

THE WAY

***IT
WAS
FOR ME***

IN THE

UNITED STATES NAVY

1954 - 1956



By:



USS MIDWAY CVA 41

Tom Lennox

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND

BIRTHPLACE OF NAVAL AVIATION

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Down loads of this book and my books about Grosse Isle
and Albion College may be found on line at;

https://luminaud.com/tom_pictures

Also at that sight are pictures from the Grosse Ile High School Year Book
and fellow GI students.

Some photos are mine, some are from the Midway cruise book
and others were copied from the Internet

Any comments or questions may be sent to **tlennox34@yahoo.com**.

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THE US NAVY - THE LENNOX WAY

The gasoline was almost covered with foam, most of the fire was out. Then someone turned on a salt water hose into the fire, blowing off the foam and reigniting the gasoline. The fire was licking my ankles and

Once again I have decided to describe some of my adventures that are an important part of my life. I hope you will enjoy this story.

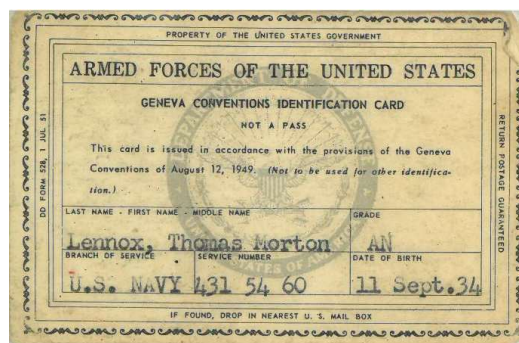
It was October 26th 1956, I was on the train to Philadelphia. I had 24 months of active duty to do in the Navy and was hoping to be sent to some station near Detroit, Michigan. I checked into the Philadelphia Naval Base and was shown where the transient barracks were. It would take a few days to get all the paper work done and assign me to a duty station. I went to the chow hall and got dinner and returned to the barracks for the night. Next morning I had breakfast and went to the personnel office where I gave them my packet of orders and described the various places I would like to be sent - such as Grosse Ile, MI; Akron, OH or Great Lakes, Illinois.

These were all Naval Air Stations and since I had an Airman rating, (E3) and had 2½ years in the reserve it sounded liked the best places to go. There were two other sailors I met there with the same situation. Well it seems that the two Yeomen behind the desk filling out all the paperwork were no higher rated than I was.

But they had 4 years of active duty to do and when they saw that we were reservists that only had 24 months of active duty to do they found a ship making a world cruise that would be at sea for almost a year and that's what they typed up our orders for. **Like it or not.** The next day I got my new uniforms to replace the old ones from Grosse Ile. Also I was given a quick physical exam and a few shots..

CHOICES

I took the train to Norfolk Naval Base. At the main gate I was told to go to Pier #7 and go aboard the USS MIDWAY, CVA # 41. I went aboard and saluted the Officer Of the Deck. He looked at my orders and directed me to the Personnel Department. There I was asked what I would like to



that they had more electronic personnel than they knew what to do with. I was given the choice of launching the aircraft off the front of the ship as part of the Catapult Crew or I could catch and stop the aircraft when they landed as part of the Arresting Gear Crew or – last choice – I could be part of a small group called the Crash Crew that put out fires when anything went wrong. Because I had worked at a gasoline refinery lab in the summer, I had training in gasoline fire fighting so I became the 12th member of the USS MIDWAY Crash Crew.

SHIP'S CREWS

The ships crew is divided into two groups. One being the ship's company. These people are the ones that are needed to run the ship. Engineers, cooks, barbers, machinists, medical and dental personnel, navigators, police, electronic techs for the ships radios and radar and ships weapon groups. The other part is the Air Group. This includes the Crash Crew, Catapult Crew, Arresting Gear Crew, Plane Pushers & Tractor drivers and other personal from the aircraft squadrons assigned to the ship for this cruise.



The Crash Crew was composed of one First Class PO (petty officer), two Second Class PO's and one Third Class PO. I think the rest were Seamen Apprentice and Airmen Apprentice or Airman. I was one of the two Airmen and only two of us were navy reserve. Some in the crew were in for 4 years and others had been in 4 to 10 years already. Our uniform was red jerseys pulled over our dungaree. Our red jerseys had the word CRASH CREW printed on them. When we were at flight status we wore red cloth caps that tied under the chin and safety goggles and carried 6 inch hunting knives. This was our fire fighting outfit.



There were about 20 guys in the Catapult Crew. Their job was to connect the aircraft up to the catapult, check that everything on the plane was ready and then launch the plane. Most of them were on the forward flight deck but some had to man the controls that were down under the hanger deck. They all wore green shirts and green caps with Catapult Crew on them.



The Arresting Gear Crew maintained and controlled the cables and barriers that were across the rear of the flight deck. There were 5 arresting cables on the deck and 3 barrier cables that could be raised about 6 ft. above the deck. As the cables needed to be protected from the salt water spray, they were covered with heavy grease. This grease got all over their green shirts and caps. This was the messiest job on the flight deck.

OUR COMPARTMENT

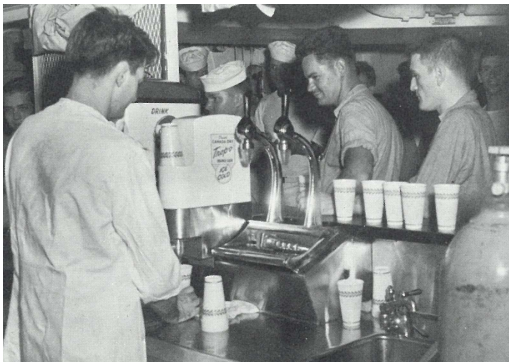


The Arresting Gear Crew shared the berthing compartment with the Crash Crew. This compartment was about midship next to the port side deck edge elevator. There were about thirty of us in this compartment. We were bunked in racks stacked up in 3 high. (Seniority got you the top bunk.) These racks would be folded up during regular business hours so that the area could be cleaned.

One man was selected out of this group to be compartment cleaner. This was a three month job and was usually the lowest rated crewman. Besides keeping the compartment clean he would take our large (6 ft. long) weekly bag of dirty clothes down to the laundry three decks bellow and pick up the clean clothes later that day and distributed them onto our bunks. He also picked up our mail from the Post Office when there was a mail call. He was



responsible for cleaning our compartment and he would close it off so we could not come in for several hours during the day.



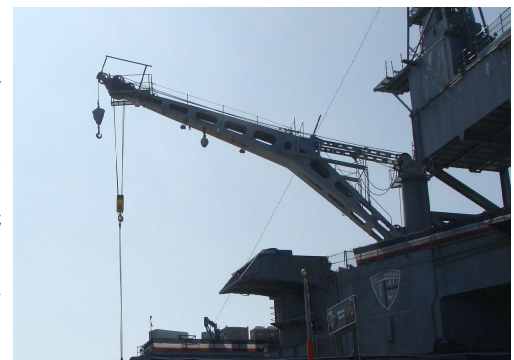
The job wasn't as bad as it sounds because he would not be standing any of the duty watches and he got to go down below decks to the ship's store and soda fountain where he would pick up all the scuttlebutt and probably knew more what was going on than we did.

We had a "head" off to the side of our compartment which contained 2 steel wash sinks, one 2 by 2 ft shower stall (no curtain), and a 7 ft. long steel trough with sea water running through it. There were 6 boards across it to sit on - not the most modern toilet in the world - a good old fashioned 3 holer. I don't think this was the way any of the other parts of the ship were set up. This would be changed during the next repair schedule in 1956. As the work on the flight deck was often dirty, especially for the Arresting Greer Crew, we usually all took daily showers. To do this in the time between when we got off work and got to the chow line we had to have a system. You would take off your clothes and get in line to the shower. The first man

in line would adjust the water temperature, jump in the shower and get wet, then step out of the shower, stand next to the shower and soap up. Meanwhile the 2nd person would get wet, step out of the shower and then the first person would step into the shower, scrub down and rinse, then step out, grab your towel and dry off. Meanwhile the 3rd person would step into the shower and get wet and the cycle would start over again. Since there were somewhere around 25 to 30 people, everyone had only a short time to shower. All of this was more difficult when we would be on water rationing. 20 gallons a day of water was allowed for each man on the ship. Most of that was used to run the ship's steam turbines and cook the food. This left about 2 gallons for washing, showers and drinking. Sometimes the fresh water would be turned off from 1000 to 1600 hours. Our compartment had a water cooler, right next to the door way into the head, that was on all the time. Some of the officers whose rooms were off the hallway next to us would come to use the water fountain and chit chat with us. Sometimes a roaming Master At Arms (Police) would stop and remind the officers that they were not to be fraternizing with us enlisted men.

CRANE

One of the jobs for the Crash Crew was operating the flight deck crane - a large, heavy duty unit attached to the starboard side of the flight deck aft of the tower. It was controlled by hydraulic motors. There were two hand wheels on the deck beside the crane. One would control the rotation

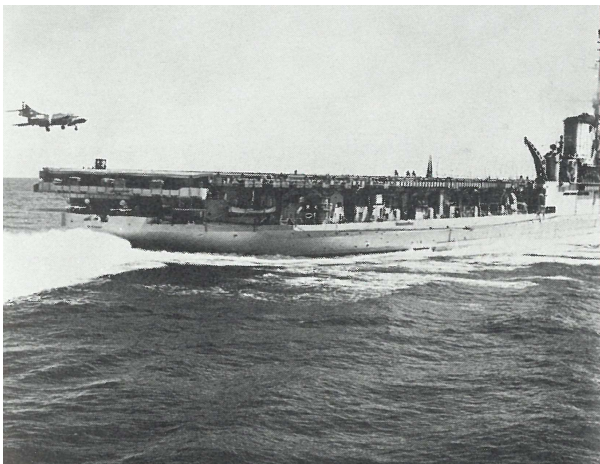


movement. The other hand wheel would control the raising or lowering of the hook. It was set up as a three man crew - one man for each wheel - and the third man down below in the cable room with a baseball bat making sure that the cables wound up correctly on the reels. The crane was used to lift aircraft and supplies from the dock

on to the ship. Also, we would use it to lower the 7 liberty launches down to the water. These were used when we anchored off shore instead of docking. The crane operation was a 24 hour duty. You could be called away anytime day or night. I usually got this duty about twice a week BUT it came with a head of the line chow pass. There could be a thousand people in line, this was GOOD.

OUT TO SEA

We **finally** set sail out to sea to train the pilots that were coming on board the ship to land on a deck that was moving from 25 to 30 miles mph and rocking side to side and might be pitching up and down and was only a few hundred feet long. They



would be required to touch the deck and not land, but take off again. The pilots had practiced on the land with runways marked off to the same length as the ship - but now they had to learn the REAL THING. The flight deck was rigged without the arresting cables or barriers. A TOUCH & GO is where a plane makes an approach for a landing but keeps

his tail hook up. The pilot has to line up with the deck with the help of the Landing Signal Officer, then slows down just enough so his wheels touch the deck, then powers up into the air again. He must do this several times with his wheels touching the deck in the area where the arresting cables would be. We did this for the next two days, never allowing the planes to land on the ship.

We then headed for Mayport, Florida. On Sat. 11/13/54 we loaded several AD4s, AD5s and AD5Ws. These are all prop driven, single engine aircraft. We used our crane to lift the planes off the dock and on to the flight deck. After securing the aircraft on board, we headed out to sea.



The Arresting Crew re-rigged the cables across the deck and set up the one inch thick steel barrier cables used to stop a plane that missed the arresting cables. Normally the planes tail hook catches one of the arresting cables on the deck. That slows the plane to a stop. The arresting cables are attached to hydraulic cylinders to add more drag. Then the barrier ahead of the plane are lowered and the plane moves up forward. If it is going to be serviced or not immediately flown, it will be put on one of the elevators to the hanger deck below

To launch the aircraft it would taxi up foreword to the catapult where the Catapult Crew would connect the aircraft to the shuttle. When the catapult is fired the pilot goes to full power and the shuttle accelerates the plane up the deck to flight speed. When the shuttle gets to the end of the track it stops and the aircraft continues on.

When we were out to sea about 10 aircraft were brought to the flight deck, the pilots manned their planes and we started their engines. The ship turned into the wind and sped up to obtain about 30 knots (35 mph) of wind down the deck. As most of the deck was cleared and these were all prop driven aircraft they did not need to use the catapult. After all the aircraft were launched, each plane would take it's turn circling the ship, lining up with the stern of the ship and coming in so that it's wheels would touch the flight deck in the area where the arresting cables would have been, then flying off to get the loop again.

All of this was controlled by the Air Boss who was sitting two decks above the flight deck, in primary control, where he had a view of the whole flight deck. After he felt the pilot had completed enough TOUCH & GOs he would release the plane to head back to it's home base. After all the aircraft had completed TOUCH & GOs and returned to their home base we re-rigged the arresting gear on the flight deck for normal operations. As we had no incidences it was an easy day for Crash Crew.

Obviously the Crash Crew's job is to put out an aircraft on fire, remove any person from inside of the aircraft and any wreckage from the deck to allow other planes to land. We also had lots of other duties. Every time an aircraft is started we would stand next to the engine with a 50lb. Co2 fire extinguisher and signal the pilot to start his engine. If it had 2 engines we would go to the other side of the plane and do the same thing. After the engines were running we would direct the plane to a flight deck director who would guide the plane toward a catapult crew member for launch. As a launch might be 20 to 30 planes we were very busy for a short time. Some of the other duties were to look up into the tail pipe of the jet engines when the plane landed to see if the fuel shut off completely and there was no fire in the engine. If there was a fire we would plug a starter cable into the plane from a vehicle with a big generator on it then have the pilot turn on his starting motor and blow out the fire. Also when not flying we would inspect all the fire extinguishers on the flight and hanger decks to make sure that they were fully charged. When in port we would be called out for fires inside of the ship. We were also part of the crew that did the refueling at sea.

Two of the Crash Crew were the “Hot Suit” men. They wore asbestos cloth suits consisting of one half that covered from their shoes to mid chest level and a top half with a hood and a face protector. When we were not actually launching or receiving aircraft, the top half of the suits could be lifted off as they were hot and heavy. They were the first to get to the



plane. One went to the starboard side, the other to port side. The one on the port side would lift the pilot out onto the shoulder of the one on the starboard side to be carried down away from the crash. The Hot Suit man on the port side would then memorize the positions of all the controls in the cockpit so that he could describe these in case of an investigation. A person in a cloth asbestos suit has about 45 seconds in a gasoline fire before he gets burned. If the suit gets wet it must be kept wet or the person inside will get steamed cooked. We were very lucky and did not have any big fires with the a hot suit man in it.

The rest of the Crash Crew were the lead nozzle men on the fire hoses. The plane pushers (blue shirts) would back us up on the hoses. It takes two men to control a one and a half inch hose and three men for a three inch hose. We had both foam and high pressure water available. Most of the fires would be fuel - gas or oil - so we would be using foam most of the time.

It was Sunday, November 21st and we had one more day of flight training. The second group of AD 5s was coming in for a landing. One was coming in for a landing

too fast. He dropped to the deck too hard. He bounced up about a foot and missed hooking the arresting gear cables. He continued into the steel barrier cables. This stopped the plane but ripped the engine off the front of the aircraft dumping the Avgas and the engine to the deck which caught on fire. This was our first REAL crash. We were laying down a blanket of foam over the gas and engine holding back most of the fire. Someone in the back-up crew turned on a one and a half inch, high pressure water hose into the foam that washed away the foam and reignited the gasoline. I had flames around my ankles and my feet and I was hopping around to keep the flames off my pants. Then someone turned off the water hose and turned on more foam. They had it pointed at my back. The foam was pouring up my back, over my head, and down to my face. **Bloody bad-tasting stuff!!!** Tilley, the mobile flight deck crane picked up the plane, then the engine and dropped them over the side of the ship allowing the other planes to land. After that we had several drills.

CRASH DRILL

Crash drills were usually done with the last plane on the last flight of the day. As soon as the planes wheels hit the deck the Air Boss would announce over the



flight deck PA system that **“this is a drill, plane crash on the flight deck”**.

Then start his stop watch. We would rush out and retrieve the pilot. The pilots didn't like to be lifted out of the cockpit by the Hot Suit man. They would much rather climb out

themselves, seeing that it was only a drill. But the Crash Crew needed the practice. The pilots didn't complain too much as if it had been a real crash and they were injured they wanted to be taken out as quickly as possible. We would bring out the

fire hoses but we would not charge them with water or foam. The Tilley would drive up to the side of the plane. The plane handlers (blue shirts) would bring out and connect the correct lifting harness to the plane and hook the plane to the Tilley. As soon as the wheels of the plane were 6 inches off the deck the Air Boss would stop his watch. We worked to shorten this drill time as this would mean fewer drills if we could do it fast enough to satisfy the Air Boss. That training session was over and we headed back to Norfolk Monday morning. We would stay there a week or so.

FIRE SCHOOL

Tuesday I was told to report to the gangway and hop on the bus to the Norfolk Naval Base fire school for 5 days of training. The bus took us to the school and back to the ship in the afternoon in time for chow. Some of the week was spent in the classroom, the rest was spent putting out real fires. We wore our dungarees and were supplied a heavy jacket and boots. They had a building about 50 foot square with concrete walls about 20 ft. high. There were 4 steel doors, one on each side. The roof also had large doors in it to control the fire. There was a catwalk connecting the four side entrances and it was about three feet above the floor. I think there was about a foot of water on the floor with a covering of oil. The oil was set on fire with the help of some gasoline. When the fire got really going two of the side doors would be open. One team of four men would go in on one side, a second team of four men would go in the door on the side next to the first team. Each had a three inch high pressure fog nozzle. The two teams would work the fire into a corner and put it out. It took 3 of us to control a 3 inch hose. If one person lets go of the hose the force back from the nozzle would push the other 2 men back out the door. We were all hot, wet and dirty from the burning oil. My eye lashes and eyebrows were a lot shorter for a few weeks. I coughed up black soot for a few days. The odd part about this was that all the training was for fighting a fire inside of a ship. Most of the time we would

be fighting gasoline fires on an open deck with winds and near other aircraft with explosives on them. OH YES - THE NAVY WAY.

DECK PERSONNEL

Every group has an area that they spend a lot of time in when not flying. This is where they muster every morning and where they have their coffee pot and get the POD (plan of the day). Pilots, when not in their air craft, would spend much of their time in their ready room or their living compartment. There are several ready rooms, one for each squadron. This is their work area, complete with coffee pot and movie projector. They will eat in the officers ward room in the uniform of the day or the officers mess if in flight suits or work clothes. The Arresting Gear crew (green shirts) would have an area on the starboard side aft of the tower or along the side where the walkway is under the flight deck where they have most of their controls. The Catapult Crew (also green shirts) works on the foreword end of the flight deck. They usually mustered forward of the tower on the port side. The controls for the catapults were on the port side forward. The crew is spread somewhat across most of the forward deck. Because there are two catapults firing alternately and it takes several people to hook up the planes on the catapult. The Crash Crew (red shirts) station is mostly at the back end of the flight deck on the port side. This would be the most likely place a problem to occur but we could be any place on the flight deck or the hanger deck if needed. The Flight Deck Directors (yellow shirts) are usually first class or chiefs. They work anywhere on the deck, guiding planes to their assigned positions either to the catapults or elevators to the hanger deck. They take control of the aircraft once we have it started and have moved to the next plane. Their station would be in the flight level of the tower.

AT SEA

December 1, 1954 - Time to get back out to sea. Now that I was all cleaned up from that fire school things looked better. We were headed to Mayport to pick up more of the air craft that we would be taking on the cruise. We did more flight training for a few days and were glad to head south because on December 6th we had two inches of snow on the deck. It melted soon and dried up before we pulled in to the dock at Mayport. The dock had more planes on it to be loaded on the ship. More crane duty. We also took on more sailors. A lot of these were part of the squadrons that would be on our cruise. They were the sailors that would be servicing their aircraft. Each plane had a plane captain that was in charge of that aircraft. There also were the engine mechanics, electronic and airframes repair crews. There were about ten squadrons on board with several types of aircraft. We had jets, props, helicopters and **One Midway Plane**. This plane was an SNJ trainer. It was kept up on the overhead in the hanger deck. It was used by the Captain and the Executive Officer, so that they could get their flight time in and keep their flight skins and added pay. It could take off from the deck without assistance. In order to land, the ship would slow down almost stopping so as not to outrun the plane.



NIGHT FLIGHTS

We were now doing more night flying which was new to some of the pilots and crew. This is very scary. We are out in the ocean, no lights from the shore, no moonlight and all exterior lights are turned off. Because the pilots must have maximum night vision in order to see the ship at night there cannot be any lights that

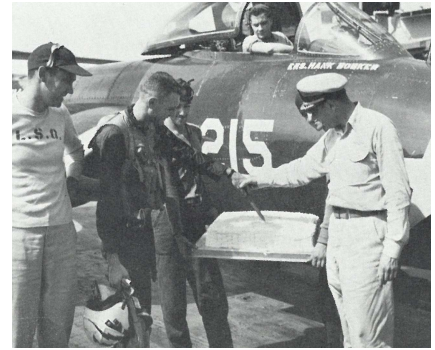
would disrupt their vision. All hatches are closed on any compartment that has normal lighting. There are no portholes on the sides of the ship so no light can escape from the inside. The only lights on are a line of small lights built into the center line of the flight deck. These lights can only be seen from the aft of the flight deck from a plane making a landing. Along the edges of the flight deck there are lights called dustpans. These shine across the flight deck only lighting the surface. These can be turned on if there is a problem on the deck but will not shine at the pilots circling the ship prior to landing. On the aft port side of the deck there is a platform for the LSO (Landing Signal Officer). He holds two lighted ping pong-like paddles to guide the pilot up, down, left or right as the plane makes his landing.

So that everyone's eyes stay accustomed to the dark all the ready room lights are red at night. The hanger deck lights are also turned to red only. The ships movie would be shown in the chow hall below the hanger deck. One good thing about night flying was that the air group would get a fourth meal at 2400 hours. It was usually sandwiches or a lighter meal plus dessert.

Back to flying this time all landings were for real. Some days the aircraft would practice bombing a raft we towed behind the ship. These were small bombs with lots of smoke. Other days they would use rockets - a little more explosive. A lot of the ships crew would come up on the flight deck to watch. The raft was on a one quarter mile long cable so that it was safe to watch.



On December 16th we made the 62,000 landing in the ship's history. The pastry chef brought a very large chocolate sheet cake for the flight personal to eat. This happens for every 1,000th landing. The chef made great cakes and other goodies. We always had good deserts. There were more days when we flew all day and also at



night. One day a tanker pulled up along the starboard side. We passed lines across and pulled over long 6 in diameter hoses. We took on ave gas to top off our tanks, which could hold 350,000 gallons of gas. We didn't take on any fuel oil at that time. We could carry 3,000.000 gallons of fuel oil for our engines . At least while we were at flight quarters we could eat in the chow hall wearing our flight gear. Instead of having to change into our white uniforms to go into the chow hall after 1630 (4:30).

CHRISTMAS LEAVE

We returned back to pier #7 in Norfolk. This allowed for some leave time. I had off from 12/21 to 12/24 at 16 hundred hours. I had tickets to fly to Detroit. I got into Detroit and Dad picked me up and went home. Dorothy Zittel, my Fiancee, was on her way home from Albion Collage via train through Detroit to Buffalo, NY for Christmas. We picked her up at the Detroit train



Mother

station to stay for two days at my house. This gave us some time together compliments of the US Navy. I slept in my old room and Dorothy had my sister's room. This was the first time we had slept in the same house. And it was the first time that year that I had seen much snow. Then I had to leave and she went home to Buffalo.

The plane that flew out of Detroit to Norfolk was late due to a snow storm. I arrived back on the ship at 2000 hours (8 o'clock pm), four hours late which made me AWOL (absent without leave). I had called back to the ship when I changed planes in Washington, DC. and told my Division Officer that I would be late due to the weather so he could log me in. He forgot to do that and that meant that I had to go up later and report to the Executive Officer of the ship. For my being AWOL my Division Officer was instructed to give me extra work detail. I had to help paint the stripe down the center of the flight deck. Crash crew would have been doing it anyway and I was not to go ashore. I considered that my Division Officer owed me a favor and I would call it in later.

GOOD BYE NORFOLK

On December 26, 1954 the USS Midway left the Norfolk Naval Base for the last time to join the 7th Fleet in the Pacific. There were bands playing on the dock and families waving good-bye to their Sailors. Norfolk had been Midway's home port for 10 years, ever since she was built. She would stay in the Pacific from now on.



We proceeded to Mayport, FL, and picked up a few more planes. The GATOR BOWL QUEENS came on board to look around and get some photo shots with some sailors. The last members of the squadrons came on board. **The next morning, the 29th of December 1954, we headed for Cape Town, South Africa.**



One of the guys in our compartment, I think he was from West Virginia, and was one of our Hot Suit men. He and I became good friends. His last name was Drowdy - can't remember his first name any more. Drowdy had a pair of size 13 leather boots. He kept them beside his bunk when we were out on the flight deck. There was no worry about them disappearing - nobody else had feet that big. He made a bet with me that before the cruise was over he would get me connected with some of those nice Japanese "Girls". I bet him \$10.00 Dollars I wouldn't.



Picture by Marty McCormick

We were coming up on New Years Eve and the cooks were working on a special big dinner. Someone in the Navy Department somewhere must have wondered what would happen if an aircraft carrier went through the eye of a hurricane. Well Hurricane Alice was coming out of the Atlantic Ocean on New Years Eve. We tied down all the aircraft in the hanger deck with double tie-down cables and closed all the (X hatchway doors). With 55mph winds on deck - **no one** was allowed outside on the ship. Very few of us were going to dinner that night. There were straps that could be put around our bunks to hold down the blankets and pillow when the racks were folded up during the day. We put the straps over us so as not to roll out. With a 22° roll, the ship rocked us to sleep. I imagine the cooks were not pleased with the Navy Brass. The next day we had turkey, dressing, ham slices, sweet potatoes, and salads - **and** not to miss the pies and cakes. VERY GOOD LEFTOVERS. Our food was fairly good most of the time. Sometimes we had two choices of meat and usually cake or large cookies for desert. There were fresh eggs for about one week after we left a port. Then after that powdered eggs that weren't too bad.

GET FLYING AGAIN

Now that the sea had calmed down we began checking everything. All of the aircraft were OK. They were nice and dry in the hanger deck. Now the Captain gave the word to the Air Boss to get the pilots flying. The Air Boss oversees mostly on the



landings. The assistant Air Boss sitting next to him overseas the launches. We had two helicopters that would fly on each side aft of us. They would pick up any pilot that had to crash in the water or anyone who went overboard. There were two destroyers that would at times follow behind us of to one side or the other. We assumed

that they would be there to help with any crash rescue at sea. But we were never sure of their full purpose. We also assumed that there was someone under us most of the time. Only central intelligence knew. We would launch a flight of about 20 planes, then recover them in about 45 min.

Using the two catapults alternately it would take less than 20 minutes. The AD Sky Riders that were used for anti submarine work. One half were used for detection and the other half to destroy. These might stay out for two hours or so. Several of the jets



were for photo reconnaissance, the rest were for air to air combat and bombing, rocketing launching and Napom. There were a couple of the ordinance crew next to the catapults. They would arm the weapons just before the plane was launched. There are special elevators from the weapons storage area to the hanger deck and flight deck. Special weapons were assembled in the chow hall. Then we sent up to the hanger deck or flight deck for loading.

The pilots usually were not on the flight deck until their aircraft was ready. The Plane Captains (brown shirts) would be in the plane until the pilot arrived, then would help him into the plane and buckle up.

Sometimes pilots who were not flying would go up on the second level of the bridge and watch the take offs and landings since they were officers they could do that. One time several pilots were standing in the catwalk beside the flight deck, next to my fire station watching the planes coming in. Some of them were standing in the passage leading under the deck. A plane was about to land and something didn't look right to me. I ran over the backs of the officers that were in the passageway so that I could get under the 3 inch thick steel deck. They apologized to me for being in my way. They said if THEY were landing they would not want people blocking my way to be able to get to the deck as soon as possible if THEY had an accident.

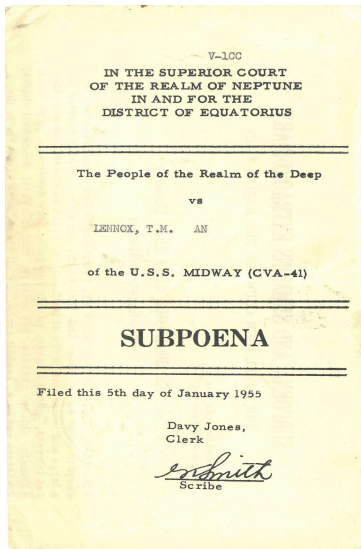
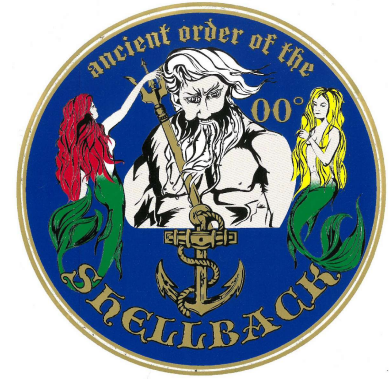
MAN OVERBOARD DRILL

Every so often we would have a Man Overboard Drill. These were always during the daytime. An officer from some department, I don't know which department it was, would select a sailor. He would then be taken to the executive office. Then an alarm would sound and over the ship's P.A. System you would hear **"THIS IS A DRILL. MAN OVERBOARD."** Everybody on the ship would report to their mustering station and take role call. The ship's rescue party would man the rescue boat. The boat would not be lowered but just kept ready. All departments would call in as each of its divisions notified them that all were present and accounted for. When a department couldn't account for one of its men his name was called in as Man Overboard. The stop watch that was started when the alarm sounded was stopped. We did these drills several times and it really went very fast.

CROSSING THE EQUATOR

January 6 1955. We were approaching west $36^{\circ} 30'$ longitude $0^{\circ} 00'$ latitude,

and were getting ready for the Shellbacks initiations. Anybody that has not crossed the Equator before is a Pollywog. Pollywogs must be approved by King Neptune Rex. Those who have been across the Equator before would do the initiation. There were about 340 Shellbacks and about 2851



Pollywogs. This meant a lot work for the Shellbacks. The Navy had cleaned up this custom so that it was much safer. Many of the Shellbacks made paddles out of 3 ft. long 2 inch diameter canvas sheaves filled with rags and soaked in saltwater. They would form a line up the deck. The Pollywogs would run the line while being paddled by the Shellbacks. The Pollywogs would be wearing shorts and T-shirts very wet with salt water. The smart thing was not to be known by many of the Shellbacks. They would save their energy for the sailors that they knew. Other enjoyable festivities included KISSING THE ROYAL BABY (very large cook with his belly covered with thick grease). Also

having quinine water squirted into your mouth by the Royal Dentist, who dumped you over the back of the chair into a wooden coffin filled with cold sea water and sprayed with more salt water. All of this included officers and enlisted men. All were treated equal for that day. For part of the day the Crash Crew had to wear our Atomic Blast Suits for a while. They were very hot, heavy and sticky. When this was all over it took a lot of soap and showers to get all of the grease and crud off of us.

CAPETOWN

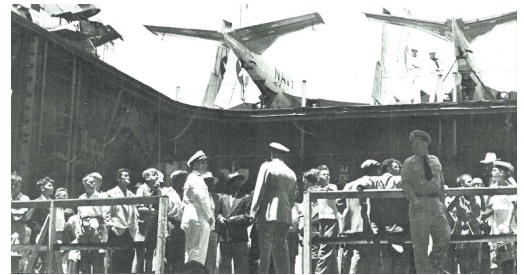
The weather had been good - lots of clear skies. We were still about a week out of Cape town and continued flying most of the types of the aircraft we had on board. Everybody got some flight time. I think we even got the SNJ up for a while. As we were just a few days from Capetown there was much more cleaning up and brass polishing. We were going to look GOOD when we pulled in.

When we were a few miles out at sea from Capetown you could see the clouds or fog falling over the face Table Top Mountain. It looked like a white fluffy waterfall. The ship's crew was divided into 3 duty sections. This would allow 2/3 of the crew to go ashore at one time so that everybody got liberty. This would be for Saturday, Sunday and Monday (15th, 16th, 17th) of January. I think I had the duty the first day.



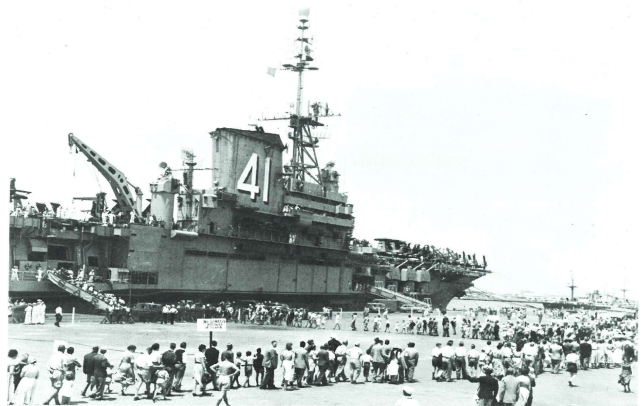
To dock the ship of this size without large tugs the Captain had another method. The Air Boss had 5 ADs tied down to the port side forward and 5 ADs tied down to the starboard side forward and 5 ADs tied down to the port side aft and 5 ADs to the starboard side aft. All with their engines pointing inboard. By revving up the planes on the diagonal corners the ship would rotate. When the planes were revved up on the same side the ship could be moved sideways. We did not have all those fancy Thrusters that the cruise ships have. We just slid easily up to the dock. We tied up, set the watches and secured for the night.

That weekend the ship was set up for open house. We would be guiding visitors up the aft gangway into the hanger deck, then up the aft elevator to the flight deck. Along the flightdeck to the forward elevator and down to the hanger deck and off by the forward gangway. We had information on the hanger deck and things for the visitors to see.



The aft elevator is about 40 ft. square. After the visitors got on the elevator guard rails automatically came up. The elevator went up about 25 feet very quickly generating a slight gasp from the crowd. We had set up several aircraft so that visitors could step up and look into the cockpits. Sometimes we would lift some of the smaller children into the cockpit for a closer view. We had one of our helicopters opened up with a guide inside and allowed our visitors to walk through it. The Crash Crew helped guide people around the deck and answered LOTS and LOTS of questions. The visitors got onto the forward elevator which dropped them down quickly to the hanger deck. There was a LARGE GASP as it was lowered. Our visitors then exited off the foreword gangway to the dock.

We had expected a good turn out and boarding time would be at 0900 hours. By 0800 a line was forming on the dock by the gangway. It went several hundred feet and then turned down the dock towards the town. By the time we opened up the line was off the dock and onto the sidewalk in

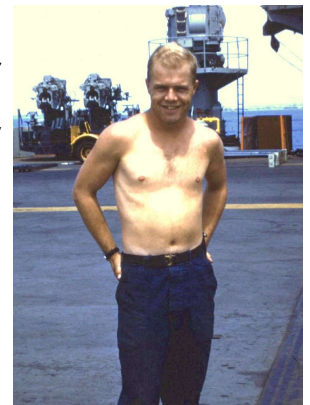


town. In many places the line was 2 or 3 abreast. This continued ALL DAY until we closed at 1640 (4:30 pm). The same thing happened Sunday. This was an unusual event for them. A US Naval Ship of this size had not been there before and this was open to **ALL** people. Apartheid was still the rule, whites in control. This was an

American ship and we treated everybody equal. From the flightdeck we could sometimes see a nice car pull up to the gangway whose occupants were obviously white. They walked up to the guide by the gangway and were politely told everybody would have to go into line and the end of the line was several blocks into town. There were over 21,000 visitors. While all of the tour was going on the flight on the decks, down in the mess hall, the cooks had prepared lunches for a large number of orphans the city had brought on board. They ate in the chow hall and watched movies and were given gifts to remember the Midway.

The race situation in South Africa was similar to the situation in the United States in the 1930s. We were told before we docked that when we went ashore even though some of our shipmates were black, we should not go into the bars or restaurants together. Theirs are separate. We didn't necessarily like it but it was their country.

Sunday our section had liberty. I went on liberty along with M.A. Clark. He was in the Arresting Gear Crew and in our compartment. He had some collage, as I did, and between us received 90% of the mail in our compartment. We were the only two in our compartment with any college education. We left the ship and were walking down the dock into town when a nice car stopped along side of us. Inside was a middled aged couple and a driver. The lady asked us if we would like to be shown around Capetown. She said that they were on their vacation and were familiar with things in the city. As this was a really nice car and had a chauffeur and the occupants were well dressed and seemed well educated so we got in. The gentleman was a government minister of some department in Southern Rhodesia. He and his wife were interested in talking to some American sailors and we spent the whole day with them. We went around various



parts of the city and they described what several of the large buildings were. We drove past their zoo which is on a strip of land that sticks out into the bay. We didn't stop there since it would have taken too much of our time. As it was mid-morning we did stop at an English Tea House. This was my first experience with English tea time. There was, of course, hot tea and lots of sweet goodies to eat. I still didn't have a camera so unfortunately I had very few pictures. What they were most interested in was the race situation. They were aware that the apartheid system was going to collapse soon. Clark and I were asked about the way it was on the ship. We both explained that there wasn't any problem that we were aware of on the ship. The sailor that slept below me was black and we were all together. Color didn't matter to us as long as we helped each other. Most of the crewmen working the officers food service were from the Philippines. Our great pastry chef was black and it was great to go on liberty with him and he would bring a large bag of his fresh baked cookies.

We drove around the area some more and stopped at a fancy restaurant. We had a five course dinner. We were first served some fruit, then some fish, then came the meat and potatoes, followed by soup and finally our desert with wine. I was able to sip a little and leave the rest in the glass. It seems that, the wife's grandmother was the first English woman born in South Africa. I wish I could remember all the stories they told us. Later that afternoon we drove back to the ship and they dropped us off. I gave them my home address and they wrote Mom and Dad about us. Apparently they were very pleased to have met us. Not too many years later Southern Rhodesia had a new name and a new government.

Monday was clean up the ship day. There still were parties and social events going on in town with various groups of the ship's company, especially the Officers. Many of the enlisted men were taking advantage of the great beaches they had.

Tuesday at 0400 we dropped lines and moved back out to sea. We were now headed for Sri Lanka. After leaving Capetown we went north east past Madagascar, back across the Equator (no parties), next stop Colombo on the island of Sri Lanka. We were at sea for 9 days and did a lot of rocket and bombing runs on the raft we were towing. We found out later that there was a reason for this much attack training. The Crash Crew had a hangout next to the flightdeck crane. This was a covered shed-like compartment that the Meteorologist used to store the Helium tanks. There they could fill their weather balloons and launch them to get the humidity and temperature aloft. Sometimes one of the crew would breath in some of the Helium and talk like Donald Duck. A few times the weather transmitter attached to the balloon would be damaged by hitting something on the deck. The unit normally would have been thrown over board, but it was added to my collection of electronic goodies. We were flying day and night which was using a lot of fuel. We rendezvoused with an English tanker again to take on Avgas and fuel oil. This would keep our tanks topped off for several days of flying.

CEYLON, SRI LANKA

There was not the proper dock at Colombo to take the Midway so on January 27th, 1955. we would anchor off shore. To get back and forth from the ship we had liberty boats. These were open boats with an engine and steerage in the rear. They were about 40 ft. long and about 10 ft. wide. We stored these on the ceiling in the hanger bays. They would be lowered down to the hanger deck, put on the elevator and we would lift them off into the water with the crane. I had that duty a couple of times. At night we would lift them up onto the deck and would have lights shining down around the ship with armed guards on duty.

To get in and out of the liberty launches we had to climb up and down large rope cargo nets that were hung over the side of the ship. When doing this we were in our dress Whites. In the morning we went ashore and looked around the city to see the sites. I am not sure who was with me at the time. There was a bus tour around the city and other sights. The cost was low and that way we didn't have to walk. We stopped and could ride an elephant if you wanted to. I didn't!. While driving through a forested area the driver of the bus would throw fire crackers into the trees. Flocks of large fruit bats would fly out. These were about the size of crows. There were many monks in orange robes in many of the buildings. Of course the bus stopped at several shops along the way that were selling gem stones such as star sapphires and rubies. I can't remember what I had to eat or drink and we were warned about local food. The tour we were on was going to Kandy about an hour away. This was mainly farmland and they grew mostly rice. In Kandy there were many old temples. We drove by them but did not get out of the bus.



TEA PLANTATION



The next stop on our tour was a tea plantation where we could get out and see how the tea was processed. There were rows of tea bushes. The top leaves would be picked and, depending on their age, they would be separated to make different teas. The tea leaves were dumped into wood bins that were the size of horse stalls. The longer number of days they sat and fermented, the darker the tea would be. Green tea would be taken out first and packaged.

The next to be packaged would be oolong. The black tea would be the last to be taken out and packed. All of this was done in a long barn like structure. The floor was dirt and the workers would be in their bare feet. They would leave their dirty shoes outside. Visitors could look in. Some of the tea leaves would be spilled out on the floor. A young boy would sweep up the leaves into a round wicker sieve, then shook out the dirt and throw the leaves into the black tea bin. That's why I use boiling water when making tea. While there I bought a pound or so of loose tea. It was a very interesting place to visit. If you like tea, the smell was great. We got back to the ship in time for evening chow.

The posted POD for the day before had said we would be headed for Singapore for the next stop. The rumor on the shore was that NO WAY we were going to Singapore. The POD that was posted this day said we are going to Singapore. That evening after chow the Captain came on the PA system and said we will NOT be stopping at Singapore and would be heading directly to the Straits of Formosa.

TEA TIME

Now that we have left Sri Lanka we would be at sea for some time and do a lot of air operations. But lets get to the important things. Now that I had some tea I needed to find something to brew it in. The navy supplies coffee to all personal. Each crew has a coffee pot and is issued coffee each week for all of their crew. Officers drink coffee, chiefs drink coffee, enlisted men drink coffee, but only officers drink tea. THE NAVY SAID "NO TEA FOR ME!!!!"

SO I had to construct my own electric teapot. In our compartment on an inside wall someone earlier had taken a torch and cut a three foot high doorway into the steel wall. The cut piece had been made into a door with a latch. The other side of

that wall was the storage room for the ship's electronics shop. So from our compartment I could go through their closet, open the door into their shop. This way was better than going through officers country into the hallway which had entrances



into the electronics shop and CIC. There was an armed Marine Guard stationed there - not a good place to be if you were not supposed to be there. My short cut was safer. This way I could borrow tools and odds and ends of things from them. They were very happy to help me out. I was able to get some Nichrome heating wire and some asbestos insulating paper. I went to the ship's store and bought a small can of peanuts and a large can of peanuts. I removed the top of the small can. No difficulty getting rid of the nuts. Then I wrapped several layers of the asbestos

around the outside of the small can. I took the Nichrome wire and wound many turns of it on top of the asbestos. Leaving the start and finish leads up on top. I then covered the heating wire with several more layers of the asbestos paper. This was all covered with one layer of duct tape. I cut a hole into the top of the large can of peanuts and distributed them to any of the crew watching. I made the hole just large enough to fit the small can and asbestos into the large can. I punched a hole into the remaining top of the large can to allow an electric line cord to pass. I put the line cord leads through the hole and connected them to the Nichrome wire. I then soldered the top of the small can to the edge of the hole in the large can and put some glue around the line cord wires where they came through the top of the can. Now I had a one cup tea pot and a bag of tea. Now I could have tea without having to go to Officers school. I left the label on the outside of the can so that it looked like a can of peanuts in case it was looked at during an inspection. NOT NECESSARILY MIL. SPEC. **I was set for the rest of the cruise!!!**

THE REAL THING

We were doing a lot of flying now. We were entering the Andaman Sea and getting ready to go past Singapore. On the night of January 31, 1955 we manned our battle stations, with lights out. We quietly passed Singapore and were out in the Pacific Ocean. The ship moved north into the South China Sea where we would remain for some time. We would be operating around Taiwan and the Philippines and flying day and night. Every four days we would take on Avgas and sometimes fuel oil. At this time our planes were carrying real bombs and rockets. All their guns were fully loaded. The Chinese were launching rockets at Taiwan and Formosa. They wanted the islands to surrender and become part of China. Our aircraft would bomb or fire rockets at the launch sites as the United States was committed to protect Taiwan. We were also covering the evacuation of the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. China was not active in Korea anymore and was concentrating on Taiwan. China was not attacking our ship.

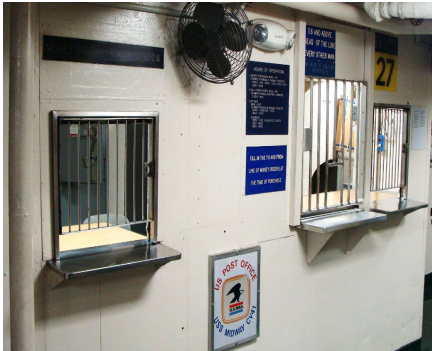
There was always a lot of action in the hanger deck with planes coming up and down the elevators and being refueled and armed. Someone in the hanger deck accidentally hit the fire button for the foam. This activated 2 of the foam nozzles that are attached to the bulkhead of the hanger deck. Within seconds foam shot all over that end of the hanger bay covering several of the aircraft that were parked there. It was shut off immediately but there was a lot of mess to clean up. This was a job for the Hanger Deck Crew - NOT the Crash Crew.



Foam Pumping Station

PAY DAY

Every couple of weeks there would be a pay day. After lunch the accounting people would post large sheets in the chow hall, showing what each sailor had



coming. Then when they sounded PAY DAY call you would get into the proper line and tell the pay officers the amount you wanted to take out. You would show your ID and put your thumb print on the pay slip. Most of us would get money orders from the ship's post office and send the money home. Mail for the smaller ships would be flown

to the Midway Post Office and then delivered to them by high line or boat. You didn't need much cash while on the ship. If we were getting to a foreign port for liberty we could get government SCRIPT that could be used on shore with local merchants who would then exchange the script at a bank for local money. In many countries we were not allowed to take US currency ashore..

RESUMED OPERATIONS

Meanwhile, back on the flightdeck we were quite busy launching aircraft. Every time a plane is launched a 1 ½ inch aluminum ring is split in half as the plane breaks loose from the tie down. It is caught in the jet blast and goes flying down the deck. That's one of the reasons we wear goggles. When bringing the aircraft up to the catapults we kept metal screens over the jet intakes. If one of these rings were to fly into the intake it would cause the turbine blades to break off which destroys the engine. When we would have a break between launching and recovery we would form a line and walk the deck picking up any pieces of material. We kept this up for about three weeks. Several times we moved down to the Phillippines and docked at the Naval Base in Manila to take on supplies, load up more ammo and have some liberty time ashore.

While I was in Manilla I went to the Navy Exchange and bought an Argus C4 camera. It was a 35 mm manual focus. A very good camera at that time - American Made. We had just come south from being in the Formosa area where it's cold in February. Now we were in Manilla and now it was hot and humid. We did this about 4 times. Luck was with us. There was a hatch on the port side that went directly into our compartment. The passage out of our compartment to the starboard side had a hatch opening to the outside. This allowed fresh air to come in from either direction. The Officers rooms along the passage way liked this too. Down below decks fresh air was blown in through duct work into most of the areas. A lot of the crew from below decks would come up on the flightdeck to cool off. Another good thing was that we had insulation on the overhead of our compartment to keep the heat in that 4 inch steel deck from coming in. Our few days of rest were over and we headed back north again.

We were doing more aerial target practice. A drone aircraft controlled by a mother aircraft flying ahead would be towing a long white banner-like target. Our aircraft had colored dye on their bullets in their machine guns and each plane had a different color to tell who had the most hits. This worked out very well and if you had binoculars you see who was ahead. The next day the mother plane and the drone aircraft came back. This time the ships gunnery group used their 3 inch anti-aircraft guns to see how well they could do. Well it seems that the master gun control radar locked onto the mother plane instead of the target. Several rounds got off before the fire control was shut off. Those aircraft never came back again. I bet someone got chewed out!



The first weekend in February a supply ship came along side. We took on food and supplies and the **Admiral of the 7th Fleet**. He would be on our ship until April 23rd. He is known as the FLAG. Midway would be the Flag Ship for the 7th fleet. All operations in that area would be under his control. The bad thing about this is that everything was spit and polish. There were more times when you had to be in the uniform of the day and your uniform better be correct and worn according to Navy regulations.

BEACH PARTY (Fish story)

We took on more jet fuel and continued air operations for the rest of the week.



That weekend we came back to Manilla and had a beach party at the Subic Bay Beach next to the Naval Base for the air group. There was free beer, pop and food. We had valley ball games

and just playing in the water. I had pop and burgers. I think one of the cooks was doing the food and it was good. This beach was set up for this kind of party. Lots of shady pavilions and fire grills.

One of the guys in the Arresting Gear Crew whose name was Savaglio, was always telling us his fishing stories. Some of his tails were a little hard to believe. He had gotten his fishing rod and tackle box on board the ship and brought them with him to the party. While all of us were at the beach party he headed up into the hills and jungle. He found a river where a stream intersected it. He was going to bring back all his fish and show us what a great fisherman he was. Later that afternoon he came back out of the jungle to the beach. He had no rod, no tackle box and NO FISH. Now we all wanted to hear what happened. He explained that after finding this

perfect place where a stream and river joined he rigged his rod with the right lure. He was starting to put his line into the water when he heard something up in the trees. As he looked up a monkey dropped down behind him, grabbed his tackle box and ran with it back into the jungle. As he started to chase the monkey another monkey grabbed his rod and reel and dashed off the other way. So there he was, the monkeys were long gone, his gear never to be seen again - and so he came back to the beach. It was a good story and was told many more times.

BACK TO WORK

Before the sun went down the liberty launches came back from the ship to pick us up. This was Saturday and I can't remember if any other parts of the ship had a party Sunday. Sunday night we loaded the liberty boats back on the ship and stowed them away. Monday was another work day and we needed to rig a new cable in the flightdeck crane. We flew a lot that week, then headed back to Manilla that weekend



and loaded two planes on board that were to be taken to Japan. The weather was clear, warm and sunny so pictures were taken of each department for the Cruise Book. We continued flight quarters for the next few days. During one of the recoveries we had a jet miss the arresting cables and run into the nylon web barrier. We cut it out without damaging the plane and the several thousand

dollar barrier was tossed overboard and a new one was set up in just a few minutes. Just to make the day more memorable, that night the fire alarm went off in the hanger bay below us. Several of us jumped out of bed, grabbed our pants and shoes and ran down to the hanger deck. One of the door switches shorted out and started to smoke. As we stood by a ships electrician replaced the switch. That was all there was to it.

One afternoon we were getting a flight of F2H Banshees off and two of them were photo reconnaissance. The others were set up with rockets and machine guns. I was on the port side with the third plane in line. They were parked at a 45 degree angle to the



ship. This way the jet blast was away from the deck. The first plane had been started, the 2nd plane was just ready to be started. After it's engines were started The first plane was handed off to the deck crew to be sent forward to the catapults. I was holding a 52 lb CO2 fire extinguisher and was about to tell the pilot, of the third plane in line to start his engines. One of the plane directors had the 2nd plane rev up it's engines and pull out to get in line to go forward. This put me about 15 feet from the tail pipe of the jet - but in order not to get burned you should be a hundred feet from the tail pipe. The 52 lb extinguisher flew off into the ocean. I was about to go with it. My metal watch band burned a mark around my wrist. Things were HOT!! I went down and grabbed the tail wheel on my plane. This got me under the jet blast. As the plane finished it's turn onto the deck the blast was away from me. The plane director was supposed to check that everything is clear when moving a plane. He should have waited until my plane was started and I had moved down to the next plane. I was not too happy about this!! The burn on my wrist went away and my neck was just a little red. A flightdeck is a dangerous place when someone makes a mistake.

One of the banshees had just come up from the hanger deck and was loaded with rockets and 50 caliber guns. There are two ammo containers, one on each side

of the nose. The 28 V. Battery is between the two containers. The starter cord was plugged into the plane to deliver up to 1200 amps of current to the starter motor. I gave the pilot a thumbs up to start his engine. All of a sudden smoke and sparks came out of the hatch on the side of the nose. The battery was on fire and would be heating up the ammo cans very quickly. I unloaded my CO2 extinguisher into the nose of the aircraft. The other crews grabbed more of the 52 lb extinguishers and unloaded 15 of them into the ammo compartment. The ammo and battery were frozen solid into a block of ice. Later it was found that the battery had just been installed and was connected backward.

HONG KONG

We had to change into our whites for the Cruse Book photos. Then back into our work clothes. The ship was now headed to Hong Kong. At that time Hong Kong was still a possession of England, not part of China. For the next two days we did deck maintenance and clean up. Hong Kong had a large commercial harbor for international trade. Midway anchored five miles off shore which kept us away from the China coastline. We lowered the liberty launches for trips to shore. The ship was set up with 3 duty sections again so everybody could get some time ashore. I think Clark and I went on shore that first day. Every morning at 0800. We would raise our flag and play our National Anthem, then God Save The Queen and then the Hong Kong Anthem. All this time, standing at attention, in our blue uniforms on the flightdeck. After that any work that had to be done out on the deck was done in our blues. NO WORK CLOTHES! The Captain didn't want anyone on the China Coast with binoculars to see anybody in work clothes. Several of us had to paint some rust spots on the steel plates that are used to cover bomb holes in the deck. We were using red lead paint and being very careful to keep the paint off our uniforms.

We walked around part of the city and looked at some of the gardens. When we returned back to the ship we had to climb back up the cargo nets that were over the side of the ship where the liberty boats pulled up. Some of the signs in the town were in English but many were in Chinese. This was still old Hong Kong. There were a large number of British nationals living there. The monetary system was Hong Kong Dollars. We could get US Dollars exchanged for Hong Kong Dollars on the ship and back again later. We were not allowed to take US money off the ship, the same thing that was true in Manilla. China wanted US dollars and so did the black market. The ship stayed there 4 days and each night we pulled up our boats and onto the flightdeck and kept lights on around the hull. Monday morning, March 27th, we pulled up our anchor and were off to Japan.

YOKOSUKA

This was Midway's first of three visits we would make to Japan. We pulled into the main harbor of Yokosuka. We docked at the US Naval Facility there in the harbor, using our aircraft to steer us up to the dock. Yokosuka was a major naval base for Japan and the US Navy. This was only 10 years after the war was over and the United States had occupied Japan. The navy base supplied lots of jobs for the local workers. It was a supply port for the Navy in that region. This would be a stay of over two weeks. Longer leaves were granted so that some of the crew could travel around more of the country. We stocked up on a lot of supplies and had fresh food most of the time. This gave some of us on the ship more time to do personal things, like studying for rate tests and longer letters home.

HIDEAWAY

This first week in port we had a full inspection of our lockers, uniforms and work areas. You were not to have more uniforms than you were issued and they all were to be in good condition. The compartment we were in better be VERY clean. The bunks were to be made up properly and should not be any equipment that was not put there by the Navy. Photographs could be on the inside doors of our lockers. Each division was inspected by officers from a different division. I could have had a problem with all the electronic stuff I had. Especially an electric teapot. But I had found that there was a room very near our Crash Crew station on the aft port side that had a locked door. Nobody that I could talk to, even those who had been in the ship before me, knew anything about it. As mentioned in earlier books I was very familiar with locks. During some of my free time (less work to be done when in port) I was able to pick the lock open .It was just a common a 5 pin tumbler lock. Looking inside the room it was about 7 ft. wide and about 4 ft. deep, not really square but lots of room and it was empty!! I removed the lock assembly and the next day when I went ashore I stopped off at the local hardware store just down the street. I had previously purchased tools and other things from them and I think they recognized me. I asked them to cut a key for this lock which they were happy to do. Instead of the electric cutting tools that a hardware store in the states would have used, they hand filed a new key fit the lock. When they were done, they didn't know how much to charge me so I gave them the equivalent of 1 US dollar which they thought was good. I went back on the ship, put the lock in the door and locked it up. Now I had my own space for my paint-by-the-numbers pictures and my tools and other things that you are not supposed to have in your compartment. The room did have an over head light and a switch. Somehow I came about a stool also. This worked out well for the rest of the cruise.

Easter Sunday 4/10/55 we had a very good meal for dinner as it was holiday routine we could loaf around for the rest of the day or go into Yokosuka. Monday I went to another fire school on the Navy Base, mostly the same things that I already knew. Most of the time we were in the classroom, very little time putting out fires. I didn't get covered with soot or lose my facial hair. This only lasted three days. After that there wasn't much doing and I was able to get up on the hills by the base and take pictures of the ship. The Japanese people were friendly with all of us and the merchants and bar owners were delighted to have 3,700 Navy personal in town. This was 1955 and a lot of the women still wore the wooden clogs with the 3/4 inch strips under them and carried their little kids in a wrap around carrier. The general public had not westernized much. The socks in the stores all had stitching between the big toe and the next toe so they would fit the clogs. When you went shopping you brought your own cloth bag to hold your purchases.



DRONE

After being docked for two weeks we headed back out to sea. Not as much flying this time. We rendezvoused with another ship of the 7th fleet and transferred the Admiral - a lot less fussy after that. The ship did more practice with the ships guns with a small drone plane. The drone had a 12 foot wingspan and was driven by a small 2 cycle engine. It was launched from a portable launcher set up on the flight deck. The ships guns used a proximity shell and were to shoot a line of shells beside the plane. Then no more REAL planes. To land a drone they would kill the engine, a parachute popped out and lowered the drone to the water. A boat crew would retrieve it, bring it on board to be disassembled. After everything was dried out, put

back together and refueled and then it was off again. One time the propeller caught the edge of the parachute and tore a hole in it. It was supposed to be scrapped and I said, "I'll take it!". They kept a serial number and I kept the chute.

By the end of April we were back in Manilla to pick up more supplies. May is hot and humid in the Phillippines. We took on 55,000 lb. of frozen beef. Funny thing the enlisted men never got any beef steak. We got right out to sea and began flight operations. We had one small crash. One of the jets missed the cables and ran into the net barricade tearing it up some. Over the side it went. No major damage to the plane. One of our aircraft made the 65,000th landing on the ship. Another large sheet cake for the Flightdeck crew. Very good cake - usually chocolate.

EAR SAFETY

We did not have any ear protection when we were on the flight deck working with the aircraft. I did find out 65 years later that this had damaged my hearing. I did put together some hearing protection. I had a pair of army tank ear phones. These would fit into my ears and had a small metal band over the head. When I had my cap



on they didn't show very much. This was much better, but I had difficulty talking with people around me. I connected a sound powered microphone into the head phones which worked very well. All I had to do was to push the microphone switch and I could hear whoever was talking to me. Then I realized that if I built a small broad band tuned radio receiver into the case behind the microphone I could pick up the radio calls from our aircraft when they were returning to the ship. This gave us advanced notice to get ready for the landing. I didn't tell too many of the guys about

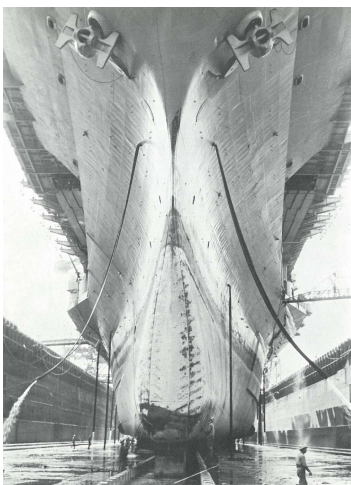
what I had, since an unauthorized radio on a navy ship would definitely be a NO NO.

FLOATING GAS STATION

Four destroyers came along side to be refueled. We would have to do this every few days. As we were not flying while we were refueling this gave time for the aircraft crews to clean up their planes. When the aircraft fly through a rainstorm the raindrops chip the paint off the leading edge of the wings on the jets. It also fuses up the edges of the heads of the rivets on the wings. The plane maintenance crew would have to sand these all down before the next flight. When we were back in the air flying again, we did a lot of day flying and a lot of night flying. This continued for about three weeks. We refueled avgas three times. While refueling one day a strong wind came up causing the tanker to pull slightly away from us. This pulled the 4 inch gasoline hose from the connection on our ship. The automatic shutoff valves closed quickly and only a little gas was spilled on our deck. We reconnected and finished the fueling.

One day one of our jets did not return. It crashed someplace in the China Sea. I didn't hear who it was or why it crashed. It may have been fire from the China Coast. All that was found was his helmet. We had an official burial at sea.

DRY DOCK



On May 21st we headed back to Yokosuka and into their dry dock. This was the only dry dock in that area large enough for the Midway. It had been built during World War II for the largest carrier Japan would ever have. It was destroyed before it ever got to sea. The dock was carved out of the side of a mountain. Large caves were cut into the sides of the mountain. These could contain fuel, munitions and work shops and was almost bombproof. The gates were closed at the end of the dry dock and the water pumped out. The Midway settled down on large wooden blocks.

The Japanese workers built bamboo scaffolding around the tower lashed together with shreds of rope. Then they cleaned and painted the tower. At lunch time some of them stood in the passage way at the end of the chow hall where we empty our trays. If there was anything good on there that we didn't want they would put it into their empty lunch pails. All this time we stayed on the ship. Fresh water, electricity and sewage were connected to the dock facilities . I think we didn't get our sea pay for that week. When standing on the dock with all the water gone the ship looked a lot bigger. By the end of the week the dry dock was filling up and we were returning to sea on the east side of Japan.

FAT MAN

We continued our night and day flights, not as many as night flights. One night, sometime before midnight, I was up on the flight deck. There was no moon and nothing going on so I could look at the stars. It was quiet and I was just sitting there. I still had my Crash Crew outfit on. All of a sudden up came the forward elevator with several red shirt ordinance personal and a large object on it. Obviously I got up to see what was going on and noticed that there were several armed Marines standing around also. I scooted back to the Crash Crew station and picked up a clip board and headed back to the elevator. This was an unusual activity because the warning horns that always sound when the elevator moves were turned off. After flight quarters that day a large plane that had landed, that was not ours was taxied up to beside the forward elevator. It had two prop engines and a jet engine in the tail, not something I had seen before. As I got closer I could see that the large orange object was FAT MAN. This was the type of Atomic Bomb that was



dropped on Nagasaki. LITTLE BOY is one of the Atomic Bombs dropped on HIROSHIMA to end World War II. The bomb, which I assume was a dummy, was moved over to the airplane and the crew was practicing on mounting it to the plane. As I was watching one of the armed Marines came over to me and wanted to know what I was doing up here. I pointed to my shirt that said Crash Crew and said that I was part of the Crash Crew and if anything went wrong I would need to be here. He looked at me and moved away. I casually walked away before he decided to check with whoever was in charge if I was supposed to be there. A few years later I found out that where ever Atomic weapons are Marine Detachments go with them. No one that I know ever said anything about it and the plane took off the next morning.

LATER THAT AUGUST

One night when the cruise ended and we were in Bremington, Washington the crane crew were told to unload three packages that were on the flight deck. These were containers on wheeled dollies about 6 ft. high and 10 foot long. They had red reflectors all over them. There were a couple of Marines on the deck with us and several armed guards around the trucks on the dock. We lowered the 3 containers onto the trucks which were then covered up and driven away. The officer in charge of the operation told us that you weren't here, and you saw nothing, go back to bed and don't talk about it. That pretty much confirmed what these were.

BACK TO SEA

The air group has to send one of their men every three months to galley duty, in other words, kitchen duty. The man that had the duty then comes back to the flightdeck. We made the change as we left Japan. He was one of the plane pushers (blue shirts). He had not had any deck experience for the last few months. While

hooking up the tow bar on an AD5 he stuck his head up just as the engine backfired. The prop made a ½ revolution and took out part of his brain. His body was kept on board in a freezer until he could be returned to the US. Crash Crew had the job of cleaning up the deck. We all knew it was a dangerous place to be but you learned to be careful and watch out for everything. This was the only nasty accident we had on the flight deck..

One of the pilots flying the F2H Banshees, I don't know which squadron it was, wore a white scarf. It was about 6 ft. long and he wrapped it around his neck and left a foot or so out the back. He was all set to take off, he got the OK to go, he hit his throttle and off he went. BUT the plane went strait into the water. I think the ship veered some and all we saw were the wing tip gas tanks float by. The pilot popped up seconds later and one of the helicopters lowered their pickup ring and lifted him out of the water. The helicopter brought him back to the ship. 45 minutes later he was up on the next flight. The pilot claimed it was a "bad cat shot". The catapult crew said the plane wasn't up to full power.

It was time to refuel - more gas and oil. At that time we were burning 145 octane avgas in the prop driven planes and in the jets. Normally the jets would burn JP4, but seeing that the prop planes couldn't burn JP4 we used avgas in everything. That way - NO mistakes! We were doing a lot of night flying. One night and AD5N was returning from a mission the Air Boss announced over the PA system that the plane making it's landing had hung ordnance. This was a 300 lb. depth charge for antisubmarine warfare. We all dove into the catwalk under the flightdeck and the plane caught the arresting cable and stopped. Then there was a loud thump, thump, thump, as it bounced up the deck. Then things were very quiet. Someone was going to call for the Crash Crew to come on deck but it was changed quickly to the

Ordnance Crew to get rid of it. They dumped it overboard and nothing happened. I hoped someone sent a warning to any submarines below us that we were dropping a depth charge overboard.

We had our 3,500th landing for this cruise. MORE CAKE!! We stopped flying and headed back to Japan. By the 13th of June we were back in Japan to replenish supplies for ships use. No ammo. We stayed in port for about two weeks to give longer shore leave and allow time for dignitaries and politicians to visit the ship. About mid-week we had another inspection with everybody on the flightdeck, probably just for show. We had a payday and I only took a little out. June 28th at 0800 the USS Midway shoved off for Hawaii. On the dock as we left there was a band and Dancers to wish us well. It would be over two years before Midway would return to Japan.

DECKEDGE ELEVATOR

Most of the time I was easy going. The underside of the elevator needed to be painted. This meant chipping off the loose old paint and applying fresh paint. To do this the elevator was raised to the flight deck level. The under side is constructed of large tubular structures protruding out 40 some feet and was 50 ft. above the ocean. We were traveling at about 25 miles an hour. Some of us from the Crash Crew were called in to help with this. The Chief in charge gave us chipping hammers. These are hammers that have both heads ground to a chisel point. This meant crawling out on the beams with a chipping hammer in one hand and holding on with the other hand. The Chief in charge gave me a hammer and told me to get out there and start chipping. There were no safety belts, no safety lines, no eye and face protection. If you slipped it was 50 ft. into the ocean and hoped they would stop the ship and send out a rescue boat to find you, **if the sharks didn't get you first!** I told the Chief that no way was I going out there without safety gear. I still had the chipping hammer in my hand. I guess I raised my hand with the hammer in it, as I gesture a lot with my

hands, and apparently the Chief was worried that I was going to put the hammer into his head. He quickly decided that I could work on the top side of the elevator. I heard later that he really was scared. I had no problems after that.

While we were in the South Pacific before getting to Hawaii, the weather was warmer and we did less night flying. Sometimes at night I would go up forward on the Flightdeck and lay in the wire mesh safety nets that were along the edge of the decks and look down at the bow wake 40 feet below. The jelly fish were near the surface at night and would glow greenish blue when the water was disturbed. On a dark and moonless night it was a wonderful sight to view. Kind of like the introduction seen on the TV show Star Trek Voyager.

There were no more flight operations and the flight deck crews were combined into one deck crew. We proceeded to get rid of any extra materials that we didn't use because we must have requested more than we needed. In the dark of the night a lot of deck paint patching materials and non usable "stuff" went over the side. Some of the aircraft did fly out to stay in Hawaii, the rest were cleaned up and were prepared to be unloaded in California. On 7/2/55 we crossed the International Date Line. At 1900 hours. This was Saturday evening. When we woke up it was Saturday morning again. We had most of the day off and most of Sunday off. The next week was generally paint up, fix up.

HAWAII

Tuesday, July 5th at 0730 we arrived at Pearl Harbor. I had liberty the next day and took an all day bus tour around the island. On the bus tour we visited a pineapple plantation where they cut off a fresh pineapple and chopped it up for us to eat. It was VERY sweet and



GOOD. We also went to the Punch Bowl Military Cemetery. At that time it was still new and the trees were just a few feet tall. You could see the city of Honolulu. The tallest building was only 7 stories high.

We drove by Waikiki Beach and the Pink Palace Hotel. We drove around the back side of the island to the mountain pass where you could see for miles. Everything was green. Thursday we loaded a couple of planes that would be taken to California. We did this in our white uniforms - no more flight gear. Friday at 1900 we left Hawaii headed for California. From Hawaii we made a speed run on our way to



Oakland Naval Station. We ran at top speed for two days and the whole ship shook. I think we got up to 38 knots. We pulled into Oakland on Saturday, 7/16/55. All the aircraft we had left on board were unloaded. Some of them were later flown to their home bases. With the ship empty of aircraft we had some open house days for civilians and we had another inspection. Drowdy paid on his bet and gave me my ten dollar bill. I had him sign it and I sent it to Dorothy.

GOOD BYE BOMBS

We left Oakland and sailed up to Seattle, went into the harbor to the Tacoma Ammunition Depot arriving on 7/25/55 at 0500. The ship's company was divided into 3 shifts for unloading what was left of our ammo. Each shift would work for about 8 Hours. We did this for 2 days. There were enough bombs, rockets and shells to fill a college gymnasium. This was what was left after we used so much of it around the China Sea. On the first night of unloading the fire alarm sounded. I was asleep till then. Our compartment was right over the hanger bay that was filled with 500 lb. bombs. The Crash Crew put on pants and shoes, grabbed some fire equipment and dashed down the ladder way to the hanger deck. The problem turned out to be an overloaded switch on the bulk head. It was turned off and everything was OK. We could go back to sleep?? GOOD LUCK WITH THAT!

When we were done with the unloading we headed back down the harbor and past the Bremerton Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. We made a stop at downtown Seattle for the Sea Fair. This was the first time the Captain had docked broadside without the aid of the aircraft. We did have one tug assisting us but it didn't have enough power to slow us down as we approached the dock. We came up against the dock and moved the dock over a few feet. We had a ceremony on the flightdeck where the Mayor of Seattle made Captain Hogle an honorary member of the local native American Tribe. We stayed a couple of days then went back up the harbor to the ship yards. This is where the ship would stay for the next two years while it was being rebuilt.

Now that the squadrons were gone I had access to the ready room next to our compartment. I had this all to myself and was a great place for writing letters and studying for my AT3 exam. My division officer owed me a favor. He was the one who

forgot to log me in after I came in late from Christmas leave. It was time to order the advancement in rate tests. I went to see him and told him that I wanted an Aviation Electronic Technician 3rd Class Petty Officer test. He said that the job of Crash Crew was a boatswain's mate rate and that would be the appropriate one for me. I told him "you order the AT3 test and I would do the rest". He did and I felt we were even. The lighting in the ready room was very good and I used the white overhead lights, not the red ones. About the 2nd week in August I took the AT3 test. It was not as hard as I thought it would be. Some of the test was about electronics and some about Navy Regulations. I would find out in November if I passed. Several of the air group were being transferred to other ships but I was staying on the Midway. The Forrestal was just starting it's shakedown cruise and needed more sailors. Drowdy shipped over for another year and got to go back to Japan which is where he wanted to go. I was told my orders would probably come in September. I saw lots of movies now that the hanger deck was always open. I was also able to take a ferry to downtown Seattle and had access to the base at the shipyards.

The mail came quicker while we were stateside. I got a letter from Mom that she just got her 1955 Ford Fairlane. It had been painted specially for the Detroit Motor Show. It was pink, white and black. She had seen it when she was doing some of the flowers for the exhibit. She really liked it and Dad contacted the local Ford dealer, who he had bought many cars from, to get it for her.

SHUT DOWN

Now that we were in Bremington, WA, Midway was shutting down. The ship's company was being reassigned to other ships. Most of us that were Airman would be sent to air stations. I signed up on a list and picked out stations I wanted to go to. When the time came to assign us they simply went by alphabetical order. I don't think

they even looked at the list. As many of the crew had left our compartment I moved up to top rack. It was next to Mike Clark. This way we could both share his radio. The shipyard was taking off the armor plating that was around the waterline of the ship. These plates were 10 ft. wide, 20 ft. high and 8" thick. To do this a crane on a barge hooked on to the outside of the armor plate, Then inside the ship the bolts that were put through the 1½ inch skin of the ship were burned off with torches. I got fire watch several times to stand by down in the ship when they were cutting the bolts loose. The next week we had another inspection but I had a food loading work party and had to miss it. As part of the ships crew was still on board we had to take on food and some supplies. Our power, water, steam and sewage were connected to the dock. Not much to do now. We would still check the fire equipment and stand fire watches for the construction crew. Some nights we would get to see TWO movies. I shipped home a sea chest full of goodies I had collected during the cruise. Fun things for later.

On 9/08/55 my transfer orders came in. I was being sent to **San Diego, California!!!**. I would be attached to VC-11. This was an Airborne Early Warning Squadron. We had one like this on the cruise. It was VC - 12 with AD4Ws.

ON LEAVE

On 9/09/55 I flew to Detroit and was home on leave. Did not have a report into San Diego until October 15th. After I got home Dorothy took the train from Albion College to Detroit. Dad and I drove to the Detroit train station and picked her up. She had to notify the college when she would be gone from the campus and the address of where she was going to be. The college also sent a copy to her parents. She stayed at our house for the weekend. Monday morning I borrowed Mother's pink, white and black Ford and took Dorothy back to Albion and her classes. I was able to get there several times during my leave. Many of Dorothy's friends got to recognize

the car and would let her know when I was coming into town. I would try to be at Albion on weekends when I could. Weekends were when home football games would be played. Dorothy played the Clarinet in the band and I would sit with her in the stands except when she was playing. I never did watch any of the games when I was attending the college. Dorothy was still a house mother for several of the freshmen girls. When I was at home I don't remember seeing any of my high school friends, they were all at college or at jobs or had moved away and 9/11/55 would be my last birthday at home. Because of Dorothy's job as House Mother she couldn't leave the college very often. That part of Michigan is very nice at that time of year, we had time to drive around the area and see the color change in the trees. I had to fly out of Detroit early Saturday morning 10/15/55.

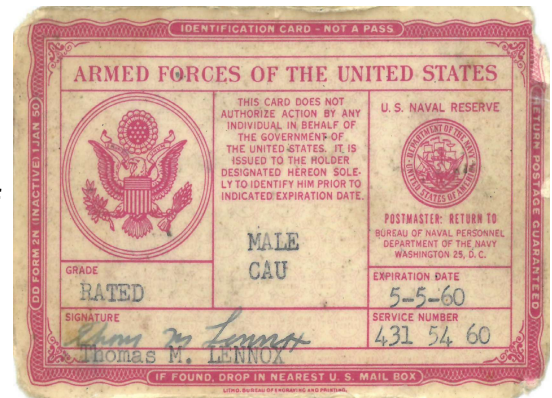
SAN DIEGO



Saturday morning 0900 on 9/15/55 I arrived at San Diego North Island Navy Base. It was on a peninsula that formed San Diego Bay. Most of the bay was the Naval Ship Yards and supply stores. The Navy Base was at the end of the peninsula with the ocean on one side and the bay on the other. There were several docks on the bay side for Aircraft Carriers to tie up. This base was a major airfield for the Pacific fleet. About 12 other personal from the flight deck were also assigned to this base.

NORTH ISLAND

I was put into a temporary barracks for a few days. I was issued a new I.D. card instead of the international one. I had to take the base drivers training class as I would be driving the power unit that would be used when servicing the aircraft. The chow was pretty good - lots of choices.- more than on the ship. For now I kept my gear in my seabag until I was assigned a barracks and locker. I went to the base movie theater and it only cost 10 cents. It was a real theater with a large, full size movie screen with a full stage behind it. There were several rows of teasers lights and curtains. Most of the places I would be going to were within walking distance. There was a bus system that went to many places on the base, many of them stopping at the chow hall or the main gate. The busses were wooden semi - trailers with benches along the insides. One of the movies I saw "Three Coins In A Fountain". By the end of the week I was directed to check in to the VC11 hanger. It was the last building on the main road through the base. Masters from the arresting gear crew and I had both been sent to VC11. He wanted to be put into the supply department, which he got. The supply department can be a good deal if you plan to stay in for a few years.



VC11

VC11 was a Early Warning Radar squadron. These were the same AD5Ws that were on the Midway, just a different squadron. VC11 did go out on the Midway several years later. I was familiar with that type of aircraft as I had worked on AD1Qs at Grosse Ile. I got into the electronics



shop which was right next to the supply office. The electronics group was the largest unit in the squadron, with about 3/4 radar techs. The other 1/4 were radio communications, navigation and friend or foe techs. My AT3 rating would not come through till November. Most of the guys in the squadron were all in the same barracks but a few of them lived off base and came into work in the morning and went home at night unless they had the duty that night. I now had my own top rack and locker. The barracks were right near the chow hall. That was good for us as we would get breakfast about 0630, then ride the bus about 1/2 mile to the hanger for 0745 muster. The radio shop also had a small control tower on the roof of the hanger. This was so we could talk directly to our aircraft and keep them connected to another radar station. The radar shop was right next to us with a doorway in between, not much reason to go in there. Lots of Chiefs and Officers.



Our planes would go out about 200 miles and sweep with their radar another 200 miles. This would show anything happening out there. Our radar could

pick up a periscope two foot out of the water from twenty miles away. All this information would be sent back to a station in San Diego. It was located out on the end of Point Loma which sticks out into the ocean. I would communicate with them on the radio, their call was Ruthless Ruth. The end of this first week I had the night watch on our planes, 1200-0400. I was still an AN, therefore I would be out on the tarmac with the planes. There were three of us on duty. We would carry a wooden nightstick for a weapon. November and December in San Diego there are a lot of foggy nights. At night you need to wear a coat. About a week later I had the night watch again. This time from 0400-0800 and was inside of the hanger most of the time. This early watch qualified me to get late breakfast in the chow hall and come in to work later.

TOWER DUTY

The weather was nice most of the days now so we did a lot of flying. I spent a lot of the day up in the tower that we had on the roof of the hanger. When our aircraft took off they would report their time and the plane's ID. This was a good job. They



would be gone for about 2 hours. There would be 2 or 3 flights like this a day. When they entered the controlled space of the base they would radio in their time and ID. I was told that the pilots liked my voice as it was clear and they could easily understand it. When it was lunchtime someone else in the shop would relieve me so that I could go to the chow hall.

I had plans to rebuild our tower radio station. Mostly I moved things around to make it more efficient. I moved the power units outside as they were very noisy. I was there more than anybody else. This was a lot better place to be than in the shop fixing radios or cleaning up. There was no one else up there with me and it got quiet and pleasant while the planes were gone for two hours.

A RAY OF SUNSHINE

I was in the hanger working on one of our aircraft that was having problems with the ARC 27 radios. These are located inside the first section of the wing. To get to them you have to stand up inside the landing gear wheel well. I had the battery on to check the power connectors on the radios. While standing there I could feel a nice warm beam of sunshine on my side. All of a sudden I realized that I was inside the hanger and there are no windows that let any sunlight come in. I lowered my head out of the wheel well and there was the APS 22 E Antenna pointing directly at me. I got out of there very quickly. That radar unit puts out a pulsed beam of 1.5 megawatts. This was what heated my side up, not a good thing to have happen. One of the radar

technicians had turned on the radar unit to check something. I reminded him that you never turn the radar without first checking that there are no personnel around and you have placed the radar absorbing panels in front of the antenna. I told him I would come back when he was done.

The USS ORSKINEY CARRIER that some of the Midway crew were on was still in port next to our flight area. A couple of us were going aboard and see some of them but they had all gone ashore earlier. That night I went to the movie and saw "Lady and the Tramp". For the next 3 weeks I was sent to the school on the ARC-27 transceiver. This was our main radio for our aircraft. Each plane contained two of these. I did not have to check in at the shop at all. I would go directly to the school. It was not far from the chow hall which made it less busy when we had lunch. I did very well with this equipment and could fix any of the faults that the instructor would put into the radio. While I was in school my AT3 petty Officer rate came through. Now that I was a 3rd Class PO my watches would be the POW, Petty Officer of the Watch. This meant that I would stay inside the hanger and just go out and check the other watches once an hour. I carried a 45 cal. Semi-Automatic side arm. when I and one of the other POS got the watch we would take the clip of bullets out of the gun and put them back in when our watch was over. There was no reason to have a loaded gun for this watch. The squadron next to us had their watches carry rifles. These were kids between 17 and 19 year olds out in the dark and fog where they can't see anything. That scared US.

DOWNTOWN

I heard that Mike Clark got into an electronics unit at El Centro Air Base. He was still an AN. Masters had gotten some time off and went to North Carolina to pick

up his car and drive it back to the base. It was December and the daytime weather was very nice. It was Friday and I was out of the school and back in the shop. I was starting to feel at home here. I had time to do some of my own projects. I was going into San Diego at times to do my Christmas Shopping. There was a ferry boat that would run from just outside the main gate across the bay



Broadway

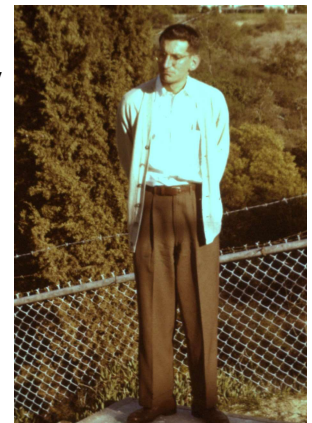
to downtown. This was very popular and did not

cost much. The other way to downtown would be to drive several miles out along the strip connecting North Island to the mainland and back along the bay to downtown. As long as I was downtown I had dinner

there. The area around the ferry dock was filled with

small shops, food stores, drug stores, tattoo parlors and good Pizza Restaurants. The large department stores were a few blocks up into town. The area near the docks would be filled with sailors some nights.

Several of us would go into town after work to have Pizza. Shabat, one of the guys in the shop was a First Class PO, and was very smart. He had been in for over 8 years. We had about the same way of life. We would go to town to an Italian Restaurant and would order a medium pizza for each of us. Then, when we were half way done we would order another pizza and split it. All of this with a cold glass of milk. Masters came back from leave with his 1951 Ford. Now we had some transportation. I had some leave coming and would take it from 12/22 to 1/03, **12 days**.



CHRISTMAS WITH DOROTHY

We had another inspection on Friday, just personal, not the shop equipment.



I took some time to do some more Christmas shopping as the downtown stores were all decorated up. I got my plane ticket to Detroit for the 22nd. On the 21st the airport was fogged in - no flights out until noon. I was getting worried about the next morning - I only had 12 days. The next day the weather was clear and the plane was out on time. I got into Detroit at 2112. It was Thursday night and I was home. We had a fair

amount of snow on the ground. I think I called Dorothy at college, Christmas break had just started and she would be taking the train to Buffalo. She got off in Detroit and we brought her to our house for a while, then took her back to the train station. This way we each got to have Christmas with our families that year. I had to fly out early on 1/02/56 to be sure to check in Sunday before 1600 hours.

Several of the guys in the shop thought that I had probably gotten married when on leave. SORRY, not this time. When I got back to the base everything was fogged in for two mornings. We did not get any flights off till noon. I got a locker in the building that's outside of the main gate. That way I could wear a uniform out the gate and change into civilian clothing when I went into town. Then I would change back into the uniform to get onto the base. Enlisted personal had to be in uniform to go through the gate. Officers and Chiefs could dress as they liked.



I had the dorm watch again. This was not too bad. All I had to do was check for fires. Smoking was allowed in the building. I also made sure the lights were out on time and all was quiet at night. In the morning the watch PO would turn on the lights at reveille at 0630.

TOP SECRET WORK

There was a major electronic repair facility in a building just up the street from our hanger. They had a large dumpster behind their building next to the tarmac where they dumped the stuff they didn't fix. About once a week I would take the starting



vehicle and drive by the dumpster to check it out for any goodies. One time I saw a 6 Inch square TV type tube. It had a three inch dia plug on it with about a dozen pins in it. Shobot and I were very interested in what it was used for.

We could tell from the part numbers that it was part of an airborne fire control radar. The electrics repair center would have the schematic telling what it was used for. At that time both of us had a top secret clearance because we worked on classified equipment. We went to the repair building and asked to see the schematics on the radar unit that matched the part number on the tube. The person in charge decided to call our squadron office to get an OK. Naturally the officer at our squadron confirmed that we had clearance. Nobody mentioned the piece of equipment that we were asking about. This was not anything our squadron had anything to do with. We got the information on exactly what it was and how it worked. It would give the pilot a ground view, target image and speed and direction of the target - all on the one screen at the same time. No digital electronic displays then. I still have the tube. It's a great display piece!

FIVE MONTH CRUISE ?



Saucher had me over for dinner at his house one night. He was living just off the base with his wife and two year old son. He was a Second Class AT and had been in 4 to 6 years. Things were going pretty well now even though I didn't want to be here but it was better than being at sea. It seems that our squadron was sending some of our planes out on a 5 month cruise. They need another radio repair technician and asked me to go. I said NO - I was going to be getting out before their return date and had been at sea for 10 months not that long ago. I was told that they would look around for another person, maybe a volunteer. From 1 /30 - to 2/10. I would be in another electronic school. This was on the IFF unit. This is a lunch box size radio/radar that sends out a coded signal to the scanning radar. If the code is correct you are OK (Friend). If the code is (Foe) - Now you are in trouble!! This equipment had a Top Secret clearance. Training on this equipment was required by the person going out to sea. This school was for two weeks. I would not have to stand any watches and didn't have to go to the shop at all except to pick up my mail. I became quite good at repairing this unit. On the last day of class we had a test covering what we had learned. There must have been about 30 or so questions. Somehow I got all but one question wrong. The instructor knew that I knew the correct answers in order to pick out the wrong ones. Nothing else he could do but say that I wasn't qualified to work on that equipment. Therefore I wouldn't be the one to send out on the cruise. Someone else did volunteer to go. We had 19 more people join our squadron this week. Most of them are AA or AN. I found out that when I came in to the squadron I was the highest educated enlisted man that had come in that year. My division officer said that I could be recommended for Officers Candidate School. They would pay for my college and graduate as an Ensign. I asked what then

and was told that I would get about 3 years of sea duty and then transferred to a Naval Base. I said No Thank You!

TIJUANA

On the 8th of February I was just about to get out of my bunk when it started to shake. I looked down to see who was kicking the bed. There was no one there. It was an earthquake and this was my first time having felt one. It was no big deal as people who lived in San Diego were used to them. One time when I was down at the shop one occurred and you could see the waves move along the cement runway. On Saturdays we



had more free time. It was interesting to go down to Tijuana, Mexico. There were several busses running from downtown to downtown Tijuana. They would stop at the boarder and you would have to show your identity. Our military ID cards did fine. The cost of the bus fare was not too bad. This was a lot better than driving down in a car. You would have had special insurance and if anything did happen you would be in a Mexican Court. We did not want to be there after sunset so we caught the late afternoon bus back to San Diego. The main rule was don't eat the food and don't drink the water. This is a tourist town for sailors and people coming in from the US. Lots of food courts and stands on both sides of the main street. The shops had all kinds of Mexican things, lots of leather goods, carved stone and wood crafts. Some of the articles were really good deals - but some were junk. There were lots of bars and plenty of restaurants. They had a bull fight ring right near the center of town. This was not only used for bull fights but also for other games. There was always some question about the ethics of the Police Department.

JAIL BATE

The San Diego Shore Patrol would come down Monday morning and pick up the sailors, after they paid there fines from the jail. There was talk then because of the large number of military personal in that area that the boarder might be closed. Obviously, due to politics and money this never happened. One time some of the guys from our squadron drove down to Tijuana and spent some time in the bars and realized it was getting dark so they got in the car and headed out of town. As they were going they saw a young girl beside the street waving them down and they stopped. She said that she just lived two blocks up the street but that neighborhood that she would have to walk through was dangerous, especially at this time in the evening. She asked if they could drive her past that neighborhood and drop her off at the traffic light. She got in and they drove on ahead. After going one block a Police Car with flashing lights pulled them over. One of the police officers accused them of picking up an under age girl for sex. Then the girl all of a sudden couldn't speak any English but indicated that she was only 16 years old. The Police Officer told the guys that instead of going to jail he would give them a warning if they could come up with enough money as a penalty. They gave him all the cash they had and started to drive away. When they came to the stop light ahead they looked back behind them and saw the girl getting back out of the police car and standing along the road in the same spot that they picked her up at and the Police Car parked down the street waiting for their next victim. As years went on this situation did improve.

TWO DAY CRUSE

The USS Wasp wanted our squadron to come aboard their ship for some exercises. This time I could not get out of going. This was going to be from 2/20 to 2/25 - just five days. We got all of our equipment ready and the ship, for some reason, did not leave until the 23rd so we went out for a two day cruise and back by

2000 Friday night. That weekend we moved our belongings into a refurbished dorm that was right next door to the old one. It had been painted and cleaned up and was only for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class Petty Officers. As there would be no AAs or ANs. This would mean less noise and disturbance in our dorm. There was more extra room in this dorm so we got our picks of bunks and lockers. I got a top bunk with nobody below. I found a sheet of plywood, same size as my bunk and placed it under the mattress. This made the bunk feel much better.

SONOBUOY

March was getting closer and the weather was getting even nicer. I spent some more time looking around for rings at some of the better stores. There were a few interesting ones but nothing yet that I wanted. Shabot was leaving soon to work for IBM. I guess he thought he had enough time in the Navy. Another inspection coming up for the personal only, not the shops. This time it would be done by our officers. I was getting a good collection of parts from the damaged sonobuoys. These devices are cylinders about 5 in diameter and 3 ft. long. They have bright green dye in glass containers at the bottom of the units. There is a transmitter in the top and there are water activated batteries and a microphone in the bottom. When these are dropped from an airplane hitting the water breaks the dye containers forming a large green spot in the ocean. The microphone drops out on it's 40 ft. cord and listens for submarine sounds. The water activated batteries, turned on the transmitter and the radar beacon. All of this information was then received by our aircraft allowing us to track the submarines. After a certain length of time a plug would dissolve and the unit would sink into the ocean. Sometimes while loading them on the aircraft one would drop onto the ground breaking the dye bottles. Nobody wanted it then. It was supposed to be thrown in the trash. That's when I got a hold of them. The squadron that handled them was right across the road from us. I still have some of the

microphones and dye containers. Nobody seemed to mind that I picked them up but, of course, this was just for educational information.

We all got ready for another inspection, fresh hair cuts, pressed blue uniforms, very white hats, and highly polished shoes. After the inspection we went back to our barracks and changed into our work clothes. I had been able to modify one of our navigation radios so that it would pick up the local FM background music station in San Diego. I could have this on for me at night when I stayed in the shop, which might be 2000 and 2300 hours. This was a good place for me to write letters, study my electronic magazines and work on **my** projects.

THE RING GAME

I still had a lot of time before I needed Dorothy's engagement ring. I checked out the base exchange. All they had was mixed small stones with large settings. I wanted a single stone and a small setting. I checked one of the better stores in town. Their rings were about the same as the ones at the Navy exchange, but just more expensive. San Diego also had a Fed-mart store, same type of thing as Sam's but only for federal employees. The rings they had were about the same as the ones in the jewelry store, but much cheaper. I went back to the Navy Exchange and asked the clerk at the jewelry counter if they were going to get anything like I described very soon. She explained that the orders they had in were for replacements of the ones they had in the store, nothing of any new style. But she told me that on Tuesdays at 1430 the jewelry salesman would be in to see her about any new orders. He would come up to the counter and he would be carrying a black briefcase and I should ask him what he could do for me. The next Tuesday I took some time off after lunch and went back to the Navy Exchange. About 1430 the salesman showed up and I stayed around until he was done talking to the person at the counter. I stopped him and told

him my story. He said to follow him out to his car where he could show me some samples. I looked over what he had and noticed some rings that were very close to what I wanted. I explained what had to be different and he said he could have something made up for me. It would be about \$180.00. This was better than anything else I had found and a much better price. He instructed me to meet him at the Exchange next week. The next Tuesday it was time to check on Dorothy's ring. I went over to the Navy exchange and waited for the ring salesman. After he was done at the counter I followed him out to his car and he showed the ring he had. It was what I had wanted. I had money in my pocket so I paid him in cash, and I don't think there was any tax.

FINALLY! A RING ON HER FINGER

I was able to get airline tickets to Detroit on 3/29/56 and back to San Diego on 4/06/56. The plane for Detroit took off at 0930 on Thursday morning. I can't remember if I had to stop in Chicago on the way. We got into Detroit that afternoon. Dad picked me up and we went home. That Saturday I drove Mother's car to Albion and I got there about 3.00 in the afternoon. I believe that I gave Dorothy her Ring at 4:30. That evening Dorothy and I, along with Lynn Lewis and Don Henderson went to Marshall about 12 miles away for dinner at Schuler's Steak House. I ate too much of the pickled Herring and Swedish Meat Balls for the appetizers. They didn't all stay down. We still had sometime at Albion together. Dorothy was now living in Susanna Wesley Hall, where all the girls had now been moved. She was on the first floor and she was at the back taking care of the one group of the girls. This was a large 3 story building a few blocks from the main campus. She wanted to show me her room. We entered the front door into the reception room and met the dorm director. Dorothy explained that I had to leave to go back to the Navy and would like to see her room.

The lady was NOT too happy with this. The first thing she did was to turn on the



alarm horns, this meant there was a man in the building. She took Dorothy and me to Dorothy's room and stood next to me. My foot was not to cross the doorway.



I could just look in. After 2 or 3 minutes she escorted us back to the main room. FORT KNOX SHOULD BE THIS SECURE!!!

I probably stayed at Don Henderson's house overnight and returned home Monday when Dorothy went back to classes. I spent some of my time at home and went to visit Dorothy again. I had to fly out Friday morning so I only stayed at Albion until Thursday morning.

BROKEN ALTIMETER

Another inspection on Friday the 13th. Just personal in whites. We were out on the tarmac in front of our hanger. The weather was nice and it was in the morning. The sun was to our back. It didn't take very long and we changed into our work clothes. I was sent to another school, this time on the APN 22 Radar Altimeter. This shouldn't be very difficult since I was already working with this equipment. Another two weeks without having duties and, as I mentioned earlier, the school was close to the chow hall and our barracks.

Shortly after finishing this school, which I had done very well in, we had a problem with an APN 22. One of our aircraft had a complaint from it's pilot that the radar altimeter was not working. One of the guys from the shop was sent to check it out. He returned and informed us that he had checked the calibration and that the

unit was working OK, This was not unusual as sometimes the pilots would forget to check the circuit breaker on the equipment to be sure it was on and just say it was not working. The next day the plane went out on patrol with a different pilot. When he returned he gave the shop the same complaint - Radar Altimeter not working. This time we changed the control box and the antenna, which we didn't have to do very often. Now there was new equipment in the plane and one of our senior technicians inspected the unit. It again was working well and was adjusted for the correct altitude. The next day the pilots report was Radio Altimeter not working. Somebody talked to the pilot and was told that before taking off the altimeter was giving the correct information. It usually read about 5 or 6 feet when the aircraft on the ground as this was the height from the altimeter in the tail to the ground, but after he took off he checked it again and it was not working correctly. As I had just gotten out of the APN 22 school I was assigned to find out what was going on. One of the techs who had flight skins went up on the next flight with that last pilot and observed it shut off just as they left the runway. Again both pieces of the equipment were exchanged for units that had just been bench tested in the shop. The controls were getting power as all the breakers were on. I started checking the connectors for the various cables that were plugged into the controls. All OK. I removed the antenna head from the plane's tail and all the connectors were OK also. There are cables running from the cockpit to the tail. These are about 22 feet long and bundled together. I wiggled and pulled the wires and looked for cracked insulation or broken wires. I found none. I noticed that it was not just one long cable. There was a plug and connector where the wires went through a bulkhead in the tail of the aircraft. This AD 5 W has a compartment behind the pilot and the observer where the adjustment controls and secondary screen is. A technician can ride in there and make adjustments to the radar. Entrance to that compartment is through a small door on the port side of the plane. A few feet behind that technician's seat is the panel separating the tail from the rest of the

aircraft. All the mechanical cables that control the rudder and tail services go through holes in the panel along with other electrical wires without any disconnects in them. The altimeter cables were the only ones that had a connector on them. I had to crawl back into that space behind the techs seat with a flashlight and some test equipment brushing up against the metal control cables that were covered with black grease. GREAT FOR THE WORK CLOTHES. It was dark and hot back there and I disassembled the plug side of connectors and took some resistance readings. I found saltwater corrosion inside the plug. When the plug was originally put together a rubber sealant was put into the plug and closed up. Over time with the heat from sitting out on the tarmac all day and being out at sea with saltwater spray on them, the sealant had shrunk allowing salt spray to get in. When the plane was resting on the ground everything was Ok and there was good contact in the plug. When the plane took off the tail of the aircraft dropped as it was not on the ground anymore - just a little bit. This caused the plug to pull open slightly, losing it's electrical connection on the corroded part of the pins. When the plane landed the plug was pushed back together. I removed the old sealant, cleaned the contacts, resealed the connector. I had found the problem and fixed it. After I was done the Chief of the shop wanted me to check out all the rest of our planes for corrosion in the connector. Sometimes it doesn't pay to be smart. THAT'S THE NAVY WAY!!!!

I started looking for apartments around the base. If I could get something in Coronado that would be close enough to walk to the base. I wouldn't need to have a car on base. One of the guys in the radar shop lived in Coronado and said he would look around. Most of the units that I saw were VERY expensive - way out of my class and I only wanted it for 3 to 4 months.

Dorothy and I were planning our wedding schedule. It would be in Buffalo, New York, maybe in the late later summer or early fall. The parachute I got from the drone on the ship was made from many small triangles of material. This made it difficult to

use for making a wedding dress. Saved it for Halloween costumes. I requested collage catalogs from some of the technical schools in Michigan and Ohio to see what was available and what the requirements would be. I was assuming that the Navy would pay some of the costs. Saucear was also looking into schools for when he got out. It was the end of April and we should be having some very nice weather, but it had been rainy and cloudy a lot of the time. We had not been flying very much and were catching up on the maintenance and work around the shop. As the weather improved we got back to normal flight schedules - some day flight and some night flights.

BALBOA PARK

With the improved weather it was nice for walking around San Diego. Back in 1915 the Pan American Exposition was in San Diego. It was set up just north of downtown covering many acres. This was a major international event. They constructed many buildings in a



Spanish Style with lots of fancy trimming and roof spires. Many of the fanciest and largest buildings have been fixed up and rebuilt. It now contains many different museums, a replica of the British Globe Theatre, many flower gardens and a lot of



open green areas. There is a large outdoor organ built into a band shell. There are concerts on the weekends - **all open to the public**. The whole complex is known as Balboa Park. With the nice weather they have there some of the homeless sleep on the grass. Next to the park they also built a Zoo that has grown considerably.

It is now a world renowned - Zoo. Some Saturdays or Sundays I would take the ferry across to downtown and walk up 2 ½ miles to the park. This would be an all day

event. I would then walk back to downtown, stopping to get something to eat before taking the ferry back to the base.

NEW SHOES

I did a lot of walking and needed some comfortable shoes. The only shoes I had were US Navy black, leather soled, regulation shoes. Since we had to wear these Navy shoes to get through the gate, these were not good for walking. I went to the Navy Store and bought a brand new pair of black dress shoes for \$5.00. I took these with me on my next trip to downtown and stopped off at a shoe repair shop. I had them put on a soft rubber heel and soles - MUCH better for walking!! - but not regulation. When you went off of the base the Marine Guard would check everybody to make sure your uniform was regulation. The guard saw my shoes and questioned if those shoes were correct. I explained they are made this way because I have to walk onto the wings of the aircraft and the special soles on these shoes won't scratch the surface of the wings. No problem after that. (I did have these shoes until 2006 when the rubber started cracking.)

BACK TO THE SHOP

Saucier was building a stereo Hi Fi amplifier and was having me help him from time to time. One day he invited me over for dinner to help him with the amplifier. Smith, the Second Class PO, was leaving. He had been in for 8 years and knew quite a bit about electronics. I don't know what he was going to do for a job. It was the end of May and things were warming up, but not as hot as the rest of southern California. The nights were cool enough that you might wear a light jacket. Another inspection was coming up on the 8th of June. This time it was a shop inspection. The inspecting officer would check that everything was clean and all the paperwork on our repairs was correct. They would check to see if a number of repair parts and spare units

were what we were supposed to have. NOT ANY MORE and NOT ANY LESS. Anything extra that we had acquired had to be hidden before they arrived. We relocated our extras into the lockers in our barracks. This worked out fine. The inspector wanted everything by the book. THEIR BOOK!

THE MISSING EARPHONES CAPER

Our squadron had two twin engine beach crafts. They held 8 passengers and were used to transport pilots and other personnel to other bases for training. Each seat had a set of earphones for communication with the pilot. These were nice with comfortable, soft ear cushions. They had very good sound quality. Every so often a pair would disappear and we would replace them from our stock in the shop. After a few months we had no more stock so that several of them were missing in each aircraft. No one seemed to know what had happened to them. The only persons to use them were the pilots or officers riding in the aircraft. In order to requisition new ones you turn in the old, broken ones. We HAD NO BROKEN ONES. The other method of getting new ones was to fill out a stolen materials report. This would then lead to an investigation by some department of the Navy. Our top brass would not have wanted this. That's the NAVY WAY. But then there was (and still is) the LENNOX WAY! Before this I happened to notice while checking out the dumpsters at the repair department a large box of damaged headsets, just like the ones we used. I brought the box back to the shop and that evening on my time I rebuilt about 10 sets of good headsets from all the junked one's. I also put together a few sets that weren't as good just to have around. I still have one of these. I then took what was left of the broken ones to the supply department, there were parts looking like about 6 headsets. I turned these into the supply officer along with a requisition for 6 new ones. Then they would send them to the repair department who would throw them back into the dumpster. **Everybody was happy now!**

I had been studying for my FCC Second Class Radiophone licence in the last few months. I went into downtown San Diego Federal Building and took the test. I passed and that licence qualified me to operate and repair commercial broadcast station equipment. I thought this would be a good thing to have on my reassume when I went looking for a job.

Saucer's wife and son left for her home to get some things to set up there for when he would get out of the Navy. He was to be discharged the end of June. One by one my friends was getting out of the Navy or being transferred. On June 26th Saucer packed up his stuff, got his discharge papers and flew home. Now we had only one First Class and two Third Class POs in the shop. Dorothy and I had decided to have our wedding on Saturday, the 25th of August of this year. This time would work out well for getting our Maid of Honor and Best Man there. Don Henderson, the Best Man, would be flying in from the end of a vacation his family was taking in Europe. I was able to arrange my leave from 8/20/56 - 8/31/56. I had a dentist appointment to get everything checked out, teeth not too bad. The chow hall put on a special dinner for the 4th of July. I can't remember exactly what the food was - just that it was better than normal. They had special decorations on the tables. And I got my blood test for the marriage licence. One more thing done.

OUR APARTMENT

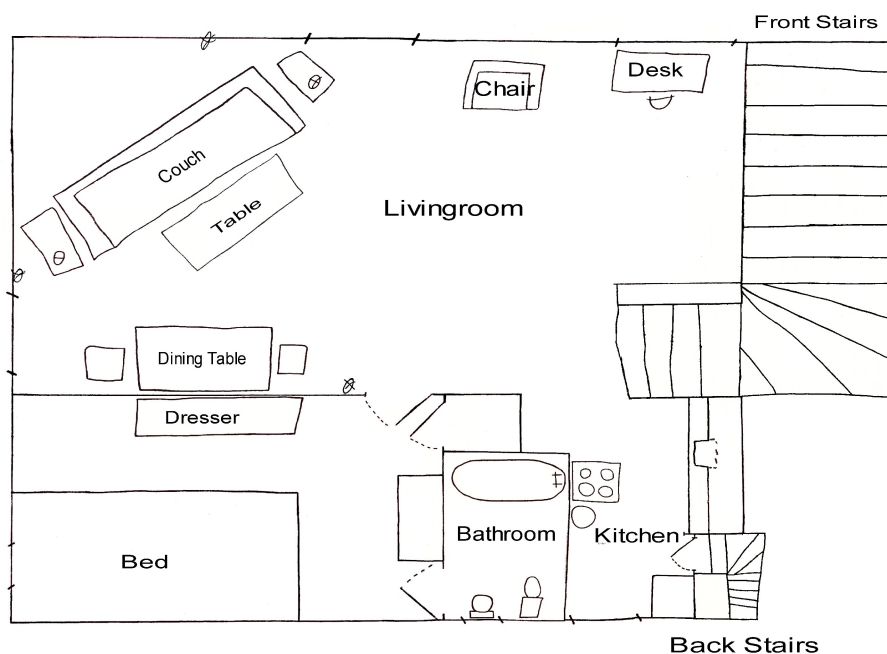


Someone mentioned to me that there was an apartment being worked on in Coronado just a few blocks from the base and near the ferry. I went and talked to the landlady who owned it. It was a second story, one bedroom and she was asking \$75 a month. I asked



her if she could hold it for me for about two weeks and I gave her a down payment. I checked back with her in about a week. She said she didn't think I really wanted it and rented it out to someone else, but the other apartment next to it had just been

fixed up and was being painted and I could have that one. Her son-in-law still needed another week to finish it off. She was going to charge more for that one - but she would keep it at \$75 per month. This was 180 Orange Ave, Unit #10.



BACK AT SEA

Another one of the aircraft carriers wanted our squadron to come on board for a one week cruise to do anti-submarine exercises. I was very good at tuning the ARC 27 transceivers that are in our aircraft and very well checked out on the APN 22 Altimeter. I knew I would not be able to get out of going to sea because this cruise would be along the California coast, not in foreign waters, I did not have to be qualified on the IFF equipment. I only remember several of us got on board at 0700 on 8/10/56 and would be back on the 17th. Most of our crew were from the radar shop. I don't remember what I did while on the ship, but we would have been down below decks where the squadron shops were. I was not up on the flight deck much. I don't believe that the ship was very far from the coast. I hoped, was my last cruise.

That Saturday we got word that one of the planes from our squadron back at San Diego had gone down. We did hear later that one of the enlisted men in our shop got a ride in the technician's seat on a flight up to Oregon just for the experience. The fuel strainer drain valve had not been safety wired and opened up while they were flying over northern California. Gasoline ran out on to the hot exhaust stacks, causing the plane to catch on fire. The pilot and co-pilot bailed out over the top of the plane. To get out from the technicians seat you had to go out the small door on the port side of the plane, in this case this was where the flames from the fuel and engine were burning. He had his helmet, flight suit and goggles on - but no gloves. They were all picked up but the one in the back was in the hospital for a while as his hands were badly burned. I can't remember if or when he came back to the squadron.

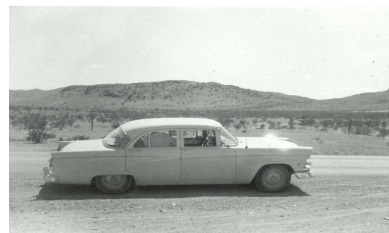
BACK ON BASE

On Monday, August 8th, I got the last letter from my fiancée. I had told her I would not be writing any more letters to any unmarried ladies after this. I was shortly going to be married and that would keep me very busy. Masters and I started putting my stuff into the apartment that weekend - 18 and 19 of August. I would be gone from there for about 12 days. Masters asked if he could stay there for next week and I said, "OK."

*In the days before he left Tom and I were trying to get our last things straightened out. Neither of us liked the idea of "Until Death Do Us Part" - we didn't ever want to be apart. We wanted to be **"FOR EVER"**. So I went to the minister to explain this to him. He wasn't very happy to do this but he said he would discuss it with upper supervisors. He was trying to get it approved but at that time it was unusual to change a ceremony. Fortunately he got 3 higher-ups to agree with him and we were very glad. { Dorothy }*

OFF TO OUR WEDDING

Tuesday the 21st I was on the plane to Detroit and stayed with my Mom and Dad for a few days. They gave us a Four Door Ford. It was a used car low mileage and the dealer had given it a complete check out. It was kind of a blueish-green-gray. Dad had purchased it from Gorno Brothers Ford Dealer In Trenton, Michigan. Dad had bought several company cars from them and probably got a very good price.



On Friday I drove to Buffalo and stayed with Dorothy's grandmother who lived next door. Saturday I arrived at the church sometime about 10.30 or 11.00 and Don



Henderson arrived about the same time. We were taken into the church and led down into the basement where there were classrooms that we could use to put on our tuxedos. Don and I were told to wait and when things were ready they would



come and get us. We didn't go up and really try to open the door but we think it was locked. We were there until the ceremony was to begin. We had left a tape recorder up by the alter. Someone there said they would set it up and record the wedding. This was not what we wanted to do but were not given any choice. Both Don and I had been doing the tape recordings for Albion College while we were there and we were experienced in doing this. Dorothy had already picked out the music with the organist that was to be played for the wedding. The recording did come out - you could hear the music - but the voice pickups were very weak. We didn't



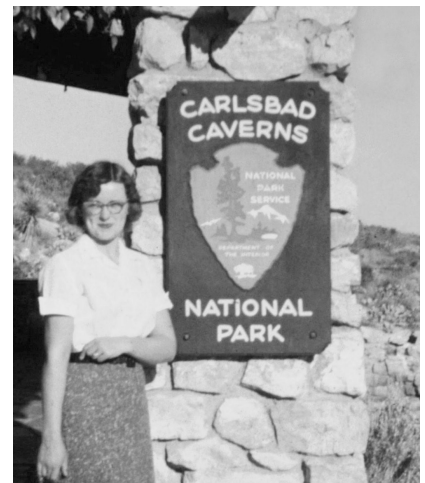
know this until sometime later when we listened to the tape. Don and I used the classroom in the basement to change back into our regular clothes since the Tuxes had to go back to a store in Buffalo.

As we had changed some of the wording in the ceremony the minister's hands were shaking more than mine. But the ceremony did go off fairly well. After that we went out the front doors of the church and around the side, while Dorothy's cousin was taking pictures. Then into the reception room. There was punch, nice small sandwiches, cookies, cake, nuts and

such - BUT NO ALCOHOL Pictures were taken on the stage of the wedding party.

No big long celebration - we wanted to get out of there. By 4:00 we had our clothes changed and said our good byes to everybody and were on our way to Erie, PA.

My sister, Billie Jean, had come to Buffalo on the plane with Mom and Dad. I think that she then flew out of Detroit to Minneapolis. Don continued on to Albion where he lived. Lynn Lewis, Dorothy's Maid of Honor lived in Evergreen Park, IL. Dorothy's parents and younger sister Sally lived in West Seneca just south of Buffalo. We had reservations at the starlight motel in Erie, PA for that night and then we headed on to San Diego. I don't remember too much about the drive except when we got to the Texas area it was so hot that we had to stop at 3:00pm and get into a motel. No air conditioning in the car!! We continued on into New Mexico and stopped at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. We took the cave tour and also got to see the bat cave... not much action - they were all asleep.



OUR LIFE IN CALIFORNIA

We arrived in San Diego at our apartment late Friday afternoon. I didn't have to check in until midnight on Saturday. I still had Sunday off, no watch. So began our life in California.

Monday morning we had things in order and I went off to work at the base and Dorothy commenced housekeeping. It was just a one bedroom unit - see the floor plan. There were other couples in the adjoining apartments and the walls were not very sound proof. There was a car dealership next door with an outdoor speaker for calling people in for their phone calls. Thank goodness they closed about dinner time.

GOOD TIMES IN SAN DIEGO

The weather was always nice. There are several beaches on North Island. The longest beach is on the sea side of the strand that connects North Island to the mainland. This was a nice beach. There were ocean waves coming in and a lot of just open sand. At that time it had not been commercially developed except for the military landing beaches. On the bay side of the Island there were many small boats parked, lots of them sail boats. Coronado had it's own beach up next to the Naval Base on the ocean side. This was more developed with tables and campfire rings. Between the edge of the road and the beach huge rocks had been stacked up. In the early evening we could sit in among them and keep warm. They had been heated up by the sun all day and would stay warm for several hours after sundown. We were there many times having a picnic and enjoying the seaside.

Dorothy had not heard the tape recording of the wedding and we finally got the tape out and listened to it. Dorothy was horrified to find that there were none of the material that she had selected to be played at the wedding - only the organist's own

selections. Dorothy had been downstairs on the other side of the church before making her entrance and could never hear any of the music. She never forgot it. **SHE WAS NOT HAPPY!!!!**

When we had been there a short while we decided to buy our first piece of furniture. We found a desk that we could use in our living room since there wasn't much furniture with the apartment. We found a place where there was furniture we liked, so we paid for it, picked it up and headed for home. BUT we found the street we were going on was just one way and we had to follow for several miles before we could find a way off and turn around.

San Diego has many activities, especially those for outdoors. There is Balboa Park, the Zoo, Old Town, and trips to Tijuana. The Podrays Baseball field was right downtown between the harbor and the Santa Fe railroad station. Just across Harbor drive and the Coronado ferry dock. On weekends the harbor may be filled with hundreds of sailboats. I still had to be on the base 5, and sometimes 6, days a week. I did have a few night watches but as I was living off base I did not have to stand any barracks watches. But most of the time I had weekends free and week days home by 5:00 pm.- just in time for dinner. The nice thing about living in Coronado was that everything was within walking distance of our apartment, There was a movie theater on the base and a small one in Coronado.

One day, a couple of weeks after arriving. Tom came in for supper and saw I was ironing his pajamas and other clothing. "Why are you doing that???" he said. "Because your Mom told me that these were the things I should take care of with washing and ironing for you." Tom said, "For heaven's sake, You don't need to do that. It's just a waste of

time.” So I was happy to take his advice. I did bring along my new Pfaff sewing machine. I had time now to make some gifts for Christmas.

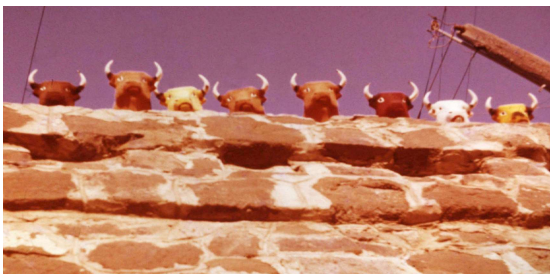
{ Dorothy }

Now when I returned to the shop I was able to tell everybody that I WAS married. I was beginning to feel like a short timer, just a couple of months to go. On weekends we had time to drive around town and sight see in Tijuana. The boarder was easy to cross. All we had to do was show them our ID and speak in English. Coming into the US they might check on what you have brought with you. Tijuana’s main street was



lined with small shops and bars, lots of trinkets and souvenirs. We picked up a 10 inch by 15 inch plaster Bull, which we still have. There were lots of silver, jewelry, Mexican style clothes and street food. We didn’t eat the food! On a side street you could look down into a yard where there was a large kettle - about two feet in diameter. Any time we went by there was something cooking in it and it was over a wood fire. When we would be walking around the town, someone would come up and ask us “Want to get married??” If you said NO, then they would say “Want a divorce??”

OLD TOWN



This was an area somewhat on the north side of San Diego. It’s called Old Town. It was about the same distance from downtown as was Balboa Park from downtown. This was the early beginnings of San Diego. Some of the buildings

were probably there when the land belonged to Mexico. Now there are many small shops, bars and very good restaurants. Many of the restaurants have large outdoor patios surrounded with floral gardens. This is a major tourist attraction. There is a lot of free parking and the San Diego to the Tijuana Bus stops there also.

MOVING OUT

I had to be released early enough so that I would be at the station that I was activated from when my active duty finished. This would be on October 26th, 1956. This gave us seven days to get from San Diego to NAS Grosse Ile. I didn't have to check in or anything. I was just automatically discharged. On the 17th of October I was released from my squadron VC 11. This gave us a day or so to pack up our things before the moving company came. Early morning on the 19th we got up and started to fix breakfast and put some bread in the toaster. Just then there was a knock on the door and there were the movers. They picked up everything of ours that was in the apartment including the toaster with the bread still in it. **Very efficient movers.** We didn't see anything they had packed up for almost 2 or 3 months. It was a good thing that we had packed a lot of our personal things in the suitcases that we were taking with us because a lot of our Christmas things had gone into the first part of the moving van and we found that we couldn't get to it until after the rest of the van was empty.

HEADED BACK EAST

We left San Diego on the 19th for Grosse Ile, Mich, via Minneapolis. This was the last time I wore my Navy uniforms, now all packed away forever. They seemed to have shrunk some since then. On our way east some of the motels in the southwest were more than we wanted to pay so we pulled off into a vacant rest area and slept in our car that night. We woke up on the morning and herd cattle around behind the car. This was apparently open range. We realized that trying to sleep two

people in a car filled with all of our stuff was not a good plan. We used motels after

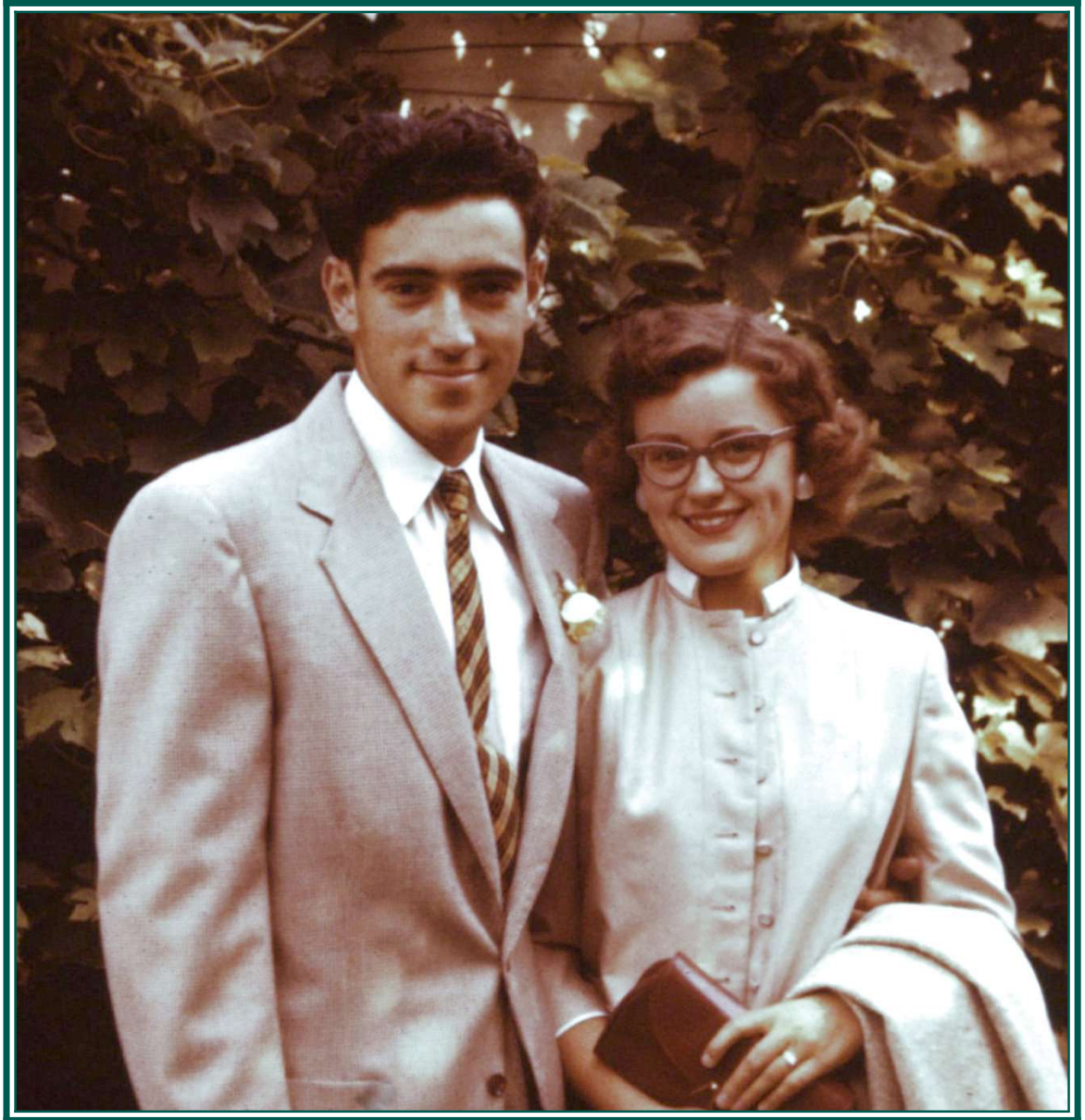


that. When we got up to my sister's house just south of Minneapolis. The leaves were falling from the trees. My sister said that "Today is Summer, the next day will be Fall and the day after that will be Winter." When we got up the next morning it was sunny out and we raked leaves and mounted her storm windows. The next morning when we got up there was 8 inches of snow on the ground and it

was very cold. She knew about Minnesota weather!! That afternoon we continued on towards Grosse Ile. This was more difficult than we had expected, not only was there 8 inches of snow on the ground but it had iced up also. This was the first big snow of the season and many of the neighbors were helping out each other to get their cars on the road. There were farmers who had large wheeled tractors pulling people out that had slid off the road. We got some tire chains and got them on the car. That helped a lot and by driving slowly and carefully we were able to get out of that area.



We stopped off at Grosse Ile, picked up my civilian clothes and other small items and spent some time with my parents, then proceeded to Cleveland, Ohio. We set up temporary residence at a motel on Euclid Ave. while we looked for an apartment and jobs....



This book is the last story I am telling of my many Adventures. Dorothy and I are married and have 5 kids. I have had some other adventures over the years, but these I will leave for our kids, grand kids or great grand kids to tell...

On 4/11/1992 the USS MIDWAY was decommissioned at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego, California.

After 47 years of service she was despatched to Bremerton Naval Shipyards in Washington State. The ship was in mothballs for several years. Then a group of volunteers worked for a long time to get it released to an organization called THE SAN DIEGO AIRCRAFT MUSEUM. Midway was finally towed into San Diego Harbor, and now rests in the old Navy Pier in downtown San Diego, near to the big cruise ships. Midway is maintained by a large number of dedicated volunteers. In the last few years she has been getting 1,000,000 visitors a year. To any Sailor who served aboard the Midway the odor when you come on board smells like HOME!

Midway Magic is still there!

