

## Pilot Profile: Bruno Stanly

by Russell Knetzger

The interview for this profile took place on September 17, 2007, the very day of Bruno Stanly's 85th birthday. Bruno has been a Milwaukee boy all his life, graduating from Pulaski High School near 27<sup>th</sup> and Oklahoma Avenue. Now he and wife Marion live on S. 96<sup>th</sup> near Arthur Avenue in West Allis. His father, Felix Stanley Grcescskiewicz, emigrated from Poland just as WW I was starting, and once established in Milwaukee, changed the family name to his middle name, except the spelling lost the "e". Bruno's mother, Marcyanna, was also from Poland, but only met Felix here in Milwaukee, at a dance.



Bruno in 1948 went to work for County Parks, as had his older brother. Bruno stayed until retiring 30 years later at age 56. Before joining County Highways, his father Felix had been a carpenter. Perhaps by that example Bruno gained an early love of woodworking. Before he was a teenager, Bruno was making furniture made from ends and sides of apple and lettuce crates, using only hand tools. He still does woodworking relying mostly on hand planes, gouges, etc., though he now indulges in the luxury of one band saw and two small table saws. Most furniture pieces in his home are hand made by him, which the Milwaukee Journal noted in a Jan., 1956 double-page article.

In spite of his great love for woodworking, after high school Bruno accepted a machinist apprenticeship at Kearney & Trecker in western West Allis. But after only two years of the six-year program, in 1940 he was drafted into the US Navy.

At the Great Lakes Naval training station near Waukegan, Illinois, Bruno learned more machining, related to Navy diesel engines. He was then assigned to an LST boat made in LaGrange, IL, and sailed with it down the Mississippi, around Florida to Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. The 327 ft. long LST is a flat bottomed, powered barge with bow doors intended to land men, machines and equipment on sea shores, if necessary while under attack. All the LST crew took gunnery practice.

Unfortunately, Bruno came to use that gunnery practice in the lead-up to, and the actual landing on Omaha and other beaches on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Bruno's LST made 40 trips back and forth over the English Channel delivering men to the gruesome



**Bruno Stanly showing his scratch-built 5 ft. wing span Curtiss P6E Hawk, displayed from the family room ceiling.**

battle of the beaches, and bringing the wounded back to England. Some doctors and corpsmen worked right in the LSTs.

But Bruno still talks with anger over the slaughter his own ten-ship convey suffered ahead of D-Day during practicing landings on the south shore of England. The British destroyer assigned to protect the LSTs was pulled in for maintenance, and three of the LSTs, #289, #507, and #532 were hit by torpedoes from the German equivalent of PT-Boats, capable of 45 knots compared to LSTs at 11 knots. Bruno's own ship, #511, had a torpedo scrape its bottom, without exploding, during the attack. A total of 749 men were lost that evening

Following the war Bruno married Marion, and helped build their first owned-home near N. 20th & W. Stark. Later they contracted to build their present home. They have three children, Bruce, Marcia Ann and Craig, and among them, 11 grandchildren. A musician, Bruno played trombone & baritone years with the Legion Band in Humboldt Park pavilion concerts. He regrets the loss of concert funding.

Although involved in boyhood Comet-kit stick and tissue modeling, Bruno's real entry into R/C modeling was at Garman's Hobby Shop on National Ave. at S. 80<sup>th</sup> St. Lou Siebauer was his mentor with the MARKS Club at the Franklin industrial park field near S.51st & Ryan. Retiring as a Level III parks supervisor, Bruno played table tennis at McCarty Park with Al Coplin, parks personnel director. In 1978 Bruno asked Al why application for a County R/C field on Oakwood Road was not progressing. That question broke the logjam, and the field was approved. Bruno has flown there ever since.

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