



The Knox County Joint Veterans Council Honor Guard is looking for **volunteers!!!**

The Knox County Joint Veterans Council is located at the Knox County Veterans Service Office located at 105 E Chestnut St. Mount Vernon, Ohio. The post conducts regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The meeting time is 7:00 P.M. **Contact Eddie Stage @**

740-504-1597 if you are interested in volunteering.



They stand guard silently, vigilantly through whatever Mother Nature dares throw at them. They do so with great pride to honor one of their own. For them, honoring a fallen brother-in-arms is compensation enough.

For the families of the deceased veteran, they are the ever-watchful sentinels, and their selfless act is a much-appreciated tribute.

She was America's first woman POW in Vietnam — and was never found

In the dense jungle terrain in Darlac Province, near the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot, South Vietnam, American doctor Eleanor Ardel Vietti had found her calling to heal. Yet that same calling led her to become America's first female prisoner of war in Vietnam. To this day, Vietti remains the only American woman POW whose fate remains unknown. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, 1,244 Americans are still unaccounted for in Vietnam. Fifty-nine civilian women were killed during the war.

Called to service, Vietti, alongside the Christian and Missionary Alliance and tribal nurses, worked to treat those afflicted with leprosy within South Vietnam's largest ethnic minority, the Montagnards — a French phrase for "mountain people." Within Montagnards communities the rates of the disease could reach a staggering 30 percent, among the highest in the world. However, amid escalating tensions between guerrilla factions under Ho Chi Minh and South Vietnamese forces and their foreign advisors, the U.S. State Department cautioned all American expats to leave the country. Targeted attacks against the Montagnards were also on the rise, but despite that and government warnings, Vietti and other missionaries — notably, Daniel Gerber, a member of the Central Mennonite Committee, and Rev. Archie E. Mitchell — believed they were in no inherent danger and continued their work within the Leprosarium compound.

The night of May 20, 1962, was one of the last nights Vietti and the two men were ever seen alive. That evening 12 armed guerrilla fighters descended on the colony, tying up Archie Mitchell and Gerber, and ordering Vietti out of her house. Vietti and the other two captives were bound and taken away. With no ransom demands ever made, it remains unclear why the three prisoners were taken. Mitchell, incidentally, was the lone survivor of the 1945 Japanese balloon-bombing attack off the coast of Oregon that killed his first wife, Eloise, and five neighborhood children. The Japanese strike was the only successful enemy attack on mainland America during World War II.

It seems likely that the Viet Cong raid was aimed at obtaining hospital equipment, with Rev. T. Grady Mangham, director of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, telling the New York Times in 1962, "I rather think they were in need of medical supplies." Since that evening Vietti's status remains "Unaccounted For," with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency concluding, "The three missionaries were forced to march south, and were eventually executed while in Viet Cong custody. The exact locations and circumstances surrounding their deaths are unknown."

Rumors remain about their status, with jungle tribesmen through the years claiming that they spotted a white woman with two white men. These assertions have never been substantiated.

World War II ace Richard Bong's plane found, explorers believe

Searchers announced Thursday they've discovered what they believe is the wreckage of World War II ace Richard Bong's plane in the South Pacific. The Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior, Wisconsin, and the nonprofit World War II historical preservation group Pacific Wrecks announced in March they were launching a joint search for Bong's Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter. Bong nicknamed the plane "Marge" after his girlfriend, Marge Vattendahl. Another pilot, Thomas Malone, was flying the plane in March 1944 over what is now known as Papua New Guinea when engine failure sent it into a spin. Malone bailed out before the plane crashed in the jungle.

The expedition's leader, Pacific Wrecks Director Justin Taylan, said that the search team discovered the wreckage in the jungles of Papua New Guinea's Madang Province on May 15. He released photos of himself in the jungle with chunks of metal on the ground. In one photo he points to what the caption calls a wing tip from the plane stamped with "993," the last three numbers of the plane's serial number. Enlarging the photo shows markings that could be two "9s" but they're obscured by what might be dirt or rust and difficult to make out. Another photo shows a piece of metal stamped with "Model P-38 JK."

Taylan said during a video news conference from Papua New Guinea on Thursday afternoon that the serial number and model identification prove the plane is Marge "definitely, beyond a doubt." "I think it's safe to say mission accomplished," Taylan said. "Marge has been identified. It's a great day for the center, a great day for Pacific Wrecks, a great day for history."

Taylan has been researching the location of the crash site for years. He said that historical records suggested it went down on the grounds of a 150-year old plantation. Local residents initially showed the expedition the wreck of a Japanese fighter plane before telling the searchers about wreckage deeper in the jungle. The explorers hiked through the jungle until they discovered wreckage in a ravine, Taylan said. At the top of the ravine they found two aircraft engines sticking out of the ground, indicating the plane went in nose-first and buried itself in the ground. Taylan said Bong painted the wing tips red and the paint was still on them.

Bong, who grew up in Poplar, Wisconsin, is credited with shooting down 40 Japanese aircraft during World War II. He plastered a blow-up of Vattendahl's portrait on the nose of his plane, according to a Pacific Wrecks summary of the plane's service. Bong shot down more planes than any other American pilot. Gen. Douglas MacArthur awarded him the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's highest decoration, in 1944. Taylan said that Bong shot down three planes while flying Marge.

Bong and Vattendahl eventually married in 1945. Bong was assigned to duty as a test pilot in Burbank, California, after three combat tours in the South Pacific. He was killed on Aug. 6, 1945, when a P-80 jet fighter he was testing crashed. He died on the same day the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Vattendahl was 21 at the time of Bong's death. She went on to become a model and a magazine publisher in Los Angeles. She died in September 2003 in Superior.

A bridge connecting Superior and Duluth, Minnesota, is named for Bong. A state recreation area in southeastern Wisconsin also is named for him. "The Bong family is very excited about this discovery," James Bong, Richard Bong's nephew, said in the news release. "It is amazing and incredible that 'Marge' has been found and identified."



After nearly 80 years, the wreck of the USS Harder has been found

The final resting place of the 79 sailors aboard the submarine Harder has been found. The boat was sunk by Japanese depth charges on Aug. 24, 1944, while Harder was on patrol. Its last known location was in the South China Sea, near the Philippines, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

The command's underwater archaeology branch confirmed Harder's location with the help of Tiburon Subsea CEO Tim Taylor and the Lost 52 project, a group that works to find and memorialize the 52 U.S. submarines lost during World War II.

In addition to Harder, the group has located fellow fallen subs Grayback, Stickleback, R-12, S-26, S-28 and Grunion, according to the Navy, and Taylor received the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award in 2021 for his efforts.

Harder was found sitting upright with its keel "relatively intact" at a depth of more than 3,000 feet, with depth charge damage aft of the conning tower, the Navy said.

While it can be challenging to identify subs in such situations, the Navy credited the data collected by Lost 52 and the "excellent state of preservation of the site" as key to confirming that the wreck is Harder.

"Harder was lost in the course of victory," Navy History and Heritage Command's director, retired Adm. Samuel J. Cox, said in a statement. "We must not forget that victory has a price, as does freedom."

"We are grateful that Lost 52 has given us the opportunity to once again honor the valor of the crew of the 'Hit 'em HARDER' submarine that sank the most Japanese warships – in particularly audacious attacks – under her legendary skipper, Cmdr. Sam Dealey."

Harder played a key role in disrupting Japanese forces in the lead up to the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944, according to the Navy.

During its fifth and most successful patrol in May and June of 1944, Harder sunk three Japanese destroyers and crippled two others over the course of four days, attacks that prompted Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa to depart his fleet from Tawi-Tawi, Philippines, a day early, according to the Navy.

That earlier departure mucked up Japanese battle plans and forced Ozawa to slow down his carrier force in the Philippine Sea, which contributed to the Japanese defeat in the battle, according to the Navy.

The final days of the Harder and its sailors began during the boat's sixth war patrol, when it joined fellow sub Haddo in attacking and destroying three Japanese escort ships off Bataan, Philippines, on Aug. 22.

As the sun rose the next day, Haddo attacked until it needed to leave for torpedo replenishment, and Harder and Hake stayed off Dasol Bay, prowling for new targets.

On Aug. 24, Hake went deep and silent to avoid a Japanese attack, and reported hearing 15 rapid depth charges at about 7:30 a.m.

Japanese records later showed that Harder fired three torpedoes at an escort ship, and that the ship sunk Harder with the fifth depth charge that it dropped, according to the Navy.

Harder's commanding officer, Cmdr. Dealey, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for Harder's fifth war patrol, and the sub received a Presidential Unit Citation and six battle stars for its service in World War II.

The Navy said the Harder's final resting place is protected under U.S. law and falls within the Navy's jurisdiction.



Pictures of the Month



The final resting place of the 79 sailors aboard the submarine Harder has been found.

An Air Force LC-130 practices ski landings and takeoffs at Camp Raven in Greenland, May 12, 2024



Marine Corps MV-22B Ospreys and a KC-130J Hercules fly in formation during training over Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, May 10, 2024.