



Leonard J. Reichert (1902 – 1945)

Leonard Reichert Home of Record is listed as Chula Vista, CA. His wife, Mrs. Doris Bryan Reichert, lived at 184 Hilltop Circle, Chula Vista, CA. His year of birth was assumed from his logbook entry for his home of record (Sheboygan Falls, WI), and the 1920 and 1930 census which indicates that a “John” Reichert was born in 1902, and this is the only individual that would “fit” these parameters.

He was a pilot flying in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during WWII. He had 24 months of active service.

In Sept 1944, Lt Reichert, USNR, reported to the newly established VPB-119 at NAAS Camp Kearney, CA. He was the Qualified Pilot (PPC) of Crew 9A. He flew the Patrol Bomber, the PB4Y-2 “Privateer” aircraft. A collateral duty was listed as Photographer. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on October 1, 1944. Various missions for the Privateer included sinking various enemy surface craft, submarines and aircraft. The Privateer was an adept and capable aircraft, and the squadron was credited with the “numerous destruction of enemy craft”.

In February 1945, one month prior to Lt Reichert’s death, he was on a training mission with a drone and the crew was firing at a towed sleeve. A live round “cooked off” in the starboard blister turret and caused extensive damage to the aircraft, including loss of ailerons, a flat tire, and extreme shaking of the aircraft. Lt Reichert landed safely and stated that was the “worst emergency he's ever had and he's had twenty-one months combat duty. Just hope that's my worst one for same length of time”.

On 2 March, 1945, Lt. Reichert and his crew landed at Clark Airbase in their PB4Y “Privateer” and taxied to a full stop on the runway. Prior to exiting to the taxiway, the aircraft was struck by a B-24 who landed long. This tragic accident resulted in the death of Lt Reichert. He was buried the following day at the Air Force Cemetery near the airbase. He had been in combat operations for 22 months. Japanese were fighting less than 3 miles from the airbase at that time. He was considered an excellent pilot and a fine officer by his crew.

Official Log reads as follows:

(a) On 2 March 1945, Lt. Leonard "J" REICHERT, USNR, (130280), landed at Clark Field, P.I., arriving from Owi Island, in PB4Y-2, Bu No. 59429. He waited at the end of the runway for a PB4Y-1 to land before taxiing to the parking area. The PB4Y-1 was unable to stop at the end of the runway and crashed into the PB4Y-2, killing Lt. REICHERT and damaging the plane so seriously that it was surveyed for parts the same day. Other members of the crew escaped without serious injury.

His address from the back of the "Cruise Book" was:

Reichert, Leonard J., Lieut.
248 Fondulac A.,
Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin



Left to right, front row: House, Matienzo, Huntington, Wixted, Robinson, Etheredge.
 Rear row: Kennedy, Nail, Bush, Reichert, Yeremian, Montgomery, Schwant.

CREW 9A

Commander	Reichert, L. J., Lieut.
Co-pilot	Bush, J. F., Lt. (jg)
Co-pilot	Yeremian, R., Ensign
Plane Captain	Huntington, H. E., AMMF2/c
1st Radioman	Schwant, C. D., ARM3/c
1st Ordnanceman	Matienzo, W. M., AOM3/c
Bombardier	House, G. O., AOMB2/c
Bow Turret	Wixted, R. J., AMMF1/c
Fwd Upper Deck Turret	Kennedy, J. X., ARM3/c
Aft Upper Deck Turret	Etheredge, J. H., ARM3/c
Stbd Waist Turret	Nail, B. G., AMMF2/c
Port Waist Turret	Robinson, M. E., S1/c
Tail Turret	Montgomery, D., Jr., ART2/c

(Above information furnished from logbooks of J.H. Etheredge, III (ARM 2/c))



In 2006, the City of Chula Vista and the McMillin Housing Development honored Leonard Reichert by having a street named in his honor in the Lomas Verdes subdivision. The 1930 Census shows two Leonard Reicherts and both were both in 1912. One was living in Missouri, and the other in Pennsylvania. It is unknown which is the Leonard Reichert who died in WWII