

### Here's hoping y'all are enjoying the Holiday

...Just don't forget the reason for the the season day! O.K., so I couldn't think of a word that would both fit AND rhyme with "reason"! But I'll get to why I used the expression later...

### About the newsletter

...after the upcoming meeting schedules and past meeting reports, you'll find all by yourself lots of pictures of neat members' models. A photo quiz at a recent meeting evidently had some puzzlers; one being this Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm between-wars torpedo plane, that was so ugly that it had a double-barreled name:



*the "Blackburn  
Blackburn" (Really!)*  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackburn\\_Blackburn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackburn_Blackburn))

Many of my long-time IPMS friends will know Dr. Frank Mitchell of the Atlanta area, whom I've long admired for, among other things, his penchant (might we say "masochist tendencies"? ) to scratch-build beautiful, large-scale models of really difficult and esoteric subjects. The Blackburn Blackburn certainly fits that description, and so it follows that Frank would find the Blackburn2 to be a challenge!

You can read all about his build (with lots of useful photos to give you scratch-building ideas!) at the Hyperscale link below! And yes, I know this has little to do with the Oklahoma newsletter, but I couldn't pass up it up! Note especially up front Frank's reason for the build, basically saying that Blackburn2 was so ugly that, quote: "I felt sorry for it....." and his final comment, quote: "...Jets do have some advantages")

More at

[http://www.hyperscale.com/2012/features/blackburnblackburn32fm\\_1.htm](http://www.hyperscale.com/2012/features/blackburnblackburn32fm_1.htm)



**But as usual I've wandered ....**

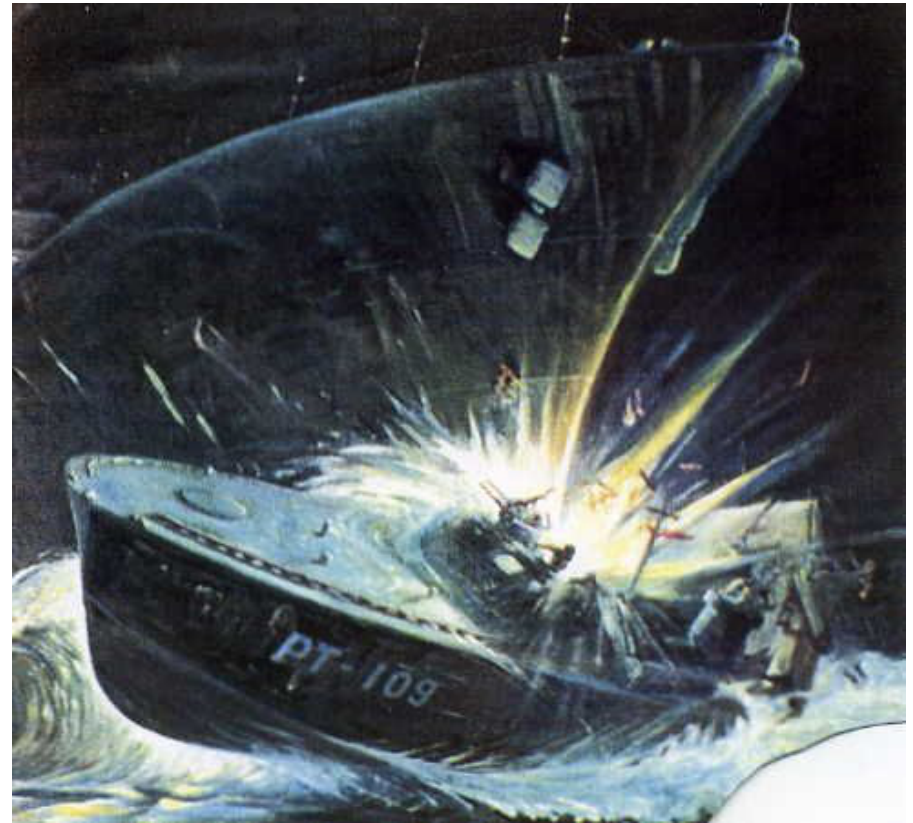
far away from editor Rick Jackson's newsletter, which features "Come to the Dark Side" Dave Kimbrell's article on the Brit "Matilda" tank of World War II.

As with most weapons, the name covers a small family of early-war infantry-support tanks which were evidently just fine ....



....until they encountered an anti-aircraft gun which Rommel pressed into service in North Africa as an EXTREMELY effective anti-tank gun. The versatile and feared (just ask any former 8th Air Force bomber crewman) Flugzeugabwehrkanone 18 (or 36, 37, or 41) 88 mm gun was universally known to both sides as the “Flak 88” or just “eighty-eight”.

Per usual, editor Rick includes ....a naval theme in this issue, a neat article on Japanese destroyers up through and including World War II. Without repeating any of Rick’s fine article, I’ll just mention THREE Japanese destroyers. Two I’ll get to later: the third destroyer is well known for a specific brief Japanese Navy victory which was a footnote to them at the time, but would come to loom large in American history. That happened when a Japanese destroyer suddenly appeared out of an incredibly dark night, to ram an obscure American PT boat, cutting it in half ....leaving her young skipper and the survivors of his crew swimming for their lives, deep in enemy territory. Since that skipper went on to be president of the United States, that story of that encounter on the night of August 2/3, 1943 is too well known to need further comment.



*Likely over-dramatized and certainly not entirely accurate, this painting emphasizes the “clipper bow” typical of just about all Japanese destroyers.*



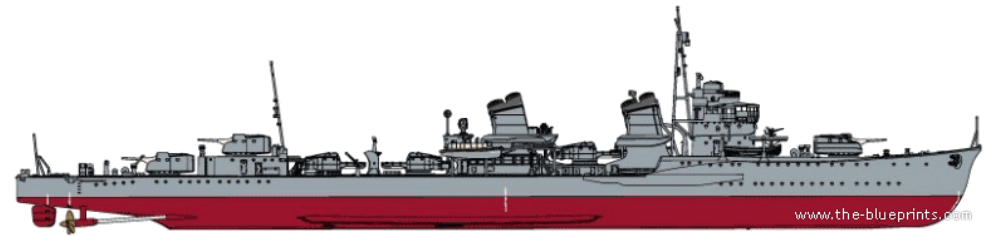
The victor, IJN Amagiri, had been launched and commissioned in 1930, and was the 15th of her 24 hull Fubuki-class. After many WWII adventures, most especially as part of the famed “Tokyo Express” supporting (and eventually, evacuating) the Japanese effort on Guadalcanal, Amagiri would herself be sunk less than a year later upon striking a mine on April 24th, 1944; a few miles off Borneo.

The OTHER two Japanese destroyers .....I wanted to mention were Hayate and Kisaragi. They did not have long WWII careers; both being sunk by U.S. Marine Corps gunfire in the valiant defense of Wake Island VERY early in the war.

And that takes me back to my “Don’t Forget the Reason for the Holiday” comment, up at the top.

By now you should be happily gorged with beer, hamburger, potato salad, watermelon, and all the other accouterments of having a good time on this traditional kick-off-day-of-summer holiday. That’s fine, but remember: this is the MEMORIAL Day weekend! I simply ask you to read at least some of the links below, with several interesting accounts of the defense of that lonely atoll, just after the Pearl Harbor disaster of December 7th, 1941.

The three islands making up the Wake atoll are the coral-encrusted tip of a dormant volcano thrust up from the sea floor, thousands of feet below.



*Of note are the Amagiri’s “clipper bow” and high forecastle typical of about all Japanese destroyers*



Seen viewing the Marine Corps memorial on Wake Island in 1957 is Jim Adkins, my navigator on that C-119 ferry flight across the Pacific. *Before anybody asks:* Jim was either brave enough to wear that “Brit” type shorts and take the barbs that followed, or perhaps he just thought it had the legs for it. That USAF uniform combination was optional a short period in the late 1950’s. (Personally, I never even bought it.)

For more about that “mercifully-short-lived” ensemble, there is a hilarious picture and some interesting internet commentary at:

<http://www.usmilitariaforum.com/forums/index.php?/topic/75178-usaf-photographs-1956/>

As a uniform it had been a little more popular than the service uniform former USAF Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak imposed in the mid 1990's, which lasted about until the door hit the general in the butt when he left office....

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniforms\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Air\\_Force#/media/File:Gen\\_Merrill\\_McPeak\\_1993.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniforms_of_the_United_States_Air_Force#/media/File:Gen_Merrill_McPeak_1993.jpg)

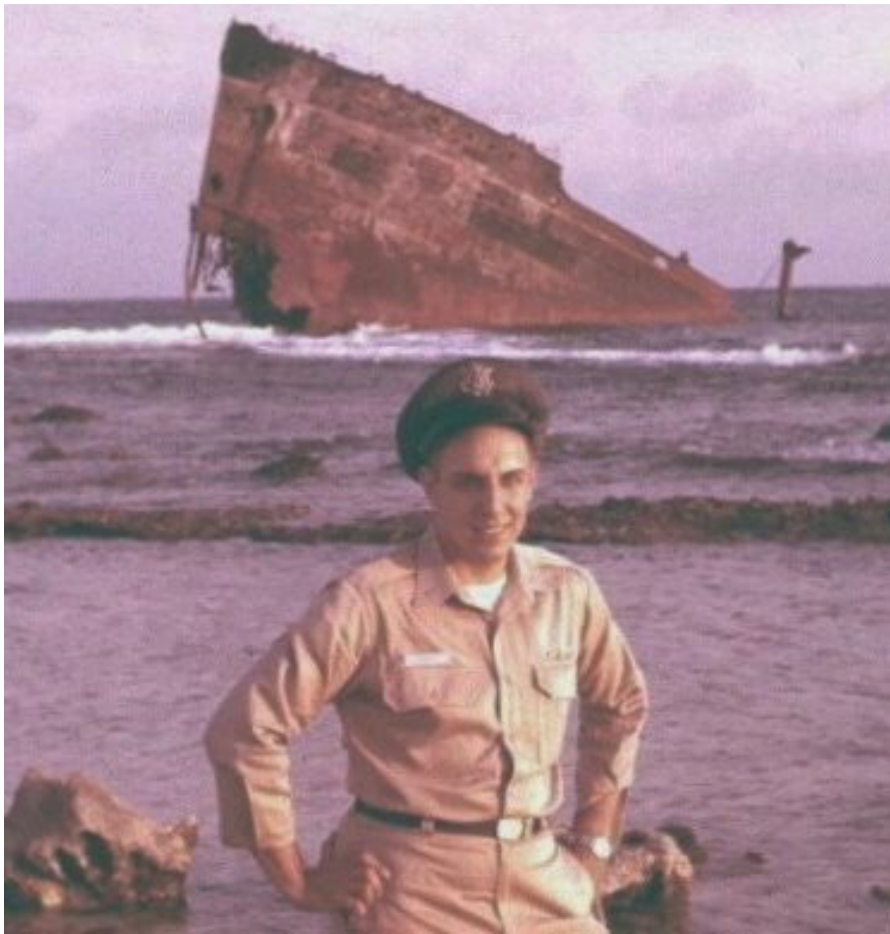


But about Wake: I've been there several times. The extreme depth of the water just off-shore all around (it's the tip of a volcano, remember) is betrayed by the “deep water blue” seen in the above picture. Today, airplanes have long enough legs that Wake's airfield is infrequently used. Unless you have official (and unlikely) business there, about the only way you'll see Wake today is after an (also unlikely) emergency landing there.

But back in the day of SLOW airplanes with PROPELLERS driven by BRE's (“Big Round Engines”), Wake was heartily welcomed as the only place dry and

barely big enough to land, after flying for hours and more hours and miles and more miles. Even so, the runway runs pretty much from the surf at one end to the surf at the other. The first time I passed through that very welcome dry spot ....its max elevation but eleven feet above a very big “four engine ocean” .....was in 1957. That's when I photographed Jim at the simple memorial seen in the above picture, made from the prop and cowl ring of one of the Marines' twelve F4F-3's of VMF 211, the squadron famed for their heroic defense.





Above, in the 1950's still seen clinging to the side of the island was the wreck of the Suwa Maru, where she had been run aground after being torpedoed by USS Tunney (SS 282) on March 28th 1943; trying to run the submarine blockade to resupply the by-then isolated and starving JAPANESE garrison.

*(Note that the faint outline of the Hinomaru could still be made out on Suwa Maru's bow.....)*

In another photo taken just after the war, more of the wreck was still above water; the wreckage of a Mitsubishi G3M "Nell" is in the foreground.

<http://militaryhonors.sid-hill.us/honors/hon-14b.htm>



The island's defenders had an impossible mission, and were overwhelmed by vastly superior Japanese forces. The brutal fate that followed for the Marines as POW's must be remembered ....but also to be remembered is how the many CIVILIAN workers kept on the island as slave workers had been "disposed of" at Massacre Rock...





<http://www.executedtoday.com/2008/10/07/1943-98-american-civilian-contractors-wake-island-sakaibara/>  
<http://www.goldtel.net/ddxa/massacre.html>

<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-C-Wake.html>

<http://www.historynet.com/battle-of-wake-island>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Wake\\_Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Wake_Island)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wake\\_Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wake_Island)

