

# War Hero



We shouldn't have to look deep into the past to find stories that have meaning or poignancy. Each of us are making tomorrow's history today simply by living our lives and having the experiences we have. And that goes for our family members who are not that far removed from our present.

My grandfather, whom I called Hop (his name was Herman Oliff Parish), had plenty of stories to tell. A career military man, he served in the US Navy for most of his adult life. When WWII came along, he was given the command of Destroyer Division Fifty. One day, on April 14, 1945 to be precise, his fleet came under attack by Japanese forces near Okinawa.

The official report reflects that "undaunted by overwhelming odds, Captain Parish skillfully directed ships and aircraft under his command in repelling suicide attacks by fifteen to twenty hostile planes, thereby playing a major part in destroying ten aircraft and denying the remainder access to his Task Group." That report can be found in the accompanying documentation for the Navy Cross he was awarded for

extraordinary heroism and distinguished service. That Navy Cross has been passed down to me and I have it along with the Legion of Merit medal and Bronze Star he also received.

My grandfather, once he retired from active duty with the rank of Rear Admiral, continued to serve by teaching mathematics to young recruits at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Besides that, in what is probably the event that had the most impact for me, he was the one who introduced his daughter to the man who would become her future husband. If he had failed to do that, I wouldn't be here to write about it. Thank you, Hop.

*Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotape, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).*