

War Stories you will only read in The Sentinel
Sailor Overboard by Michele Starkey

The Sentinel sat down with WWII Navy Veteran, Franklin Reggero, to reminisce about some things that happened during WWII that won't ever make it into the history books. These are just two of his precious memories...

The year was 1943 and our country was at war and the majority of newly recruited and enlisted personnel were between 17-24 years of age. One of those young sailors to enlist after the bombing of Pearl Harbor was Franklin Reggero, a native Newburgh resident. Reggero told us that he was trained at the Naval Training Center in Newport, RI and then spent time at the Naval Hospitals in Newport, RI and Sampson, NY. When Reggero was assigned to the Submarine Training Center in Miami, FL he was assigned to the USS PC-1213 as a Pharmacist's Mate First Class. The PC 1213 would serve tours of duty in the North and South Atlantic and the Carribean.

When we asked Reggero about some of the war time memories that he could share that never made it into the history books, there were two instances that he recalled. The first occurred when the men on board the USS PC-1213 were maneuvering off the coast of Florida, going through a series of speed tests when suddenly the call went out from the ship, "Man overboard."

On the Miami shore, the naval men checking the results of the tests realized the ship was doing an "about" and radioed to the ship, "What the hell is going on out there?"

The reply came back, "Salty Mose is overboard. We're heading back to get him."

The crew aboard the PC sub chaser was heading back out to sea to pick up the dog. Not just any dog, Salty Mose had been with them ever since meeting up with the sailors when they were docked. He lived on board the ship with the men, ate with them and was the ship's mascot. He even had his own I.D. tags. Reggero smiled as he remembered that the dog even learned the sailor lingo and when "chowtime" was called, Salty Mose was often the first in line, beating the sailors down to the mess and was indeed one of the crew. When Salty Mose went overboard that day, no less than six men jumped in to save his life including the ship's doc, Frank Reggero. The sailors resuscitated the pup and he regained consciousness.

It has been over sixty-five years since Salty Mose took the plunge off the ship that day. Former sailor, Reggero, still smiles when he reminisces about all of the sailors who jumped overboard to save their four-legged buddy during a time when our country had very little to smile about.

Another fond memory occurred while Reggero's PC 1213 was docked in port in Miami. His newlywed wife, Virginia, and his mother, Edith, ventured down from Newburgh to visit him. He told us that while the girls were taking a stroll down the streets in Miami, a police patrol car pulled alongside of them. The officer said, "Where are you girls from, because down here in Miami, our ladies don't dress in shorts on Sunday. It's against the law."

Reggero said his wife and mother almost were arrested that summer in 1944 for wearing shorts on the street. As unbelievable as this may sound, back in those days, women were expected to dress accordingly.

Franklin Reggero served his country during WWII from April of 1942 until October of 1945. He received the American Theatre Medal, the Navy Good Conduct Medal and the New York State Medal of Merit.

Reggero and his longtime sweetheart, Virginia, still reside in New Windsor. They will celebrate their 69th Wedding Anniversary on July 18.