



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

April 26, 2023

**GREETINGS TO ALL COMMEMORATING THE 79th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE WWII BATTLE OF EXERCISE TIGER AND VIETNAM VETERAN TRIBUTE**

On behalf of the Department of the Navy, it is my pleasure to extend greetings to those gathered at the Exercise Tiger Army & Navy Anchor Memorial at the Audrain County Courthouse, Missouri and United States Coast Guard (USCG) Station Barnegat Light, New Jersey. And to all other USCG stations participating in the USCG National Wreath Tribute in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf waters.

Today, this annual national tribute by the United States Exercise Tiger Foundation honors the "Legacy of our Fathers" not only those from this overlooked battle, but ALL who have served our nation in its time of need. Some of those we remember and honor are here in spirit, others like those who served during the Vietnam War, are here in person.

We honor those who fought on April 28, 1944, and those from the Vietnam War. For many years "Tiger" was overlooked by history, just as some of those returning from Southeast Asia some 25 years later in the 1960's. The 8 LST's of convoy T-4, radio call sign Taffy -4, faced an enemy force of 9 German warships known as "E" Boats. Of the 4,000 man US force on those 8 ships, 551 Soldiers and 198 Sailors lost their lives in combat while preparing for the Normandy Invasion.

A father's legacy holds special meaning to me as well. My father helped us to immigrate from Cuba in 1962. I, as those of you gathered, hold dear his teachings, his character, and his dedication and love to me and my family. In April 2004, USCG Petty Officer Nathan "Nate" Bruckenthal gave his life in combat while serving on the USS Firebolt (PC 10). His legacy has always been remembered by the USTF with a separate wreath honoring him that April and since. His daughter, Harper Natalie "Nate" Bruckenthal was born 7 months after he was lost. She too, carries on his legacy as a nurse.

Allow me to join you in honoring the overlooked "Battle of Exercise Tiger" and all who serve in the US Navy and Coast Guard. They are inspirations for those who will follow them, as did those from WW II who served as inspiration for an entire generation.

As a former Surface Warfare Officer, I am proud that the US Coast Guard Station at Barnegat Light will mark its 35th straight year of laying a wreath to "Exercise Tiger" and to honor USCG Petty Officer Bruckenthal for the 19th straight year. Best wishes for a memorable event.

Sincerely,


Carlos Del Toro