



The **Charlie Brown and Franz Stigler incident** occurred on 20 December 1943, when, after a successful bomb run on Bremen, Charles

'Charlie' Brown's

B-17 Flying Fortress

(named "Ye Olde Pub") was severely damaged by German fighters.

Luftwaffe

pilot and ace Franz Stigler had an opportunity to shoot down the damaged bomber, but instead, for humanitarian reasons, decided to allow the crew to fly back to their airfield in England.

The two pilots met each other 40 years later after the extensive search by Charlie Brown and the friendship that the two developed lasted until their deaths.



Franz Stigler and Charlie Brown

Bf 109 pilot Franz Stigler and B-17 pilot Charlie Brown's first meeting

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Υ.Γ. 1: οι φωτό από [εδώ](#) και [εδώ](#) . Το παράθεμα από [εδώ](#) .

Υ.Γ. 2: JG 27 was a famous unit, the home of the great ace, [Hans-Joachim Marseille](#) . Franz was in good company. He was assigned to the squadron of

[Leutnant Gustav Rödel](#)

. His new commander quickly gave him a lesson that would have a profound influence on him:

"Every single time you go up, you'll be outnumbered. Those odds may make a man want to fight dirty to survive. But let what I'm about to say to you act as a warning. *Honor is everything here.* What will you do, Stigler, for instance, if you find your enemy floating in a parachute?"

"I guess I've never thought that far ahead yet," Franz said.

"If I ever see or hear of you shooting at a man in a parachute," Rödel said, "I will shoot you down myself. You follow the rules of war for *you*, not for your enemy. *You fight by the rules to keep your humanity.*"

It's left to the reader to ask whether "the cold calculus of war" is decisive. What about the calculus of humanity? Remember what Gustav Rödel said to Franz Stigler:

You fight by the rules to keep your humanity.

When the war is over, do we want to welcome back into our midst warriors whose every choice was guided solely by the cold calculus of war? Or do we want to embrace warriors who have fought bravely and well, and yet have retained their humanity and can say that their honor is intact?

[[source](#)]

Υ.Γ. 3:

B-17

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