



William Charles Wetzel Jr.
Seaman 2/C U.S. Navy
9 October 1945 – 8 August 1946

William was born at home on Creamery Road in Lower Macungie Township on 12 July 1927 in the area known as Spring Creek, located downstream from Brookdale, Pennsylvania, along the Little Lehigh Creek. He attended grade school from 1932 to 1941 at Brookdale School near Lehigh Church. William worked as a knitter for Royal Manufacturing Company in Albutis, Pennsylvania, from October 1943 until he was drafted into the Navy as a Seaman on 9 October 1945 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He was first assigned to Camp Perry, Virginia, for initial training as an Aviation Support Equipment Technician (AS), responsible for keeping naval aircraft, power systems, armament and ordnance systems, and aircraft ground support equipment in top operational condition. He then received orders to the Landing Ship Dock *USS Tortuga (LSD-26)* which was en route to the Pacific combat area when news was received of the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945. He boarded the *Tortuga* on 9 January 1946 and served aboard while the ship conducted operations in the China Sea, repairing small craft and serving in the Mobile Support Unit attached to Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet. For his service aboard *USS Tortuga*, William earned the World War II Victory Medal. William was discharged on 8 August 1946 at Bainbridge, Maryland. Upon discharge from active duty, William joined the Naval Reserves and returned to live at Spring Creek where he lived for the remainder of his life. He immediately went back to work for Royal Manufacturing as a knitter and was employed there until his retirement in 1987 when the company ended operations in Albutis and relocated out of state. William married **Gladys Jenny Reese** (born 12 October 1925) on 21 July 1945, just three months prior to his being drafted into the Navy. He and Gladys had one son and two daughters. William died on 28 June 1992 in Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, and is buried at the Lehigh Zion Lutheran Church in Lower Macungie near Brookdale. His brother **Alton O. Wetzel** served in the Army during World War II. William's parents were **William Charles Wetzel Sr.** (3 June 1892 – 19 May 1968) and **Eva Merkel** (1 October 1894 – 6 September 1969).



USS Tortuga (LSD-26)