

THE ADVENTURES OF DICKKEY DARE

LEAVING AN ACADEMIC LIFE, RICHARD HAMILTON JOINED THE NAVY
AND WENT TO WAR WITH THE PT-BOATS

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PT-305 PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

On 24 October 1944, the thin trip wire that would spring a trap set by R/Adm. Jesse Oldendorf in Surigao Strait was in place. Thirteen three-boat sections of PT-Boats were waiting to greet the two battleships, one cruiser, and four destroyers of Japanese V/Adm. Shoji Nishimura's Force C. Intending to penetrate Surigao Strait and destroy the invasion transports sitting in Leyte Gulf, Nishimura had little idea of the number of PT-Boats waiting for him and no idea of the overwhelming force of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers that blocked the exit. Sitting in the middle of Surigao Strait aboard PT-493 (named *Carole Baby*) and in-between these two great battleship forces, was a horticulturist with a master's degree from the University of Ohio.

Born on 17 January 1915 in the tiny North Dakota town of Rugby, Richard A. Hamilton seemed to be on track to live a normal academic life. After graduating high school, he attended North Dakota State University, graduating in 1937 with a BS in horticulture. He then moved to Columbus, Ohio, to attend a master's program at the University of Ohio, graduating in 1940. Within weeks, Hamilton was working for a company based in Washington, DC, managing a department of 15 employees that collected and analyzed statistical data for the United States Department



Visitors to the National WWII Museum can thrill to a ride on the restored PT-305. For more information on the rides, go to nationalww2museum.org.



Aerial view of the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons Base and Training Center.

of Agriculture. Hamilton appeared to have his life on track until 7 December 1941.

Ten months after the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Hamilton left his safe job for a commission in the US Navy. The beginning of Hamilton's Navy career was very similar to his civilian life, moving at a predictable and non-exciting pace. He attended the required training schools and was assigned as the assistant gunnery officer aboard the USS *Bulmer* (DD-222). When Hamilton boarded the *Bulmer* in November 1942, the ship was already a veteran of early battles in the Pacific.



Sign at the entrance of the facility.



Passengers enjoying a ride on PT-305.