

Full Power Run

Dick Remington, 1948-53/MMI

Perhaps my most memorable experience during my years aboard Midway (1948-1953) was on our return to Norfolk from Gibraltar (I don't recall which Mediterranean cruise). Normally a transit either to or from Gibraltar took 5 days. On this particular transit it took a bit longer. One warm, sunny Saturday morning with ideal seas, an engineering full power run was scheduled. The lone DMS – a high speed mine sweeper converted from a destroyer – that was with us was sent ahead; the plan was that upon completion of our full power run the DMS would come alongside for refueling. Bearing in mind that years ago weather-guessing was literally "guessing." When we met up with the DMS about 1600 in the afternoon, the seas had built to a point where we were unable to accomplish the fueling and plans were made to attempt doing it Sunday morning. Well, as things turned out, Sunday morning we were in the middle of a hurricane with mountainous seas and no hope of fueling that DMS. There were times that even though we were making turns ahead, we actually went backwards. During the storm the DMS was so close to our stern that one could almost reach out and touch it. Even aboard Midway the majority of the crew was sea sick; eating was out of the question. Tons of crackers were consumed. And believe it or not, though the DMS was so close to our stern, with the mountainous seas, from time to time when the DMS was atop the crest of a wave the blades of their screws actually came out of the water. By some miracle both Midway and the DMS made it back to Norfolk 26 days later. The damage to both vessels was incredible; everything topside on the DMS was missing, life lines, hand rails, antennas, boats, etc. One of Midway's anchors had been dislodged and ended up heavily beating the bow, all the gallery walkways and antennas on either side of the flight deck were gone, and there was major damage in the forecabin area including the quad 40mm guns that were up in the bow.

Wow! What a trip! And, by the way, we did have a successful full power run. All was not lost.

Pre-school Indoctrination

David Payson, 1963-64 / RDSA

It was a hot summer day on Treasure Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay under a cloudless cobalt-blue sky. What a view we had: sailboats tacking in a brisk wind on the bay, skyscrapers and bridges standing out in sharp relief, framing the scene. Nowadays a view like that would cost you a small fortune from your multimillion-dollar condo. But when I was attending radar school at "T.I.," as we called it, it was ours for the price of a Navy billet. On the day I'm recalling here – sometime in July of 1964, I think it was – several of us were sitting around a picnic table outside our barracks, too broke to hit the beach, even though most of us had weekend liberty. Being marooned on T.I., broke and without family or friends (girlfriends) in the "City by the Bay," which loomed large before us, magnified somehow by the atmospheric conditions, left us with little else to do but study our radar lessons, which none of us were too keen to do, as I recall. Because I'd already been out to the fleet as a crewman on the USS Midway, CVA-41, for 6 months, at the ripe old age of 19, I was a "salt" among these radar school "boots," which gave me some status, but not much. I had made the 1963-64 West-Pac cruise on Midway before coming to T.I. to attend radar school, under a program the Navy called "Pre-school Indoctrination," that is, they sent you straight out to the fleet after boot camp leave.

To this day, I remember how lousy I felt leaving Midway and my shipmates on the day we got back from that West-Pac cruise. Within hours after we pulled into the pier at Alameda, without time hardly to even pack my seabag or say good-bye to a few of the buddies I had made during the cruise, I had to report across town to radar school at T.I. I will never forget how glorious it had been "steaming" under the Golden Gate Bridge returning to the States with the ship's crew lining the flight deck in ceremonial fashion as we came under the bridge, effortlessly cruising across the Bay, and mooring at Alameda shipyard, Midway's homeport. How sad I felt coming down Midway's gangway for the last time, many of the welcoming wives and family members still gathered on the pier, seabag hoisted over my shoulder, looking back at Midway and thinking what a mighty and glorious ship she was. How unfair it seemed that I had to leave her and my shipmates behind, for she had been my only home in the Navy to that point, save for basic training, and no one counts boot camp as home.

But returning now to the present of this memory on that sun-struck afternoon in the early 60s on Treasure Island as we sat out around that military-style picnic table dreaming about liberty in San Francisco, the radio playing the hits of the time, I recall "Sugar Shack" being on. Then the D.J.—could it have been "Wolf Man Jack"?—broke in with a news bulletin hot off the wire. In a distant place called Vietnam, in the Gulf of Tonkin,

North Vietnamese gunboats had attacked the U.S. Navy destroyers *Maddox* and *Turner Joy*, “Wolf Man” said. We learned from him that our destroyers had returned fire and sunk two of the gunboats. We looked at each other silently, contemplating the news. “They better not mess with us,” I remember one of my radar-school mates saying finally. The rest of us nodded in agreement, pondering briefly what this naval skirmish in a distant country none of us had ever heard of might mean to us down the road. And then we put it out of our minds and resumed our lazy day, land-locked sailors on an island in the middle of San Francisco Bay.

A year later I was a Radarman on USS Wilhoite, DER-397, patrolling the coast of South Vietnam, usually 3 to 10 nautical miles out, on guard for weapons smugglers from the North. The Vietnam War had begun in earnest, and Midway was out there on Yankee Station, launching her “birds” around the clock.

USS Midway: 1971 and 1972 Cruises (Part 1)

by Michael Hayes, 1971-72 / ATN2

Disclaimer – *The following is based on my memory of events that happened over 35 years ago. They are from first-hand involvement, second-hand information, and other sources. Some of these events were during traumatic events and my memories may have been likewise affected. Please forgive me if their accuracy may be a bit blurred.*

1971 Quals. — The major event of my first qualifications cruise was the flight down from NAS Whidbey Island with the rest of VA-115. Our P3 Orion was attempting to come in for a landing at NAS Alameda through the infamous San Francisco Bay fog and we had an unexpected thrill. The fog broke just as I noticed that the runway we were supposed to be landing on was at my eye level and to our right. It was then that I noticed the Bay waters just below our plane and the pilot hit full throttle and pulled us up from a nasty crash. We went directly to an inland Air Force base and were bused in to the base from there. When the bus deposited us at the Midway it was bright and shiny out with no fog in site. My first impression of the USS Midway was of its size and how low it was to the water. Most of the newer carriers and particularly the USS Enterprise were quite a bit taller than the Midway. With the new angle flight deck on the Midway it looked more like a sports car when compared to the other carriers. Her new deck was, as told to me, larger square footage wise than the Enterprise's. Later in the cruise I was standing on the flight deck as the Big “E” was going by us in the Gulf of Tonkin and we were level with her hangar deck. I had always liked boats/ships and this was to be the biggest that I had ever been or would be on. I felt at home almost immediately.

My initial berthing area was right under the flight deck forward and alongside the starboard-side catapult. In fact, the port wall of my bunking area was the catapult itself. I was made very aware of that on the first morning of flight operations when they test fired the cat. I was asleep in the top bunk when I was vaguely aware of a hissing/sliding metal noise whistling by my ears followed immediately by the loudest thump/crashing noise I had ever heard. The jolt was so loud/strong that it lifted me up out of my bunk and I fell to the deck (three bunks down). How I did not break anything is beyond me. I felt like someone should have popped in the hatch and said “Welcome to the Midway.” It was certainly a jarring start to my many months aboard the Midway and I guess you could say it felt like Magic! Most of the rest of Quals were spent getting used to where everything was onboard ship and watching Flight Ops from the crow's nest behind the bridge.

1971 Cruise — The '71 cruise started out rather rough as we ran into a major storm on the first night out at sea. The following morning we were advised that instead of playing war games off of Hawaii we would be spending the week in port while the damage to the starboard sponson was fixed. The storm had knocked a hole the size of a full-sized van underneath the 5-38 gun mount. Nobody complained very much about a week in Hawaii. They had to remove the gun from the sponson. It was one of the last vestiges from the original 1945 version of the Midway and it left us with only the two rear 5-38's. When they practiced using the guns off of Taiwan the noise they made echoed all over the hangar deck. That was only one of the many rather loud noises we became used to as the cruise progressed. The

constant drone of the ship's engines, the jet engines whining through flight operations, the "crash" of the catapult at the front of the ship, and the "crash" of planes landing on the stern all soon became a normal routine for the crew. It was at least 3 years after I was separated from the Navy that these noises finally quit echoing in my head.

We visited Subic Bay, Philippines (many times); Yokosuka, Japan; Hong Kong; and Sasebo, Japan, on this cruise and for the most part enjoyed every one of them. The Japanese ports as well as Hong Kong were natural favorites with the crew as we must have made major contributions to their economies with our saved up paychecks. Stereo equipment, cameras, motorcycles, and much more were purchased at great savings. The motorcycles were not allowed on the ship until our last port (Sasebo, Japan) before heading home. That made a very interesting sightseeing hundreds of crated motorcycles being hoisted onboard the ship.

Naturally our real purpose was supporting the Vietnam War effort. We spent up to 60 days at a time off of South Vietnam running flight ops almost every day from morning till night. Our normal stay off of South Vietnam was 30-45 days, but due to an elevator problem on the Big "E" we were asked to stay out longer to cover their repair time. We were chased by water spouts during one storm, but for the most part the weather was fairly calm off of South Vietnam. We did have to sit out a hurricane off of Subic Bay and took many 15-degree rolls during that time. With our shop hanging out under the angle flight deck, watching these rolls was quite exciting, especially when we had our outer hatch open to watch.

One of the most exciting happenings was the accidental missile firing on the flight deck. As I heard the story, a miss-handled static electric charge check was being performed at the rear of the flight deck and set off the sidewinder accidentally. I was in the TV room in my quarters directly under an A7 Corsair being checked out on the flight deck. The crewman doing that check had just exited the cockpit of the plane and was on its side step when the missile hit the plane in the cockpit and shot straight up into the sky. I and all of the guys in the TV room with me knew almost immediately what had happened as the sound was unmistakable. What we did not know was where the missile had gone and we spent several long minutes wondering if we were going to be blown up or not. Captain Carroll came on over the intercom and advised us as to what had happened which relieved everyone. As it usually happens, the guy that was on the side of the plane that got hit was only a few days from getting out of the Navy (we always called that being short). The last that we heard was he was still having problems with being deaf.

(To be continued)

The Midway Mail Buoy Watch

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

The officers and men of Midway enjoyed a good prank even if it was executed at the expense of one of their shipmates. The prank usually targeted a crew member new to shipboard life and therefore vulnerable to being conned. One of the Navy's traditional pranks at sea was to set the mail buoy watch. The victim was told that the ship was expecting a new batch of mail for the crew in the next 24 hours and that a watch was being set to look out for the mail buoy. I was responsible for just this sort of prank to be played on Ltjg. Ivan Belyea, a VF-21 Demon pilot and my shipboard roommate.

Midway was in the mid-Pacific en route to duty in the Western Pacific in April 1962. I arranged for a group of squadron officers to talk up the pending setting of the mail buoy watch whenever Ivan was in earshot. A few days later, when all officers were assembled in ready room #1 to watch the evening movie, I arranged for Air Operations to call down on the 19 MC squawk box for VF-21 to assign an officer to the 2000-2400 mail buoy watch. Our senior watch officer responded by naming Ivan as the watch officer. In the meantime, I went to the ship's Bosun's Locker and asked the CPO in charge to provide me with a life jacket, binoculars, and (believe it or not) 100' feet of rope attached to a grappling hook. I will never forget

the look on that Chief's face after receiving my reply to his question of "what in the world for?" A big grin spread across his face as he replied, "Yes, sir!"

Fifteen minutes before the watch was to be set, the senior watch officer and I briefed Ivan on his duties. He was told to look for a lighted buoy floating in the sea and if the lights were red and blue it meant that it was an air mail buoy. Upon sighting the buoy he was to go to the catwalk, lower the grappling hook, and snag the buoy. After the briefing I escorted Ivan to the flight deck where a ship's bosun was waiting with the requested gear. After Ivan was decked out and fully in the mail buoy watch mode I proceeded to the bridge to get permission to allow a ship's photographer to take a photo of Ivan. Captain Roy Isamin was in his chair when I requested permission from the O.D. to take a flash photo on the flight deck. When I explained that one of our pilots was standing the mail buoy watch, Captain Isamin emitted a long sigh and then said, "An officer? Jeeze..." Permission was granted, and I escorted the photographer's mate to where Ivan was standing his watch and the photo below was taken.



Ltjg Ivan Belyea, caught red-handed standing mail buoy watch. Ivan was a good sport about the prank and never held a grudge over it, to his everlasting credit.

Soviet TU-16 Flyover

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

Midway departed Yokosuka the end of the 1962 WestPac deployment but instead of heading east for Hawaii, the ship turned north toward the Soviet occupied Kuril Islands. While in Yokosuka two of the VAH-8 A3s were taken off and replaced by two VAQ A3 Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) aircraft. When the ship turned north, complete emission control (EMCON) was imposed, which meant that all ship's radios and radars were shut down. We were headed for a point 100 miles east of the Kurils.

During the transit we were briefed on the operation to be conducted when we arrived at our Point of Intended Movement (PIM), about 450 miles north of Yokosuka. Two packages of 3 aircraft each were to be in alert 5 status on the two forward catapults - An EA3, F3H, and A4 tanker. Upon arrival at our PIM, the ship turned everything on and waited. The mission was to lure Soviet TU-16 Badger bomber/surveillance aircraft out to the ship and intercept them with the F3H and EA3. The tanker was along to refuel the F3 if necessary.

The rules of engagement were that we were to make an in-trail intercept and not to close on the TU-16 closer than 1.5 miles. The presence of the EA3 was to be kept secret and in that regard, the EA3 used the

VF-21 call sign and side numbers for all radio transmissions. Intercepts were to be made 50 miles from the ship and concluded when the Badgers passed 50 miles on the way out.

During the intercepts the EA3s gathered electronic intelligence on the TU-16 communications and radar systems. When the TU-16s flew out to surveil Midway they did not fly directly over the ship but instead flew a 50-mile circle around the ship. After the operation the EA3 crews were elated over the amount of information they gathered on the Badgers. That information contributed to the development of a system, code named Brigand, in the 70s that allowed the EA3 to electronically "steal" the TU-16 radar scope presentation. On one mission an EA3 displayed a TU-16 radar picture during a test firing of an air-to-surface guided missile.

Exploding Demon Wheels

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

As VF-21 line officer I was always between the forward catapults during squadron launches. One of our F3H Demons had experienced a wheel explosion during catapult launch, but we thought it to be an isolated incident. Unfortunately, that turned out to be not the case. A second explosion occurred a few days later. I was standing next to Chief Dunning, the squadron maintenance chief, during a normal day launch. I had my right hand on Dunning's shoulder when the port wheel of the Demon being launched on the starboard catapult exploded. I took a couple of steps forward while I peered at the departing port landing gear in order to assess any peripheral damage incurred from the blast. I heard a groan from behind me and when I turned around I saw Chief Dunning lying on the flight deck with a rapidly growing pool of blood flowing from his right leg.

A large chunk of the magnesium wheel had struck Dunning in the upper thigh of his leg and had opened his femoral artery. One of our maintenance guys and I immediately whipped off our belts in order to apply a tourniquet but we could not see the source of the bleeding. Fortunately a corpsman arrived, shoved us aside, and ripped Dunning's khaki trousers open. He then reached into the wound and pinched the artery closed with his fingers. The corpsman held onto the artery while the Chief was placed in a gurney and taken to sick bay.

When the artery was surgically closed and the wound dressed, the doctor's learned that the chunk of metal had taken a small amount of skin from Dunning's penis. They also learned that a number of smaller arteries were damaged, and they were concerned about the possible onset of gangrene. Sure enough, Chief Dunning's toes began to turn black, and as the tangerine moved up his foot, the doctors marked its progress by outlining the dead area with a ballpoint pen. When it reached his ankle, the decision was made to remove the leg just below the knee. That procedure was successful and later Dunning was flown from the ship back to San Diego.

Naval Air Systems Command engineers determined that the magnesium wheels on the Demon were suffering from long-term stress caused by the overpressure of the 400 psi tire during each catapult launch. Replacement wheels were x-rayed at Subic Bay before being flown to the ship, and we had no more wheel explosions. In both cases, the pilots made barricade landings.

Midway Wire Break

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

I was VF-21 Line Officer during the 1962 Midway WestPac deployment and thus I was on the flight deck during flight ops when I wasn't in the cockpit. One afternoon I was standing by a Demon just forward of the island watching an A-3 approach for an arrested landing. When the A-3 engaged the cross-

deck pendant, the cable below deck attached to the port arresting gear engine parted. The engagement slowed the A-3 to below flying speed and it went off the angle and pancaked into the water.

The broken wire whipped across the angled deck toward the island. Two personnel were in peril from that whipping wire, a Yellowshirt plane director and a Blueshirt whose job was to ensure the wire dropped clear of the arrested aircraft's hook when it was raised. All of what I observed happened in seconds but it seemed like I was watching it in slow motion.

The Yellowshirt turned and sprinted toward the island. The Blueshirt gathered himself and timed his leap perfectly - the wire passed safely underneath him. The wire caught the fleeing Yellowshirt just below the knees, slicing off both legs. The most horrific part of this tragedy was watching the stunned Yellowshirt attempt to get to his feet. He had not realized what had just happened to him.

The crew of the A-3 climbed out of the floating aircraft and were taken aboard the duty helicopter.

The reason the arresting cable parted was that the arresting gear engine was set to absorb the energy of the much lighter A-4 instead of the much heavier A-3.

“You’re Fired!”

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

VF-21 flew the McDonnell F3H Demon. The Demon, like all carrier aircraft, was equipped with wing-fold mechanisms but unlike others, the fold/spread cycle was not actuated from the cockpit. Instead each wing had a switch located in the underside of the inboard wing section and a method of manually locking the wing after spreading which was accomplished by maintenance personnel prior to launch. When the wing was spread but not locked a small red cylinder could be seen protruding from the top of the wing. Locking the wing mechanically lowered that cylinder, which we called the "beer can", so it was flush with the top wing surface and not visible.

I was in Primary Flight Control as the Squadron launch rep during a day launch cycle off the coast of San Francisco. Squadron mate Ltjg. Dick Anderson was being directed to the starboard catapult and on the way VF-21 personnel spread both wings. As Dick's Demon was positioned on the catapult I heard Capt. Dose notify PriFly that the starboard wing of the Demon on the starboard catapult was not locked. The bridge crew could clearly see the red "beer can" projecting above the surface of the starboard wing.

Immediately the Assistant Air Officer turned to the Air Officer and said, "Shall I suspend him?" For some totally incomprehensible reason the Air Boss thought his assistant said, "Shall I send him?" The Air Boss replied "No" and seconds later the catapult fired and the Demon became airborne. But the right wing did not fold and send the aircraft spiraling into the sea. It turned out that the wing lock indicator in that wing was broken so that even though the wing was actually locked and safe for flight, the indicator was still visible.

But immediately after that Demon got airborne Capt. Dose's voice came over the squawk box again. Calmly and coolly he informed the Air Officer that he was relieved of duty effective immediately and should proceed at once to his stateroom and prepare to leave the ship. The ship contacted ComFleetAir Alameda and arranged for a replacement Air Boss to be flown out on the ship's COD.

Two hours later the fired Air Boss was flown to Alameda and the new Air Boss was in the tower when night ops commenced. When you look at this incident from the modern perspective it kind of gives new meaning to the Donald Trump imperative, "You're fired!"

Near Miss

by John Newlin, 1960-62 / Ltjg/VF-21

Midway stopped in Hawaii on the way to a six month WestPac deployment in April 1962. On the next to the last day in Pearl Harbor, Captain Bob Dose was relieved by Capt. Roy Isaman while the ship was ported at Ford Island. The next day the ship got underway for WestPac.

As the ship moved away from Ford Island and into the Pearl Harbor channel I was walking down the hangar deck through bay three when I saw the Weapons Officer screaming at the operator of the starboard elevator to raise the elevator. Midway was making a port turn from Ford Island up the main channel and its path was close aboard to a group of nested destroyers. I watched in awe as the elevator operator finally responded and the elevator slowly ascended just in time to avoid collision with the outboard line of destroyers.

Capt. Isaman had just walked out onto the starboard wing of the bridge and witnessed the near miss. He later told me that his one thought during those brief but terrifying seconds was that his tour as the C.O. of an aircraft carrier would be the shortest on record.

As it was, the DesDiv Commander sent a rather nasty message to Midway complaining about the ship's bow waves that caused some minor damage as it passed close by on its way out of the harbor.

Faulty Radar

by Jim Daugherty, 1971-73 / YN/X-Division

During the 1972 Vietnam WESTPAC (can't remember the exact date), the ship was pulling out of Subic Bay, Philippines, heading back to Vietnam. Usually we got underway early in the morning, around 0800 and would be back dropping bombs the next afternoon. So we had a day and a half to recover from our liberty in Olongapo before going back on the line.

We had left the carrier pier in Cubi Point and were making our way through the bay and out to sea when suddenly the word came over the 1MC that the ship was preparing to drop the anchor and soon we were at anchor about half way between the carrier pier and Grande Island.

The Captain got on the 1MC and said that one of the radar antennas had fallen over at about a 45-degree angle and might drop down onto the flight deck. They had to move all the planes out of that area. The XO and I suppose an engineer type climbed up and looked at the radar. It was highest radar antenna, just above the island. I guess they decided that it had to be removed/fixed before we could go to sea.

So we sat there in the middle of Subic Bay. After a while the Captain got back on the 1MC and informed us that we were going to wait in the middle of the bay while they moved all the ships off of the main pier (I believe Alpha pier) on the Subic side of the bay. It was the only pier with a crane that could reach that high. Well, there were a lot of ships moored at the pier, some 2-3 deep and it took most of the morning for the tug boats to move them.

Then they moved us up to the pier and the Captain said we might get one more night of liberty! Big cheer from the crew. But it was short lived. The shipyard did not take long to remove the antenna and soon after that the Captain announced that the high brass had decided we didn't really need that radar system, as the small boys around us could provide it for us. I believe it was air search and wasn't needed for flight operations. So the high brass told us to continue on our way and during our next inport in Subic Bay they would replace it. Big moan from the crew.

Our next inport visit was great. We spent the whole inport period at the pier in Subic; we could walk to the Main Gate and almost everywhere. No fighting/waiting for a taxis or bus to go to the Main Gate.

The snipes were happy as it was the only time during the 11 month WESTPAC that they got to go cold iron with shore power!

Crash Crew

by Stephen Douglas Hayes, 1954-55 / AB2/V-1

December 1954—USS Midway left Jacksonville, Florida, for Cape Town, South Africa. It was snowing when we left. We crossed the equator on 1/19, spent three lovely days in Cape Town, then deadheaded to Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and then Singapore. Before we could get there we were summoned to the Korean coast (The Princeton lost a screw).

One afternoon my buddy Red and I, both of us red shirts in the crash crew, were standing in front of the island waiting the return of a single plane that was towing an aerial target. Usually, to recover the target, it would be dropped over the bow of one of our destroyers. This day the air boss decided to have the target dropped onto the flight deck. Red and I were apprised of this event when this long nylon leader came floating down at our feet, then the air boss instructed Red and me to grab hold of that line, which we did. Almost immediately Red yelled at me to drop the line. He could see the target disappearing over the fantail into the Sea of Japan. Before I could let it go, the target hit the water (we were doing at least 30 knots), and the line tore out of my hands, ripping the skin off as it went.

I looked over to Red, who was standing next to the air boss, when, all of a sudden, he was launched twenty feet into the air, and then crashed down onto the deck. The buckle at the end of the line had hit him in the leg, shattering his tibia. The corpsmen tended to us, and the last I ever saw of Red was when they lowered him over the side to a destroyer to get him to the naval hospital on Japan. His name was Ernest T. Carey and he was from Tewksbury, Mass. If anyone has any information about him, please contact me at sandy.hayes@gmail.com.

After this cruise, the Midway went to Washington to be refitted with a cantilevered deck. Incidentally, Al Tschaeché was also on that cruise. I served on four carriers—Block Island, Leyte, Midway and Philippine Sea. Are those flight decks still as dangerous?

Jet Hit Radome

Al Tschaeché, 1954-55 ET/ OE Division

I was in CIC fixing a radar repeater. The radio reported one of our jets had lost most of its hydraulics and was trying to land. I wanted to watch so I went up to the platform aft of the stack on the 04 level. A telephone talker was there with about a mile of phone wire on the deck. He said the jet had lost *all* hydraulics. It was headed straight for us about 300 yards astern. There was nothing between us and the jet but the flight deck mobile crane.

The talker ran forward along the starboard catwalk. I started along the port side – got all tangled up in the cord – couldn't move.

The jet poured on the coal and roared up over the stack. Then everything was still. I saw parts of something floating down to the water and finally got to the port rail. There was nothing in the water but a big greenish-yellow stain. The jet had stalled and augered in. No sign of the pilot. I looked at the mast and saw the radome at the top of the mast was gone. The jet hit it before stalling. The pieces were what I saw floating down into the ocean.

Piping Aboard

William Michael McGee, 1958-59 BM3/1st Division

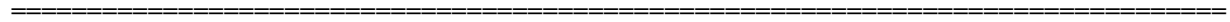
Tw was while standing a bridge watch, 1959, steaming in the Western Pacific. I was keeping an eye on the helmsman, phone talker and the rest of my space serving as the Bosn Mate of the watch. "The Captain ordered... "Bos'n, pass the word...China Arriving." I did.

It was a gray morning, and as I peered down on the flight deck, I observed Admiral Harry Hopwood and several other dignitaries greeting Chaing Kai Chek for important discussions.

Midway served.

That was one of my most vivid memories of the time I served in this crew. Over fifty years have passed and our Navy has had to learn a great deal about how to cope and deal with the results of insurgencies worldwide.

Have we?



Midway Veterans, send your Midway Memories to minandave@charter.net.