

HISTORIAN SEEKS TO BRING HOME PARTS FROM WW2 –ERA DELAND TUGBOAT

The U.S. Navy has rejected a request for help in bringing some 20 tons of World War II-era military history back to its birthplace, but Dan Friend, leader of the **DeLand Army Tugboat Preservation Group**, isn't giving up.

Friend, a historian and former DeLand High School history teacher, contacted the Navy through U.S. Sen.

Bill Nelson's office earlier this year to request help in bringing home the guts of a U.S. Army tugboat built on the shores of Lake Beresford. However, he recently received a copy of a letter from Vice Admiral W. H. Hilarides denying the group's request because it's a private organization. "This letter indicated appreciation for what we are trying to do but denied our request based on the fact that the U.S. Navy has 'no statutory authority to transport private property for private entities,'" Friend said.

He is considering asking the city of DeLand, which is a public entity, to make a request on the group's behalf. The parts would come from **ST-479**, or "Tiger," an 86-foot-long workhorse that likely saw action during the invasion of Normandy, according to Friend's research.

It was one of more than 30 boats produced at the Beresford Boatworks during the war, out of some 700 in total built around the country. More than 300 people worked at the Boatworks between 1943 and 1945.

The factory was operated by the American Machinery Corp., one of a handful of companies that built tugboats for the U.S. Army during the war.

The boats were widely assumed to have been used only in internal U.S. waters, but over the past couple of years, Friend has uncovered evidence that many saw action in Europe during the war.

The tugs met varied fates after the war. "Tiger" eventually ended up in Sweden under private ownership.

The boat's current owners intend to convert its hull into a houseboat, but have offered to give the boat's innards — including the original Clark diesel engine — for free to Friend, though not including the cost of shipping. If all else fails, Friend said he's been getting some quotes on what it would take for the group to have the boat parts shipped from Sweden to the United States.

While he initially thought the move would cost more than \$10,000, after doing more research, he now estimates the parts could be moved for \$4,000 or less. "We'd have other costs — getting the bits to the container, careful packing, and shipment from the Florida coast to DeLand," he said, adding that, if needed, \$4,000 is not an insurmountable amount for the group to raise itself.

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