

A.S.W. Picture

By Captain Ace Trask, USN, (Ret)

In the early 60's I was onboard the USS O'Hare (DD-889) operating out of Norfolk. We were part of TASK GROUP ALPHA hunting for Russian submarines snooping along the east coast of the United States. TASK GROUP ALPHA or BRAVO were at sea 24/7 hunting for the subs.



USS O'Hare (DD-889)

During one of our times at sea we had a scientist onboard to evaluate firsthand how destroyers operate when they have a submarine contact. A few days after getting underway we got a submarine contact and the scientist came to the bridge to observe. I told him he should observe the bridge operation first so he stayed on the bridge for one to two hours until he could understand just what was happening. The bridge has: 2 primary tactical circuits, 2 lookouts, a visual aircraft controller, OOD and JOOD, etc. After the observer got the bridge picture the Captain told him to go into COMBAT (CIC) and observe its operation. CIC has: 5 circuits, 5 tote boards where plotters keep the task group picture as it relates to the sub, and 2 dead reckoning trace (D.R.T.) plots of the submarine contact and the task group. Also, just off to the side in sort of a dark closet is the Sonar Plot Room. After he has the CIC picture he should be able to walk between CIC and the bridge keeping in mind what was going on. [At least that was the objective.] CIC is just aft of the bridge and after an hour or so the scientist emphatically stated "It can't be done!" It was just too much for him to comprehend. And to think he had a Doctorate in at sea combat maneuvers!!!

Editor's note: USS O'Hare (DD-889) was named after LT Edward H. "Butch" O'Hare, the first Navy Ace in WW2 and Medal of Honor recipient. On February 20, 1942, northeast of the Solomon Islands, he shot down five Japanese bombers that probably saved the USS Lexington (CV-2). Promoted to Lieutenant Commander, he was later Commander, Air Group Six aboard USS Enterprise (CV-6). He was reported as MIA in November 1943 and declared dead one year later. In addition to the Medal of Honor, he earned the Navy Cross and other awards. O'Hare International airport in Chicago is named in his honor.

Photo # 208-PU-14842 Lt. Edward H. O'Hare in his F4F fighter, 1942



Lieutenant Edward Henry ("Butch") O'Hare, USN, seated in the cockpit of his Grumman F4F "Wildcat" fighter, circa spring 1942. The plane is marked with five Japanese flags, representing the five enemy bombers he was credited with shooting down as they attempted to attack USS Lexington (CV-2) northeast of the Solomon Islands on 20 February 1942. The censor blanked out the Fighting Squadron Three "Felix the Cat" insignia below the windshield. Photograph from the Office of War Information collection in the U.S. National Archives.