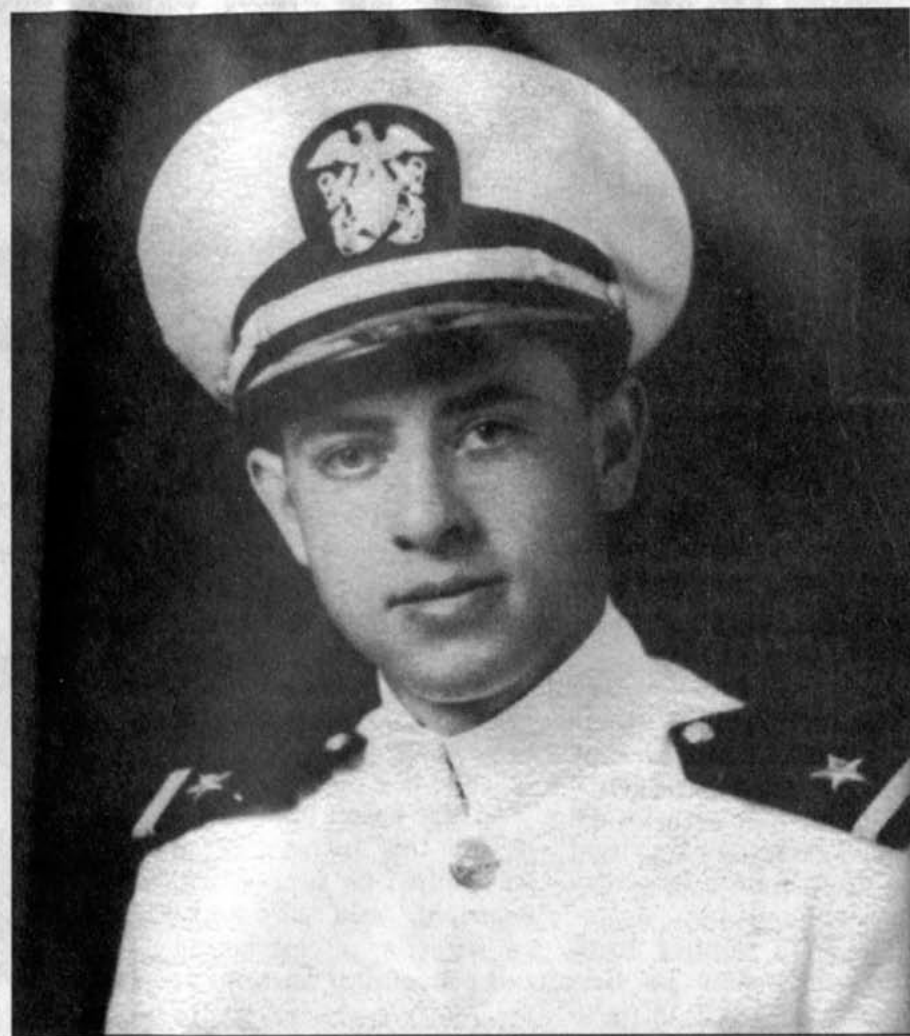


Forty Years Of Silence:

Clarence Gonnerman and Exercise Tiger

By Hugh Curran
Senior Times Managing Editor



Like most World War II veterans, Clarence Gonnerman returned home, left the military to enter the bustling, post-war business world and settled down to create a home and raise a family. Like most, he carried with him dark war memories of death and destruction.

Unlike most veterans, however, Gonnerman's most painful memory of the war was made an official secret backed up by the threat of court martial. For 40 years, Gonnerman carried with him the forbidden knowledge of Exercise Tiger, a practice run for the Normandy invasion and a tragic Allied blunder that led to the death of at

keeper for the registrar's office at MU, and worked for the National Youth Association on Saturdays washing windows for 25 cents and hour.

America's entry into World War II following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, threatened to cut Gonnerman's schooling short, but he had a plan that would allow him to both finish school and serve his country.

"I heard that some Navy recruiters were on campus and I knew that the Navy would let you finish your schooling," said Gonnerman, who joined up. In February 1943, he graduated from

only six weeks before the actual invasion. Most were kept in the dark as to the specifics of what they were preparing for.

On the afternoon of April 27, 1944, Gonnerman, now in command of 24 men, was given his orders.

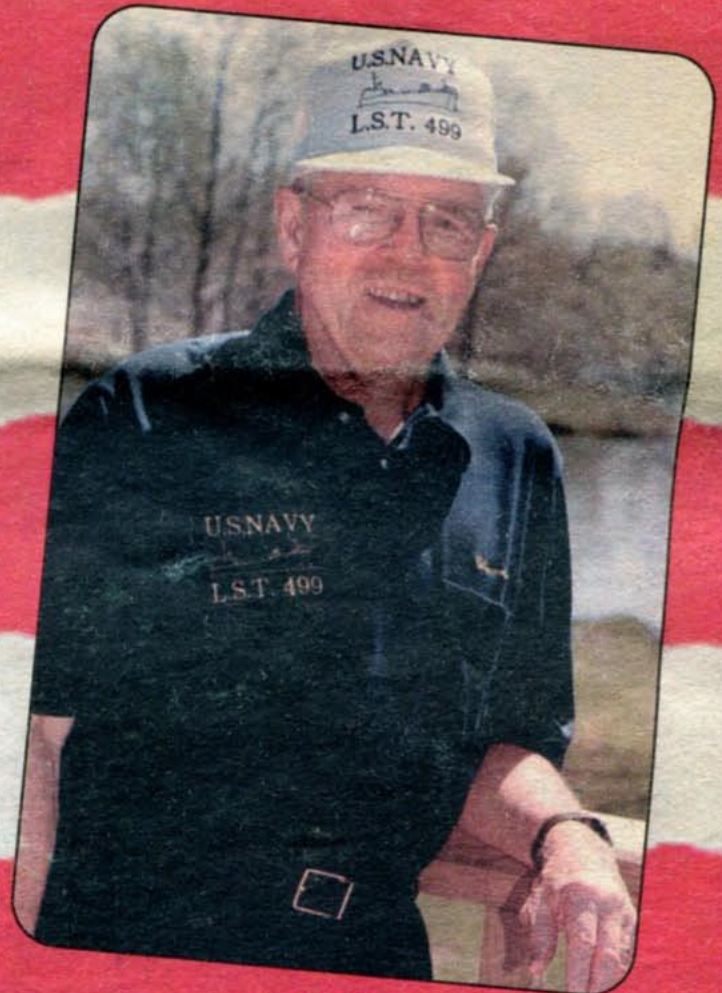
"I and my crew were told to immediately board LST 499 as 'guests,' " Gonnerman said. No further information was offered. The LST, or landing ship/tank, carried tanks and men right up to the shoreline. The 328-foot long vessels moved at an average speed of 4 mph, earning them the nickname "Large, Slow Targets."

COLUMBIA SENIOR TIMES

July 1996



1943



1996

40 Years Of Silence:

Clarence Gonnerman And Exercise Tiger