rewarding that we're producing a product that we actually want to have out in the fleet to protect, heal or to be a comfort when we need them the most.”

Shipmate Anecdotes

Patrick McManus served as a Quartermaster while serving in Bristol. During a navigation of the Red Sea, he was QM of the Watch. The Officer of the Deck was a brand new Ensign who repeatedly asked for a “POSIT”, a position report. Pat dutifully responded quickly and showed the OOD the current position. Pat noticed that the OOD hardly looked at the coordinates as Pat presented the POSIT to the OOD.

After the sixth time, Pat gave the OOD a fictitious position report that the OOD acknowledged with “very well”. That position report would have put Bristol about 5 miles in the Sahara Desert. That would have made history as the only US Destroyer to have navigated the Sahara Desert. The other QMs told Pat to never let the Navigator find out about the ruse, which he never did until this writing.

.....
Earl “Charlie” Weaver shared this heartwarming story.

I don't think many of us heard about this patriotic act of kindness.

This article ran in WSJ on Monday July 23, 2018.

"We were overwhelmed," said Lt. Col. Nick Jaskolski. "I don't really have words to describe how surprised and moved we all were. I had never even heard of the town before."

Col. Jaskolski, a veteran of the Iraq war, is commander of the 142nd Field Artillery Brigade of the Arkansas Army National Guard. For three weeks earlier this summer, the 142nd had been conducting an emergency deployment readiness exercise in Wyoming, training and sleeping outdoors, subsisting on field rations. Now it was time for the 700 soldiers to return to their base.

A charter bus company had been hired for the 18-hour drive back to Arkansas. The Army had budgeted for a stop to get snacks. The bus company determined that the soldiers would reach North Platte, in western Nebraska, around the time they would likely be hungry. The company placed a call to the visitors' bureau: Was there anywhere in town that could handle a succession of 21 buses, and get 700 soldiers in and out for a quick snack.

The community welcomed more than 700 service men and women, North Platte, Nebraska, June 18-19, 2018

PHOTO: STEPHEN BARKLEY/
THE NORTH PLATTE
TELEGRAPH

During World War II, North Platte was a geographically isolated town of 12,000. Soldiers, sailors and aviators on their way to fight the war rode troop trains across the nation, bound for Europe via the East Coast or the Pacific via the

West Coast. The Union Pacific Railroad trains that transported the soldiers always made 10-minute stops in North Platte to take on water.

The townspeople made those 10 minutes count. Starting in December 1941, they met every train: up to 23 a day, beginning at 5 a.m. and ending after midnight. Those volunteers greeted between 3,000 and 5,000 soldiers a day. They presented them with sandwiches and gifts, played music for them, danced with them, baked birthday cakes for them. Every day of the year, every day of the war, they were there at the depot. They never missed a train, never missed a soldier. They fed six million soldiers by the end of the war. Not 1 cent of government money was asked for or spent, save for a \$5 bill sent by President Franklin D Roosevelt.

The soldiers never forgot the kindness. Most of them, and most of the townspeople who greeted them, are gone now. And now in 2018, those 21 busloads from the 142nd Field Artillery were on their way, expecting to stop at some fast-food joint.



https://si.wsj.net/.../i.../B3-BC248_greene_P_20180712104949.jpg

PHOTO: STEPHEN BARKLEY/
THE NORTH PLATTE
TELEGRAPH

“We couldn't believe what we saw when we pulled up,” Col. Jaskolski said. As each bus arrived over a two-day period, the soldiers stepped out to be greeted by lines of

cheering people holding signs of thanks. They weren't at a fast-food restaurant: They were at North Platte's events center, which had been opened and decorated especially for them.

"People just started calling our office when they heard the soldiers were on their way," said Lisa Burke, the director of the visitors' bureau. "Hundreds of people, who wanted to help."

The soldiers entered the events center to the aroma of steaks grilling and the sound of recorded music: current songs by Luke Bryan, Justin Timberlake, Florida Georgia Line; World War II songs by Glenn Miller, the Andrews Sisters, Jimmy Dorsey. They were served steak sandwiches, ham sandwiches, turkey sandwiches, deviled eggs, salads and fruit; local church groups baked pies, brownies and cookies.

Mayor Dwight Livingston stood at the door for two days and shook every soldier's hand. Mr. Livingston served in the Air Force in Vietnam and came home to no words of thanks. Now, he said, as he shook the hands and welcomed the soldiers, "I don't know whether those moments were more important for them, or for me. I knew I had to be there."

"It was one soldier's 21st birthday," Lisa Burke said. "When I gave him his cake, he told me it was the first birthday cake he'd ever had in his life." Not wanting to pry, she didn't ask him how that could possibly be. "I was able to hold my emotions together," she said. "Until later."

When it became time to settle up, "the Army, after all, had that money budgeted for snacks" the 142nd Field Artillery was told: Nope. You're not spending a penny here. This is on us. This is on North Platte

Excuse me, I seem to have something in my eye again.....

IS SEX WORK !

This is especially for any one in the military or that has been in the military.

An Infantry Major was about to start the morning briefing to his staff. While waiting for the coffee machine to finish its brewing, the Major decided to pose a question to all assembled.

He explained that his wife had been a bit frisky the night before and he failed to get his usual amount of sound sleep.

He posed the question of just how much of sex was "work" and how much of it was "pleasure?"

A Captain chimed in with 75-25% in favor of work. A Lieutenant said it was 50-50%. A 2nd Lieutenant responded with 25-75% in favor of pleasure, depending upon his state of inebriation at the time.

There being no consensus, the Major turned to the Private who was in charge of making the coffee. What was his opinion?

Without any hesitation, the young Private responded, "Sir, it has to be 100% pleasure."

The Major was surprised and, as you might guess, asked why?

"Well, sir," said the Private, "If there was any work involved, the Officers would have me doing it for them."

The room fell silent

Splinters in her crotch

A woman from Los Angeles, who was a tree hugger, a liberal Democrat, and an anti-hunter, purchased a piece of timberland near Colville, WA. There was a large tree on one of the highest points in the tract. She wanted to see of the natural splendor of her land, so she started to climb the big tree. As she neared the top, she encountered a spotted owl that attacked her. In her haste to escape, the woman slid down the tree to the ground and got many splinters in her crotch. In considerable pain, she hurried to a local ER to see a doctor. She told him she was an environmentalist, a anti-hunter and how she came to get all the splinters.

The doctor listened to her story with great patience, and then told her to go wait in the examining room and he would see if he could help her. She sat and waited three hours before the doctor reappeared.

The angry woman demanded, "What took you so long?" He smiled and then told her, "Well, I had to get permits from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management before I could remove old-growth timber from a "recreational area" so close to a waste treatment facility. I'm sorry, but due to ObamaCare...they turned you down.!

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

USS Hudner

A Tale of Two Pilots

29 November 2018 By Elizabeth M. Collins, Defense Media Activity
Trailing oil, the Corsair plummeted toward the frozen peaks below, deep behind enemy lines in North Korea. The snow-covered slopes loomed

closer and closer as the pilot dropped his bombs, hoping to avoid an explosion on impact.

Bang! The plane slammed into the earth wheels up, the fuselage crumpling at the cockpit.

Ensign Jesse Brown opened his canopy and waved. He was alive.

To a man, his buddies circling above breathed sighs of relief. They turned their attention to the next set of problems: Brown wasn't getting out. He appeared to be stuck in the cockpit and the engine was smoking. The temperature was bitterly cold, and it was only a matter of time before he froze to death or the plane exploded — if the enemy didn't get to him first. Hordes of Chinese soldiers were nearby and likely knew an American pilot had gone down.

As the flight leader called for a rescue helicopter, Lt. j.g. Thomas Hudner Jr., Brown's wingman, made a decision. "I'm going in," he radioed. He squared his jaw and prepared to land.

So began a legacy that continues today, as the Navy prepares to commission USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116).

The scion of a well-off New England family, Hudner had attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis after graduating from prep school. He only applied for

flight school under pressure from his friends.

Brown, the son of Mississippi sharecroppers, had grown up dirt poor, but in a family that valued education. He had been working his way through college in Ohio when he saw a recruitment poster for pilots. Flying had been his dream as a child, a dream that seemed impossible in the age of the Jim Crow south and segregated military. He managed to become a pilot anyway, and not just any pilot, but the first African-American pilot in the U.S. Navy.

"I met him a couple of days after I joined the squadron," Hudner remembered in a Navy interview conducted several years ago. "He just said, 'Hello.' He was very friendly, but didn't get up to shake my hand." Hudner immediately walked over, his own hand extended. Brown gratefully reciprocated. "I realized later on that he's a very sensitive person, and it would have been very difficult for him, and for me, if I'd refused to shake his hand," something that had happened all too often.

Although junior in rank, Brown was the more experienced pilot, so when the two flew together, Brown was in the lead.

"He was a good pilot and everybody liked flying with him," said Hudner. "He was a regular guy. ... "Most everyone on the ship liked him and respected him. Those were the days when we would eat on white linen tablecloths, and we were all in the

wardroom. We were served by either Filipino or black stewards, and they were always falling all over themselves to do everything they could for Jesse. He probably corresponded with more people than everyone on that ship. He was just a fine guy."



The men's squadron, VF 32, was assigned to USS Leyte (CV 32). They had been on a Mediterranean cruise when North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel, June 25, 1950, leaving a trail of slaughter and destruction in their wake as the Americans and South Koreans retreated, then regrouped.

Recalled from the Med in August, Leyte arrived in the waters off of Korea in October, and its pilots got to work, targeting bridges, communication lines, and enemy troops and installations.

By November, the Americans and their allies had reversed the course of the war, and had pushed into North Korea, heading for the Yalu River, the border with Manchuria. This, however, brought China into the war, its troops sweeping down the peninsula in a seemingly endless flood.

About 30,000 American and allied troops, mostly Marines, found themselves trapped at the [Chosin Reservoir](#), surrounded by some 120,000 enemy soldiers. At night,

temperatures dropped to 20, even 40, degrees below zero. That's also when the Chinese liked to attack, wave after wave overrunning the beleaguered, frost-bitten Marines in what would be a battle for the history books.

The pilots' focus turned to protecting the desperate Marines as they retreated south, and they regularly flew danger close air support missions.

On that fateful day, Dec. 4, 1950, Hudner, Brown and four other pilots took off around 1:30 in the afternoon, and flew about 100 miles toward Chosin through terrible winter weather. As they cruised over the desolate landscape, oil began trailing from Brown's plane. He had been hit by ground fire, but the sound had disappeared into the roar of the Corsairs' engines. The plane quickly stalled out and Brown crashed into the snow.

It was a place, wrote Hudner's biographer, Adam Makos, where "only a crazy man would go."

"I could just see that airplane bursting into flame," Hudner said. "Jesse was still very much alive, and I thought it was a risk worth taking."

Hudner, who injured his back in the crash landing, ran to Brown's plane, but couldn't get him out. Brown was stuck, his lips turning blue, his leg pinned by the crumpled, now icy fuselage.

"The first thing he said, in a very calm voice, was, 'We've got to figure

out a way to get out of here,'" Hudner remembered. "He'd taken his helmet off, he'd taken his gloves off, probably to unbuckle his parachute harness. He dropped his gloves. ... I used to carry a Navy woolen watch cap around in my flight suit, so I pulled that down over his head, and I had a white scarf ... and I put the scarf over his hands."

Hudner radioed that the helicopter pilot needed to bring an ax, and began packing the still-smoking engine with snow, doing anything he could think of to help until he heard the distinctive tut-tut-tut of a Marine Corps helicopter some 30 minutes or more later. By that point, Brown seemed to be in shock, and was going in and out of consciousness.

"Tell Daisy I love her," Brown whispered at one point, referring to his wife in what would be his last words. He also had a baby girl, Pam, back home in Mississippi.

"The helicopter arrived — the pilot's name was 1st Lt. Charlie Ward," said Hudner. "He did have an ax and fire extinguisher, and while I was using the extinguisher, he climbed up into the cockpit, and he couldn't do anything either. Charlie and I conferred for a little bit, and made one more try."



But darkness comes early north of the 38th parallel at that time of year, and the helicopter couldn't fly after dark. Hudner's own shipmates had

already reluctantly peeled off, needing to get back to the Leyte before dusk fell and before their fuel ran out. Marine pilots had also decimated an approaching Chinese column, but there was more enemy out there. And after dark, it would be cold enough to kill a man in hours or maybe even minutes.

Ward, said Hudner, "gave me the choice of going with him or staying with Jesse, which would have meant unquestionably death," and by then, Brown was already dead or dying anyway.

"I told [Jesse] we couldn't get him out, and we were going to go back and find some more equipment," Hudner added. "I don't know if he heard me or not. He died sometime during that time. He was cold anyhow, and between shock and cold and his actual injuries, he was in pretty bad shape."

Brown posthumously received the Distinguished Flying Cross, and USS Jesse L. Brown (FF 1089) sailed the high seas from 1973 to 1994.

Hudner fully expected to be court martialed, Makos wrote. After all, he had crashed a perfectly good airplane. But in the spring of 1951, he learned he would instead be given the nation's highest honor for his "conspicuous gallantry," the Medal of Honor.

He would always remain humble, said his son, Thomas, who grew up viewing Brown as his hero as well as his father. Hudner, he explained,

always said that if he hadn't done it, someone else would have, and that Brown would have done the same for him.

“Through the years,” Hudner said, “we've had a lot of fighting people, whether on the ground, in submarines or in airplanes or surface ships, who have performed valorously who've never been recognized. ... There are a lot of people who have lesser decorations — Navy Cross, Silver Star — whose actions probably took every bit as much as those of us who got the medal. Our feeling is that the medal highlights military service, and we want to highlight it in respect to all who have been in service, even those who never even got close to combat. ... We feel it belongs to everybody who has put on a uniform.”

Hudner retired from the Navy as a captain, and later served as the commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services. He returned to North Korea in his 80s in a futile attempt to recover any remains of Brown's that might be left. He passed away at the age of 93 in November 2017.

That “spirit of selfless service,” his son said, will live on in USS Thomas Hudner, an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer that will be commissioned Dec. 1.

“He was very fortunate to be alive for so much of the construction period of the ship and as the crew began to get assigned to the ship,” said Thomas. “Really, a highlight ...

was for him to be able to visit Bath Iron Works while the ship was under construction and to meet so many men and women who were physically bringing the ship to life — that was incredible. ... Likewise, he did have a number of opportunities to meet the men and women who were becoming part of the crew of the ship. That too sort of gave me chills. ... I think the whole thing was pretty surreal for him.”

“It appeared we meant as much to him as he meant to us — we were Tom's heroes,” wrote Cmdr. Nathan Scherry, the ship's captain, shortly after Hudner's death. “Whenever I spoke to him, he always talked of Jesse and Jesse's family. He never spoke of himself or anything he did. It was never about Tom.”

Source: “Devotion: An Epic Story of Heroism, Friendship, and Sacrifice,” by Adam Makos.

IL SILENZIO.....

About six miles from Maastricht, in the Netherlands, lie buried 8,301 American soldiers who died in "Operation Market Garden" in the battles to liberate Holland in the fall winter of 1944.

Every one of the men buried in the cemetery, as well as those in the Canadian and British military cemeteries, has been adopted by a Dutch family who mind the grave, decorate it, and keep alive the memory of the soldier they have adopted. It is even the custom to keep a portrait of "their" American

soldier in a place of honor in their home. Annually, on "Liberation Day," memorial services are held for “the men who died to liberate Holland." The day concludes with a concert. The final piece is always "Il Silenzio," a memorial piece commissioned by the Dutch and first played in 1965 on the 20th anniversary of Holland's liberation. It has been the concluding piece of the memorial concert ever since.

This year the soloist was a 13-year-old Dutch girl, Melissa Venema, backed by André Rieu and his orchestra (the Royal Orchestra of the Netherlands). This beautiful concert piece is based upon the original version of taps and was composed by Italian composer Nino Rossi.

Our European legacy, in alphabetical order

1. The American Cemetery at Aisne-Marne, France... A total of 2289
2. The American Cemetery at Ardennes, Belgium.. A total of 5329
3. The American Cemetery at Brittany, France... A total of 4410
4. Brookwood, England - American Cemetery... A total of 468
5. Cambridge, England... A total of 3812
6. Epinal, France - American Cemetery... A total of 5525
7. Flanders Field, Belgium... A total of 368
8. Florence, Italy... A total of 4402

- 9. Henri-Chapelle, Belgium... A total of 7992
- 10. Lorraine , France... A total of 10,489
- 11. Luxembourg, Luxembourg... A total of 5076
- 12. Meuse-Argonne... A total of 14246
- 13. Netherlands, Netherlands... A total of 8301
- 14. Normandy, France... A total of 9387
- 15. Oise-Aisne, France... A total of 6012
- 16 Rhone, France... A total of 861
- 17. Sicily, Italy.. A total of 7861
- 18. Somme, France... A total of 1844
- 19. St. Mihiel, France... A total of 4153
- 20. Suresnes, France... A total of 1541

Remind those of our sacrifice and don't confuse arrogance with leadership. The count is 104,366 dead, brave Americans. Most of the protected don't understand it.

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Naval Aviator Accounted-For From The Vietnam War
(Lannom, R.)

Release No: 19-005 Jan. 15, 2019

WASHINGTON —
The Defense POW/MIA Accounting

Agency (DPAA) announced today that Naval Reserve Lt. Richard C. Lannom, 27, of Union City, Tennessee, killed during the Vietnam War, was accounted for on Sept. 25, 2018.

On March 1, 1968, Lannom, a bombardier-navigator assigned to Attack Squadron Three Five (ATKRON 35), USS Enterprise (CVA-65), was on board an A-6A aircraft on a night strike mission over Quang Ninh Province of North Vietnam. Radar contact with the aircraft was lost due to the low altitude of the aircraft, and the pilot had been instructed to turn his identification beeper off. The flight path to the target was over islands known to have light anti-aircraft artillery. When the aircraft failed to return to the carrier, a search and rescue effort was mounted. No evidence of the plane could be found. Lannom and his pilot were subsequently declared missing in action.

In August and September 2006, a Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) team interviewed three wartime residents concerning a crash site. One witness, reported traveling to the crash site on the top of a mountain in Na San Hamlet several times, finding a pilot's helmet.

During a JFA in 2007, a witness stated that in 1968, he heard an explosion while he was sleeping. He went outside and observed an aircraft crash and explode on impact. He later observed scattered aircraft wreckage and personal effects.

Between October and December 2017, a VNOSMP Unilateral Team excavated a crash site below the peak of a steep mountain on the southwestern peninsula of Tra Ban Island. The team recovered possible osseous material, as well as material evidence and aircraft wreckage.

To identify Lannom's remains, DPAA and the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis as well as circumstantial and material evidence.

DPAA is grateful to the government of Vietnam for their partnership in this mission.

Today, there are 1,592 American servicemen and civilians still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. Lannom's name is recorded on the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, and the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, along with others who are unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

For family contact information, contact the Navy Casualty Office at (800) 443-9298.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, find us on social media at www.facebook.com/dodpaa or call (703) 699-1420/1169.



[Naval Aviator Accounted-For From The Vietnam War \(Lannom, R.\)](#)

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Naval Reserve Lt. Richard C. Lannom, 27, of Union City, Tennessee, killed during the Vietnam War, was accounted for on Sept. 25,

This piece contributed by Charlie Weaver

Worse than you thought: inside the secret Fitzgerald probe the Navy doesn't want you to read

By: [Geoff Ziezulewicz](#) 17 hours ago



Erin Elizabeth Rehm receives the American flag from Vice Adm. Jan Tighe during a graveside service for her husband, Fire Controlman Chief Gary Leo Rehm Jr., at Arlington National Cemetery on Aug. 16, 2017. Rehm died when the guided-missile destroyer Fitzgerald collided with the Philippine-flagged merchant vessel ACX Crystal on June 17, 2017. (Elizabeth Fraser/ Arlington National Cemetery)

A scathing internal Navy probe into the 2017 collision that drowned seven sailors on the guided-missile destroyer Fitzgerald details a far longer list of problems plaguing the vessel, its crew and superior commands [than the service has publicly admitted](#).

Obtained by Navy Times, the “dual-purpose investigation” was overseen by Rear Adm. Brian Fort and completed 11 days after the June 17, 2017, tragedy.

It was kept secret from the public in part because it was designed to prep the Navy for potential lawsuits in the aftermath of the accident.

Unsparingly, Fort and his team of investigators outlined critical lapses by bridge watchstanders on the night of the collision with the Philippine-flagged container vessel ACX Crystal in a bustling maritime corridor off the coast of Japan.

Their report documents the routine, almost casual, violations of standing orders on a Fitz bridge that often lacked skippers and executive officers, even during potentially dangerous voyages at night through busy waterways.

The probe exposes how personal distrust led the officer of the deck, Lt. j.g. Sarah Coppock, to avoid communicating with the destroyer’s electronic nerve center — the combat information center, [or CIC](#) — while the Fitzgerald tried to cross a shipping superhighway.

When Fort walked into the trash-strewn CIC in the wake of the disaster, he was hit with the acrid smell of urine. He saw kettlebells on the floor and bottles filled with pee. Some radar controls didn’t work and he soon discovered crew members who didn’t know how to use them anyway.

Fort found a Voyage Management System that generated more “trouble calls” than any other key piece of electronic navigational equipment. Designed to help watchstanders navigate without paper charts, the VMS station in the skipper’s quarters was broken so sailors cannibalized it for parts to help keep the rickety system working.

Since 2015, the Fitz had lacked a [quartermaster chief petty officer](#), a crucial leader who helps safely navigate a warship and trains its sailors — a shortcoming known to both the destroyer’s squadron and Navy officials in the United States, Fort wrote.

Fort determined that Fitz’s crew was plagued by low morale; overseen by a dysfunctional chiefs mess; and dogged by a bruising tempo of operations in the Japan-based 7th Fleet that left exhausted sailors with little time to train or complete critical certifications.

To Fort, they also appeared to be led by officers who appeared indifferent to potentially life-saving lessons that should’ve been learned from other near-misses at sea, including a similar incident near Sasebo, Japan, that occurred only five weeks before the [ACX Crystal collision](#), Fort wrote.



The guided-missile destroyer Fitzgerald sails limps back to Japan following a collision with a merchant vessel on June 17, 2017. (Kazuhiro Nogi/AFP/Getty Images) ‘Significant progress’

Fort’s work took on added urgency after another destroyer assigned to the 7th Fleet, the [John S. McCain](#), collided with the Liberian-flagged tanker Alnic MC on Aug. 21, 2017, killing 10 more American sailors.

But it remained an internal file never to be shared with the public.

Pentagon officials declined to answer specific questions sent by Navy Times about the Fort report and instead defended the decision to keep the contents of the report hidden from public scrutiny.

“The Navy determined to retain the legal privilege in order to protect the legal interests of the United States, but provided information regarding the causes and lessons learned to families of those sailors, the Congress and the American people, again to make every effort to ensure these types of tragedies to not happen again,” said Navy spokesman Capt. Gregory Hicks in a prepared written statement to Navy Times.

In the 19 months since the fatal collision, the Navy’s Readiness Reform Oversight Council has made “significant progress” in implementing reforms called for [in several top-level Navy reviews](#) of the Fitzgerald and McCain collisions — nearly 75 percent of the 111 recommendations slated to be implemented by the end of 2018, Hicks added.

Navy Times withheld publication of the Fort report’s details until Pentagon officials could brief the families of the dead Fitz sailors about the grim findings.

Sailors Xavier Martin, Dakota Rigsby, Shingo Douglass, Tan

Huynh, Noe Hernandez, Carlos Sibayan and Gary Rehm drowned in the disaster.

Coppock pleaded guilty to a dereliction of duty charge at court-martial last year.

The Fitz’s commanding officer, [Cmdr. Bryce Benson](#), and [Lt. Natalie Combs](#), who ran the CIC, are battling similar charges in court but contend unlawful command influence by senior leaders scuttled any chance for fair trials.

When Fort arrived at her CIC desk, he found a stack of paperwork Combs abandoned: “She was most likely consumed and distracted by a review of Operations Department paperwork for the three and a half hours of her watch prior to the collision,” Fort wrote.



Family, friends and shipmates attended a memorial ceremony at Fleet Activities Yokosuka on June 27, 2017, for the seven sailors killed when the guided-missile destroyer Fitzgerald collided with a merchant vessel off the coast of Japan 10 days earlier. (Navy)

Lessons unlearned

Although Fort’s report drew parallels to a 2012 non-fatal accident involving the destroyer Porter and the supertanker M/V Otowasan in the Strait of Hormuz, his investigation focused on a near-miss by the Fitzgerald near Sasebo on May 10, 2017.

During that incident, an unnamed junior officer “became confused by the surface contact picture” of vessels surrounding the destroyer and summoned the warship’s then-commanding officer, Cmdr. Robert Shu, to the bridge, according to Fort.

Shu set the course to steer the Fitz behind the merchant vessel and then left the bridge.

But once the officer in charge had cleared the other ship’s stern, he “became immediately aware that another vessel was on the opposite side” of the ship they had just dodged, Fort wrote.

“(The officer) sounded five short blasts and ordered all back full emergency to avoid collision,” something Lt. j.g. Coppock failed to do weeks later when the ACX Crystal loomed out of the darkness, the report states.

To Fort, the earlier incident should’ve been a wakeup call for both Shu and Cmdr. Benson, his executive officer who would soon “fleet up” to replace him as skipper, plus Benson’s future second-in-command, Cmdr. Sean Babbitt.

“FTZ’s command leadership was unaware of just how far below standards their command had drifted,” wrote Fort, a surface warfare officer with more than a quarter-century of experience. “Had the (commanding officer) and (executive officer) critiqued the near-collision, they may have identified the root causes uncovered by this investigation.”

When contacted by Navy Times, Shu recalled the incident that took place just east of the Tsushima Strait, “a normally busy and recognized waterway.”

“As I was heading down the ladderwell to my cabin, I heard five short blasts and felt the ship back,” Shu said. “I ran back up to the bridge and there was another vessel behind the one we had just maneuvered for.”

Although Shu couldn’t recall how close the two vessels got to each other, he insisted that the incident wasn’t a near-collision and that his bridge team “reacted appropriately”

and later assured him that they had a good picture of the vessels around their destroyer.

But Fort’s investigation pointed to a disturbing pattern of watchstanders failing to follow standing orders from a skipper and XO who often were inexplicably absent from the bridge, even when the warship was transiting potentially dangerous waters at night.

One junior officer spoke of a similar near-collision during low visibility, when a watch team finishing their shift failed to identify a vessel that was closing on them and wasn’t being tracked, according to the report. The oncoming officer of the deck maneuvered out of the vessel’s way but never notified the commanding officer. Watchstanders admitted to knowing of other instances when ships got close enough to trigger a call to the CO, but they never made it, according to the report.

“Procedural compliance by Bridge watchstanders is not the norm onboard FTZ, as evidenced by numerous, almost routine, violations of the CO’s standing orders,” not to mention radio transmissions laced with profanity and “unprofessional humor,” Fort found.



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer Fitzgerald was heavily damaged during a June 17, 2017, collision with a merchant vessel.

Rules of the road

Benson and predecessor Shu spent little time on the bridge during nighttime transits and Benson was asleep in his quarters on the fateful

night the Fitzgerald collided with the ACX Crystal, Fort wrote.

Some of Benson’s bridge team had never transited the busy waterway before, or had only done so during the day, and “his watchstanders were at least as fatigued as he was from a long day of operations without sufficient rest,” Fort found.

It also was Benson’s first transit from Sagami Bay to the open sea as the warship’s skipper, a command he assumed just a few days after the near-collision off Sasebo.

“It is inexplicable that neither Benson nor (executive officer Cmdr. Babbitt) were on the bridge for his first outbound Yokosuka transit as CO, at night, in close proximity to land, and expecting moderately dense fishing and merchant traffic,” Fort wrote.

Ship travel is governed by the “rules of the road,” a set of guidelines regarding speed, lookouts and other best practices to avoid collisions, but Fort’s report casts doubt on whether watchstanders on board the Fitz and sister warships in the 7th Fleet had sufficient knowledge of them to safely navigate at sea.

About three weeks after the ACX Crystal disaster, Fort’s investigators sprang a rules of the road pop quiz on Fitz’s officers.

It didn’t go well. The 22 who took the test averaged a score of 59 percent, Fort wrote.

“Only 3 of 22 Officers achieved a score over 80%,” he added, with seven officers scoring below 50 percent.

The same exam was administered to the wardroom of another unnamed destroyer as a control group, and those officers scored similarly dismal marks.

The XO Babbitt, Coppock and two other officers refused to take the test, according to the report.

Reached by email, Babbitt told Navy Times that he declined because of the investigation and the fact that Fort had read him his rights.

“The exam was also given weeks after the collision when the wardroom had not been concentrating on the rules of the road,” he said. “The crew had been pulled from event to event to include the memorial service and the dignified send off and the last thing anyone had been thinking about was how many lights a 50 meter towing vessel on inland waterways should have.”

Speaking through his defense attorney, Benson declined to comment on the Fort report’s findings.

In an email to Navy Times, Lt. Cmdr. Justin Henderson said Benson “has never declined or avoided the responsibility that is the burden of command at sea” and remains “accountable for the Fitzgerald and her crew, who remain at the forefront of his thoughts.

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This article about the Fitz submitted by Marty Walsh

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One More Day

By USS Wasp Media Department

“All the signs and symptoms were there, and I think people were afraid, or maybe thought that I wasn’t the type of person that would be suicidal,” said Senior Chief Information Specialist Jillian Cardoza. “It’s not always easy to

come right out and say, 'Are you thinking of killing yourself?'"

And its can be even harder when someone is drifting away.

"You don't want to be around [your loved ones], especially if you are feeling that bad about yourself and your situation," said Cardoza. "And that was where I didn't trust in my own abilities to bounce back. I didn't think there was anything that anyone could do, and that there was only one thing that I could do to get out of the situation."

While Cardoza was going through the hardest part of her life, she found it difficult to open up. She felt pathetic. "I thought I was weak for having those thoughts and that I was weak or if I said anything about it. I just let it consume me."

"From not having your family there, to working with other, different personalities, just trying to do your best and be the best ... over time the stress starts to accumulate," sympathized Information Technician First Class Nicole Gallardo. "When it piles up and you don't have the support or someone you trust, you hold on to it. [The suicidal feeling] comes to those who are strong, those who are strong to others and those who help others. A thought can come into your head, but it's how you go about controlling those thoughts."

Be strong enough, she said, to ask for help controlling suicidal thoughts and depression. Seeking the assistance of a therapist does not make a person weak. Rather, it makes that person a stronger individual.

"After you get your healing, life goes on; you will not be the same person," said Gallardo. "You will be more aware of your surroundings, you will know when you need to talk, you will know that you can no longer just hold on to things, and you realize that people do care. Thoughts are thoughts, but if you

don't deal with those thoughts, they become actions."

Healing doesn't mean things will immediately go back to normal, however, said Cardoza. Healing takes time.

"After my suicide attempt, and then coming back to my family," who had no idea she was struggling, she said, "it was difficult. It was gradual. You can't expect that things are going to bounce back right away and you're going to be okay, but really, the light for me was my family and going to therapy."

In fact, Cardoza's family was shocked. They had been clueless as to her struggle — until they found her.

In many suicide attempts, this is the case. No one knows something is wrong until it's too late.

Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class Marrison Cross was on deployment when she lost her best friend to suicide. She had no clue as to the "why" or the "what" behind his actions.

"We ask ourselves why ... they did this, but I saw no signs — nothing," said Cross. "The fact that I had no clue for myself, that I didn't even realize that all this was happening, made me think, 'Does that make me a good best friend? Did that make me not care in a way?' There were just so many thoughts. I was just so confused."

Being underway didn't help either. The helplessness of the distance and lack of communication took its toll, both emotionally and physically.

"It's not like I could go on social media and see what was going on. It's not like I could talk to anyone. It's not like I could go to his own funeral and be there with him," she said, noting that the atmosphere of an underway naval vessel isn't necessarily conducive to mourning. "For anyone who hears news like

that while underway, it can be difficult because you're surrounded by people, and yet you feel so utterly alone. Find somewhere, go be with your emotions and take some time because you need to feel everything, and if you need to cry, then cry; do what you need to do."

Sometimes that grief is compounded by deep sense of self-blame.

Aviation Ordnanceman First Class Jacob Learned lost his mother to suicide when he was only 13. "It made me not merely blame myself, but it made me question, 'Was I not worth sticking around for?' The aftermath was just complete turmoil. I didn't know where to go; I didn't know if I should talk to anybody, if I should keep it locked up inside or, if I did talk, how did I talk about it?"

"If you are a parent who is thinking about [suicide], or even had a weak point in your life where you've thought it was the easiest way out, I can't deny the fact that you are not wrong," he added. "But the harder path is always the one that leads to the greater gift. If you go down the easy pathway, you'll never get what you could have had."

Suicide victims ultimately deny themselves the opportunity to see how things may have turned out differently one day, one week and even one year down the road.

For those left behind when someone commits suicide, the natural tendency is to feel selfish — after all, the pain they may feel at the loss of their loved one couldn't possibly compare to the pain of the person who took his or her life. Those who have been left behind just want one more day, one more conversation, one more laugh and one more chance.

"The story that is going to be told to your kids and your grandchildren is the one you write for yourself," said Learned. "If you take yourself out of it, there's no one to tell that story."

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Hunter Killer 25 October 2018
By Mass Communications Specialist
2nd Class Andrew N. Skipworth,
Defense Media Activity

Actor Gerard Butler visited Naval Submarine Base (SUBASE) New London, Connecticut, ahead of an exclusive premiere of his new submarine movie, "Hunter Killer," Oct. 20.

Butler kicked off his visit with a luncheon hosted by Vice Admiral Charles Richard, commander of Submarine Forces, Submarine Force Atlantic and Allied Submarine Command. They were joined by the Lions Gate film crew and twenty-plus top Sailors from tenant commands.

Butler then followed the admiral to USS Hartford (SSN 768), where Richard awarded the Battenberg Cup to the crew. The cup is given to the crew that most distinguished itself through outstanding performance in an annual "battle efficiency" competition.

Butler toured USS Hartford and met with crewmembers along the way. "If there was another career that I had to choose, I would definitely consider this one," said Butler.

Before the premiere of the movie, the star signed autographs and met with Sailors and their families. More than 1,300 Sailors and family members went to see the movie at the Dealey Center Theater that evening. After the conclusion of the film, Butler and movie director Donovan Marsh held a question-and-answer session for the audience.

When asked what he did to prepare for his role, Butler explained that he drew his inspiration from George Wallace, author of the book "Hunter Killer," and his experience aboard USS Houston (SSN 713).

"What I learned was the mind set which comes from an unbelievable amount of training and drilling. You

understand why this is the best military in the world. They do not stop training," said Butler. "We would do battle station drills; even if it was incredible, it wasn't good enough and we would continue to do it again and again. They know things inside out and have that level of expertise."

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Wounded Sailors Find Safe Harbor 29 May 2018
By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class
Raymond Minami, Defense Media Activity

Life happens, and sometimes it changes our bodies and minds in ways we could never imagine. You never walk into a barber shop expecting a haircut only to leave in an ambulance with a slashed throat. That's what happened to Chief Yeoman Tim Vaughn.

Sailors just like Vaughn are working and standing watch for the United States around the globe every moment of every day. Unfortunately, like him, a number of these service members will be in the wrong place at the wrong time. A few will be wounded on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier deployed to the Pacific. Others will be on their way home from dinner back in the States on a Saturday night and get hit by a drunk driver. Some will survive an explosion in combat and go on to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. This is the reality of life for service members: It happens; life happens.

To the Navy, these Sailors are all wounded warriors, no matter how they were injured or whether their injuries are visible or not. The Navy Wounded Warrior - Safe Harbor program is here to help these service members enroll in a recovery and support program once their medical needs have been met.

Safe Harbor works with service members who are still on active

duty as well as medically retired to create a recovery plan that fits their individual needs. These plans also focus on helping families prepare for the potential loss of income, become aware of the benefits available to them, and also ensure the emotional well-being of service members and their families.

One of the benefits Safe Harbor offers to promote emotional well-being in these Sailors is the annual Navy Wounded Warrior Training Camp and trials, a lead up and preliminary to the Department of Defense's Warrior Games. The camp is designed to transform wounded Sailors and Coast Guardsmen into athletes, encourage them to continue to stay active and healthy and to push themselves to do things they think are impossible. Athletes who wish to compete in the Warrior Games will be selected at the camp and will go on to represent Team Navy during the games, scheduled for June 2018.

"Even though I'm still on active duty, I might look like I'm healed on the outside, not on the inside," said Vaughn. "Safe Harbor, bringing all these guys out here to [the Wounded Warrior Training Camp] from all over the U.S. is amazing."

Every athlete attending the camp is enrolled in multiple sports training events. After honing their skills, they'll compete in multiple events at the Warrior Games.

"I have never done any of these events before," said Vaughn. "I have never competed in any of these, and have never wanted to do it more, now that I have experienced the trials and now I'm going to the games."

Husband and wife coaching team, Ramona and Ken Pagel, have been working for the Navy Wounded Warrior - Safe Harbor program for a number of years, and say they have been inspired by the Sailors they work with.

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The Story of "Bad Angel" Airplane

A World War II Pilot Story

The Saturday following Thanksgiving 2013, Ms. Karen, my 94-year-old father, Bill Gressinger, and I were visiting Pima Air and Space Museum.

We were in Hanger #4 to view the beautifully restored B-29, when I happened to take notice of a P-51 Mustang near the big bomber. It's name ? "Bad Angel ".

P-51 Mustang "Bad Angel" in Hanger #4 at Pima Air and Space Museum.

I was admiring its aerodynamic lines and recalled enough history to know that until the Mustangs came into service, the skies over the Pacific Ocean were dominated by Japanese Zeros.

Then something very strange caught my eye. Proudly displayed on the fuselage of 'Bad Angel' were the markings of the pilot's kills: seven Nazis; one Italian; one Japanese **AND ONE AMERICAN** Huh? "Bad Angel" shot down an American airplane?

Was it a terrible mistake? Couldn't be. If it had been an unfortunate misjudgment, certainly the pilot would not have displayed the American flag. I knew there had to be a good story here. Fortunately for us, one of the Museum's many fine docents was on hand to tell it.

In 1942, the United States needed pilots for its war planes lots of war planes; lots of pilots. Lt. Louis Curdes was one. When he was 22 years old, he graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe.

He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning Ten days later he shot down three German

Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters. A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf -109's. In less than a month of combat, Louis was an Ace.

During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitts before his luck ran out. A German fighter shot down his plane on August 27, 1943 over Salerno, Italy. Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered. Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he flew P-51 Mustangs.

Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theater, Louis downed a Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa. Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter.

While attacking the Japanese-held island of Bataan, one of Louis wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean. Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived, so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot.

It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Bataan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a

Douglas C-47 transport with American markings.

He tried to make radio contact, but without success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept head to its landing target. Apparently the C-47 crew didn't realize they were about to land on a Japanese held island, and soon would be captives.

Lt. Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives. He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do?

Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 caliber machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on toward the Bataan airfield. Curdes shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean.

One of "Bad Angel's" .50 caliber machine guns built into its wings. The big plane came down to it wings. in one piece about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base. The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PBY that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived, and later, Lt. Curdes would end up marrying one of these nurses.

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese **and one American flag**.