

The TMCA News

Fall 2024



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2024 Fall Show

Where: Franklin Marriott Conference Center / Hotel Cool Springs
700 Cool Springs Blvd., Franklin, TN 37067

When: Friday, **November 29** - Life Members Only 8AM-9AM
Members Only 9AM - Noon Public Admitted 12 Noon - 5PM
Saturday, **November 30th** - 8AM - 3PM

Admission: \$5. for Non-Members. **TMCA Members get in free early - Wear Badge**, Children under 15 free. Also admitted free Members of US Military, Fire, Police, and if in uniform R.O.T.C. and J.R.O.T.C members.

What Will Be There: Uniforms, Medals, Insignia, Badges, Helmets, Photos Weapons, Books and much more! **Buy-Sell-Trade-Display-Appraisals.**

Table Reservations '325" 6 FT. Tables ~ Members Only ~
Sale and Display Tables - \$55 each. SOLD OUT, call for waiting list
To reserve contact Ronnie Townes @ 615-661-9379 - tmca@comcast.net

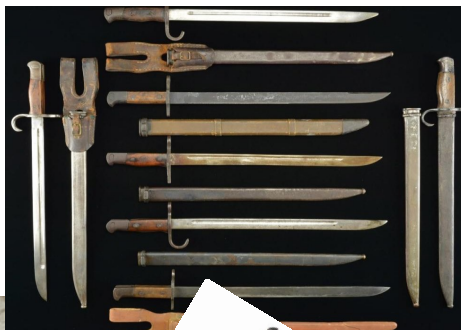
Room Reservations at Hotel: Call 1-888-403-6772 or 615-261-6100 and
ask to receive the TMCA discount rate of \$121 (king/queen), plus tax
(normal rate is \$289).

Club News

*Display theme for the
Fall show is:*

**WW1 and WW2
Weapons of any kind.**

\$100 cash Prize



Navy Cross PM1c Ben Morris -*USS Squalus Rescue Diver 1939*



PM1c Morris's original issued Type III (Gunmetal) Navy Cross

On May 23, 1939 the Submarine USS Squalus accidentally sank off of Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 243 ft of water during a test dive.

26 men drown immediately and another 33 were trapped inside still alive.

Rescue operations started immediately and luckily a newly invented Submarine Rescue Chamber (SRC) happened to be nearby in New London, CT on the submarine rescue ship FALCON. The Rescue invention was thought up by navel officer Charles "Swede" Momsen and it had never been tested. Momsen was onsite during this rescue.



Lt. Ben Morris during WW2. Morris started out in the 1920's as a USMC private, then enlisted with the navy and retired as a navy Lieutenant.

Having never been tried before, navel divers quickly begun working on the sunken USS Squalus. Over a period of 14 hours, four trips were made using the

McCann Rescue Chamber and all 33 of the initial survivors were brought to the surface,... alive. A fifth trip was made down to the sub, to ensure that no other survivors were left behind.

After the rescue, the USS squalus was salvaged and brought to the surface. 26 bodies were found (1 went missing). The USS Squalus was rebuild and renamed the USS Sailfish (SS-192). She went on to have a successful career during WW2, earning 9 battle stars during 12 patrols. Decommissioned on October 27, 1945, her conning tower was saved. Today the original conning tower stills stands as a memorial to her lost crewmates. It is located at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine.

The rescue operation of the U.S.S. Squalus, resulted in 4 peacetime Medals of Honor and 46 Navy Cross's being awarded to both Rescuers and some Survivors.

Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class Benjamin T. Morris (1907-1994) was one of those divers who was awarded the Navy Cross.

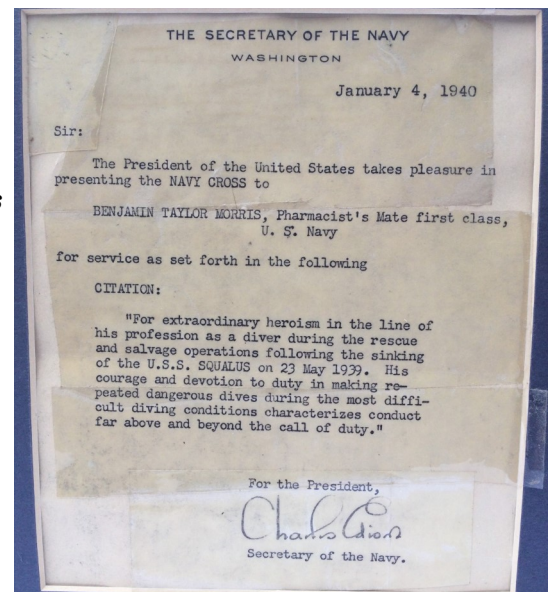
CITATION:

BENJAMIN TAYLOR MORRIS, PM1c, U.S. Navy

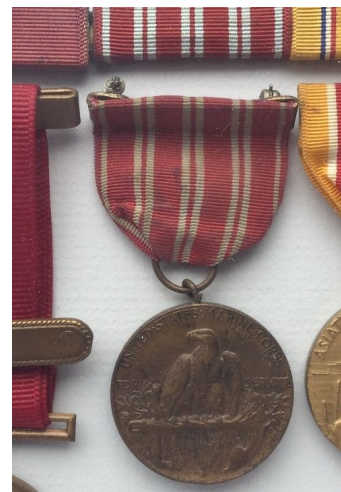
"For extraordinary heroism in the line of his profession as a diver during the rescue and salvage operations following the sinking of the U.S.S. SQUALUS on 23 May 1939. His courage and devotion to duty in making repeated dangerous dives during the most difficult diving conditions characterizes conduct far above and beyond the call of duty."

Signed: Charles Edison, Secretary of the Navy

Morris's medals are still under glass in a sealed frame and are unfortunately hot glued in place. There are actually two Navy Cross's with his grouping. A Type V, WW2 issued Navy Cross, is pinned to his burial flag. In a picture frame is the original, rare, Type III gunmetal colored Navy Cross, which was the type awarded for the Squalus rescue. This is not the so called "Black Widow" cross that came out later during the WW2.



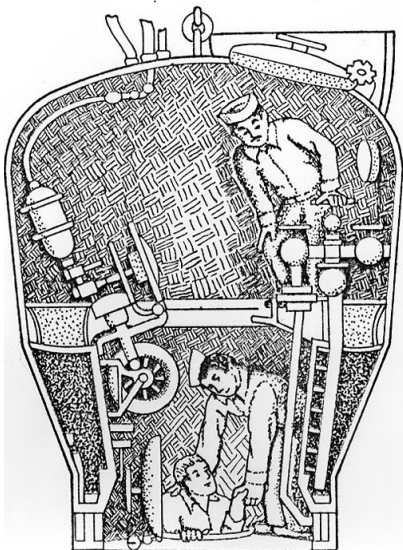
The Original Citation is taped to the back of PM1c Morris's burial flag case.



Submarine rescue ship FALCON lowering divers over the side. You can see the Rescue Chamber on the deck, ready to go down.

A second Navy Cross, (WW2 Type V style) is pinned to his burial flag. Morris's USMC Second Nicaraguan Campaign medal, No. 1325 is also included.

Photo # NH 97291 Cutaway drawing of McCann Rescue Chamber



13 July 1939: Salvage operations brought the Squalus to the surface, only for the cables to break and she sunk again to the bottom.

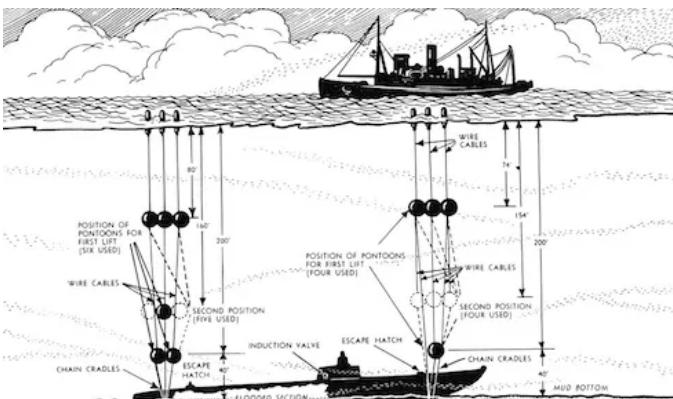
It took 3 attempts to finally raise her successfully.

Cutaway of the Momsen Rescue Chamber used on the Squalus rescue.

33 men climbed from the sunken sub into this bell and were brought to the surface. 5 trips were made down.



4 Sailors received the Medal of Honor (peacetime) for their parts in the USS Squalus rescue operations. Secretary of the Navy, Charles Edison presents: William Badders, John Mihalowski, Orson Crandall and James Harper.



A-2 Archaeology

SSgt Chester Klier's A-2 Jacket



Photo date: Spring 1957

Tail section of a FW-190 that SSgt Klier picked up when his unit first moved to France.

This exact same relic as pictured in the 1944 newspaper article to the left.

Nobody wants a relic that has been messed with or enhanced! However, what if it was the same veteran who originally painted the jacket and wore it into combat. What is he wore it to reunions and felt that he needed to touch it up a bit?

SSgt. Chester Klier (1922-2014) was a B-26 Flight Engineer and top turret gunner on a B-26 with the 386th Bomb Group, 552nd Bomb Squadron. He flew 66 combat mission earning 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 11 Air Medals and a Purple Heart. After the war he became a design engineer in the Aerospace industry working on the Nasa Apollo, early jet fighters and commercial airliners. He was credited with shooting down an Me-109 on Sept. 5, 1943 over Dunkerque.

Mr. Klier spent his entire life after the war as the 386th BG's Unit historian. He attended many reunions and various aerospace adventures. He was always able to fit into his original A-2 jacket so he proudly continued to wear it to various events. As a design engineer, he was capable of painting and maintaining his jacket himself and he had done so ever since his first combat mission. Today the jacket survives in above average condition with photo evidence of its journey.

Looking at photos as far back as 1943, it is possible to see several slight changes to the jacket. The biggest change was to remove the swastika flag and replace it with a Balkenkreuz. This happened later in Klier's life, probably because Senator Bod Dole was his escort during a well publicized veterans event. Senator Dole pushed "Klier the Flier" around in a wheel chair while Klier was still wearing this jacket. The Nazi flag was probably removed by Klier for that event.



1944 — Showing off the artwork on his A-2 jacket to his crew.
B-26, "Black Magic".

Front of the jacket today.

386th appears added later.

Original 552nd BS patch was changed out later in life by Klier for a cleaner original spare patch that Klier had.

I have no idea about the white square area above name tag.





November 1943

Great Dunmow, England

B-26 "Hot Pistol"

16 missions completed and (1) Me-109 downed by this time

Note: The "white" swastika for a Kill, the black tiny tail swastika and fat wing crosses.

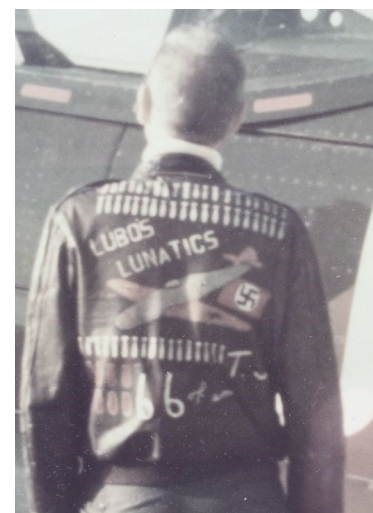


December 1944

Local home newspaper article shows SSgt Klier with has A-2 Jacket and 66 missions.

Note: The "white" kill marking has been changed to a standard Nazi flag.

Me-109 shows signs of changes as well. No tail swastika now? Wing crosses moved and smaller? Wing color matches fuselage color ???



May 28, 1971

Airshow East Alton, Illinois

Klier (age 49) looking at a British Spitfire

Jacket in 1971 Wings, tail and nazi flag are clearly painted red in this color photo. Wings do not match the fuselage? Wing Balkenkreuz's do not appear to have white outlines on them.

No tiny white tail swastika as in 1943.



SSgt Chester Klier's A-2 Jacket **today**, 2024.

The Nazi flag was very skillfully removed and a "Politically Correct" Balkenkreuz was added by SSgt Klier himself, along with the date and location of his Me-109 "Kill".

This was probably done because Senator Bob Dole escorted Klier at a reunion late in his life.

It appears that the Me-109 was touched up at the same time. All grey with white outlines.

You can see were the Nazi flag was removed.

Up Coming Shows and Events

December 7-8, 2024 Franklin, TN Civil War Show Mike Kent www.MKShows.com

February 20-22, 2025 Louisville, KY Show of Shows OVMS

February 1-2, 2025 Dalton, GA Civil War Show Mike Kent wwwMKShows.com

April 18-19, 2025 Franklin, TN TMCA Spring Relics Show www.tmcaonline.org



Rick Moody, White House, TN
30th Division in WW1



Best Display
Spring Show 2024
WW1 Military
Aviation

David Hoagey

Dave Received \$100 for
Best Display



Hiram Bishop

Wins \$100 for the
Dealers Drawing

This drawing
happens at every
show at 2:45 p.m.
and \$100 is given
to a dealer that is
still set-up.



Vietnam Veterans Honored at the Spring Show

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Show Director: Ronnie Townes



BATTLE SOUVENIRS

SSgt. Chester Klier proudly shows off a (War Trophy) that he cut off the tail of a German FW-190 Fighter plane in October 1944 when he was based in France.

SSgt was a Flight Engineer/Top turret Gunner on a B-26 Marauder during WW2. He attended airshows, veteran events and Squadron reunions his entire life.

He held onto and displayed these War Trophy's his entire life.

Klier was credited with shooting down a Messerschmitt Bf-109

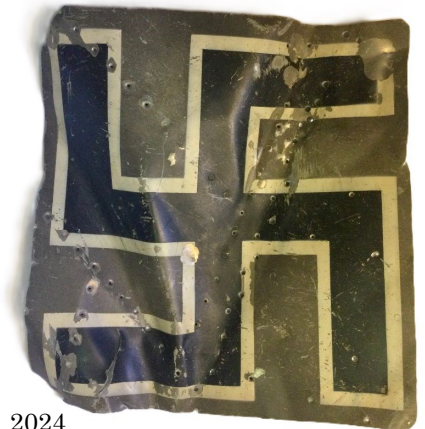


SSgt Klier in 1957 with his war souvenirs.

Airshow 1971, Turner, Klier, Howard.



Written on back: *Taken from vertical fin of a FW-190 by C.P. Klier. France October 1944*



2024