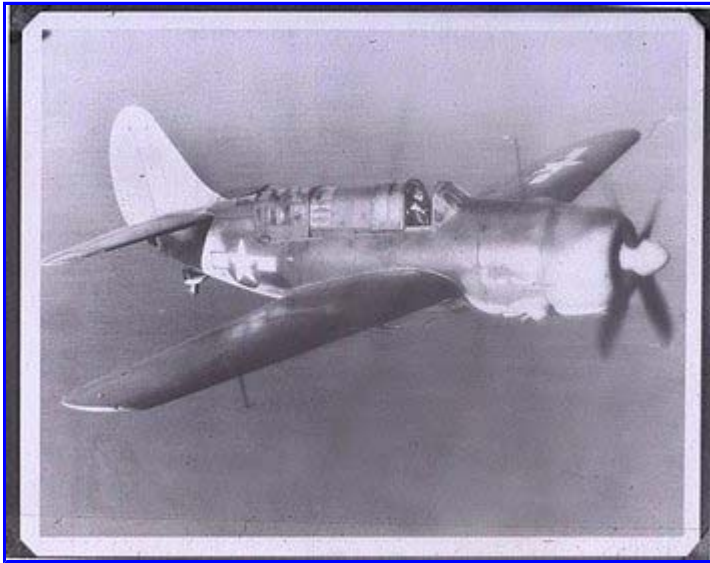


## Raisin' Helldiver

Originally published July 28, 2009 at 6:23 p.m., updated July 30, 2009 at 2:11 p.m.



Navy pilot E.D. Frazar before he boards an SB2C-4 Helldiver. Frazar was the pilot of the Helldiver that ditched into the Lower Otay Reservoir on May 28, 1945. Photo courtesy of Richard Frazar



E.D. Frazar shown flying an SB2C-4 Helldiver. Photo courtesy of Richard Frazar





The tail section of a SB2C-4 Helldiver aircraft was examined and photographed by divers in the murky water at the bottom of Lower Otay Reservoir yesterday. (A&T Recovery)

Bass fishermen see the craziest things on their electronic fish finders, but San Diego angler Duane Johnson couldn't believe what he spotted as he was idling across Lower Otay Reservoir.

"I turned to my fishing buddy and said, 'That looks like a plane,'" Johnson said.

He downloaded the images from his Humminbird Fish Finder and shared them with Bryan Norris, reservoir keeper for San Diego's water department. An investigation began and now Johnson's incredible discovery in February has led divers to uncover a Navy bomber that was forced into a water landing 64 years ago.

And thus begins one of the strangest fish tales in San Diego history. Since his first story on July 21, 2009 Union-Tribune Outdoors reporter Ed Zieralski has been following the hunt for the rare Navy SB2C-4 Helldiver bomber that's been resting on the muddy bottom of Lower Otay Reservoir.

In the weeks and months ahead, Zieralski will track the recovery, restoration and possible battle between military and local museums to own and display the finished Helldiver.

Below is the story so far. Follow along as we raise the Helldiver:

### Archives:

- [WWII plane's number doesn't match records \(7/31/09\)](#)
- [Pilot's son hopeful for salvage of plane \(7/29/09\)](#)
- [Local museum wants WWII plane, too \(7/23/09\)](#)
- [Naval museum likely to claim bomber if it is raised \(7/23/09\)](#)
- [Navy bomber intact but under sediment in lake \(7/22/09\)](#)
- [Museum wants to restore WWII plane \(7/22/09\)](#)
- [Salvage team to assess chances of raising sunken WWII Helldiver \(7/21/09\)](#)
- [Search for fish unearths history \(7/21/09\)](#)

### Documentation

- [Helldiver crash damage/loss report](#)

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