



USS Harry E. Hubbard (DD-748)



USS Cowie (DD-632)



USN Mailman Rating Insignia

Wilbert Oliver Hoffman
NAM 2/C U.S. Navy
4 April 1944 – 15 July 1947

Wilbert, or “Wimp,” nicknamed after Wimpy in the Popeye cartoon, was born on 14 June 1926 in the historic Log House in Wescosville, Pennsylvania. He was named in memory of his mother’s youngest brother, and in honor of next door neighbor Oliver Clinton Reuben Bastian, teacher and farmer, who, with his wife Jennie Huff Bastian, were his godparents. Wimp attended the two-room Wescosville School, and graduated from Allentown High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Class of 1944. He was employed by Town Auto Company of Allentown as part of the auto-shop industrial course at Allentown High. He enlisted in the Navy as a Seaman Recruit on 4 April 1944. He was assigned to destroyer *USS Harry E. Hubbard (DD-748)*, which sailed for Hawaii on 16 January 1945, where she served as a training ship out of Pearl Harbor until 17 April 1945. She then departed for the Western Pacific, arriving off Okinawa on 8 May 1945, where she served as a picket ship, guarding against day and night waves of Japanese aerial raids and suicide runs of *kamikazes*. She shot down four suicide planes that tried to crash into her at various times. She remained off Okinawa until 24 July 1945. Wimp was next assigned to destroyer *USS Cowie (DD-632)* which, following the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific Theater, had sailed from San Diego on 29 August 1945 for Okinawa, arriving on 27 September 1945. She deployed from Okinawa to sweep mines in the Yellow Sea and off Kobe and Wakayama, Japan. She remained in the Far East until 25 March 1946, at which time she departed from Yokosuka, Japan, for San Francisco. She arrived in San Francisco on 11 April 1946, and remained in service until 21 April 1947. She was then decommissioned and berthed in reserve at San Diego, California. Wimp was discharged on 15 July 1947 at Naval Receiving Station, San Diego, with the rating NAM 3/C, a mailman. He was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. After his return to the States, Wimp returned to work for Town Auto Company for a while, later owned and operated an auto-collision and engine-repair shop in Haafsville, Pennsylvania, and at various other times he worked for William F. Deibert Trucks in Allentown, and for Strohl Chevrolet in Fogelsville, Pennsylvania. Wimp subsequently moved to San Diego, California, where he worked as a night foreman for Norm Pressman’s (Peterbilt Truck Company) and as a Federal Government employee as a Security Guard at Naval Station, San Diego. He was joined in San Diego by his brother **Lamont Lewis**, nicknamed “Massey.” Both Wimp and Massey were masters of diesel and gas-engine repair. Wimp was generous to a fault. Massey, in his own words, often said, “Wimp could fix absolutely anything, but he couldn’t affix a six-cent postage stamp because he had only five cents.” Wimp married **Betty Billman** of Allentown in 1949, and had two children, **Judy** and **Blair**. After Betty’s death, he married **Barbara Potocnic** on 22 August 1966. They also had two children; **Wilbert**, nicknamed “Butch,” and **June**. Wimp had an interest in music and toyed at playing the banjo with his friend Billy Deibert. Wimp was the fourth son of **Norman Henry Hoffman** (2 December 1895 – 17 June 1963) and **Bessie Kate Haas** (23 December 1896 – 13 January 1992). He died of cancer on 13 November 1985 in San Diego, and his ashes were scattered in the Pacific Ocean. Two of Wimp’s brothers, **Erwin Arthur** and **Norman Charles**, served in the Army during World War II. His brother Massey and another brother, **Russell Frederick**, served in the Army and Navy, respectively, during the 1950s.