

Finding Bingo

Kathleen Taylor grew up hearing the story of her Navy dad befriending a lost puppy on his aircraft carrier. She and her mother-in-law Katherine Taylor have now turned that tale into a charming children's book.



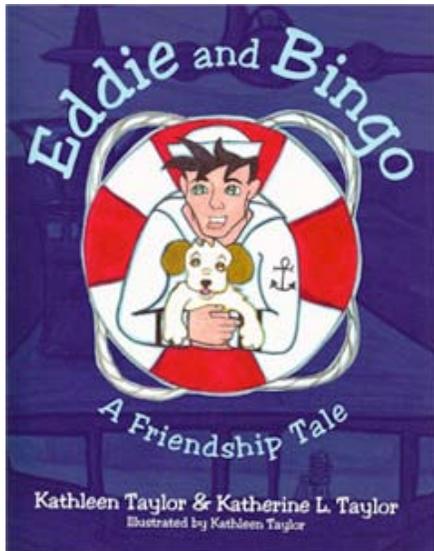
Illustrator Kathleen found the perfect collaborator for her book in her mother-in-law, author Katherine.



Katherine Taylor scans the charms at her local Brighton Collectibles, searching for an "artist's palette." She and her daughter-in-law Kathleen wear matching bracelets, but she wants to add this charm to the others on Kathleen's chain. What does the Life Is Art charm have to do with a poodle, a camera, another dog and a patriotic ribbon?

The bracelets commemorate the completion of their first book, Katherine explains to Jeannette, a Brighton sales partner. They show her a copy of *Eddie and Bingo: A Friendship Tale*, a children's book illustrated by Kathleen and written by her and Katherine. It recounts the charming story of Kathleen's father, Eddie McDonald, a Navy photographer who found a puppy aboard his aircraft carrier during the Korean War.

Eddie was a 19-year-old kid from Brooklyn, away from home for the first time. He was assigned to the USS *Hornet*, which was on its way from Pearl Harbor to Yokosuka, Japan, in 1951. During the "welcome aboard" ceremony, while the Captain addressed the sailors, he thought he saw a rat scampering around the deck of the carrier. When he realized it was a tiny puppy, he picked it up and hid it behind his back while the Captain wasn't looking.



He and his shipmates managed to keep the puppy hidden for about two weeks. Whenever they talked about him, they referred to "Bingo," which was the Captain's favorite game. Just before the *Hornet* was to depart, however, the Captain's wife came on board to say goodbye and brought her poodle with her. Bingo took off after the dog. Mrs. Captain was livid that a mutt was pursuing her prized pure-bred. The Captain told Eddie to get rid of Bingo before they left port.

He went into town and tried to find a home for Bingo. When a potential dog-sitter fell through at the last minute, however, he ended up bringing Bingo back to the *Hornet*. The crew erupted in cheers when they saw Bingo with Eddie, so the Captain allowed the guys to keep the dog during the journey to Japan.

"I didn't find Bingo," Eddie would later say, as he told the story to Kathleen. "Bingo found me. He was our guardian at sea."

The puppy entertained the homesick men, relieving stress and lifting spirits. When Eddie and other shipmates would swab the deck, Bingo would run through the wet mopped areas, slipping and sliding, leaving paw prints everywhere. Sometimes he would climb into the mop bucket to cool off and take a bath. Often Bingo would hide, so Eddie put "dog tags" around his neck so the men could hear him moving around. Whenever Eddie aimed his camera towards him, Bingo would sit very still, almost as though he knew he was being photographed.



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One day, Eddie and a buddy were on night watch on the deck. Bingo followed along with them. They hit rough waters, and waves crashed onto the deck, knocking them off their feet. Bingo tumbled across the deck and out of reach. Eddie scrambled over to Bingo and grabbed the dog tags around his neck just as he was about to go overboard. They knew then that life at sea was not a safe place for a puppy.

When the *Hornet* landed in Japan, Eddie brought Bingo into town to find him a permanent home. He discovered an orphanage, whose kids were delighted to adopt him.

Eddie first told Kathleen about Bingo when she was five years old. It was one of his favorite "war stories" from his four years in the Navy. When she was 21 years old and taking an illustration class for children's books, he encouraged her to draw Bingo. Eddie always had faith that his daughter, a stay-at-home mom, would succeed as an illustrator. Whenever she promised to tell Bingo's story by saying, "If I ever write a book...", Eddie would respond, "No, not if -- when you write a book."

The project gained momentum about three years ago when Kathleen found the perfect collaborator – her mother-in-law Katherine. A purchasing supervisor for a manufacturer, Katherine had always wanted to be a writer. She knew Eddie well and had heard the Bingo story many times over the years.



Before they could finish the project, however, Eddie fell ill. He saw some of the original art and initial text before he passed away in 2009, happy that his daughter was fulfilling her promise.

Katherine and Kathleen have had two readings at the [Brighton Collectibles in Thousand Oaks](#), California. They are now working on their second book and may do a sequel to *Eddie and Bingo*. Apparently, Eddie made three trips overseas during his time in the Navy, and he and Bingo did meet again. Stay tuned.♥

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Eddie (left) and a couple of buddies in front of their barracks during photo school in Pensacola, Florida.



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