

LT. NAT BROWNFIELD FREY

"Nat B. Frey"

U. S. Navy - Lost in the Battle of the Java Sea, 1942

Wheeling News-Register, 13 Jan 1944

MOUNDSVILLE FORMER MOUNDSVILLE YOUTH LOST IN BATTLE, JAVA SEA

**PHILADELPHIA WOMAN
SEEKING BIBLE BIRTH REC-
ORDS, REVEALS LOSS
OF NAT FREY**

**LIEUT. NAT B. FREY WAS
HALF BROTHER OF MRS.
V. L. GARBESI, OF
GLENDALE**

In a letter directed to County Clerk J. Randall Crow, seeking his aid in locating the family Bible in which were kept the birth records of children of the late Lewis B. Frey of Moundsville and his first wife, Mrs. J. B. Conway (Hallie Frey Conway), of 5447 Maseher street, Philadelphia (20), Pa., informed the Marshall county clerk that her brother, Lieut. Nat B. Frey of the United States Navy, a former resident with his family in Moundsville, was lost in the battle of the Java Sea in February, 1942.

Lieutenant Frey, Mrs. Conway's letter states, was chief engineer on the U. S. Navy aircraft carrier Langley, but the letter did not state specifically that it was, or was not, on the Langley that Lieutenant Frey was lost.

Lieutenant Frey was a half brother, and the writer of the letter a half sister of Mrs. V. L. Garbesi of Glendale, whose husband is a department manager for the Hazel-Atlas Glass company at Wheeling.

Clerk Crow telephone Mrs. Garbesi and informed her of Mrs. Conway's request to locate the family Bible, and learned that Mrs. Garbesi had lost contact with Mrs. Conway, and would communicate with her at once. Apparently, the clerk said, Mrs. Garbesi had not heard of the loss of her half brother in battle.

Lieutenant Frey is well remembered by many Moundsville people. He lived with his family just opposite what was formerly the Henderson Brothers department store at Jefferson avenue and

Third street, which now houses the state liquor store. Prior to moving there the family resided in what was then the Bowman property at Eighth street and Morton avenue. His father, who operated a saloon in the business room now occupied by the T. F. Rogerson dry goods store, died at Glenwood in December, 1908.

Mrs. Conway at Philadelphia asked aid of the county clerk to locate the family Bible, last known to her to have been in the possession of the second wife of her father, Mrs. Ella Craft Frey, to assist in procuring birth records for the first children of Mr. Frey

Former Moundsville Youth Lost in Java Sea

Writing to County Clerk J. Randall Crow in quest of information that would enable her to locate the family Bible in which are written birth records of the children of the late Lewis B. Frey of Moundsville by his first marriage, Mrs. J. B. Conway (Hallie Frey Conway) of 5447 Maseher street, Philadelphia (20), Pa., disclosed that her brother, Lieutenant Nat B. Frey of the Navy, a native and former resident of Moundsville, was lost in the battle of the Java Sea in February, 1942.

Lieutenant Frey was a half brother, and Mrs. Conway is a half sister of Mrs. Vinton L. Garbesi of Glendale, whose husband is a department manager for the Hazel-Atlas Glass company at Wheeling.

Clerk Crow, learning of the relationship between Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Garbesi, communicated with the Glendale woman by telephone and informed her of the quest for the family Bible being made by Mrs. Conway in order to secure birth certificates.

Mrs. Garbesi told the clerk she had lost touch with her half sister, and that she would communicate with her at once.

A postscript to Mrs. Conway's letter, telling of the loss of her brother, said that he was lost in the battle of Java Sea, and that he was chief engineer on the U. S. Navy airplane carrier Langley. The letter did not say whether or not it was in the sinking of the Langley that her brother was lost.

Evening Standard, Uniontown, PA, 28 April 1942

Missing Man Related To Local Residents

Lieut. Nat Brownfield Frye, reported missing after the sinking of the U. S. Aircraft Tender Langley in Far Eastern waters, was a native of Uniontown and lived here during the early years of his life.

He was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Lewis B. Frye, grandson of Mrs. Helen M. Patton, who resided in West Berkeley street for a number of years, and nephew of the late Drusilla M. Patton, a teacher in Uniontown schools for many years.

Lieutenant Frye, who had been in the Navy for 34 years, resided with his wife, two sons and two daughters in San Diego, Cal. He also has two sisters, Mrs. John Byron Conway, Philadelphia, and Mrs. John E. Wallace, Waukegan, Ill.

The son of Lewis Beall Frey and Isabelle Moore McMackin, Nat was born in Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania on November 19, 1890. His siblings were Samuel, Hellen, Charles and Harriet. His mother died in September 1896.

The father, Lewis Beall Frey, then married Ella Craft and had additional children: Caroline Mary, Lewis Beall, Henry Gilmore and Irene Ella.

Father, Lewis Beall Frey, a former saloon keeper in Moundsville, died in 1906 and is buried at Mt. Rose Cemetery, Moundsville.

Cremated Himself in A Blaze of Whiskey

Lewis B. Frey, a former Moundsville saloon keeper, ended his life in a sensational manner in T. B. Dolan's saloon, at Benwood Junction, about midnight Friday. His dead body, burned to a crisp, was found shortly after midnight by "Squire" Lilly, a bartender, who was aroused by smoke from the blaze which was rapidly eating into the floor and would soon have had the entire building in a mass of flames.

The dead man is supposed to have fired his clothes after saturating them with whiskey, and then lay down on the bed, where he died, apparently in terrible agony.

LEWIS B. FREY KILLS HIMSELF

SATURATED HIS CLOTHES WITH WHISKEY AND THEN SET THEM ON FIRE DYING IN TERRIBLE AGONY—HOUSE WAS SET ON FIRE AND WAS SAVED WITH DIFFICULTY.

WHEELING, W. Va., December 15.—Lewis B. Frey, a former Moundsville saloon keeper, ended his life in a sensational manner in T. B. Dolan's saloon, at Benwood Junction, about midnight Friday, his dead body, burned to a crisp. "Squire" Lilly, a bartender, who was aroused by smoke from the blaze which was rapidly eating into the floor and would soon have had the entire building in a mass of flames.

The dead man is supposed to have fired his clothes after saturating them with whiskey, and then lay down on the bed, where he died, apparently in terrible agony.

Had Been Drinking.

Frey came to Benwood Junction early in the evening, and visited a number of saloons. He is said to have been drinking heavily. He had occupied a room on the third floor of the hotel, run in connection with the saloon a number of times previously, and unknown to any of the attaches of the place went through the hall and upstairs to the room. It is thought he entered the room about 11 o'clock.

Short after midnight the bartender, who had occasion to visit a room in the upstairs portion of the building, detected the smell of smoke and made an investigation. Shortly before he reached the room occupied by Frey he met Mr. Dolan, the proprietor, who occupied a room nearby, and who had also been attracted by the smell of smoke.

Together they made their way into the room, which was literally packed with smoke. The fire was communicating with one of the walls of the room and blazing merrily.

Dead Body in Bed.

They found Frey laying stretched out on the bed. A glance showed that he was dead, his clothing being burned off and the flesh burned to a crisp. Other inmates of the house were aroused, and by this time they succeeded in extinguishing the fire.

A physician was summoned, and upon examination stated that the man was doubtless dead some time before he was discovered. The body was removed to the undertaking parlors of Becker & Son, at Benwood. Coroner McCombs, of Moundsville, was summoned, and made arrangements to hold an inquest this morning.

Had Narrow Escape.

Peter Dolan, the aged father of the proprietor of the place, occupied a room adjoining the one occupied by the dead man, and when found was almost completely overcome by the smoke. Had the fire gained much more headway the entire building would soon have been in a mass of flames and it would have been almost an impossibility for all of the inmates to have made their escape without injury. The building is a frame structure, and, with practically no fire-fighting equipment, it would have burned down in a short time.

Officer Press Matthews, of the Benwood police force, arrived soon after the body was discovered and stated early this morning that the case was evidently suicide.

Was Well Known.

Deceased formerly conducted a saloon on Jefferson avenue, near the corner of Third street, Moundsville. His place was one of the finest in the city. Since the "drys" have been in the majority Mr. Frey has been engaged principally in horse racing. He owned two fast animals which were run on a number of tracks throughout the State and valley during the summer and fall.

He resides at No. 709 Eighth street, Moundsville. He was in comfortable circumstances and his friends are at a loss as to the motive of his deed, unless it was despondency from drink.

He is survived by his widow and three children. Mr. Frey was well known throughout this vicinity.

Frey was well known here. For a long time he was manager of the Fairmont Brewing Company. Henry Gilmore, of this city, was a partner with him in his business at Benwood. Mr. Gilmore left here this morning and will look after matters there.

In New Jersey, in 1911, Nat B. Frey married Ilena Gale, born in Baltimore. She died in 1920.

FREY.—On February 27, 1920, ILENA GALE, wife of N. B. Frey. [Newport (Ohio) papers please copy.]
Funeral from her late residence, 107 West Saratoga street, on Monday at 1.30 P. M. Interment in Greenmount Cemetery. 1e

With Ilena Gale, Nat had a son, Nathaniel Brownsfield Frey, born in Baltimore, Maryland on January 7, 1914, and Earl Wells Frey, born about 1916.

In 1922, Nat B. Frey married Myrtle D. Weber.

Santa Ana Register (Santa Ana, California) - 30 May 1922.
Nat B. Frey, 31, San Pedro, and Myrtle D. Weber, 29, Philadelphia, Pa.

In the 1930 Census, Nathaniel Frey, Electrical Engineer, U.S. Navy, lived in Long Beach, Los Angeles, California with Myrtle, Naomi V., 16, and Ruth L. (Lufkin) Frey, 19. Naomi and Ruth were the daughters of Myrtle and her first husband, James Weber.

In 1940, Nat B and Myrtle D. Frey lived in San Diego, California. Her daughter, Naomi, 26, lived with them. Her surname is stated as Frey, however.

Myrtle Dorothy Luskin/Lufkin Frey, born in New Jersey 18 Nov 1892, died on 20 Nov 1942 at San Diego. As the wife of Nat B. Frey, she is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego.

The death of Nat Brownfield Frey occurred on February 27, 1942. He was declared "**Missing In Action**" when the Langley was attacked by Japanese dive bombers during the war. He is named on the Manila American Cemetery Memorial at Manila, Capital District, National Capital Region, Philippines. He was awarded a Purple Heart.

