

Wreath laying directed by Commanding Officer  
CWO Jay Greiner and Crew: BM2 Endicott,  
BM2 Powell, FN Keith, MK3 Fortner, in  
Honor of WWII Exercise Tiger Veterans of  
all US Wars and Conflicts.



## LST 289 After The Battle

“LST’s, Their Finest Hour”

Secretary of the Navy  
John Dalton, 1997



Wreaths and Flowers Provided by:  
The Exercise Tiger Association and the NJ Submarine Association

# The Exercise Tiger Foundation

Presents

## The Historic 23rd Annual “Tiger” Wreath Ceremony



April 28th, 1944

April 28th, 2011

USCG Station:  
★ Barnegat Light



## The National Ceremony

*Honoring Veterans, Active Duty  
Forces & Special Recognition*



★ April 28th, 2011 ★

United States Coast Guard Station, Barnegat Light, NJ  
The 67th Anniversary of Exercise Tiger



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

March 30, 2011

GREETINGS TO ALL COMMEMORATING THE 67<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF EXERCISE TIGER

On behalf of the Department of the Navy and a grateful Nation, I join you in remembering and honoring the Sailors and Servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice for their countrymen during a critical time in our Nation's history.

The Normandy invasion was one of the largest military undertakings in world history and marked the turning point in World War II. The invasion would not have been such a crucial success had it not been for the numerous rehearsal exercises leading up to the assault. The 749 Americans who lost their lives in the early hours of April 28, 1944, when the Exercise Tiger amphibious assault forces were unexpectedly attacked by nine German E-boats, remind us of freedom's inestimable cost. While the loss of life was tragic, the lessons learned from Exercise Tiger ensured the success of the Normandy invasion.

I commend each of you gathered here today in the cause of keeping this important event fresh in the minds of our countrymen. Devoted Americans like you make sure the sacrifices of those who fought so valiantly on that terrible day will never be forgotten. Our collective efforts to remember that sacrifice will ensure future generations do not take our liberties for granted.

God Bless America and God Bless the Exercise Tiger Association!

  
Ray Mabus



Office of the Governor  
State of Missouri

## Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, what began as a top secret naval operation to prepare United States Army and Naval forces for the June 6, 1944 D-Day Invasion would end with one of the highest losses ever suffered in combat by the United States Army and Navy in World War II; and

**WHEREAS**, *Exercise Tiger* was the code name for one of several secret military full-scale rehearsals for the Battle of Normandy, conducted along the southern coast of England; and

**WHEREAS**, *Exercise Tiger* involved over 30,000 United States Army and Navy personnel, as well as British forces; and

**WHEREAS**, during this staging in the English Channel, on April 28, 1944, eight tank landing ships carrying American troops were unexpectedly attacked by German Naval Forces; and

**WHEREAS**, the aftermath of the German attack found two American vessels sunk, a third crippled, and 749 soldiers dead, including 201 soldiers from the State of Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, the courageous servicemen who participated in *Exercise Tiger* made great sacrifices and endured hardships to help achieve victory and preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy for this great country.

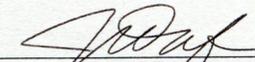
**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI, do hereby proclaim April 28, 2011, to be

### EXERCISE TIGER DAY

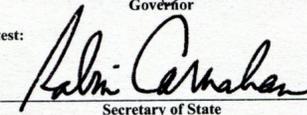
in Missouri to recognize the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WWII Battle of Exercise Tiger, and urge all Missourians to honor all troops, especially the soldiers and sailors of *Exercise Tiger*.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Missouri, in the City of Jefferson, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2011.



  
Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon  
Governor

Attest:

  
Palmi Carnahan  
Secretary of State



# THE EXERCISE TIGER NATIONAL WREATH TRIBUTE

## 67th Anniversary of Exercise Tiger



*The Historic 23rd Annual "Tiger" Wreath Ceremony*  
*In conjunction with The NJ Submarine Association & The USCG Station Barnegat Light*

### Sequence of Events

*April 28th, 2011*

#### Welcome & Remarks

**CWO Jay Greiner, USCG Commanding Officer**  
Secretary of the Navy Remarks

#### Recognition by Edna M. Winans

USCG Auxiliary VFC 74, SO-PB, FSO-PA/PB

#### Recognition by Exercise Tiger Foundation

Susan Haines, National Director

#### Distinguished Unit Award

USCG Station Barnegat Light

#### Distinguished Service Awards

**Michael "Tex" Gydos, Veteran US Navy WWII**

**Calvin Moon, US Navy Veteran WWII**

USS Razorback SS394

**Tom Oakley, US Navy LST Veteran WWII**

**X. George Platia, US Navy Veteran WWII**

USS Nautilus SS168

#### *In Our Thoughts & Prayers*

**Tom Glynn, US Navy LST Veteran WWII**

**Earl Thatcher, US Navy LST Veteran WWII**

**Arthur J. Cox, US Army Veteran**

Korean War Theater

**Jake Engelman "Ex-Coastie", US Navy Veteran Vietnam War**

Patrol Gun Boat BIBBWHEC31

**Dan Staruch, US Navy, Cold War Veteran**

USS Bluegill, NJ Sub Assn.

#### Special Recognition Award

**Edna M. Winans**

USCG Auxiliary VFC 74, SO-PB, FSO-PA/PB

#### **The Historic 23rd Annual "Tiger" Wreath Laying at Sea**

Wreaths Honoring "Tiger", US Forces & US Navy Submarine Service  
& Flowers for USCG Petty Officer Nathan Bruckenthal,  
Killed in action 2003

~ Aboard 47 Foot USCG Motor Lifeboat ~

**A Reception Will Immediately Follow in the Mess Hall**

### Today's Event

Today's National Wreath Tribute marks the 67th Anniversary of the Pre D-Day training Exercise code named "Tiger". It also marks the 23rd year that the USCG has honored the historic WWII battle with an ocean wreath laying tribute. Today's wreath laying is the only one of its kind in the world to mark this historic event in WWII. USCG Station Barnegat Light has performed this honor since 1989, making it the only branch of the US military to continually honor "Tiger". Additionally, The US Navy Submarine Service Association of New Jersey joins us for the 6th year honoring the "Silent Service". Other official ceremonies today take place in Missouri at the "Tiger" Memorial. We also remember USCG Petty Officer Nathan Bruckenthal killed in combat off Iraq in 2003, as well as ALL U.S. forces serving in Harms Way.

# The Missouri Exercise Tiger Army & Navy Anchor Memorial *History and Notes*

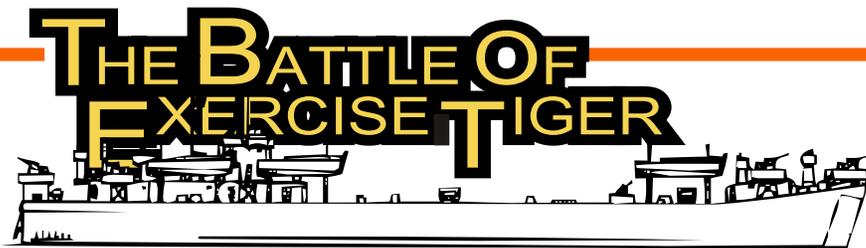
On June 12th 1997 a request was made to US Navy Captain Gary Chiavarotti, Director of the US Navy's Inactive Fleet by National Executive Director Walter Domanski. On July 13th 1997 the request was approved. The record approval time was because of Capt. Chiavarotti's desire to make a memorial to "Tiger" a reality. The request was for two ex-LST anchors that could serve as twin state and national memorials to the Battle of Exercise Tiger in New Jersey and Missouri. Working with Fred Hood, Director of Naval Sea Systems Command Detachment, Norfolk Naval Base and T.H. "Tommy" Tise the NAVSEA Maintenance Facility Supervisor, the Exercise Tiger Association, National Foundation was given two 5000 pound stern anchors from LST's of the Suffolk County Class. The Missouri anchor was used on an LST of this class. At the request of the Tiger Association the Navy will keep the anchor in the official US Navy Inventory, placing it on permanent loan to the Exercise Tiger Association making a lasting tribute to the courageous American Sailors and Soldiers who gave their lives in combat action with an enemy of the United States. Symbolically, the anchor will remain ever ready to again serve on an LST should an emergency exist for this type of anchor.

The anchor arrived in Columbia, Missouri as a Christmas present to area "Tiger" vets and National Director Susan

Haines on Dec. 16, 1997. Its 1500 mile journey from Norfolk, Virginia was due to the efforts of former US Navy Petty Officer Rocky Roberts who served on LST USS LaMoure County 1194, and Uponor ETI of Columbia who donated their transportation resources. Roberts' ship, the LaMoure County hosted the 1995 Exercise Tiger ceremony and was the first LST and active ship of the U.S. Navy to do so. At that time the LaMoure County was the Navy's last LST. Under the direction of Lt. Col. Marty Walker the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, University of Missouri, painted it with official U.S. Navy paint that they secured for this project. Lt. Matt Mackenzie USN, oversaw the painting.

The Exercise Tiger Association, National Foundation in conjunction with the Audrain County Commissioners Dick Webber, Roger Young, Tom Groves and Missouri residents dedicated the memorial's host site in Mexico, Missouri.

*To join the National Exercise Tiger Foundation or to make a financial contribution write c/o The National Exercise Tiger Foundation, P.O. Box 246 Columbia, MO 65205. Visit our website at [www.exercisetiger.org](http://www.exercisetiger.org) for more information or current updates.*



What began as a top secret naval operation to prepare US Army and Naval forces for the June 6<sup>th</sup> D-Day Invasion, would end with one of the highest losses ever suffered in combat by the US Army and Navy in WWII.

At 0135 on the morning of April 28th, 1944, eight Tank Landing Ships (LST's) and their lone escort, the British corvette HMSAZALEA, were en route to the landing area. Slapton Sands was selected because its beach looked every bit like the beaches at Normandy that would be code named Utah and Omaha by the allies.

The eight LST's of LST Group 32, formed convoy T-4. they were the support group for elements of the 4th & 29th Infantry, 82nd Airborne and 188th Field Artillery Group already ashore at Slapton Sands.

The LST's were carrying the 1st Engineer Special Brigade, the 3206th Quartermaster Company from Missouri, the 3207th Company and 462nd and 478th combat truck support companies as well as other elements of the US Army's engineer, signal, medical and chemical corps along with some infantry.

Miles south in the mouth of Lyme bay, lay the bulk of the Tiger naval force. Protected by the cruiser USS AGUSTA and the new British "O" class destroyers HMS ONSLOW and HMS OBEDIENT as well as the

Tribal Class destroyer HMS ASHANTI and a covering force of motor torpedo boats. Anchored along with LST's 55 and 382 they would be of no help to the ambushed LST force of T-4.

Attacking in the pitch black night, 9 German Navy "E" boats (torpedo) struck quickly and decisively. Without warning LST 507 was torpedoed first. Explosions and flame lit the night. At 0217 LST 531 is torpedoed. It sinks in six minutes. Of the 496 soldiers and sailors on her, 424 of them died. It would be on this ship that the state of Missouri would lose some 201 of its boys of the 3206th.

LST 289 tried to evade the fast German "E" boats but was hit in the stern. LST's 496, 515, and 511 all began firing at their attackers, LST 289 joined in returning fire while lowering landing craft to pull it out of harms way.

At 0225 the LST 499 radioed for help. Minutes later the lead ship, LST 515 sent out an urgent and chilling message. " 'E' boat attack". Radio stations along the coast pick up the dramatic calls for help. unaware of the top secret operation underway, the calls go unanswered. Only after an alert radio operator heard the words "T-4", did the Naval Command realize the calls were from "Tiger" and send help.

By 0240 the horror was slowly realized. Two LST's sunk, a

third lay crippled. Of the 4000 man force nearly a fourth were missing or killed. Official Dept. of Defense records confirm 749 dead, 551 US Army and 198 US Navy. The death toll makes "Tiger" the costliest battle to U.S. forces at that point in the war after Pearl Harbor.

On April 28th, 1944, the LST's darkest yet finest hour occurred. When, for one hour, the men and ships of Convoy T-4 fought the greatest naval battle ever faced by an LST force in history. Against superior enemy warships, the Tiger amphibious force held its own.

The German attack did not stop Exercise Tiger. Landing operations resumed later on the 28th. It is a credit to the tenacity and determination of the soldiers and sailors involved in Exercise Tiger, that the D-Day invasion at Normandy occurred as planned.

The events surrounding Exercise Tiger were officially declassified in early August 1944, two months after the Normandy Invasion. On April 28<sup>th</sup> 1996 Secretary of The Navy John Dalton stated in his remarks "Tiger...was the LST's finest hour."

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*This history was assembled by the NJ/MO Tiger Assoc. and based on Navy reports, DOD reports, and eye witness accounts.*