FLIGHT DECK II

A Pictorial Essay of a Day in the Life of an Airdale

Since I am and was, literally, the only one involved in the creation of all aspects of this book, other than the fine work done by Kathleen Dyson designing its text-pages, I alone am responsible for any and all errors and gaffs such as misapplying words ("Brevity is the sole of wit" instead of "Brevity is the soul of wit"; a "grate injustice" instead of a "great injustice", etc.). Depending as I do on a magnifying glass makes difficult my picking up these foolish phonic errors. Also, it's an oxymoron to say a proofreading author: the book would never be completed. That being said, I hope and trust that this necessarily one-man volume will nevertheless be of beneficial effect to one and all. Now let's see how it goes.

Copyright © by Edward Atkins 2010

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any forms or by any means—graphic, electronic or mechanical—without written permission from the copyright holder.

ISBN 978-0-9710134-2-1

Edward Atkins
Ship-n-Planes Publishing Company
13705 Lakewood Court
Rockville, MD 20850

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Foreword iv

Preface v

Introduction 1

1. The Ship 16
2. Flight Deck Activities 46
3. External Activities 180
4. Launch Activities 418
5. Landing Activities 556
6. Mishaps 634
7. Parking Activities 694
8. Enemy Action 740

Epilogue 810

FOREWORD

Inquiring of the author why he put together this second volume of "Flight Deck", he answered "I could perhaps elucidate various thoughtful reasons why there should be a second volume, but the unvarnished truth of the matter is that I have other pictures that I believe would appeal to those few who are still interested in flight deck operations on an Essex-class aircraft carrier. In any event, I certainly am interested. And besides, these volumes could possibly be of value to those historians who want additional material about WWII." This volume differs somewhat from the first volume in that more emphasis is given to Chapters 5 and 6, and less emphasis given to Chapters 7 and 8. Both "Flight Deck" books are a first-person commentary about the author's thirteen-month stint (April 1945 to May 1946) on the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36) as an Airdale. An Airdale spent most of the day, every day, on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier pulling wheelchocks (launch operations), placing wheelchocks (parking operations), pushing aircraft, and fighting fires as high-powered aircraft were launched from, landed on, parked up forward of, and sometimes crashed onto the flight deck of a floating airport. Commentary is critically made describing both objectively and subjectively all the activities that occurred on the flight deck, this "playing field". A visual impact is provided by the pictures of all the actions on the flight deck as photographed by official Navy photographers. The format of this book is that each of the pictures is described by one page of text, with each of the eight chapters having an introductory text. The text of this book reflects the thoughts and emotions of an 18-19 year old youth as put into words by a 75-year-old man. It is an honest retrospection of some stimulating and sometimes gripping times, as flavored by true introspection. This book covers a significant and substantive and historic and interesting subject. It is also unique in that this subject has "never" been documented publicly as a subject in its own right. And furthermore, very probably, it will never be presented again in the future as a first-person account, ever. It is literally unique in this respect, especially when it is understood that only a few thousand people ever have or ever will experience being an Airdale on an Essex-class carrier carrying propeller-driven aircraft. In deference to the author, it must also be stated that the U.S.S. Antietam never saw enemy action because its mission was that of being a training ship for aircraft squadrons of the line. This in turn meant that every day there were 90-aircraft flights, both morning and afternoon, day in and day out. Because its theater of operation was somewhere in the Western Pacific, it was susceptible to submarine attacks. None occurred. So what follows is an historical mini-reference to activities germane to the prosecution of the naval war in the Western Pacific. And after having gone through this book and the first volume, you should have felt like "you were there".

PREFACE

This section will very briefly provide my understanding of the significance of the class of ships called the "Essex". There was a total of twenty-four Essex-class aircraft carriers built, by far the most ever of any aircraft carrier class. Starting in April 1941, eighteen of these ships were built by the end of the war. The huge American industrial capacity made this possible. Of these eighteen ships, fourteen of them saw enemy action between 1943 and 1945. The U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36) was the last of the Essexes to be commissioned (January 1945) before the end of the war. During the Second World War the aircraft carrier became the dominant ship of the Fleet, responsible for almost all the destruction inflicted on the Japanese naval surface and air forces. (It was the American submarine that sank most of the Japanese merchant fleet, while the battleships, cruisers, and destroyers functioned as bombardment support for landing and landed ground forces in the island-hopping offensive campaign. They also provided anti-aircraft protection against Japanese aircraft and Kamikazes (pilots who deliberately crash their bomb-laden aircraft into American ships). A Task Group consists of two Essex-class carriers, a light carrier, and supporting battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. These Task Groups can be (and were) combined to form a Task Force. Such a Task Force could launch about five hundred aircraft made up of bombers and fighter-bombers. With an aircraft carrying a minimum of one thousand pounds of bombs, it can only be said that such a Task Force was truly an awesome entity. Thus, an Essex-class fleet carrier was a mobile airport carrying a lethal air force that could range anywhere over the seven seas to deliver targeted death and destruction. Such is the nature of war, something to be devoutly avoided if at all possible (if it's thrust upon you, your options are very limited; Pearl Harbor allowed for no options). In the Pacific War, these targets consisted of the myriad islands occupied by the Japanese. So the American military forces had to "march" across the Pacific, east to west, from island to island, spear-headed by the task forces as defined above. To accomplish this job of preparing for and supporting the invasions of the many enemy-held islands, the Essex-class carrier was designed for maximum effect: carry, launch, land, and support a 100-aircraft air force. This they did with stunning successes, albeit also with many of these gallant ships being grievously hurt. (It goes without saying that a human being has no chance against the violently exploding bombs and ensuing fires that would render the ships asunder.) But as was said about the Fleet off the coast of Okinawa in 1945 during the Kamikaze deluge, this was "the Fleet that came to stay", and it was a matter of "those fighting to die against those fighting to live". (The carriers were not the only ships to receive the punishment dealt out by the Kamikazes. Any of the ships in the Task Force were candidates to absorb the wrath the Kamikazes. But the pilots on both sides were exhorted to "Get the carriers!!" Chapter 11 concerns this aspect of the conflict.) The die was cast at Pearl Harbor, and no one considered there would be an end to the war in the Pacific until the American Fleet steamed into Tokyo Bay unopposed.

A very brief overview of the evolving situation in the Pacific Theater is in order so as to set the stage for a closer look at the carriers that prosecuted a very large part of that conflict. The Japanese had, for a long time, wanted to have access to the natural resources in the Southwest Pacific (Southeast Asia). The invasion of China and Indo-China (Vietnam) and Manchuria (Korea) was the start of this process, and it caused strained relations with the United States, which in turn had halted the export of oil and scrap-metal to Japan. The Japanese also needed natural resources

from the British and Dutch holdings in Southeast Asia. Knowing that the U.S. would oppose any such actions, Japan decided to attack the U.S. to prevent American interference in their designs in S.E. Asia. Thus they undertook the attack on Pearl Harbor. To further protect their interests, Japan invaded and held an arc of land and islands from the Philippines down through New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and up through the Gilbert and Marshal and Caroline Islands, finally topping it off in the Central Pacific with the Wake and Mariana Islands. This was a huge area that Japan conquered in the first six months of 1942, and their outward thrust was stopped only with the stunning American victory at Midway Island in June 1942. Now the pendulum started to go in the American direction with this victory and the long process of pushing the Japanese back to their homeland was begun. The strategy was to retake all the Japanese-held islands as stepping-stones to the doorstep of Japan. But two particularly ferocious battles at Okinawa and Iwo Jima, in 1945, had to be won before that doorstep could be reached. History books abound with meticulous recitations of this "grinding march" to the shores of Japan. The Pacific War was primarily a Navy/Marine enterprise, but some Army troops were also valiantly involved, as was the Army Air Force in the form of very long-range B-29 bombers, later in the war. This then represents the very broad-brush scenario of the situation in the Pacific War, the war in which the Essexes "won their wings". Let us now gather up our thoughts and proceed into the realm of that most incomparable of ships, the Essex-class aircraft carrier.

INTRODUCTION

This section contains nothing about my personal life except as it pertains directly to the war. For a busy teenager who was involved with school (Newark Academy), with sports (football, basketball, baseball, tennis, and with various other such activities), and some socializing (parties and dances), I nevertheless was fairly well attuned to the progress and implications of the war. This was probably due to the fact that my father, having a Doctor's degree in international economics from the University of Chicago, was very carefully following the daily news from overseas. (Also, my father, a Yale University Phi Beta Kappa graduate, was an officer in the field artillery in France during WWI. This somehow translated into his having a position on the American staff at the Peace Conference in 1919. This was probably the origin of his interest in things international, as well as the fact that he married a French girl whom he met in Paris. Parenthetically, my mother, who received a Masters Degree at Syracuse University in 1919, was active in the Alliance Francaise and we attended the monthly coffee and formal dance at the Cosmopolitan Club (where young people were well represented and most especially where I met someone who was to become that "MOST special girl". Parenthetically, both my mother and father spoke to me in French through adolescence, so I was somewhat more attuned to that world outside of America than were those who had no specific foreign ties.)

With this background, I continue the Introduction. By the spring of 1944, the war for the United States had been going on for two years, while the world at large had been immersed in war since 1939. This was the time when I gave serious thoughts to my impending induction into this gigantically destructive struggle. The American army was heavily involved in the defeat of the Germans in North Africa. The U.S. Army Air Force was sending huge armadas over Europe while sustaining heavy casualties. The American forces were meeting fierce resistance fighting their way up the Italian Peninsula. The army was massing for the inevitable invasion of Europe. Meanwhile, the American navy and army and marines were heavily involved in the treacherous island-hopping campaigns in the Central Pacific. (The Allies England, Canada, Australia, Russia, et al of course had been immersed in this terrible war since the very beginning in 1940. The American involvement was outlined because this was where I was to make my contribution.) In those days everyone who turned eighteen was drafted into the service, regardless. However, if a seventeen year old wanted to enlist, he could chose the service in which he went (at age 18). Since I wouldn't turn eighteen until July 23, I had that option of enlisting after graduation. But there was a conundrum to be resolved first.

On the one hand, I wanted to do my part for the war effort. And on the other hand, I was desperately afraid of losing my GENUINE "special girl" who was "my very life" and who was going to college right next to a college training naval officer candidates (V-12), one of whom was seeing "my girl" every weekend. I don't mean to imply that the V-12 students weren't doing their part, but at the time I definitely thought it was a smaller part. So the conundrum was to do my part (right away) by enlisting, or doing less than my part (by deferring it) so as to "fight for my life–my girl". I could, and did, rationalize the second option by noting that many of the seniors were joining the V-12 program. Also, when I was younger and I was walking home from church with my father, he said I should do twice as much as anyone else (why this should be so was never explained). Would this support the first option or the second option? I soon dismissed that line of thought as not being relevant. The only thing I was sure of was that I wouldn't be proud to go with the second option (V-12). But I confronted the notion and I realized these things: I would get an education; I would be doing what others in my

senior class were doing (small thinking); I would eventually contribute (but probably too late to do so in the war); and of completely overriding importance (selfishly), I could, I thought, have a chance with "my girl", "my life". All of this soon turned moot, soon turned academic, because the Navy doctor said my blood pressure was too high. Of course it was too high. That's what stress and strain does to you. So the decision was thereby made for me. At this point there was no question as to which service it would be: ever since adolescence my interest was with the navy. The reasons aren't important (I'd be hard put to shoot at somebody, except in self-defense), but who can deny the allurement, even the fascination, of a large naval ship? And to be a part of such a magnificent construct would be, to use the vernacular, a real kick. So the navy it was, and as they say, the rest is history. It is a little bit of that history that I would like to present in the form of pictures, backed up by some hopefully clarifying text.

THE DANCE

The National Archives Naval Collection contains pictures of all varieties of naval subjects, including the following two pictures. This one shows a dance at a girls' college with invited V-12 students (Naval Officer Candidates). While this certainly is not of the Airdales' world, this picture seemed a good way with which to start because it shows something that was an important part of my life preceding my enlistment into the Navy. Each month I would go to the Cosmopolitan Club formal dance (previously mentioned) where tuxedos and evening dresses were required. These dances were enjoyable in their on right. But what made them special was that it was at one of the dances that I met a girl who was to become that "VERY special girl". I know the exact spot in which I was standing when I first saw her. I remember every important detail of that evening. It was a true revelation. I'll only say that it was she who was to have, later, such an intense emotional impact on me during my time in the Navy. And it was at dances such as the one shown here that she met her future husband. Oh the restlessness. Oh the agony! Oh well, let's move on. I will only add that it was the decorum at dances such as these that seemed to bring a certain civility to social intercourse throughout. It was a civility that seemed to favor the sense of respect for others. And to me, it is that respect for others that makes for a smoothly running society. Anyway, those were happy times, something to "hang onto". The big band ballads made for an evening to remember. (Those who preferred the more upbeat sound could enjoy music such as Benny Goodman's "Sing Sing Sing".) But I enjoyed the ballads that were melodious and sentimental (for instance, "All The Things You Are" and "My Prayer") and sometimes those that were melancholy (such as "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"). So visions such as this picture served both as a depressant and as a sustainer while on the ship in the evening, alone, and topside I would think back to this type of scene and alternately agonize or rhapsodize. As in any war, there are those who are relatively untouched and there are those who are devastated. While I sometimes felt I was in the latter category, I was in truth quite lucky to come through unscathed in mind and body. In those days, there were multitudes upon multitudes who could in no way say such a thing. I would say it's a testament to the human spirit that those multitudes could pick up the pieces and continue their way through life. I salute them for their indomitable fortitude. Would that it were not necessary, as in my case. "There but for the Grace of God go I". Let us now bow our heads in thanksgiving.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE GIRL

I didn't have to include this picture, but it produced an immediate resonance when I saw it (it certainly will be the only one of its kind in this book). It took me back to 1943-1945 and all that those years represented. It reminded me of my "awakening" and the beginning of new feelings at once intense and gentle. But wars are no respecters of these kinds of emotions. Let me delve one more time into that sentimental area of youth. Objectively, this picture, of less formal circumstances, shows a Naval Officer Candidate (V-12) and his date taking some time to reflect on what the future might hold for them. But who knows what these two young people are thinking about or what they're feeling. It might be something like this: After graduating with a commission as a naval officer, is he going to be stationed stateside, or will he be shipped out overseas? And if it's to be overseas, will it be shore-based or shipboard? And if it's to be shipboard, will the Fates take him to enemy territory or not? And should it be enemy territory, will he be placed in contact with that enemy? And if that's to be, will that enemy pick his ship for destruction? And finally, if it's to be his ship singled out for destruction, will that arcing aerial bomb have his name on it? Such a sequence of considerations was not hard to come by, for those who's future was not spelled out ahead of time. On the other hand, their thoughts and feelings could be of an entirely different slant, taking on an interpersonal bent. It was this latter interpretation that caused me to empathize with this picture. The conditions of a wartime society had a way of making such meetings fraught with intense poignancy (presuming these two were "a pair"). Each reader must interject his or her own rendering of this wartime portrait. If it be angst, then I can relate. Or if it be a subdued gladness, then I can again relate, vividly, because it conjures up an evening that I still remember clearly as "my girl" and I were dancing together "cheek-to-cheek" in a semi-darken room in her house, when the radio came forth with two ballads in succession. The music and the words ("There Are Such Things" and "Street of Dreams", both by Tommy Dorsey and the Pied Pipers) were perfect for the occasion. It was pure enchantment. Those magical moments, some of the most exquisite moments of my life, are long gone (as well they should be). But back then they were priceless. So how could I reasonably exclude this picture? I should have, but I didn't because the picture was too compelling. This picture could also perhaps conjure up the following scenario where the girl is timidly trying to explain her innermost sentiments with her good and close friend. It might go along these lines after her careful consideration, well thought out beforehand and spoken with great, but soft-spoken, deliberation: Since I don't feel an abiding love for you, were I to go to bed with, it would surely be one of the biggest mistakes I could make. You certainly are intelligent enough to understand that the first occasion of physical intimacy should only be to express true emotional and intellectual love, honestly achieved. To do otherwise would be to grossly devalue one of the most precious things that I possess. And once that initial physical intimacy is devalued, that value is forever lost, never to be regained. It's irretrievable, and it would be a very sad loss. The enriching value of virginity, in the best of worlds, should be bestowed only at marriage. To make a very inadequate analogy, just as you wouldn't besmirch and besmear a beautiful painting, so too shouldn't you do the same to the valuableness of virginity by having a loveless physical intimacy. It would be a great loss because virginity clearly multiplies and greatly enhances the joy and pleasure of one's first, AND following, physical intimacies. So please, lets let true love, and not nature, be our guide. And thank you for being such a good and understanding friend.

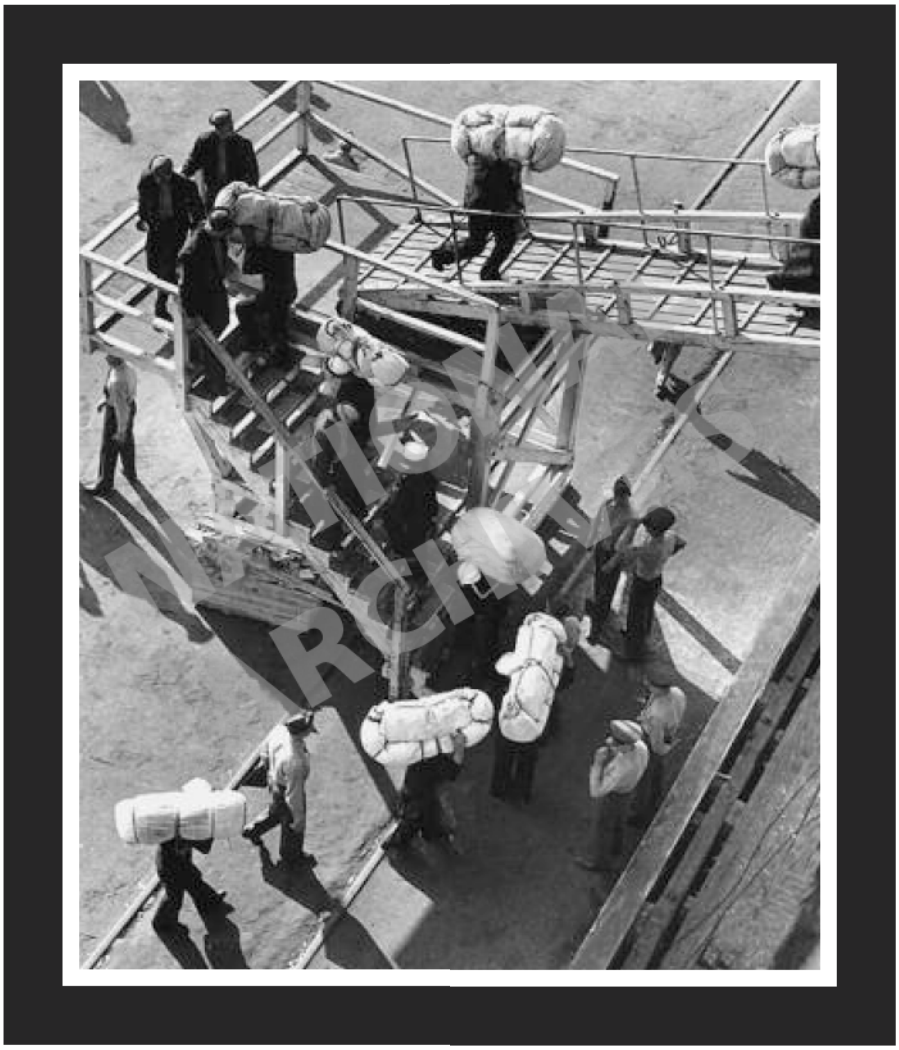


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SHIPPING OUT

So now the time has come, January 1945, when the journey must began. But who can say when or where it will end? Our destiny will be our destination, but our calculation places our most likely final terminus on the coast of Japan, the land of the most implacable foe. But first there's much to experience, and much to endure. This is an embarkation for an adventure that has yet to reveal itself. There's an odd mixture of awe, foreboding, and excitement: awe over the huge, dominating size of the ship, foreboding about what the future holds, and excitement to be an integral part of such a large enterprise.

To reach this point, we had just previously spent three months at a boot camp at Lake Sampson, in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. We then spent a little over a month at a receiving station at Newport, R.I., where we were assigned to the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36), just recently built at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. From Newport, it was an overnight railroad trip to the barracks at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard where we spent a few weeks until the commissioning of the Antietam. The next day we packed our see bags, tied them to our bedrolls, and made our way up the gangplank to that magnificent new Essex-class aircraft carrier. This was when we stepped into a new world, soon to say goodbye to the life one was so used to on land. Through these portals pass mere boys to become true "salts of the sea". ("There is probably nary a destroyer-man extant who would not scoff hilariously at such a notion. This will be verified later on.) I won't say that there was a churning of the stomach at this time, but I will say that there was a thrill of anticipation as we mounted the steps, knowing that we were carrying all our worldly possessions and leaving behind the sanctuary that was to be found on solid ground. For a fledgling, this was heady stuff, the stuff that was as foreign to one's senses as to one's intellect. We of course had seen pictures, moving and still, of aircraft carriers at sea (the one-hour documentary "Fighting Lady" ("U.S.S. Lexington") among others such as the Academy Award winner " Wing and a Prayer "). But this was to be no movie, and the though we saw movies of kamikazes, that was only film. We knew a Fleet Carrier was the prime target for attacks by Japanese aircraft, and we had seen film of the results of those attacks. We knew it all, intellectually, but we were still "wet behind the ears". And yet, here we were being given the opportunity to be an integral part of a great endeavor that would rid us of those unyielding foes. We were young, yes, and we had much to learn to make the outcome satisfactory. Regretfully, we knew precious little as to what it would take to accomplish that goal of victory over those who would seek our demise. Yes, we were young, but we would soon learn. So it's hoist that bundle, direct yourself upward and onto the platform, and "sail in the direction of" that setting sun until the job is well done.

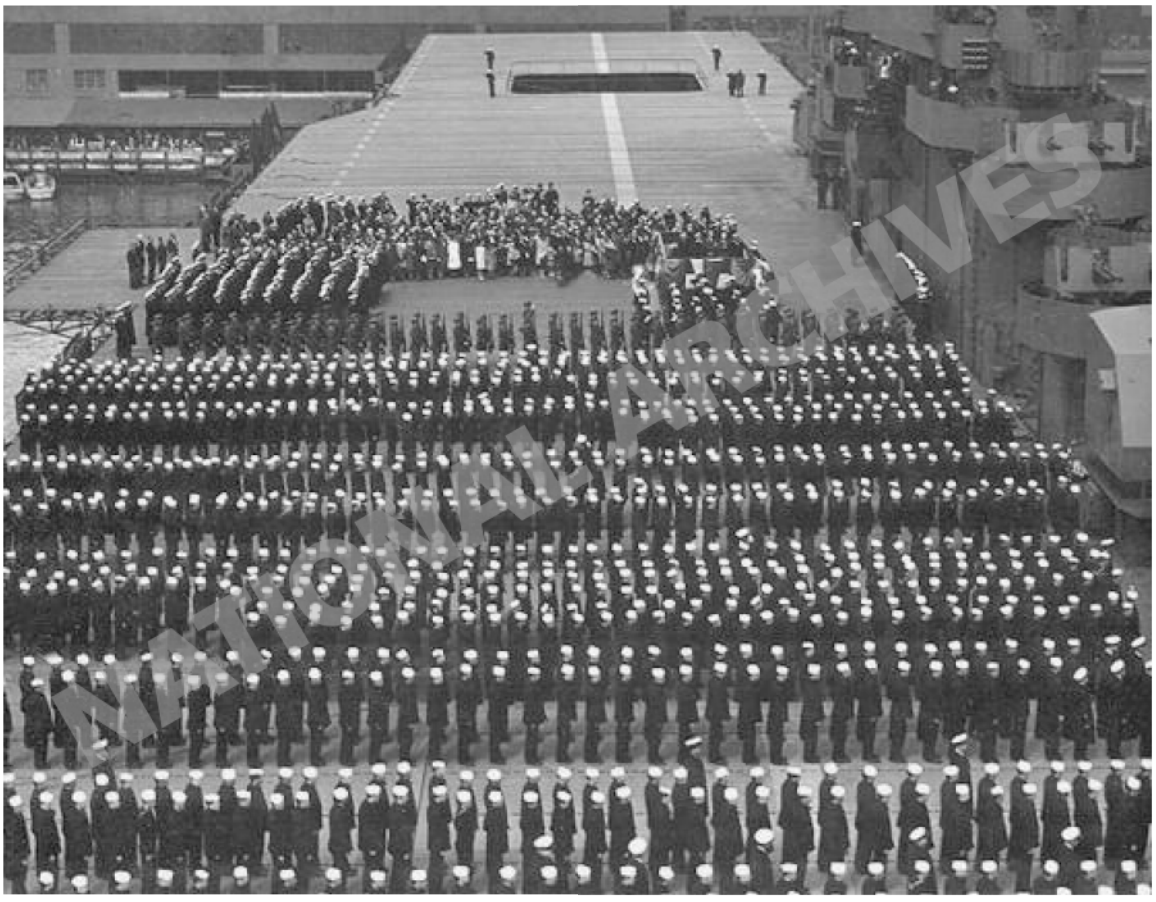


NOT FOR RIGHTS

DEDICATION

The ship has already been commissioned, and part of its 3000 personnel are seen out on the deck, garbed as they are in their dress blues. Now it's time to dedicate the ship. Speeches are made, and benedictions are offered. These benedictions are of particular importance for this particular ship, the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36), because it was the Battle of Antietam for which it was named. This Civil War battle, on September 17th, 1862 at Sharpsburg, Md., was one of the decisive battles of the war, and it was critical to President Lincoln's decision to promulgate the historic Emancipation Proclamation on January 1st, 1863. There are those who say that the results of the Battle of the Antietam were the fulcrum upon which the Proclamation was issued. This is not the place to comment on that historic event except to say that it was indeed a momentous time in the story of this country, and to say that Lincoln was certainly one of our greatest presidents, both as a president and as a man

The only other thing to be said here on this subject is at the Battle of Antietam was recorded as "the bloodiest single day in American history". There were 23,000 to 26,000 casualties on that single day (historians vary as to that number), about equally divided between the Union and Confederate forces. The speakers of course laid down the facts of this date in this nation's history, and the dedicators (can it be said) anointed this ship to do good deeds in the name of the Battle of Antietam. On a mundane level, it's not clear that naming a ship after the bloodiest day in American history was a reassuring "namesake". This is because this ship, this carrier, was designed to sail into the teeth of the dragon, and since seagoing sailors tend to be a superstitious lot, they tie the ship's destiny to its name. Those ubiquitous pictures and accounts of the kamikazes only reinforced such superstitions. It was interesting that the U.S.S. Antietam was the only wartime Fleet Carrier that was named after a battle other than a Revolutionary War battle (which were, let's be honest, quite minimal from a casualty point of view). This distinction may seem trite to those who were never under the shadow of possible future (shall I say it) annihilation, as were those on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier. (Yes, we were well apprised of these things, by the Navy itself, as well as the media.) Oh well, we agree young, and " the young always felt they were indestructible " (as the SAGES were wont to say). But then .....and then.....and.....

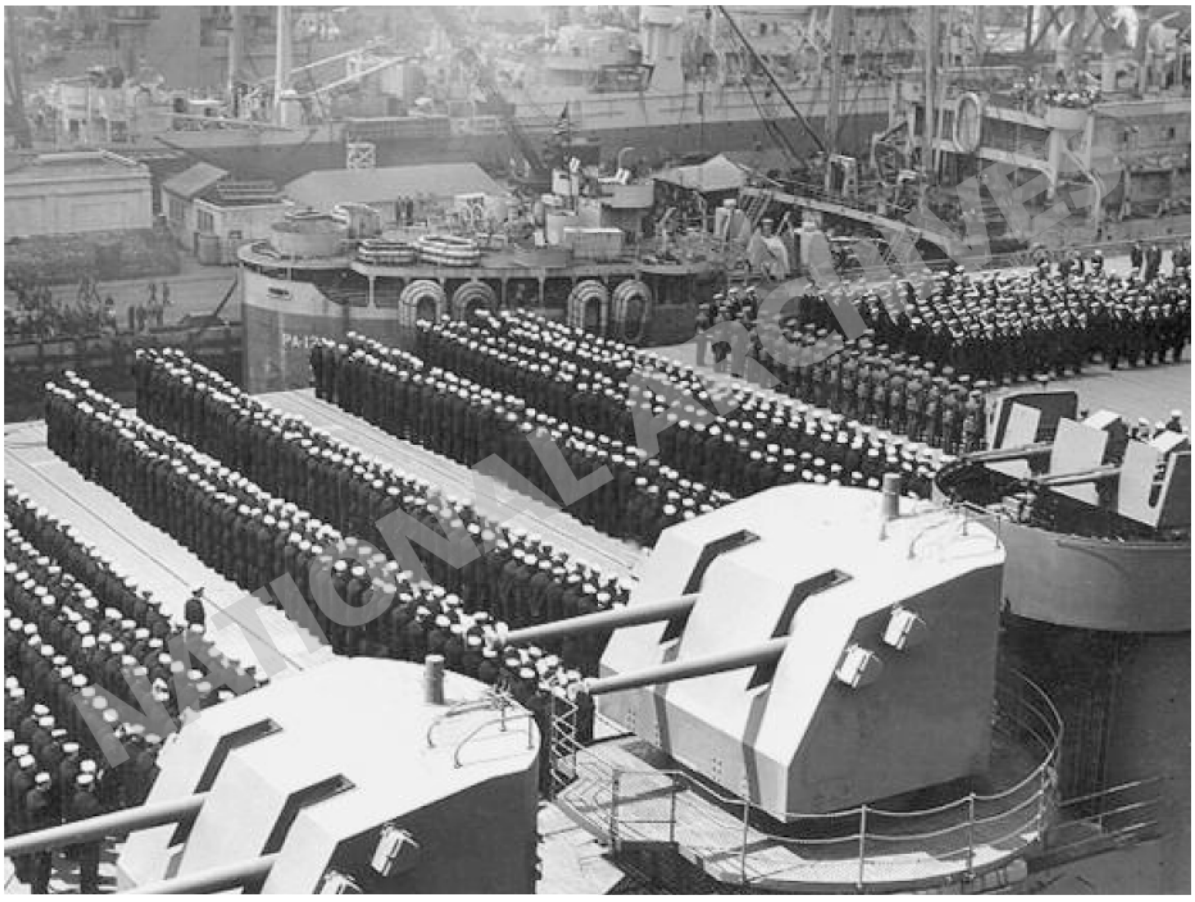

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AT ATTENTION

Let's face it. The first thing that meets your eyes are those imposing 5-inch gun-mounts. The roundness of the gun-barrels is nicely offset by the sharpness of the angles of the gun-mounts. The light/dark values are stark; the presentation is strong and clean. It is thus a pleasing representation of seemingly abstract objects. But these are far from abstract objects. If they were abstract, the effect would be minimal. But they are very, very real. No need to imagine here. And they lend an air of immediacy to everyone on the flight deck. This is because they tell us that there are bad things "out there" that need our attention, nay, demand our attention. And they will always be there to remind us that this is so. (Why that 40-mm gun sponson in back of the 5-inch guns is so pale in comparison, I don't know. Maybe it's because it has a smaller bark.) Speaking of barks, when the 5-inch gun fired, the whole 30,000 tons of the ship vibrate. This is difficult to believe, but it is true. How a little destroyer can fire one of its 5-inch guns and not rock and roll, I don't know. This is a problem in that it's very difficult to fire accurately when the ship is rocking and rolling. (But they had ingenious devices that took these things into consideration, and although they had only those old-fashioned mechanical analog computers way back then, they managed to do a pretty good job. However there was many a ship that suffered because of inaccurate anti-aircraft gunfire. The gun fire-control problem was fascinating, and it was because of those devices that I later spent much of my time studying those devices, leading me to my strong interest in automation, and later, neural networks. But I'm way "off target" here.)

So here we stand, row on row, at attention in our dress blues and pea jackets, hardly knowing what to expect once the ceremonies were over and we depart for places unknown. I dare say a goodly portion of us are not long out of boot camp, just recently upgraded from apprentice seaman to seaman 2/c. After a period of time we will automatically achieve that lofty status of seaman 1/c (barring any misconduct). But there's no need to be smart alecky about this because in our future there are serious things to be done. And we will find out what these things are, sooner rather than later. However one may describe it, what will be forthcoming will be an adventure, hopefully with a satisfactory conclusion. It is a story soon to unfold, with the outline already in broad-brush and the details yet to be determined.

Truth be told, this is not a picture of the Antietam because we were not berthed next to a ship such as this one in the picture. From the looks of it, that ship appears to be a troop transport, or maybe some kind of supply ship. A very large portion of our ships were not military ships per se, but rather ships that carried troops, oil, supplies, and etc. The war would not have been prosecutable without them. And in the process they took grievous losses at the hands of Japanese and German submarines. A ship in a convoy of ships, if sunk, was often left to the elements and life did not survive. So it was not just navy personnel who were lost at sea, but also the civilian merchant seamen of the Merchant Marine service. They were an integral and very essential part of the war effort. And the North Atlantic could be a very cruel place to be, what with its damaging storms and enemy submarines. Life expectancy, when in the water, was measured in hours, if that. The Merchant Marine and Coast Guard services were every bit as courageous as any other serviceman, for sure. Our hats are off to them, in spades.



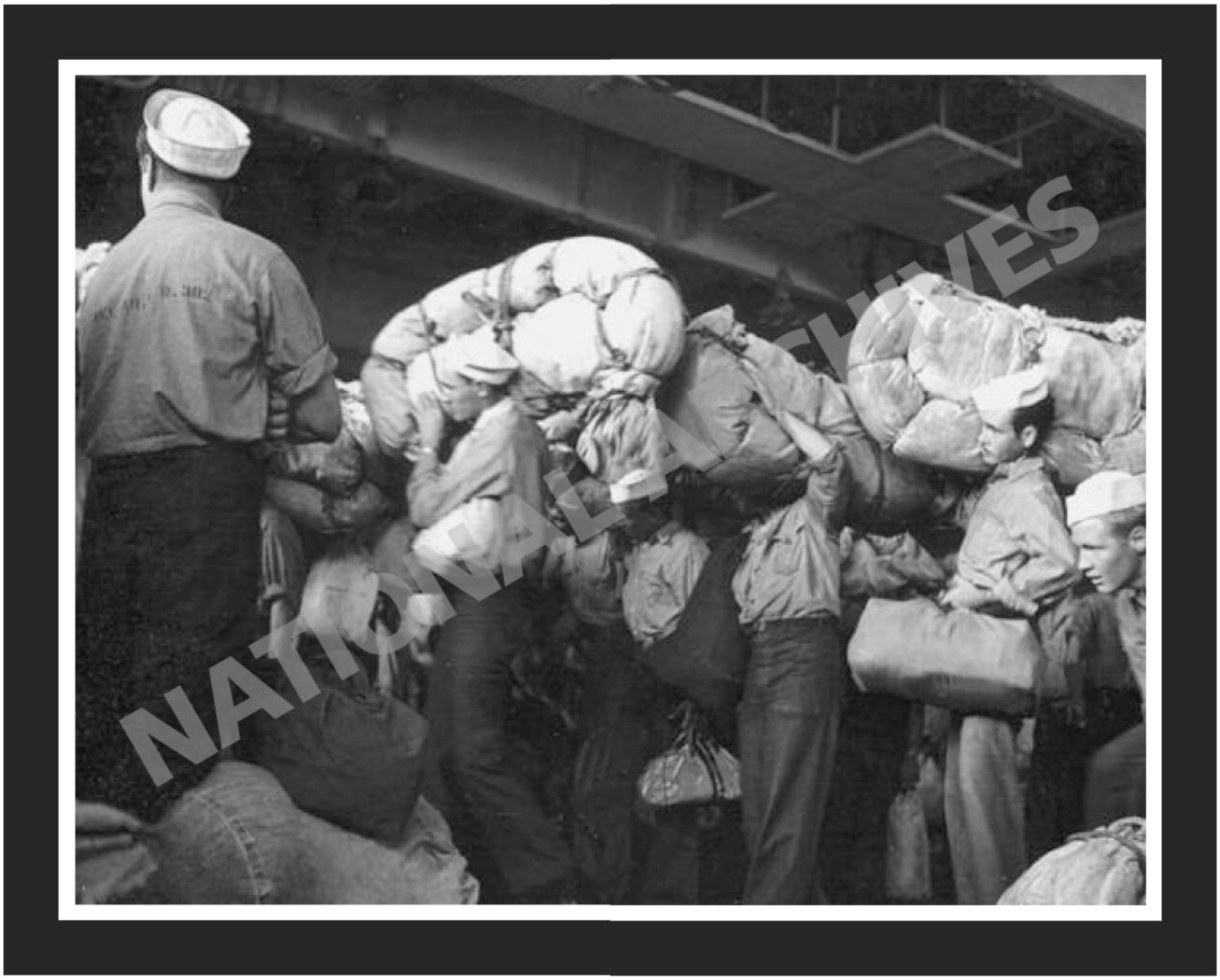
WELCOME ABOARD

These sailors are perhaps a contingent from a nearby base who weren't domiciled in the barracks in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard that we occupied just prior to our embarkation. They are seen to be enlisted men, with a rate of no more than Seaman 1/c (i.e., not long out of boot camp). This scene was typical, not unlike a herd of cattle being assembled and moved out, and onto the ship. The seabag contains all of your worldly goods, including your dress blues, your undress blues, your pea jacket (topcoat), a few white caps, a blue dress cap, underwear, socks, a change of fatigues (what they're now wearing), toilet articles, and whatever else they could fit into the seabag. Around that there is a thin mattress and a blanket, within a canvas hammock (seldom used). And that's it. Wherever you go, the above goes with you, with your name stenciled on it, as well as on all of your clothes; notice the back of the shirt on the left. Longevity in the service can usually be detected by the shade of your dungarees and shirt. The sailor to the left, cap pushed back, is fairly newly minted, while the one on the right is somewhat of an old-timer. Also, true to being an old-timer, he has his cap squared-away. It's also tilted forward and to one side. It's squared-away as a result of, each time he puts his cap on, his grabs the sides of the cap and pulls down hard. This causes the sides of the cap to bend over, thus making it "squared-away". Unless your cap is squared-away, you're a fledgling. (This process could be considered similar to the mind eventually becoming "imprinted" due to the constant, continuous condition of a given situation. Once so imprinted, that "shape" takes on a permanence that is seemingly irredeemable. And so it is with the cap, just as it is with the mind, where unmitigated rigidity of thinking, due to constant repetition, entraps the thought processes.) Now how does one go from the quirks of apparel to the basics of one's reasoning faculties? Is there a legitimate corollary here? Let the reader decide that.

These new shipmates are for the most part probably clean slates, unwritten upon, but soon to become imprinted with the daily routine of shipboard life. They will learn their new duties quickly, or else they will be put off at the next port, to be replaced by others until that well-tuned team is found. Those who scoff at teamwork would be quickly disabused of that notion once the ship was out to sea. One does one's part, else one is replaceable. For all that is known, these sailors are just those replacements. There is too much at stake to tolerate slackers and the like. It is hoped that these newcomers learn this quickly enough. Snafus (Situation Normal All Fouled Up) are not acceptable in this new environment in which they are being placed.

We can also surmise that most, if not all, of these new arrivals are full of wonder as to what is in the offing and what kind of world they are entering. "Where are we going?" "How soon do we get there?" "What will we find there?" "How will I react to what I find there?" "Who will make it back to friendly shores?" "Will I come back in one piece?" "Just who are these other guys?" "Are they good guys?" "Are they stalwarts?" "Or are they mush?" "Why was I chosen to go on a ship named after the 'bloodiest day in American history?" "Do the Fates have the same thing in mind for us?" And so it goes, questions, questions. But no answers.

"Welcome Aboard!"


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

STOPOVER

Now on our way to the Pacific, we've made a stopover to pick up some supplies and munitions, and also to bring on board some stragglers. We are in the subtropics, as witness those in "whites", ready for Liberty (a 12-hour Pass). The view is from the catwalk of a carrier right next to ours. This allows us a good look at the configuration of the catwalk alongside the flight deck. As is evident, the catwalk is from four to five feet below the flight deck, and as is not seen, it is about two and one-half feet wide, and about forty-five feet above the water below. There's a guard-wire along the outside of the catwalk that's only about three and one-half feet high. This doesn't give one a feeling of confidence, especially if one is uncomfortable with heights (and most especially if the ship is rolling excessively). However, along the length of the catwalk are sections that are occupied by "galleries". These galleries serve as platforms for six to eight 20-mm guns each. Also, notice that at various places there are containers that hold small cylinders of cork-like material strung on strong ropes. Should the ship be sunk, these are set adrift, thus providing a "netting" that floats, and with which one can stay afloat. Also note the rafts on the racks. When cut loose, they slide onto the water, available to the people in the water. Down below these are tanks of some sort and their purpose is unknown (since we never had whatever they are). That pipe ("smoke-stack") right in the middle of the picture is also a puzzle. It's probably a vent of some sort, and of a temporary nature (we didn't have this pipe on our ship).

Now we move to the flight deck, the Airdale's province. That "big bird with folded wings" is a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber, the biggest single-engine aircraft of WWII. It spreads and folds its wings under its own power, making use of hydraulics. When first seen, this action is impressive. Later on, it's old- hat. This is true of many things that occurred on an active flight deck. When a bunch of these behemoths are fired up at the same time, one becomes agitated, as if the "the earth trembles beneath his feet". Deep down, so no one notices, and no matter how many times it happens, when you stand next to the wheel of one of these fired-up "monsters", you feel like you're being physically assaulted. That furious wind and that horrendous noise will do that to you every time. However, this is neither the time nor place for these particular observations (concerning the activities that occur on the flight deck of this very large floating and moveable airport).

There's a lot of scuttlebutt going around as to what our destination will be. This always occupies our conversations, and it's diverting and engaging, but it's never of any avail. Everyone knows that scuttlebutt is only that, scuttlebutt. (One can recall the slogan "Loose lips sink ships", and that fairly well subsumes the entire subject.) Wherever it was going to be, it was going to be. "Que sera, sera". In any event, we felt it would be a great adventure (after all, we were still fledglings). (Having said the above, this though was far less offending than managing and manipulating one's thoughts and opinions by staging events purported to be factual. How can one arrive at rational and educated opinions when so deceived? It would seem that a factually informed public would be our strongest bulwark. Isn't it true that creditability provides one's will with the greatest resolve. Who among us would fight for a sham? (This requires further consideration; but yes, this will be the last of these "political/personal" comments.)



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE SHIP

Probably very few, if any, non-navy people would consider that a ship that was completely flat on top and had a squat little superstructure way over to one side could ever be thought to be anything but completely unseemly and unbecoming. And for someone to say that that ship was beautiful, and even noble and majestic, that would be the height of nonsense. Not so, say I. Why just the clipper bow is enough to set this ship apart. (This bow was the result of later Essexes having their bow extended to make room for the two 40-mm gun quads – a "quad" is a "tub" that contains four guns. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.) Another attractive attribute of an Essex carrier is the "clean lines" of the flight deck, with the "intricate" superstructure rising, in its fullness, above the clean lines. But perhaps the most compelling feature of an Essex carrier is its beauty as represented by its functionality, less any superfluousness. This functionality devoid of excess can be, and in this case, is a fulfillment of a certain kind of beauty (in my opinion). I would have been remiss if I hadn't at least alluded to the aesthetics of this magnificent ship. Now to the functional part of the Essex carriers.

.

The Essex-class aircraft carrier will be described, in summary, as to its basic design features. It is a large ship with a multitude of features that are required to perform all its many-faceted functions. Thus it might be of interest only to the technocrats. To the others, please bear with us. Beginning with the actual "airfield", it was almost 900 feet long and up to 108 feet wide. Its hanger deck was 660 feet long and 70 feet wide, and was well ventilated so as to allow the aircraft to be "fired up" during maintenance. The above dimensions allowed for, on the Antietam, 30 F4U Corsair fighters, 30 F6F Hellcat fighters, 20 SB2C Helldiver dive bombers, and 20 TBM Avengers torpedo bombers. Each ship had three elevators (fore, aft, and midships), each of which could accommodate one aircraft. These elevators ascended and descended within about ten seconds, thus expediting the flight deck operations. There were two catapults recessed in the flight deck up forward. These catapults also speeded up the flight deck operations by allowing more aircraft topside before launch began. Chapter 8 will discuss the sixteen arresting wires across the deck and the five barriers up forward of arresting wires. These are needed during landing operations. The ship's hull had to be designed to provide protection against projectiles, torpedoes, bombs, and mines, as well as to protect the ship's own bombs, torpedoes, and munitions. The hull was also designed to provide seaworthiness during periods of extreme maneuvering while under enemy attack, as well as to enable high speed in rough sea conditions. Provisions had to be made for expeditious damage control due to enemy actions. One such item was the proper placement and protection of the water mains throughout the ship, not the least of which was the flight deck Similarly, the oil (6160 tons of it) and the high octane aviation gasoline (240,000 gallons of it) had to be even better protected so as to avoid a true holocaust should enemy bombs and torpedoes find their mark. (Aircraft topside on the flight deck, when filled with high-octane gasoline, of course could not be protected and was the cause of terrible explosions and ensuing fires.) This gasoline could be supplied to the flight deck at a rate of 1,000 gallons per minute. Also available, but less volatile, were 20,000 gallons of aircraft engine lubricating oil.

The island structure, on the starboard side of the ship, housed the navigation bridge (pilothouse). The navigation charthouse was back of the pilothouse, and back of the charthouse was the air plot compartment

where the air operations were controlled. Back of the air plot was the radar compartment where the search radars where controlled. One level lower, beneath the pilothouse, was Flag Plot where the admiral and his staff held sway. Back of this was the VHF (short range) radio room, and back of that was the radio transmitting room. Below Flag Plot was another radio room, and then there was the Flag office and sea cabin. Next back was the 20-mm gun service compartment. Below the radio room, at the flight deck level, was the compartment for the flight deck personnel, and various spaces for the pilots. Going up to the bridge level and back aft in the island structure was the auxiliary pilothouse (in case anything happened to the forward pilothouse). Forward of this was a radar control compartment, a 40-mm gun ready service room, and also a meteorology office. This pretty much completes the island structure compartments. Now, one level just below the flight deck level and forming the top of the hanger deck was the so-called gallery deck. It contained many functions as will be obvious after having listed all the essential compartments found there (this will be merely a listing of the compartments, and it will be clear as to their functions): crews' berthing, 5-inch gun handling room, radio transmitter room, radio workshop, aircraft ammunition stowage, 20-mm gun ready room, Captain's cabin, Admiral's cabin, Admiral's stateroom, galley, gas line gear locker, Mk 29 radar room, stores, gun cleaning room, squadron armory, Staff office, Senior Staff office, Captain's office, Captain's stateroom, CIC, (Combat Information Center), Air Plot, Squadron workshop, radar room, aviation radar room, tool issue room, electric service station, squadron ready room, squadron office, squadron service room, Air Intelligence room, elevator stowing machinery, radar room, Air Group Commander's ready room, 20-mm gun ready room, tool room, drop tank stowage, radar bomb stowage rack, air-conditioning equipment room, air ammunition belting room, 40-mm gun ready room, 20-mm gun workshop, parachute packing room, stowage, 40-mm gun workshop, 40-mm gun control and Mk 29 radar, air radio station, and arrester gear spare parts, and repair shop. This pretty much accounts for the gallery deck just below the flight deck and forming the ceiling of the hanger deck.

Below decks (below the hanger deck) were those things necessary to sustain 3,000 officers and crew, where the crew had NO amenities except for a very small library. Here again I'll only list the "big ticket" items that all ships require to be a functioning construct. To generate the 150,000 horsepower to run the ship, four sets of double-reduction geared turbines were at the bottom of the ship. There were eight superheated boilers (565 psi, 850 F.), four 1250 KW turbo-generators, two 250 KW diesel generators, and all the instrumentation to monitor and control all this power. To protect this machinery, the hanger deck consisted of 2.5 inches of steel. Additional protection was provided by the ship's armament: twelve 5-inch guns (four on either side of the island structure, and two uncovered 5-inch guns both fore and aft of the flight deck, port side, between the flight deck and hanger deck levels. The 5-inch guns had a maximum horizontal range of 18,000 yards and a maximum vertical range of 37,000 feet. It also had a normal slant range of about 10,000 yards for anti-aircraft use, and 12,000 yards for low flying torpedo aircraft. The mounts were power operated, but the gunners were still required to load them manually. The normal rate of fire was 15 rounds a minute, but under duress this rate could be increased. The projectile was propelled by a cartridge case of powder, which was separate from the projectile. The projectile weighed 55 pounds and had both an impact fuse and a mechanical time-fuse, which had to be set before firing. Thus the fuse was set for a certain range, and this reduced its effectiveness radically when used against aircraft. However, in 1943 proximity fuses were developed enabling the projectile to detonate when proximate to the target (aircraft). Also available were eighteen 40-mm gun quads (four guns to a gun-mount), which meant 72 guns total. There were also sixty 20-mm guns. All of these guns were of course only for anti-aircraft defense. To control the 5-inch guns there was an Mk 37 fire control radar/directors (a later chapter discusses this further). The 40-

mm guns were directed by Mk 51, 57, or 63 fire control directors. These had no radars, but rather were aimed manually, with the director providing for the lead-angle, etc. And finally, the 20-mm guns were directed (aimed) manually, although later in the war some of the guns had directors similar to the 40-mm guns in that the Mk 14 directors for the 20-mm guns used gyroscopically stabilized gun sights. But for the most part the 20-mm guns were manually aimed by sailors and marines.

Tying together all the many search radars to their controllers, the 5-inch gun fire control radars to their controllers, all the many radio antennas to their controllers, required a huge amount of cabling throughout the ship. Add to this all the cabling required for the internal communications and all the cabling tying together the radar and radio controls to the CIC (Combat Information Center). This added much more cabling passing through the compartments. It was as if the CIC was the brain of the ship and the cabling was the nerve fibers going out to all parts of the ship. Then of course there was also a huge amount of cabling required for the electrical power distribution system, for everything from lights to electrical machinery to the radios and radars. In those days there was no digital equipment of note. Everything was analog, so digital computers were still in the offing. But the 5-inch fire control system was controlled by computers, but not electronic ones. Instead, ingenious mechanical computers, large and bulky, served to generate the electrical signals that in turn controlled electrical power to the hydraulics that trained the guns in lead and elevation. This fire control system is of course a far cry from today's digital fire control systems. (Parenthetically, I will say that not long after leaving college, the recollection of all of that remarkable fire-control equipment generated in me an abiding, life-long interest in automatic controls. Even more parenthetically, I will only mention that recently I watched a TV program about automatic manufacturing control systems, i.e., automation. They showed machine tools doing all sorts of things, and these visuals were, to me, thrilling. Yes, thrilling. And that's all I'll say lest I lose track of time and purpose.)

Finally, there are a host of aircraft and engine repair shops that were required to maintain the squadrons. And certainly one should not forget such things as electrical machinery repair shops and anything else required to keep an airport, as well as a ship, operational. When at sea, a ship must take care of itself, because no one else will.

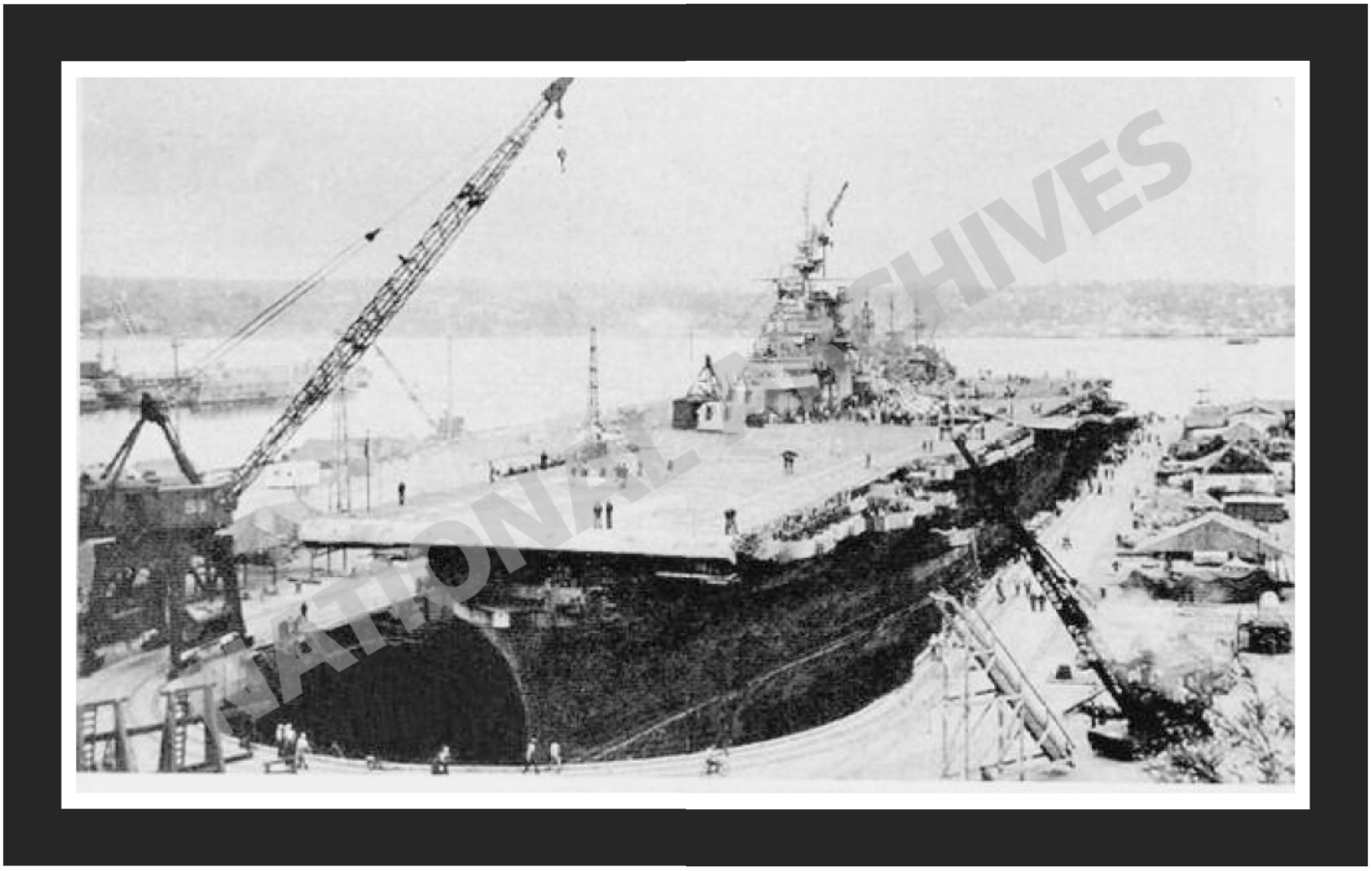
All of what has been said has only scratched the surface of what might (and probably should) be said. However, my purpose was to merely give an overview of this magnificent ship, the Essex-class aircraft carrier. For those readers who are interested, I found the following books to be excellent reading. They are "Essex-class Carriers" by Alan Raven, "The Essex Aircraft Carriers" by Andrew Fultum, and "The Aircraft Carrier Intrepid" by John Roberts. These books are not only good reading, but also they are solid references, and I certainly recommend them.

THE GENESIS

This is it. This is the genesis of that most illustrious of ships, the Essex-class aircraft carrier. This pleasing "etching" portrays the essence of this ship as it's being serviced by that overreaching crane, giving it its finishing touches. It's all there now, all the necessary accouterments to make this ship a formidable adversary to anyone or anything that might try to challenge it. This grand ship also represents the product of a great country, hard at work in an immense effort to defend itself and those things for which it stands: liberty and justice. One could argue that this is only plausible within a framework of a strong national infrastructure. One could further argue that this infrastructure is only possible in a country that has created a strong national industrial capability and capacity as generated by its peoples' ingenuity. (As an aside, it would seem that the "hard sciences" and the disciplines such as engineering and manufacturing (and computer software) are the bedrock of and make possible the so-called "soft sciences" that are so important and salutary to a nation's character and health and culture. This comment would seem to digress from the topic at hand, but if the comment were given some thought, it will be seen that it merits some serious consideration. Certainly no one could dispute the fact that the health of this country was in part directly dependent on this marvelous construct, this Essex-class aircraft carrier.

Returning to the picture, try to imagine building such a large and intricate construct. The largeness is apparent, but the intricacies certainly are not. The inside of this ship is filled with innumerable compartments, many of which are packed with all kinds of electrical and electronic equipment (made with electron-tubes, not semiconductors). The engineering drawings for these equipments, and their interconnections with other equipments, were beyond imagination. On top of that, there were miles of wires and cabling running throughout the ship interconnecting equipments in one compartment to those in other compartments. One could liken this ship to a huge body, wonderfully made, with all the complex equipments and machinery in it only awaiting that human spark to animate it into a living, well-functioning entity. One can imagine.

Many of the big ships, such as this carrier, were built in a dry-dock such as this one pictured here. During the three and one-half years of the war, five shipyards were able to construct twenty-two Essex-class carriers. This is a tribute to the phenomenal and formidable industrial capacity of America. As the Japanese Admiral Yamamoto is said to have said after his raid against Pearl Harbor, "I'm afraid we've only awakened a sleeping giant". And so they did. This ship, and all the other Essexes built during the war, took just seventeen months to be built. Take a moment to think about that. I have no doubt that although the home-front was not in harm's way, it expended far more energy to the war-effort that most all of servicemen. What the producers at home did was nothing short of incredible! They didn't win any Purple Hearts or medals, but they did fantastic things to win the war. We all are profoundly in their debt!


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ISLAND, STARBOARD SIDE

This picture was included because it was desired to briefly discuss a situation that was somewhat harrowing (at least it was to me at the time). It took place exactly at that spot where the sailor is standing: on the catwalk just below the gun-barrels of that aft 5-inch gun-mount. Having spent a week as a messenger on the Navigation Bridge, one of my duties was to bring coffee to the personnel on the bridge. My watch this night was 0000 to 0400 (midnight to 4 AM). The ship was always in the "Darken Ship" condition after dark, to deny lurking submarines a visible target and also to allow one's eyes to adjust to the dark more quickly. The night was overcast, and as I stepped out onto the flight deck, it was absolutely dark, even with the accommodation provided by the red-colored lights. It was so dark that I couldn't detect my hand right in front of my face. Therefore, while keeping my hand on the island structure, I made my way to the 5-inch gun-mount, reaching out and feeling for it. First one gun-mount, then the next gun-mount. Now it was a matter of doing the same underneath the gun-barrels, at which time I had to stop short of the catwalk, a few feet further on. Now, as if tightly covered with a blind-fold, I had to feel my way to the edge of the catwalk, inch by inch, subconsciously leaning backward all the time. There was a fresh breeze, the ship was rolling moderately, and the swish of the water below made itself heard. The front of my foot reached out to the edge of the flight deck after about 30 seconds. Now I had to move down the flight deck a short way to get to the two-step ladder to the catwalk. This I reached, in a crouching fashion. The configuration here was a one and one-half foot wide, two-step "ladder" next to the flight deck, going down to a two and one-half foot wide catwalk. The outside of the catwalk was "secured" by a wire strung along the catwalk four feet high (at this location there was a one-foot wide container holding a life-preserver netting). The point here is that when standing on the two-step "ladder", one was essentially two and one-half feet from the free-fall of forty-seven feet to the water below. Mind you, you are "blind-folded", and the ship is in a moderate, irregular roll-mode. What to do? Strange to say, there are probably those who would get a kick out such a situation. For us normal people, we would crouch low, arms outstretched, and creep down the "ladder", and always leaning to the right. Once done, it was down the long ladder to the hanger deck, down another ladder to the second deck, back aft a short way and to the officer's mess (dining-room).

After securing the six cups of coffee, the above route had to be retraced. But now there was the small matter of balancing the tray against the rolling AND pitching AND heaving ship. The motion was moderate, it was true, but how does one do this blind-folded? In two words, with difficulty. Getting to the hanger deck was OK, and even getting up that long ladder to the gallery deck was accomplished without "any" coffee in the saucers. So far, so good. Now the "blind-fold" goes back on as I step out onto the catwalk. Recall that one's equilibrium is suspect when one is blindfolded, and we don't want the ship's complement to be one short the next morning, do we? One could well say that one was standing one and one-half feet from eternity on that pitch dark night with the wind playing with one's mind, and the ship's roll playing with one's viscera. You knew what the situation was and where things were supposed to be, but this was not your familiar living-room by any stretch of the imagination. Ah, that's it. It's your imagination that wants to take hold of you, but you resist it, place the tray on the deck, and crawl up onto the flight deck. Yes, the worst is over, and the bridge is reached. .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE GALLERY DECK

Briefly referring to the island superstructure, one has a good view of the Flag (Admiral's) Bridge that is located at the front of the island (the long, horizontal siding two levels up from the flight deck. That object " tacked onto " the front of the Flag Bridge is the gun-director for the 40-mm quad guntub above it. It was later removed and placed on a pedestal just behind the 5-inch gun-mount. Continuing back from the Flag Bridge are two "squares" which form the Signal Bridge, providing both flags and a signal light. One level above the Flag Bridge is the Pilot House and Navigation Bridge, and above that is the 40-mm gun quad. Higher still and back a bit is the 5-inch gun director and radar. Then directly back aft from the Navigation Bridge is Pri Fli (Primary Flight Operations Station) where the Air Officer controls the activity on the flight deck during flight operations. Continuing back from Pri Fli aireis Bat 2 (Battle Two, the After Bridge). The importance of this picture is how well it shows off the gallery deck, that deck immediately below the flight deck. This is seen by observing the long horizontal rectangle just below the flight deck and above the deck-edge elevator, which is now at the hangar deck level. (Notice an aircraft being pushed onto the elevator. Those people standing on the elevator are the flight deck Airdale, ready to push the aircraft once the elevator reaches the flight deck, while those now doing the pushing are the hangar deck Airdales. It was to my satisfaction that I was a topside Airdale because up there I was not " confined ", I could "enjoy" the great outdoors, and there were more interesting things happening there such as the refueling and resupply ships which periodically came along side our ship. While the topside Airdales had the burden of attending to aircraft crashes and fires that occurred during flight operations, I believe it was the plight of the hangar deck Airdale that trumped that: since the flight deck was made of wood, a bomb from an enemy aircraft most usually went right through the gallery deck, and exploded on the hanger deck (being made of 2 ½ inch thick armor plating). The explosion, the concussion, and the ensuing fires from the aircraft there caused very high casualty rates on the hangar deck. This was an eventuality that was hard to dismiss from one's mind. (The mind certainly is a wonderful thing, but sometimes it becomes a dreadful antagonist.) There's literally a whole world residing on that gallery deck. Due to limitation of space, the various compartments will be named only, since their names explain their functions. First, mention must be made about the C IC (Combat Information Center). It was found that it was too vulnerable to combat damage where it was (on the Gallery Deck), so it was moved down below the protection of the hangar deck. There follows now the listing: crew's berthing, 5" handling room, radio transmitter room, radio workshop, aircraft ammunition stowage, 20-mm ready room, Captain's cabin, Admiral's cabin, galley, gas line gear locker, Mk 29 radar room, stores, gun cleaning room, squadron armory, staff office, senior staff office, Captain's office, CIC (later moved below hanger deck), Air Plot (control aircraft), squadron workshop, radar room, aviation radar room, tool issue room, electric service station, squadron ready room, squadron office, squadron service room, air intelligence room (debriefing), elevator stowing machinery, radar room 2, air group commander's ready room, 20-mm ready room, tool room, drop-tank stowage, radar bomb stowage rack, air ammunition belting room, 40-mm ready room, 20-mm workshop, parachute packing space, aft radio station, aviation engine repair shop 1, arrester gear spare parts and repair shop.



CLEAN DECK

As was mentioned on the previous page, those 5-inch open gun-mounts back aft are now clearly seen, as both gun barrels point back aft. Just forward of them is a 40-mm quad guntub. Notice that this ship has only one 40-mm quad guntub on the stern, unlike the newer Essexes which had two quads there. The radio masts are in the upright position (three up forward and two back aft, starboard side). There are aerial wires strung between them, making possible low-frequency, long-range broadcasts and receptions. Also clearly evident are some of the 20-mm guns pointing uniformly upward. Some of 20-mm guns are not so evident, as that pair of 20-mm guns right at the back edge of the flight deck, port side. Just ahead of these is the LSO's (Landing Signal Officer) platform and its netting outside of that. (More anon). Further up on the port side one will observe that the deck-edge elevator is in its vertical position. This is done so as to allow the ship to transit the locks at the Panama Canal. Who knows, maybe this ship is on its way to the canal right now to pick up its aircraft squadrons at San Diego. This is perhaps why it has a " clean deck ". It so happened that all the Essexes were built on the East Coast, namely Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, and Newport News. The first and last of these were commercial shipyards and the others were Navy shipyards. There was something stimulating about being in a shipyard with all that material and equipment that was used to build ships such as this one. It's almost unimaginable to realize that man's ingenuity is capable of fabricating such a huge and complex functioning object. It's fascinating beyond comprehension..When I was at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, near the completion of the U.S.S. Antietam, one could not help but wonder at such a prodigious accomplishment. It wasn't until some years later that I was able to be a very peripheral part of this process when as a management engineer I spent a short time at the Groton, CT shipyard, where nuclear submarines were being built. This job allowed one to go into one of those missile submarines, and it was, yes, awesome. (I often wonder that there can be those with this wonderful, this magnificent ability to construct such a complex thing as a nuclear submarine or an aircraft carrier, while those in power who lead governments seem to make such a hash of relations between countries. But then, no doubt the rejoinder is that that is comparing apples and oranges. Well,-I don't know). Back in the days of yore, when returning to a shipyard, one could always detect that distinctive " aroma " of oil in the air. This wasn't so much so after having been there a while, but as one first arrived, it signaled the presence of many ships, some small but many large, and all painted that familiar Navy gray. Now gray isn't a particularly distinctive color, but it covered an object of such admiration, it became an "energizing" color. There is a natural beauty in an object, such as a ship, that is constructed such that there is nothing superfluous about it. That " thing " on that ship, if it weren't necessary and useful, wouldn't be there. You can be sure that when you look at a Navy ship, everything on it has a specific and necessary purpose. I don't know about others, but for myself, this is a very pleasing thing (even though it flies in the face of those who like ornamentation). On the other hand, there are those who prefer the shiny " boxes " that are the modern office buildings, while I much prefer buildings that are in the Gothic style, as are found, for instance, on the campus of Yale University. As they say, to each his own. One further comment concerning this picture: here we get a good view of the flight deck overhang up toward the bow. One truly feels then that this ship deserves the moniker "flattop".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SEA-TRIALS

The first thing that caught my attention, strange to say, was the absence of the two 40-mm quad guntubs on the bow. It's clearly seen that to place these guns on the bow, the bow has to be extended forward. This in turn, foolish as it sounds, makes for a beautiful "clipper bow" (as can be seen in other pictures). The Essexes that had these guns were called the "long-hulls".

The second thing that jumped out was that plume of smoke. In naval parlance, the ship is "making smoke". (In those days, all the ships were oil-burning, a step up from the WWI ships that were coal-burning, and a step-down from present day nuclear propulsion. One of the characteristics of the WWI ships were those voluminous pillars of dark smoke trailing them wherever they went.) To "make smoke" was a sin, for it signaled all the world that "here I am". Being a warship, this was pure folly. Your friends already knew your whereabouts (by coded radio), while your enemies were looking for you "with malice aforethought". (Yes, I'm also an environmentalist about smoke, but in this case that's a non sequitur.) This then certainly is one the reasons the shipbuilder performs the so-called "sea-trials". After a ship is essentially completed, it puts out to sea with a skeleton crew to test its sea-worthiness, meaning essentially, how well does the propulsion system perform. The production of smoke was a malfunction of the combustion process, and this could only be corrected at sea-trials.

The propulsion system consisted of four boilers and four turbines, which turbines each turned a propeller-shaft. Included in the propulsion system were large auxiliary machinery-rooms that provided for the electrical plant of four 1250-KW turbo-generators. Each generator had its own set of turbines, including a condenser, circulating pump, lubricating oil pump, etc., etc. In case of the loss of steam power, there were two 250-KW diesel generators on the main deck. Power was also needed for a distillation plant that provided fresh water for the boiler and crew needs. In addition, the auxiliary rooms had to provide both high and medium pressure air for various ship requirements. These rooms also provided pressure for the water pumps used for fire-fighting purposes, in addition to the pressure required by the bilge pumps and the pumps needed to clear out compartments that had taken on water due to enemy action.

Thus the primary source of power was that supplied by the main boilers that were fired by fuel oil. These boilers supplied steam at a temperature of 850 degrees F. and a working pressure of 565 psi. Both of these figures were substantially higher than previous designs, thus providing a higher power/weight ratio. This in turn reduced fuel consumption. The turbines turned the propeller-shafts through a double-reduction gearbox. Thus, by running at a higher speed, the turbines were more efficient in their use of steam. These turbines were serviced by lubricating pumps, exhaust pumps and condensers, circulating pumps, condensate pumps, water pumps, oil pumps, all kinds of pumps and motors. A big ship's engine-room is a wonderfully wrought construct, one of the wonders of the world (?) , one with diverse machinery and equipment interconnected with myriad pipes of all sizes and directions, festooned with valves and "peppered" with dials and gauges of all descriptions. It's enough to put the uninformed into a daze, and it's more than enough to require the fine-tuning touch of the engineers on board ship on sea-trials (to get rid of that damnable smoke). .



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIR OPS

What first attracts attention here in this picture of air operations is the orderly group of aircraft parked up forward. (At the same time, notice the pair of 40-mm gun quads on the bow, as discussed on the previous page.) What with this being flight operations, the radio-masts are in their horizontal position, out of the way. This picture could have equally have been put in the Landing Chapter, as well as the Parking Chapter. The choice of the former would have been predicated by that aircraft that has just landed back aft on the flight deck. It will taxi forward post haste to make room for the following aircraft twenty seconds later. This process continues until all one-hundred aircraft are on board (I don't know about the others, but the Antietam, being a training ship, had one-hundred aircraft on board most all of the time.) What is not seen are those aircraft that have been taken down below to the hanger deck (which can hold up to thirty-five aircraft). This leaves sixty-five aircraft topside on the flight deck after air ops. There is a flight deck officer who controls which aircraft stay topside, and which go down below. This is usually determined by which aircraft need special attention, such as repair of a balky fuel pump, or adjustment of the carburetor, or any of a multitude of other things that make up a high-powered aircraft engine (of up to 2,800-hp). (Here, and throughout this book, the present and past tenses will be perhaps used interchangeably, if incorrectly, as is the writer's predilection to inject himself too closely to the activity at hand. Please accept this blanket apology.)

However, perhaps this picture is more appropriate to the Parking Chapter, what with those thirty-five aircraft in that assemblage up forward. The first thing one detects is that there are five aircraft abreast in each row. This is normal when parking aircraft because there isn't enough time to park them any closer (remember the twenty-second intervals). Under those circumstances, this packing density of the aircraft was fairly tight, especially when one realizes that these are large machines endowed with very powerful engines (up to 2,800-hp, as mentioned). There's a LOT of kinetic energy moving about in close quarters. You could even reach out and touch it. This in turn makes the aircraft seem bigger and closer. When the aircraft are moved back aft (after they have all landed), they are packed together even more tightly (six to a row). They have to be so, since there are one-hundred aircraft on board. Now, this leaves precious little space between the aircraft, allowing for very little room for an Airdale to move about when going to a wheelchock. Those personalities who are excitable, those people who are hyperkinetic, those guys who are "off the wall", would do well to seek another line of work other than being an Airdale. I never saw a high-strung Airdale. Instead, they were calm, cool, and collected, at least EXTERNALLY. It was a matter of intelligence, and ultimately, it was a matter of survival. Enthusiasm has its place, but unless one makes an appropriate choice, one could find oneself dead. And nobody wants that.



SHORT–HULL

Unlike most others, I first noticed that this ship was one of the older Essexes, because of its short-hull. Their flight decks are the same length as are those of the long-hull ships, but the short-hull ships lacked the twin 40-mm gun quads on both the bow and stern. The addition of these guns could of course make the difference between being hit by the enemy and not being hit.

Here there are about eighty-five aircraft topside. It can be plainly seen that about fifteen aircraft must be taken down below so as to make room up forward for catapult launch operations. This is because the flight deck must be clear from just in front of the front 5-inch gun-mount up to the front of the flight deck (to allow for the catapult operations). In this situation, probably the forward elevator is being used to move the aircraft down below, instead of using the deck-edge elevator. This is verified by that open space seen on the forward part of the flight deck. This open area devoid of aircraft is the actual forward elevator. The aft edge of this elevator is the aft part of the catapult-slot, with one on each side of the elevator. Thus that area forward of the back edge of the elevator must be cleared so as to allow the catapult operation to proceed. This will be made clear in the Launch Chapter.

The above certainly is a simple-minded example of doing what is appropriate (doing what's proper for a given situation). As in all of life, shipboard activity is always presenting situations where appropriate actions must be taken. This could be especially important to an Airdale as he goes about his business on the flight deck: "Should I go between those two aircraft as I make my way to a wheelchock, or should I crawl under that aircraft to get there?" Here the appropriate course of action could have far reaching effects. But sometimes an Airdale doesn't have a choice in a particular situation. In those circumstances, there is no appropriate decision to be made. Wartime conditions very often make this very clear. This is a far cry though from those situations where a young person (or ANYONE) drinks even SLIGHTLY to excess. Here they know full well (or certainly should know full well) that there is very definitely a clear-cut choice that is amply available to them. The appropriate course of action is there for all to see. There are no extenuating circumstances to fall back on. There are no excuses for over-drinking except the odious one that waves the flag and says "Yes, I'm damn insecure and damn unsure of myself, so I'm going to mask this feeling by indulging in alcohol, to excess. And I'll do this by joining with the groupies. They'll make me feel better". To my way of thinking, this is the exact opposite way of achieving that remediation of their insecurity that such a person no doubt craves. The same could, and should, be said about drugs of all kinds. Someone said that only the weak drink and take drugs. I won't argue with that, because it does seem that drinking and drug-taking is the the clarion call of the weak and irresolute. (Moderate drinking by adults is not in play here.) The young are notorious for liking to rebel. Some of this can be healthy, and even some forms of rebellion can be appropriate. Perhaps it all devolves into knowing how to be rational about things, large and small, and one does not need to be a grown-up to know right from wrong. I suppose that this means that to be appropriate, one must think rationally. Let's hope so, because doing the appropriate thing is to contribute to the civil fabric of society, which is everyone's job.

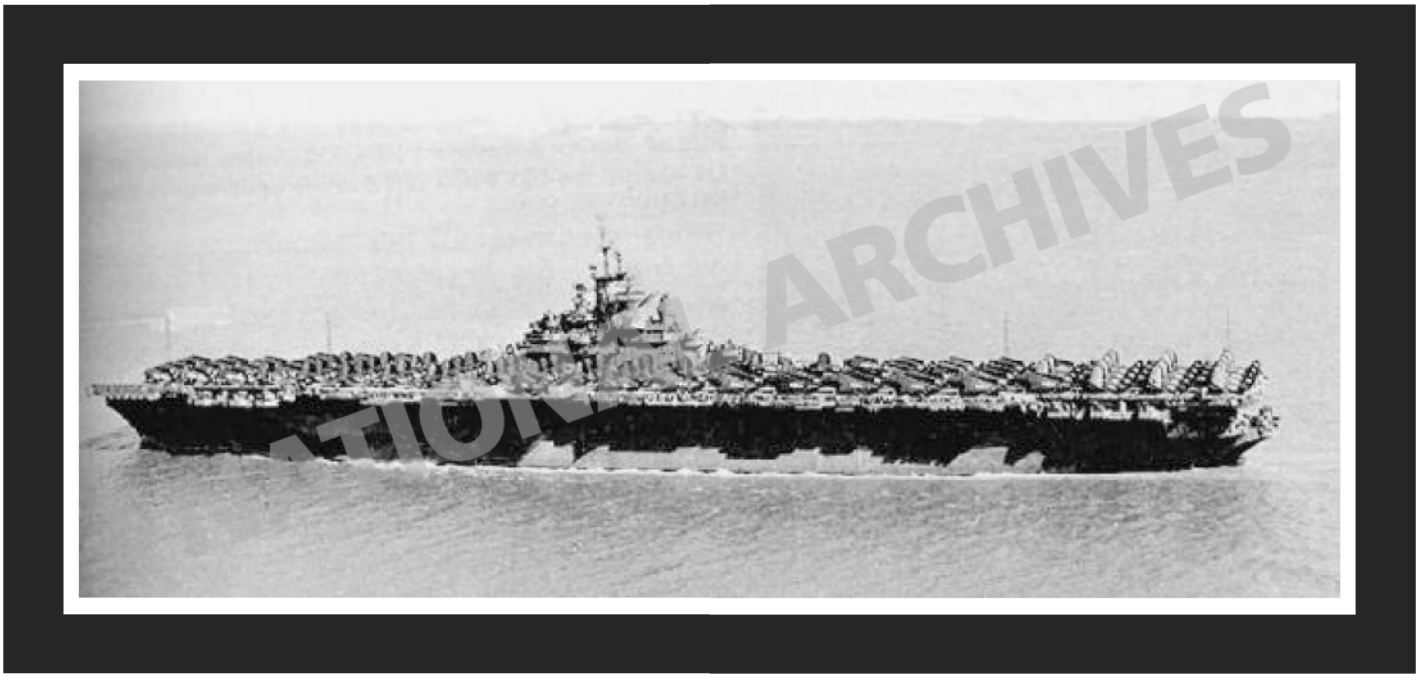


FULL DECK

Although not the usual configuration, this picture dramatically shows what one-hundred aircraft look like, sitting there cheek-to-jowl. Imagine those one-hundred aircraft thundering overhead, echelon upon echelon, as they overfly the Fleet. Imagine the effect it would have on an enemy. Imagine the effort required to service, arm, and maintain such a large load of hardware (which was done by young sailors). Finally, imagine moving, and REmoving, those one-hundred aircraft from topside to down below, and from down below to topside, until just the right configuration was had.

The fact of the matter is that you are looking at a carrier's armament. Just as a battleship has its sixteen inch guns that shoot projectiles, so too do carriers have their aircraft that drop bombs. There was a time when the battleship ruled the seas. That was then, but this is now, and Time marches onward. This is now when the carrier is the Queen of the Fleet. Where once the battleship bombarded targets with huge projectiles, it now provides support to the carriers using its bristling array of 5-inch, 40-mm, and 20-mm guns for anti-aircraft defense of the Fleet (the battleship did indeed also perform bombardment duties, but one could argue that that was secondary).

The battleship of the Iowa-class was as long as an Essex, but it was one and one-half times heavier (to carry those nine sixteen inch gun batteries). While the battleship could shoot a 2,000 pound projectile 20 miles, and aircraft carrier's aircraft could seek out, find, and unload a 2,000 pound bomb on a target. While a gun could place its projectile fairly accurately, after a number of trial-and-errors from an unstable platform, an aircraft is aimed directly at its target. Sometimes they hit the target, sometimes they don't. While a battleship's guns have a maximum range of twenty miles, an aircraft's range is two hundred miles. While a battleship could fire multiple times, a carrier had multiple aircraft. But perhaps the overriding element was to found in the munitions themselves. A battleship's projectile, being projected by a massive explosion, had to have a relatively thick casing so that the TNT within the casing did not detonate. This was not the case for a bomb that was dropped from an aircraft. Thus the 2,000 pound bomb would be more lethal than a 2,000 pound projectile. Finally, and perhaps of more significance than is usually considered, is the cost. The manufacture of a projectile is a precision process, making it a very costly item. On the other hand, a bomb requires no precision manufacturing. Yet an aircraft itself is certainly an extremely expensive item, and has to be factored into the calculations. Is an aircraft that is lost worth that bomb-delivery? One could say "yes" if that bomb sank that ship. But what if the bomb doesn't even hit the ship, and the aircraft is still lost? And what of all that expensive gasoline spent getting to the target and back? Most of all though, what of the life of the pilot? How does one price that? (Would it be sacrilegious to then mention that to train a pilot is a very expensive proposition?) The final dismal item to consider is that when a battleship "slugs it out" with another battleship, your battleship might be the one to suffer the most, or to even sink, with all hands lost. Well, the deed is done (WWII), and one can always believe that Man will be able to use his indisputable powers of intelligence to cause war to actually be an anachronism, a relic of the Dark Ages.


ARCHIVES

LIBERTY CALL

Maybe the word isn't appropriate here, but to me it has just the proper ring: there's a certain "ambiance" about this picture. It is the exact view we had as we left the ship to go on liberty (a 12-hour pass). The only thing that's missing is the "ladder" (steps) from the hanger deck to a small platform below. This ladder was located about forty yards aft of the aft 5-inch gun-mount, down on the hanger deck. That ship that we left, that ship was home, the home we returned to twelve hours later.

Here, in this picture, the ship is underway, but when we "hit port", we would anchor off shore (except when we went to Pearl Harbor, where we berthed at a pier on Ford Island on the other side from the original "Battleship Row" of December 7, 1941, that "day that will live in infamy"). This is also a nice picture because it gives one a good idea of the large dimensions of this ship, acting as it does as "a nesting place for a large number of big birds". The view of the stern of the ship is pleasing as it curves out to support the jutting flight deck. I particularly like the view of the bow as the flight deck overhangs the water below. This view also makes the island superstructure look even bolder than it does from the flight deck as it step-stairs itself upwards. All the little nuances of this picture, all these things I notice with pleasure because it's both "soft" and detailed at the same time. One can surmise that there are no flight operations now, as witness the three upright radio aerial masts, up forward. If one looks closely, one can observe, next to the middle mast, an F6F Hellcat ready to be catapulted, and two people in silhouette. Also notice that this ship does not yet have the five 40-mm gun sponsons "tacked' onto the starboard side of the ship at the hanger deck level.

Although there are no Liberty boats in this picture (the ship is underway), it has a"Liberty motif", because of this view. Of all the ports visited, it was Hong Kong that I enjoyed the most, primarily because of the view we had of the harbor as we lay at anchor in the channel just off of the city. It was spectacular at night from the ship, what with all the lights and the reflections off the water, and it was very interesting by day. This would take a chapter by itself. All that will be said is that there were distractions by the hundreds by those of the opposite gender. This was at once eye-opening and disturbing. How does one, at the height of pubescence (we were slow then), handle such a situation? (I believe I handled it well, as I look back on it.) The temptations were there in abundance for all to see. Yet I knew I would not succumb in spite of all the many nubile, really pretty young attractions. How was this to be, how was this to be accomplished, when far from home and its stabilizing influences? (We're talking about 1945, remember.) It was just a question of how far to go; there was no intention of "going all the way", for sure. Suffice it to say that money changed hands, everything was pleasant if somewhat strained, and abstinence won the day, hands down. It was really never in doubt. The only question was would it go as far as closed doors. It did, and abstinence prevailed. I'll have to admit that it wasn't all that easy, and I'll also have to admit that a certain someone back home was a strong, but not necessary, consideration. At the same time, it was not a help that the one behind closed doors was a friendly, pleasant, and pretty (and somewhat impatient) young lass. I was sorry about that part, and she was no doubt perplexed. However, this is an occasion best left as told. Standards were tested, and good judgment prevailed. Enough said. Besides, absence (and abstinence) makes the heart grow fonder.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE WARRIORS GO FORTH

This "painting" could well be the quintessential "Navy Air" poster, what with those business-like aircraft boldly going forth into battle while the graceful and elegant mother-ship below races forward with her brood of aircraft at the ready. How can one not admit that both ship and aircraft are distinctive in the extreme? How can one not marvel at their clean-cut presence? How can one forget the job they did for us in helping to protect and preserve our freedoms? All hail to the "Navy Air!"

This picture also embodies the motto of the Antietam: "Go Get 'Em Antietam!" Somewhat corny by today's standards, and even back then, nevertheless it still reflected the times. (Parenthetically, this picture was probably taken during the Korean War, as witness the Grumman F9F PantherJets on the catapults up forward. However, those are definitely WWII F4U Corsairs overhead, when the warriors of yesteryear "flew by the seat of their pants", and the contest was "eyeball-to-eyeball".) How does a country find such warriors to volunteer to launch from a ship, fly over endless stretches of ocean, fight a mortal battle, find their way back to the ship, and then drop down onto an unstable platform, over and over? We must remember that no one recruited these warriors; these were those who volunteered to do these dangerous missions. These were the warriors who had the fortitude to fly out into the unknown, and do battle man-to-man. One could say that these warriors all knew what it was that they had undertaken, and one could say that there was extra pay involved, and one could say that the esteem would always be there, especially at home, but one could also say that that they were susceptible to individual life-and-death duels, and one could say that to parachute to the vast and unforgiving ocean below was probably their demise. So what was it that motivated these warriors? Probably it was a mental attitude that makes for a good warrior, not the least of which is pride in self and fighting for a cause bigger than oneself, such as one's country. Part and parcel of this would probably be mental toughness. No mention has been made of physical strength, because in this day and age of technology, this is of less importance. Warriors can use weapons to trump physical strength, though this strength is certainly useful at times. (It is presumed that a warrior's strength is not perverted by the callousness of the bully, that plague of society.).

In no particular order, warriors should be brave and courageous, warriors should be ready to suffer physical pain, warriors should be physically strong in performing their duties, warriors should be smart, warriors should be prepared to die, warriors should believe in their cause, warriors should do what needs to be done, warriors should use their intelligence, warriors should be mentally strong in performing their tasks, warriors should be mentally tough, warriors should be physically tough, warriors should not be afraid to stand alone, and true warriors do not strut or seek acclaim. Who among us are warriors? Who among us could be warriors? Who among us were warriors? Who among us could name a warrior? Who among us would want to be a warrior? Who among us cares? Why should we care? Why shouldn't we care? Why should we say an Airdale is a not warrior? Why should we say an Airdale is a warrior? Are the above attributes appropriate to define a warrior? Is it necessary to have a warrior? Is this getting tiresome? Wouldn't it be good not to need warriors? Are you glad this is not a book about warriors? I am, even though I believe an Airdale actually can be considered a warrior, at least according to the above specifications. Rewrite the specifications to your liking and then revisit all of this.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SUBLIMINAL INFLUENCE

Now why would a serious book include a picture of a ship "advertising" the fact that it had raised $15,000 to benefit a worthy cause? Let's just say that it was subliminal influence that "made me do it", as has been said, often. Is this a proper thing to do? Does it show suitable respect? Does it indicate sportsmanship? Is it fair? Well, let's move on and become more serious. This picture was actually included because it so clearly shows the Essex-class carrier with its clean lines and the clean array of aircraft back aft. This picture was taken as it was going under the Golden Gate Bridge over the San Francisco Bay. I had already left the ship, the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36), when I was on it off the coast of China. That's the exact platform that was my duty station, my home, where it was pushing here, crawling there, everywhere being vigilant and aware. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, a year of tumult and turbulence, toil and trepidation. This is completely belied by the tranquility projected by this picture, this picture of one of the then titans of the sea.

It would be fitting and proper to say that friendships were made over a period of a year under those conditions of stress and strain. But truth be told, that was not what happened in my case. So how was it that one could be that proverbial loner, the one who didn't fit into what should have been a natural camaraderie of those undergoing the same ordeal? This was admittedly a fault on my part, but it was a fault honestly derived: when one finds himself completely and utterly distracted by a personal situation back on the home-front, one has absolutely no incentive in being an extrovert of any kind. (There's a proportionality here: the deeper the distraction, the more the introversion.) That said, there was no call to be a recluse, and I was no such thing. "Shooting the breeze" was doable, even while being reserved. The point to be made here is that it was not a smart thing to do to go about your business on the flight deck in a condition of even moderate distraction. In fact, it could be downright DANGEROUS to do so, and this was directly implied to me at the time. The actuaries among us would place such a person in the "Risky" category, and rightly so. Although this picture implies a benign setting, should the ship be turned around, the speed kicked up to have thirty knots of wind over the deck, the "Flight Deck" bugle call sounded, and the engines on deck cranked up, then it would be "a whole new ball-game" (isn't the vernacular sometimes useful?). .

On a less subjective note, notice how the bow has been extended to make room for the two 40-mm guntubs. Also notice the two open 5-inch gun-mounts just below the dollar-sign ($). Back of them is a gun-director, while back of that and at a lower level are two more 40-mm guntubs. This same arrangement is found back aft on the port side. As to those aircraft, observe how closely they are parked, six aircraft to a row. This was typical on the Antietam since we were the training ship for the Fleet with an aircraft complement of one-hundred aircraft. That meant, in turn, that there was no rest for the weary.

Before closing, let's be honest. Isn't she pretty? Isn't she a beauty? The answer of course is a resounding "Yes!" Thank you.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HONOR ROLL

Here they are, those mighty ships, all in a row. Four are wearing their camouflage paint, while the fifth in the row is in light gray. The outlier wears a dark gray. It was this group of Essexes, plus nine others, that took the war to the very coast of Japan, and it was this group of carriers that were of prime importance in achieving that final victory that made this country safe from foreign intruders. Below is the Honor Roll of those ships that served during the war. None were lost, but there were those that suffered grievously, as outlined in the final chapter. Only the Boxer, Antietam and the Lake Champlain of the group did not confront the enemy. And now let's list the Honorees:

U.S.S. Essex, CV-9
Newport News, commissioned 31 December, 1942

U.S.S. Yorktown, CV-10
Newport News, commissioned 15 April, 1943

U.S.S. Intrepid, CV-11
Newport News, commissioned 16 August, 1943

U.S.S. Hornet, CV-12
Newport News, commissioned 29 November, 1943

U.S.S. Franklin, CV-13
Newport News, commissioned 31 January, 1944

U.S.S. Ticonderoga, CV-14
Newport News, commissioned 10 September, 1944

U.S.S. Randolph, CV-15
Newport News, commissioned 9 October, 1944

U.S.S. Lexington, CV-16
Bethlehem Quincy, commissioned 17 March, 1943

U.S.S. Bunker Hill, CV-17
Bethlehem Quincy, commissioned 24 May, 1943

U.S.S. Wasp, CV-18
Bethlehem Quincy, commissioned 24 November, 1943

U.S.S. Hancock, CV-19
Bethlehem Quincy, commissioned 15 April, 1944

U.S.S. Bennington, CV-20
New York Naval Shipyard, commissioned 6 August, 1944

U.S.S. Boxer, CV-21
Newport News, commissioned 16 April, 1945

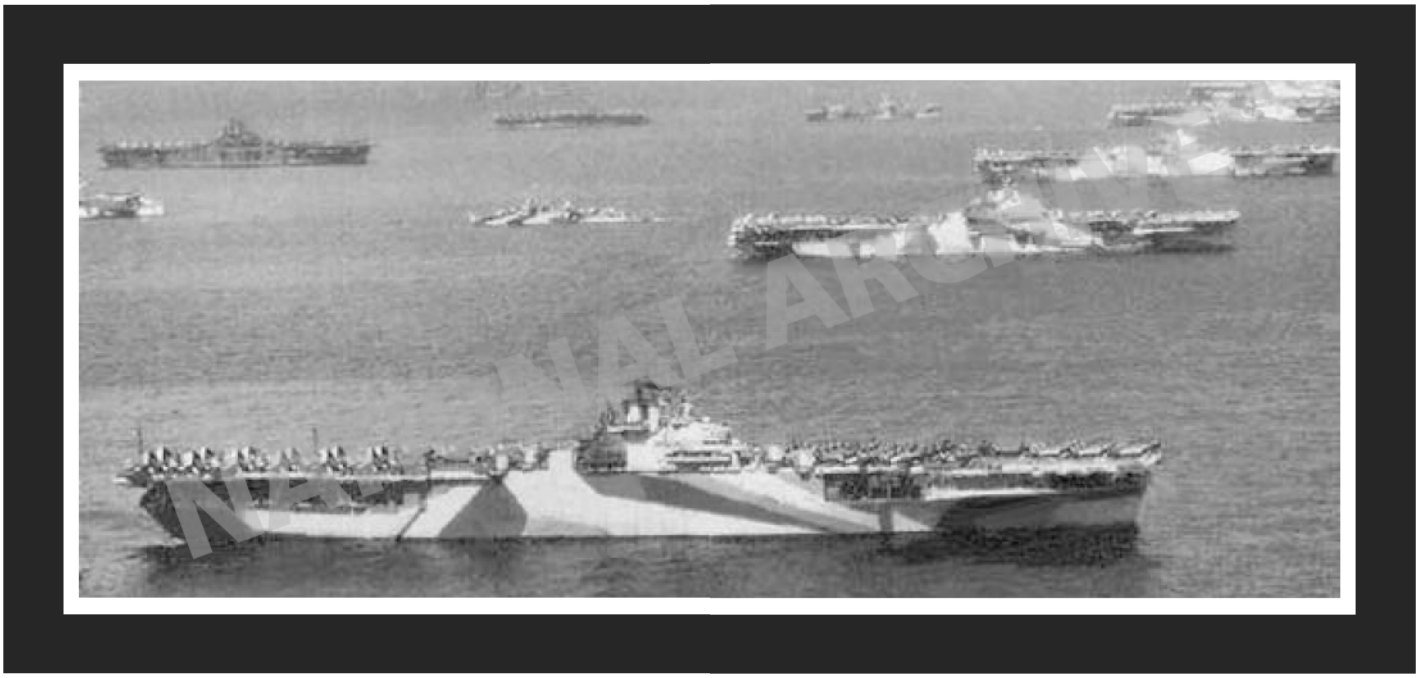
U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard, CV-31
New York Naval Shipyard, commissioned 26 November, 1944

U.S.S. Antietam, CV-36
Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, commissioned 28 January, 1945

U.S.S. Shangri-La, CV-38
Norfolk Navy Yard, commissioned 15 September,1944

U.S.S. Lake Champlain, CV-39
Norfolk Navy Yard, commissioned 3 June, 1945

I find it hard not to be ebullient about these magnificent ships, and I seem to think that I've used the word "magnificent" innumerable times in the course of putting these two book together. While I don't want to overdo it, I do want to try to instill in the reader the feeling of awe that I believe these ships deserve. Not only did these ships, and their crews, serve this country well and nobly, but also they seem to inspire in the beholder, such as myself, a sense of majesty. Perhaps it's a nonsensical idea, but I look at these ships and I harken back to the days of old, when knights were bold, in their white shining armor, doing battle with the forces of evil. They were strong and brave, doing deeds of chivalry. They were gallant warriors upholding the good, and righting the wrongs. They supported the weak with valor, all the while being generous to those who needed it. And they were noble and courteous. What else could you want of a ship! Noblesse Oblige is not a bad thing, and in my imagination these ships embody that concept. They went forth to do battle with those who would try to shackle us, and they were victorious. Amen.



NAVAL ARCHIVE

"WHEN DAY IS DONE AND NIGHT IS COME"

To me, this silhouette expresses the magnitude of the magnificent ship, the illustrious Essex-class aircraft carrier. True, it's a ship of war, what with those aircraft on its forward flight deck, but at the same time, it's also a tribute to the greatness of this country's technical capabilities and its industrial might. While a country's greatness can not solely be judged by its productive capacities, they are those capacities that allow for the attributes that do make a country truly great. (It's left to the reader to fill in that list of attributes.) This picture probably was taken during the late afternoon, while the sun was hidden. But this picture also closely resembles some of the moonlit nights as experienced when on the Antietam, "When day is done, and night is come". Since this picture is the last one of this chapter, I will exercise my privilege of composition by devoting some personal comments about this scene, as this scene contains an irrepressible reminiscences, and also because it was very definitely a integral part of my experience while on the Antietam. (There will be those who would prefer to move on. Please do.)

On more than one evening there would be bright moonlight shimmering on the broad limitless expanse of the sea, just as in this picture. I'm at my usual spot, the look-out's seat at the after bridge (Bat 2). For some unknown reason, there never was anyone outside in evidence after supper, on or above the flight deck.. Strange. There was nothing but the wide open spaces, and me. This was perfect. This marvelous night was mine alone, and all was still, all was quiet, except for the occasional soft swishing sound as the bow of the ship sliced through the water. The ship heaved almost imperceptibly now, then it rolled slowly, back and forth, slowly back and forth. A zephyr of a breeze filled my senses with that distinctive salt-air. Now was the time for some blessed solitude away from the sound and the fury of the day on the flight deck. Now was the time for relief from those insistent gales that seemingly were always buffeting you. Gone was the pushing and pulling, the straining to move those winged machines. You were now almost lulled by that fresh, gentle sea-breeze of the night and the ship's slowly deliberate undulations. Now was the time to reflect, unfettered, about the mind-games that I was playing on myself as I thought back to the home-front and that very special girl, "my rapture", all the while she was making herself further and further distant from me. (Oh, "The agony and the ecstacy!"). This brooding, this mind of mine made distraught by my own imaginings, needed to spend itself out into the quietude of the night. Finally, the emotional turmoil and anguish subsided (probably due to emotional fatigue), the soul was re-nourished and renewed, and the night had done its work. Tranquility was again at hand.

(As a sidebar, I also recall that at other times I would think back to my youth, when at summer camp in the Green Mountains of Vermont. We would have an evening, every evening, in the main room of the main house, sprawled out on the floor, as the Director gave a "fire-side" chat. When it was time to "hit the sack", we would all sing this song, softly and slowly: "Now the day is over, night is drawing nigh, shadows of the evening steal across the shy". (55555-6-5, 666-76-7, 6-6543222-222). Then we'd slowly meander out into the evening and up the hill to the cabins, as the light azure sky blended into the light golden glow at the horizon providing a backdrop to the conical mountain about thirty-five miles away. Even as a youngster I noticed this, and probably unknowingly, I cherished it. I suppose it took times of stress to make me realize this. But then, why are hard times necessary to remember good times?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

What follows in this chapter's introduction is merely my own personal philosophical understanding of these pictures and pictures in general. Each person has (should have) his/her own unique understanding to better enjoy what they see. This chapter contains many, if not most, pictures that I believe should be termed "realistic paintings" rather than precise photographs To me, this should be considered a good thing, especially for distant views as are to found in this chapter. For starters, it's usually better to view a picture in its totality rather than in its detail, and a painting does this better than most photographs. If one zeros in to view the detail of each and every object in the picture, then I believe that one does not "comprehend" the picture. Those who eschew the details for the totality of the picture are probably of the artistic bent (good), while those who enjoy only the details of the picture are probably technocrats (good). To my way of thinking, it should be the former first and foremost, and then perhaps, depending on the subject of the picture, the latter that gets the attention. The "realistic painting" obviates the distraction of the details. After all, in the extreme, a picture is merely a very large conglomeration of tiny dots. Who wants to look at a bunch of dots? (I showed one of my pictures to a printer, and the first thing he did was to take out his little magnifying glass and tell me how many dots per inch were in the picture. He was the consummate technocrat. The artistic content of the picture was of no consequence, and he was only doing his job: what's the resolution? Well, for those technocrats, most of the pictures in this book are 150 dots per inch, while some are up to 300 dots per inch. They say that 150 dots per inch are fine for book publication. But there are also pictures in this book that are down to 120 dots per inch, and one that is 72 dots per inch. Those pictures that are less than 150 dots per inch are the ones that definitely look like "realistic paintings" and to me are as good as the 300 dpi pictures.) It is the multitude of tiny dots that make digital photography possible (and so versatile). So then, a realistic painting allows the viewer a better grasp of the essence of the scene. Carrying this concept further, if the picture is in black-and-white (gradation of grays), the viewer is even less distracted by the details as represented by the colors. While color can be very attractive, they place color-combinations above the shapes and forms of the picture., and thus the meanings, of what the picture represents, because there are now more variables to be processed by the viewer: the color, the tint of that color, and the saturation of that color. When a picture has many colors, the picture becomes much too "busy". A simple melodic tune is much more pleasing than a frenetic jumble of musical notes, no matter how well ordered they are (although the composer's virtuosity in creating that "jumble" is certainly evident). But then I usually prefer the simple and calm in music. Exciting is fine, but only in moderation. (The genre of entertainment on TV/movies is so "HYPER" and frenetic and bombastic and prevalent that it has become the genre of farce and absurdity. This is realism gone amuck. I suppose one could say that they're merely one parody trying to outdo a previous parody, or one generation trying to one-up the previous generation. That's sad, really sad that it takes so long to grow up. End of mini-sermon.) Finally, to round out this commentary, I'd like to say that the silhouette has its own place in the gallery of pictures. Here one can more easily interject oneself into the scene and then extrapolate that scene into one's own experiences or thoughts which in turn expands the meaning of the image. That is, the silhouette might conjure and elicit thoughts that would not be forthcoming if there were specific details there to impede this process. Sorry about taking on this very short interpretive mode, but I believe that the pictures in this chapter might be short-changed if this were not done. But actually, each reader should do this for him/herself if this chapter is to have its greatest effect of hopefully making them more appreciative of these fine pictures as taken by the official Navy photographers. In my book they are to be given the "Well done" salute. They made possible this retrieval of a little bit of important history.

ABOUT FACE

The purpose of this picture is to introduce the reader to the chapter on External Activities. We start far away from our eventual destination, that carrier as it slips through what is now a docile and almost glassy sea. This picture also imposes on the viewer an awareness of the huge expanse of ocean that is "the stage upon which this adventure takes place". It's apparent from our perspective that the ships in this Task Group have just finished a launch operation (having left a few aircraft back aft on the flight deck; these aircraft will have to be moved up forward or down below on the hanger deck so as to allow for the return of the squadrons). We can clearly notice that the ships have just completed a 180 degree, hard turn to port, thus setting a new course. The Task Group now has a following wind, just the opposite of what was required for the launch operation of about five minutes before. From the tight turn and the carrier's churning wake, it is clear that this Task Group is in a hurry to reach their destination, and who knows, maybe also their destiny. Keep in mind that the just launched pilots are going to have to relocate this moving "airstrip" several hours from now, and it will definitely not be at the place from whence they left it. Of course they know where the ship is supposed to be several hours hence; but will it be there? The exigencies of Fleet operations on a spacious ocean during war-time don't make for neat resolutions. However, the aircraft do have search radars (of a limited scope) that enable a fairly accurate rendezvous. Without these facilities, "lost at sea" could become a real eventuality. And yet, even with radar, certainly nothing is certain in such a hostile environment (read, "a mobile airport, with nothing below but an unmarked ocean"). To counter this, they are not alone. They are part of a group (presuming that they don't stray too far in their individual combats). These pilots thus gain strength from the presence of their compatriots. It is this extra measure of strength that could be their salvation.

Being a part of a group with a common goal is a strong form of support. We see this in everyday life, and we consciously, or unconsciously, seek out this support. This is all to the good, if the group is essentially good. But what if the group is antithetical to the individual's well-being, both morally and physically? Almost without exception, everyone recognizes that peer pressure is pernicious in such situations, both to the individual and to society in general. So the big question is how does one resist such peer pressure (even when one is fully knowledgeable about the deleterious nature of a particular group)? Would that one could feel secure in oneself, that one could feel sure enough of oneself, of one's attitudes, of one's self-worth, that such groups would hold no attraction. If one should be pithy enough to want excitement above all else (if that's the group's "gig"), then one is indeed shallow and should seek a good healthy activity as an outlet (such as sports or intellectually interesting activities). It would also be helpful if one felt so strong of character that one could take even a quasi-leadership position contrary to what it is that the anti-social group embraces. (The key here is that one should not feel it necessary to be liked by everyone. To be one such is very rare indeed. And one should not diminish one's standards to find accommodations with the anti-social crowd). After all, the anti-socials are very likely those who lack a basic self-confidence and are afraid to "stand on their own two feet" (and are probably "closet bullies" to boot. It's been said before, and it'll be said again: bullies lack self-confidence. What's your thought on this?). To feel self-reliant is a blessing, and it will keep one out of all kinds of trouble. Do yourself a favor by checking it out, and tell your friends. They'll appreciate it. Appreciation is a good thing.



NOT ALONE

We, the carrier, are not alone here in this arena of possible pending confrontation with those who would seek to inflict grievous harm on us and our ships, because we, the carrier, have a good and trusted and faithful friend accompanying us in our mission. If nothing else, such a companion gives us moral support, which is just as important as the group support of the previous page. In our many experiences over time, we sometimes encounter "negative support" (a Japanese submarine is a "negative support"), but in war-time, friendly units unremittingly provide positive support. This generates trust in others, truly a blessing that is well nigh the most valuable of all our possessions. If we lack this one possession, all else becomes almost moot. Does it take a war to teach us something? Hopefully, no.

I'm of two minds as I look at this picture: on the one hand, this picture is a beautiful tableau of a ship silhouetted starkly against a shining sea, where the bright and brilliant sea serves to accentuate the essence of the ship. This picture also generates thoughts of quiet solitude where all is still and the war-time activity is suspended, if only for mere moments. But they are moments to savor, because who knows when a similar opportunity will come. On the other hand, and in a somewhat perverse way, that same quiet solitude mentioned above can conjure up things such as the words of the song "Solitaire", where "a little hope goes up in smoke" because "solitaire is the only game in town, and every road that takes him takes him down", so "while life goes on everywhere, he keeps playing solitaire". Why should such a tranquil scene as this produce such dismal recollections? One answer could be that at times a beautiful scene can provoke a melancholy response because sometimes a present happiness has to be tempered by a past sadness to augment a future happiness. That is, the past and the present have to balance out each other in preparation for a future happiness. All this from a black-and-white picture? Why not? Or perhaps it's a recognition or a restatement that the mind will always have happiness trump sadness. What's your call? Can a picture stimulate both happiness and sadness? And if so, why does the former almost always win out over the latter? Is it true that a picture can re-energize one to a point where one regains one's natural propensity to be eventually upbeat about one's future? Why not? The mind's wonderfully made, and it's who we are. Take care of it by using it and not abusing it. It's true, to paraphrase, it's profane to waste a mind (or to CAUSE a mind to be wasted .....).



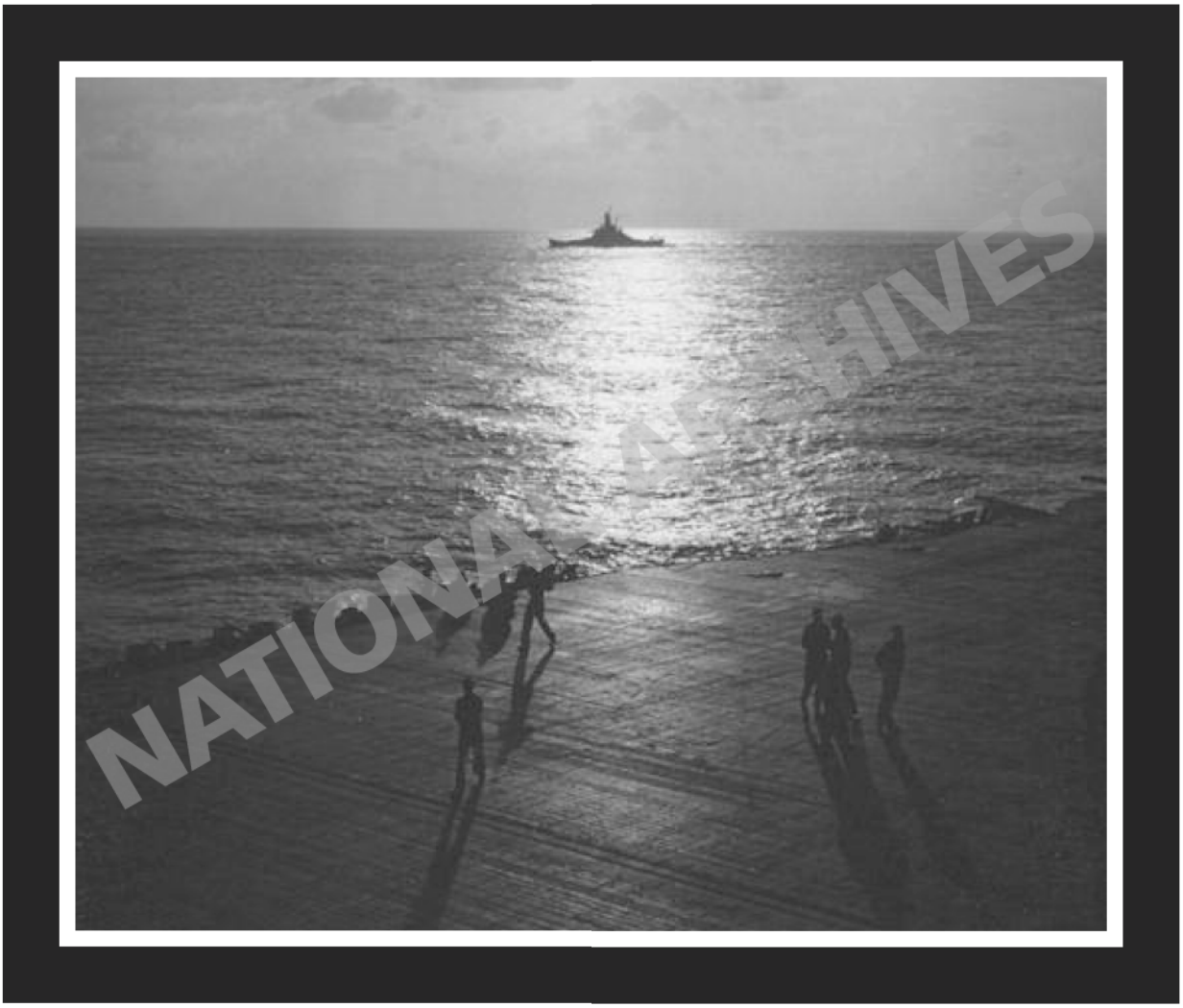
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INTERLUDE

This picture immediately caught my eye because it nicely shows the contrast of the dark figures of some Airdales on the brightly sunlit flight deck, while the battleship in the distance is highlighted by the reflection of the sun shining brilliantly on a calm sea. All this makes for a very attractive study. Certainly this picture is very simple in content, is very soothing to the intellectual senses, and yet it is also very effective in masking the fact that we are looking at a part of the stage upon which a war is being fought. This picture presents a sharp juxtaposition of two conflicting images, the one of peaceful tranquility, the other of the ever present possible incipient life-threatening attack. Such is the dichotomy of warfare.

The battleship in the distance will turn to port if we, the carrier, turns to port. It will turn to starboard if we turn to starboard. And it will speed up if we speed up. Before Pearl Harbor, the roles would have been reversed. Now, everything centers around the carrier. The big 16-inch guns of the battleship were then the prime force of the then navy. Now the aircraft of the carrier take on that function, while the function of the battleship now is to be our guardian, what with its bristling array of AA guns. Now the 16-inch guns can only be used in support of the landings on enemy-held positions (there are those who will take exception to the word "only". That bombardment support was to them crucial, and there will be no argument about that from this quarter.) (There have been many books written about the changing roles of the battleship and carrier, so we will not go down that road.)

Again, here the shadows of the Airdales on the flight deck are long, and they speak of an even longer day, sometimes defined as the tumult of the sound and fury of ninety aircraft as they are launched and landed twice a day, every day. And sometimes the day is defined as the drudgery of manhandling those bulky "hulks" that go winging off into the yonder, only to reappear a couple of hours later. In the picture, the work has been done, for now, and a lull transcends everything, even if its for a short time. However, soon it will be all motion and commotion, apprehension and tension, as the "warbirds" return from their missions. One by one the aircraft will land and "impose" themselves on the weary Airdales at the end of a long day, where the weariness is not just physical, but also of the mind. To have had the flight deck clear of aircraft was a gift of respite. Where once there was noise, now there is quiet. Where once there was agitation, now there is inaction. This is now the time to direct one's thoughts and attention, in the little time available, to those things that are external to the ship. Home is one of those things. There could be other things also, such as "I wonder what's out there, out beyond the blue horizon?" Those Airdales sitting there, they know the enemy has one paramount thought: "Get the carriers!", because they know, just as we know, that it's the carrier's aircraft that can hurt you. The peaceful scene here could be shattered at any time by the sound of the bugle calling "General Quarters", followed by the boatswain's pipe "too-WHEE, too-WHEE, to-WHHHEEEEE", and then "Now hear this, now hear this, all hands man your battle stations, and then the incessant "BONG< BONG, ...BONG". The search radars are not stopping and hunting about a 10 degree arc, so it must be assumed that the picket destroyers have picked up an enemy submarine on its sonar. Yeap, there goes one of the "tin cans" (destroyers) making white-water under a sharp turn to the abeam direction of the Task Group. If a submarine found us, can the boggies be far behind?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

JUXTAPOSITION

Just as was he previous picture, so too is this one an example of a true juxtaposition. On the one hand, there is the aesthetics of the beautiful sky (even in black-and-white), and on the other hand, there is the in-process attempt to destroy a Japanese submarine. Personally, I'm attracted by the attractive and ethereal shapes and shades of the sky's clouds that are set off by the dark and angular silhouettes of these ships of steel. If one would but look, one could observe that over time Mother Nature often displays for us a magnificent show in the sky, no matter what the time or the season.

What we are observing here is serious business that to the uninformed might look like a nice bucolic nautical setting. That "bump" behind the destroyer is the result of a depth-charge which has detonated below the surface. To accomplish their mission, a submarine has to be at periscope depth. Thus the depth-charge is set to explode fairly near the surface, and as a consequence, part of the effect of the explosion can be seen above the surface. The game of cat-and-mouse has to be done quickly so that the submarine won't have a chance to descend too far below. If this happens, the fuse is set for a lower depth, but the chances for a "hit" are diminished (the depth-charge doesn't have to actually hit the submarine. This is fairly esoteric stuff for a mere Airdale who has only a superficial knowledge of such operations. For those who are interested in this subject, it is recommended that one reads books about the "Battle of the Atlantic" where German submarines made the life of the merchant seamen an extremely perilous one. When a ship was sunk (and many were), the crewmen were usually lost.)This picture of the destroyer (the cruiser is in the background) is puzzling in that one does not notice a frothing wake behind it, or the breaking of white bow-waves. It would seem that when the ship's sonar detects a hostile submarine, it would "step hard on the accelerator" in order to override the submarine before it could descend and slip away. While it's understood that a submarine's top speed underwater is no match for a destroyer's top speed, nonetheless "post haste" is of the essence here because of time and distance. In other words, this picture looks too placid for mortal combat to be taking place. To be honest, I was sorely tempted to digitally erase that "bump" behind the destroyer, thus having a very benign scene that one could appreciate devoid of that distraction (hint: place one's finger over that "bump").

On a serious note, enemy submarines were definitely more than a distraction, and much effort was applied to the eradication of this scourge. Carriers had armor platting to minimize damage from torpedoes, but several carriers were lost early in the war due to torpedo hits (no Essexes were sunk by either torpedoes or bombs). It should be remarked that torpedoes were delivered not only by submarines, but also by aircraft. Our delivery system was the TBM Avenger torpedo bomber, the biggest single engine aircraft of WWII. Our ship always carried a squadron of twenty TBMs. That's heavy armament. (Parenthetically, at the Battle of Midway, all of our torpedo bombers were lost in their attack on the Japanese carriers. However, the bombers that were used were the inadequate Devastators which were too slow, among other things. While they were being devastated near the surface by AA fire and Japanese Zeros (fighter aircraft), the Dauntless dive-bombers in turn devastated four Japanese carriers in about four minutes (all four carriers eventually sank). Much has been written about this turning point in the war. (See "The Battle of Midway..)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ENEMY IN THE AREA

Evidently this carrier is taking evasive action, as witness the the fairly abrupt turn to port (ship listing away from the turn). It has also been firing its 5-inch guns as is seen from the 5-inch shell casings strewn about on the flight deck (these casings were ejected from the gun-mounts; notice the little opening in the lower part of the gun-mount to the right). Also notice the fire-hose played out underneath the 40-mm guntub to the left. Since it's probably early in the war, these Airdales have not been issued steel helmets (used during General Quarters). Looking closely, one can detect life-belts being worn by a couple of Airdales. They were all issued life-belts, but most all of the Airdales are not wearing them. (Who knows why). These life-belts were about ten inches in width, but were folded to five inches and were strapped to one's waist. The life-belt had a small black tube attached to the life-belt with a valve at the other end. When ready to use the belt, one would open the valve, blow into it until the belt was fully inflated, and then close the valve (turn a cap). This type of life-belt was certainly much better than what the sailors on the destroyers wore: kapok-filled life-vests. They were bulky and in the way. We Airdales had it much better: a snug-fitting "belt" that was out of the way (it's hard to notice them in this picture; take a look at the Airdale to the left with his hand on his left hip. That's what we wore.)

In the distance can be seen a battleship and an escort carrier. The escort carrier seems to have taken enemy-inflicted damage, but that's not clear, especially when there are no AA shell-bursts overhead. In fact, there are no 5-inch shell-bursts anywhere. Why? I don't know. Some of the Airdales are looking at this action and perhaps wondering the same thing. Or perhaps they're thinking, "are we next?" Or, "will we get a bomb dropped onto those aircraft back aft?" Yet the Airdales seem to be completely unperturbed, even with the listing ship telling them that the enemy is near. Probably these Airdales are "old-timers" and take all of this activity in stride, while the "new-comers" don't want to appear apprehensive in front of the others (something about being "macho"). Since the inexperienced sailors have never been under enemy fire, they tend to think the worst will happen, a not unreasonable consideration under the circumstances. "Will I be able to handle myself well when bombs drop down on us, and especially onto all those aircraft back aft? Will that bomb cause a raging inferno that leaves few options, being on a limited-size area? Will I be one of the ones who will die? Or worse, will I be so badly injured that life thereafter will not be worth living?" Not pretty thoughts, these. It's not unusual for the young to conjure all kinds of fears of the unknown, especially when one has so much to hope for in the future. This is a fear that can be irrational at times, even when that which generates these fears is directed at you. Fear is no respecter of rationality. And yet, to fear the unknown is only to unnecessarily punish oneself. The fear will not dispel that which causes the fear. (Was it not President Roosevelt who said that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself"? It would seem that such (unknown) fears can only be counterproductive. It would also seem that to counteract this (irrational) fear, one must go to the antidote of that Boy Scout motto: "Be Prepared". What could be more obvious than to be prepared for (legitimate) untoward eventualities? The unknown may always be there, but its ability to render one inoperable need not be. Why fear what you cannot confront? Here, it would seem that equanimity should be the proper solution. It saves wear and tear on the senses and the sensibilities. Equanimity serves one well.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FIRE ON BOARD

The dark, sharp, 16-inch armament is close, while the light, fuzzy aircraft armament far away.(The smoke trailing the carrier is probably not from enemy action, but it surely is a beacon to any enemy somewhere "out there"). This is also an interesting contrast of how low-in-the-water the battleship is, while how high-in-the-water the carrier is. The battleship's low-profile makes for a more stable platform for its 16-inch armament, while the high-profile of the carrier allows for a little more room to launch its armament. Yes, the platform is a little more unstable, but many an aircraft had seemed to have disappeared out of sight over the front of the flight deck, only to reappear straining to gain safe altitude as it increased its speed. This difficulty during launch could have been due to an inadequate warmup period, or it could have been a result of some "minor" engine problem.

Since there are no 5-inch gun-bursts filling the sky, we will discount enemy action as being responsible for that smoke-trail. Since the smoke is coming from the island superstructure area, and since this appears to be a launch operation (because of all the aircraft on the aft part of the flight deck), we will assume that an aircraft revving up its engine to full power in preparation for a launch has caught fire. This does not often happen because the aircraft are well maintained. An explanation could be the following (gladly deferring to all the aircraft mechanics out there): as the engine is revving up to full power of 3,000 rpm, flames shoot out of its exhaust-pipe on either side of the cowling (this is normal). What is not normal is that oil could have spilled or otherwise have gotten on the cowling. If this oil was not thoroughly cleaned off, the flames from the exhaust-pipe could "easily" ignite that oil, and the ensuing fire in turn could set fire to the engine itself. Thus we observe the fire coming from the take-off point at 450 feet from the front of the flight deck. It is at this time that the Airdales "put on their fireman's hat" and quickly subdue the fire. Time is of the essence here because there is a launch operation underway and because there are "appointments to keep".

It was my observation that Airdales had only a small modicum of fire-fighting experience. We never had fire-drills to hone what skills we did have. That is, we were not trained fire-fighters. However, this in no way meant that the Airdale was allowed to dillydally in his assigned task of putting out fires. Yes, he did have the yellow-shirts (rated enlisted and officers) to direct what was to be done, but he was also expected to take the initiative NOW. He in effect responded to the situation in an instinctive manner: there was a fire; PUT IT OUT, and then talk about it later. That was the modus operandi. Though I hesitate to say it, it was almost Pavlovian: when the Air Boss above pushed the "Crash" button (making a high-pitched, steady sound), the Airdales "appeared out of the woodwork", immediately. After all, a fire on board ship meant big trouble, especially with all the aircraft on board.

Some idea of distance is gained by realizing that both ships are about 900 feet long. Normally, the distance between ships is such that the battleship would appear "four times as long as the carrier" rather that twice as long as in this picture. The ships of the fleet are dispersed so as not to be a concentrated target. And yet, it would seem that if they were concentrated, they would in turn concentrate their fire-power (as the "English square" or the Roman phalanx). Oh well, we'll let the military experts argue about it. . .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE NAVY HYMN

(1)

"Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!"

(2)

"Oh Christ! Whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walked'st on the foaming deep,
And calm amidst its rage didst sleep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!"

(3)

"Oh Trinity of love and power;
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them where-so-ever they go,
Thus ever more shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea."

(4)

"Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its anger tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace;
Oh hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!"


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AT THE READY

On a previous page, mention was made of the necessity to "Be Prepared". Certainly those 40-mm guns are prepared and "at the ready". But who knows? We might be at General Quarters right now, looking for that group of black specks flying in ranks somewhere high overhead as they "size us up" as the targets that we are. We could of course also notice whether or not our search radars are jittering around a fixed point up in the sky as they take the measure of some "unknowns" that are almost too far away to be visible. (The IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) on our aircraft facilitates this process.) This is when we really appreciate the technical expertise of those radar operators in their darkened compartments bending over those consoles with the luminous dots and lines moving about here and there. So far, so good.

Since this picture lacks photographic detail, I took the liberty of trying to augment the sky by making the clouds more "dramatic". Hopefully, my amateurism isn't too evident. In any event, the composition of this picture is interesting: the battleship straddled by the gun-barrels, the small escort carrier being followed by the Essex carrier, and especially the clouds. To my way of thinking, without interesting clouds in a scenic picture, one has only one-half of a picture. In addition, this picture should not be perused in detail, but rather it should be viewed from about two feet away. Then one looks at the picture as a whole without being distracted by the grainy details.

Having said that, now direct your attention to the Essex carrier (in detail). This view gives one a good understanding of how the bulky superstructure is balanced by the extension of the flight deck on the left side. When a naval architect is designing a ship, this balance of course is an obvious consideration. (When I was working for the Naval Ship Systems Command, I recall talking with radar engineers about the concern ship designers had with the stability of the ship when changes were made in the placement of new radars (new in configuration). One doesn't just "tack on" structures topside with impunity. This is especially important the higher up the structure. Common sense will tell you that the higher the antenna, the longer the lever-arm, and so the less the stability. In heavy weather this diminished stability could be catastrophic. A moral can be extracted here: one's understanding of a given situation often (usually) is determined in large measure by the view of the situation with which one is presented. Thus, the ship's stability is better understood from a rear view perspective than from a side view. So it could be in life: one's understanding of a problem, of a situation, of a stand-off, is better grasped by realizing the protagonists' perspectives. This could be restated by saying that one should "walk in the other person's moccasins", and to know "where he's coming from" (to use the vernacular). Everyone has their own starting point in any given situation.

Before closing, again go to the detail of noticing the small protrusion on the right side of the ship. That protrusion actually is a 40-mm guntub "tacked onto" the side of the ship. There are four other such guntubs also tacked onto the ship on the right side further up forward. These were added after the ship had transited the Panama Canal to the West coast.



FULL SPEED AHEAD

It's apparent that we, and they, are close to "flank speed" because the bow-wave is so prominent, as is the wake at the stern of the ship Looking up above and to the left, we observe the medium gray sky imperceptibly changes to light gray over the ship, making the ship appear more pronounced. When the ship cuts through the water at near top speed as here, it produces an endlessly fascinating and kaleidoscopic display of pure white foam "playing with" and intermingling throughout the dark and light blues and aquas and greens of the ocean. It can be somewhat mesmerizing to watch this "show" and listen to the subdued hissing sounds of the bow-wave rise and fall as the bow pushes the water before it. When considering this show, one should take the blacks and the whites and the grays of the picture, and in one's mind's eye, convert them into a palette of shades of colors (of blues and aquas and greens), plus the foaming whites. At the same time, one should put the sea into constant motion, always in motion. Nothing is static, neither the ship nor the sea.

As we zoom in toward the ship, it can be seen that there is a full deck of aircraft back aft. They are no doubt poised to launch. Since there are no aircraft airborne, or on their way to become airborne, it must be concluded that flight operations are not in progress. Yet the "full speed ahead" aspect of the ship could imply that right at this very moment all the aircraft are revving up their engines in preparation for a launch. The deep-throated roar of the engines is pervasive. Also right at this very moment, we can infer that the Airdales are strapping on their cloth-helmets and goggles as they make their way to a wheelchock. There's no time now to stand on the catwalk to relax and gaze at that "water-show" fifty feet below. Those opportunities are few and far between because there "always" seems to be aircraft that need to be pushed here, or other aircraft that need to be pushed there, or etc., etc.

Alternatively, instead of getting up to speed for a launch, perhaps we are going post haste to a destination that requires our attention. Let it be understood that one of those aircraft, with up to 2,000-lbs. of bombs, can very quickly attract the attention of those who are the targets. A nasty business this, dropping bombs on those who are designated as targets. We, the ship, are the conveyers of the purveyors of what can only be called "death and destruction". Again, a very nasty business, this. One can't help but stop and think about this business, and one can only conclude that war is, in fact, Hell, for both sides. But if bad people start a war, it is incumbent upon the good people to finish it, and that is what we have to realize about that ship, in this picture, as it goes "full speed ahead" toward its destination. It's on a mission to do a job that could turn out to be very unpleasant for all concerned. But then, nobody said it would be easy. After all, its mission is to break things and send human beings to their maker. Now that certainly is very nasty business. In this case, as they are wont to say, somebody has to do it. Unfortunate, but true. "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

REINFORCEMENT

There they are, those two mighty warriors, "dashing to the fray to take the war to the enemy", doing their duty to their country. This is a reassuring sight; but then, perhaps as an harbinger of things to come, the clouds have started to form, presaging foul weather and worse to come. The foul weather will make any forthcoming launch operations that much more difficult, but "time and tide await no one". As one looks at this picture, in the best sense one gets the feeling that one is not alone, that one has a tried and true friend nearby. This is therapeutic, certainly, in times of stress and conflict. This is a true blessing, and it is something that too often goes unnoticed and unappreciated. How often do we feel the reassurance of knowing that over there, there is someone we feel we can trust? Most of us don't like to be alone in the intellectual sense, bereft of the satisfaction of support one acquires when one is a part of a group that has similar aspirations. Just so, over there, there is our compatriot, full of resolve to do that which is necessary to bring us a little closer to that goal which we both desire and for which we might have to sacrifice our well-being. When the cause is just, the call is a must.

This picture also speaks volumes concerning the concept of cooperation under dire circumstances, where two entities reinforce each other and thus each becomes the stronger for it. This is a pragmatic expression of cooperation in a common cause, where both ships are working together to achieve a common goal. Just as teamwork is vital in matters of war, so too can it be the crux of the matter in peace-time situations. (Should the cooperation be against you, "it's a whole new ball-game", to use the vernacular.) An obvious example of this cooperation was that of the Allies during WWII, and in a real way, the Marshall Plan right after the war. Thus, reinforcement, one to the other, is augmented by cooperation and teamwork. For those of you who believe that "competition" is "de rigueur" for best results, a few comments will be made. Teamwork can of course manifest itself in competitive activities as well as in cooperative endeavors. The former finds expression in games, while the latter are usually found in socially substantive activities. However, the former requires that there be a winner and a loser, while the latter usually means that everyone is a winner (which is good). At the same time, winning promotes self-confidence and self-assurance. This is good. Winning encourages one to do one's best. Good. Winning is a learning tool. Good. But for the non-winners, there is much to be gained also. They gain in any improvement they achieve (including self-confidence). They gain in a sense of accomplishment if they are a little better than the day before. Good. They also learn: they learn that "losers" can thus also be "winners" in that they are better than they were the say before. (There is a GREAT deal of satisfaction in overcoming a (sensible) challenge.) They learn that the scourge of discouragement can be handled, while a "winner" is denied an opportunity to learn this important attribute. But a winner can learn to be a leader, and this is good if applied in the right way. The only thing bad about being a "loser" (in team or individual contests) is to allow losing to tend one to become a quitter. In losing, one can gain that inestimable reward of understanding what it is to have internal strength, also known as "intestinal fortitude". If each "put down" engenders a stronger resolve, one is definitely a winner. So win or lose, one is a winner if one "stays with it" and doesn't become discouraged. To my way of thinking, the game's "score" doesn't specify the winner. Not by a long shot.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FAIR–WEATHER

This picture was included for the one simple reason that it appeals to me on a couple of levels, from ebullient to restful. What a magnificent show these clouds provide as they slowly rearrange themselves from one configuration to another one, building, always building. Should these fair-weather clouds develop into towering thunderheads with their "solid" cascades of amorphous mounds of moisture reaching upward, all we can do is stand in stunned silence and awe as Mother Nature displays Her might. On the other hand, while these clouds in the picture are evolving into potential storm-clouds, this very process has a beauty all its own such as the dramatic juxtaposition of the smaller, more angular dark clouds superimposed on the larger, more bulbous light clouds, all of which are rendered in tonal gradations from dark to light. With all of this, we are presented with a grand panoramic view of this immense stage as the clouds taper off into the distance. Even the abrupt lines of the solid ship contrasts nicely with the billowy roundness of the clouds above. Yes, I enjoy this picture very much because it depicts one of the greatest shows available anywhere.

With the sea calm and the pace slow and the weather fair and the sun reflecting off the side of the ship, all seems right with the world. One would like to take advantage of this world of tranquility, but no, there is no respite from that other world of activity and animation there on the flight deck. When the Antietam was at sea, everything was all enterprise in undertaking the training that was paramount to the purpose of the Antietam. From afar, everything seems to be at ease, with no aircraft circling above looking to land on board, and none leaving the bow of the ship in launch. However, up close, one would observe that work is being done in preparation to launch aircraft (discussed in next chapter). Think of this ship as a small airport that is constantly in the condition of preparing to launch or is launching aircraft, or is preparing to land or is landing up to one-hundred large aircraft, twice daily. A training ship is allowed no respite to enjoy that which may be there to enjoy (such as the weather-show) because when a squadron of aircraft has passed muster, off they go to make room for the next squadron that is to undergo training. So it goes, foul weather or fair, launch, land, launch, land,..... (It should be said that it was the Antietam's experience that most of the weather was fair to middling, in spite of that typhoon that caught us once.). Is that the Antietam there in the picture? Who knows, except to say that we were always in the company of either the U.S.S Boxer (CV-21) or the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard (CV-31), with two destroyers per carrier. If one looks closely, one can detect two dots on the horizon to the left. We were certainly never that far apart when we cruised with the CV-21 or CV-31. To give a proper perspective, if the Boxer were on the far side of the ship in the picture, it would appear as one-half the size of the ship in the picture. Speaking of the Boxer, occasionally, at nighttime, we would both go our separate ways, and then the next morning our aircraft would seek out the Boxer while the Boxer's aircraft would seek out us. Once found, our aircraft would "attack" the Boxer, and the Boxer's aircraft would "attack" us, preceded by the General Quarters call. All hands would man their battle stations, including of course the gunners who manned the 20-mm, 40-mm, and 5-inch guns. As our gunners tracked the "enemy", they would "drop bombs" on us. Were we "sunk"? I don't know. Were we "hit"? I don't know. Were we impressed? Yes, I was. Things happened pretty fast during those occasions, and I for one took notice. But it was only a game. How would I have reacted if it were real? I don't know.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE SENTINELS

This TBM Avenger, with bomb-bay doors open, frames two of the seventeen wartime Essexes. They seem to stand there as sentinels ready to guard against those who are out there beyond the horizon bent on doing us harm. Probably there wasn't a sailor on board who would have looked at this scene and arrived at this contrived construction. However, we readers have no such constraints. Anyway, from this vantage point one can certainly understand the moniker "flat-top" as they "sit on the horizon".

The United States produced seventeen of these Essexes during the war, of which fourteen were directly engaged with the enemy. (There were twenty-four Essexes built total.) This picture in no way reflects the Task Group and Task Force concept that was the basic configuration for our fleets during the war. In this picture, there are no other ships to be seen (except that cruiser to the right.) Toward the end of the war a Task Group was essentially comprised of two Essexes, two medium or escort carriers, a few battleships and cruisers, and many destroyers. In turn, a Task Force was made up of two or more Task Groups. Thus, Task Group 58.2 and Task Group 58.5 made up Task Force 58, as a non-specific example. While the battleships and cruisers provided close-in bombardment support during a land invasion by ground troops, a prime purpose of their presence in a Task Group/Task Force was to provide anti-aircraft protection for the carriers. It should be remembered that the "main battery" of a Task Group/Task Force were the aircraft on board the carriers. Rounding out the protection for the carriers was the anti-submarine screen as represented by the myriad destroyers surrounding the capital ships. The destroyers also supplied anti-aircraft fire for the fleet. And finally, the carriers' own CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) provided aircraft to counter enemy aircraft.

Thus we are led to believe that this picture shows two carriers not yet in a war-zone, or even within its accompanying shield of surface ships. (If there were some destroyers in view here, we could even say that this is a picture of the U.S.S. Antietam and the U.S.S. Boxer/Bon Homme Richard.) In any event, these two carriers are not in any hurry to arrive at any particular destination, so we can conclude that they are not in any "field of fray" (but beware those submarines!). But who knows what's really happening here? The point is that the picture's composition trumps its significance.

Note the wheelchock around the wheel. These were always in place the moment the aircraft's engine was shut down. The rolling and pitching of the ship made this mandatory because the brake-system was not to be relied upon. Even on land this was done. Also note the strip of tie-down cleats running from the wheelchock toward us, as does another one to the right. These were used to tie down the aircraft if heavy weather was imminent, or when the ship goes into port with aircraft on board. However, usually when we went into port, first the aircraft would fly off to the "beach". It's not clear why they did this, and a pilot would have to answer that. One explanation could be that when we went back to port, a new squadron was to replace the one that had just finished their training with us. That was what we did: train one squadron, send them off, receive another squadron, train them, send them off, and so on and on. As a training ship we saw no enemy action, but we did see a great deal of aircraft activity which translated into friendly ACTION.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SHAPES AND FORMS

Once again, it's the shapes and forms that defines this picture, not the details. Details can be good, yet distracting, while there are times when the shapes and forms are all we need or want to tell us of the significant aspects of what is in front of us. And once again, it's the darks and the brights that give definition to the shapes and forms: the dark ship and aircraft are presented to us nicely by the bright sea. Even the illuminated deck contributes to the impact of this scene.

What is seen in the foreground is the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII, the TBM Avenger torpedo bomber, of which there were usually twenty in a squadron. They replaced the Devastator torpedo bomber of the Battle of Midway in 1942, the turning point of the war in the Pacific. All of the Devastators were lost in that battle without one of their bombs striking a Japanese ship. It was devastating, what happened to those aircraft. Their big drawback was their low top speed. But that story is best left unsaid here. The semi-silhouette of the TBM emphasizes its sheer bulk and its large wings. In fact, with those large wings they usually became airborne well before the front edge of the flight deck 420 feet from their take-off point. Also, it was an impressive sight to see that huge wing fold back under hydraulic power as it taxied forward after having landed on board. In addition, although their engines were not as big as those of the fighter aircraft, they were definitely a presence when walking among them at launch-time.

Now to that ship unique in the annals of naval warfare and in topics of sea-going ships. Look at her, riding high in all her majesty, no matter what the angle of view. Even in stark silhouette, she suggests a certain nobility that cannot be denied (alright, I'm definitely partial about this). No Essex was ever lost to enemy action. The only ones they did lose were to those who dismantle ships in the shipyards. What a pity that at least one could not have been saved in wartime condition:with all its guns intact and with a straight-ahead flight deck. It was that ship, and only that ship, that carried the battle to the enemy and prevailed. Post-war, all the Essexes were given a canted deck of about ten degrees to port to allow aircraft to land without the possibility of crashing into aircraft parked up forward. To my way of thinking, the Essexes lost their "majesty" when their guns were removed and the island superstructure was diminished. They lost the uniqueness of their character, which was a prominent top-side. Three thousand personnel on board made this ship a small city devoted to the protection of these United States which stands for "the little guy being protected from domination by the big guy", to use the vernacular. In the most basic of terms, bullying should be, without a shred of questioning, anathema in this "land of the free and home of the brave", to respectfully repeat the sociologists' argot. What could be clearer? What could be more basic? And what prompted these pronouncements? Why it was, and is, that defender of righteousness, the gallant Essexes which are honored throughout this book. All honor to you, you Essexes!



NATIONAL ARCHIV

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

There off to the port quarter is the U.S.S. Lexington (CV-16), churning the sea to a foam as it spiritedly races to meet the foe, just as did the Continentals some two-hundred and twenty-seven years ago at Lexington, Massachusetts about six miles outside of Boston. Thus did the Revolutionary War start in earnest in support of the First Continental Congress of 1774 (the year, incidentally, when Newark Academy was established, with the Minuteman on its seal). On the night of April 18, 1775, the British sent troops from Boston to capture military supplies held by the Continentals in Concord, a few miles further out from Lexington. The Americans had foreknowledge of this action. So Paul Revere, a silversmith, set out to warn the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord. The British were intercepted at the Lexington Green, and this then was the first skirmish of the War for Independence, where was sounded "the shot heard round the world". The Colonists were roused, and the "rest is history". Below are portions of that immortal poem memorializing those events, as recorded by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend. "If the British march
By land or sea from the town tonight,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light–
One, if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm.

O
O
O
O
O

You know the rest. In books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled——
How the farmers gave them ball for ball
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.
So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm—
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoofbeats of that stead
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S.S. BUNKER HILL (CV-17)

There stands the U.S.S. Bunker Hill (CV-17), a ship that was later to know and withstand one of the most grievous examples of damage that a ship is called upon to undergo. Who was to say which of those ships was to be the one(s) that would have all Hell befall it (them)? Surely they could not presume that it would be they who would make the passage through the coming months (years?) unscathed. The enemy had shown itself to be too determined and too resourceful to guarantee such a fortuitous eventuality. As the Fates would have it, it was the U.S.S. Bunker Hill that was one of those to experience the agonies of overwhelming death and destruction unleashed without pity (who can make a case for pity in a war to the death?). Certainly each one of those proud Essexes was marked for oblivion by the enemy, including the Bunker Hill whose namesake was a very unprepossessing hill in the town of Boston in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In June of 1775 it was there that the American Revolution made a large stride toward full hostilities between a nascent American nation and the world-powerful British Empire. It was as the result of this Battle of Bunker Hill that pride was brought forth in many (but not all) inhabitants of this land whose desire was to wrest their independence from those who would have it otherwise and who ruled without due representation.

The city of Boston was occupied by the British. They had determined to begin offensive operations against the rebellious Americans by seizing a dominating hill called Bunker Hill. The Americans caught wind of this objective and thereupon rushed one-thousand militiamen to this "height". The British then proceeded their attack by bombarding the hill from British vessels in the nearby Boston Harbor (Charles River). Up the hill the Redcoats advanced, only to be met by volley after volley from the American muskets. Twice the Redcoats were repelled, but on the third try, they were able to take the high ground because the militiamen's powder supply gave out. Of the three-thousand Redcoats, one-thousand were casualties while the Americans suffered only four hundred. In spite of having lost Bunker Hill, the battle was deemed a great moral victory for the American troops because they showed that they could stand up to the strength of the dominant European nation by inflicting heavy casualties on the best of the British army. (Contrary to what many think, that there can only be one satisfactory result, victory, it was shown here that second best can indeed be considered a "victory". All the "losers", please note, battles can be lost, while the war is eventually won. The American Revolution was a shining example of that eternal truth.)

So the Battle of Bunker Hill was very advantageous to the cause of independence because, although they were defeated at this particular battle, the moral implication, and the ensuing improvement of morale, was very salutary to their cause of freedom. The Americans confronted superior numbers of the best of Europe, made them retreat twice, and thus proved that they were capable of upholding the fight for the liberty that they so ardently sought. How could this spirit as demonstrated at the Battle of Bunker Hill be denied? And how could not that pride be shown in the Essex named the U.S.S. Bunker Hill (CV-17)!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S.S. PRINCETON (CV-37)

None of those four Essexes out there is the U.S.S. Princeton because it was not commissioned until November, 1945. But an Essex it was, just as were those four warriors. The Princeton derived its name from the American Revolutionary War, as did the Essex (CV-9), the Yorktown (CV-10), the Franklin (CV-13), the Ticonderoga (CV-14), the Lexington (CV-16), the Bunker Hill (CV-17), the Hancock (CV-19), the Bennington (CV-20), the Lake Champlain (CV-39), and the Valley Forge (CV-45). So it becomes clear that all these proud Essexes carry the banner of that proud period in the annals of this proud country, where the shot and shell of then will become the fire and fragmentation for those ships now lying within our gaze at their repose.

It was a perilous time, those months of the winter of 1776-1777, when in that period of gloom, Thomas Paine exhorted his compatriots with his famous speech that started, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from service of their country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman".

Thus it was that the American morale was eviscerated. Congress had fled from Philadelphia to Baltimore. On that Christmas night in 1776, General Washington made his famous crossing of the Delaware River (find the Leutze painting) and captured 1,000 Hessian troops in Trenton, New Jersey, after which he crossed back over the river. Washington was so encouraged by this first clear-cut victory in a year and a half that he again crossed the river on the last day of December 1776 to occupy Trenton, New Jersey. Having been challenged by the British General Cornwallis in superior numbers, Washington left his camp-fires burning, circled the entire British army, and made his way to Princeton, New Jersey, not too far away. There Washington encountered some British regiments which he defeated. Any further fighting was broken off because of the bitter winter weather. The result of this victory at Princeton, as that at Trenton, did a great deal to boost the sagging American morale. Although it couldn't be said that this was to be the harbinger of things to come, the Battle of Princeton did change the adverse momentum against the Americans at that time. It was just what was needed under the circumstances of low spirits when all seemed to be slipping away and the ragtag army was beset by numbing cold and inadequate rations. Books could be written about how ordinary, plebeian citizens could leave hearth and home, with no assurance of any kind of success, with no adequate rations, with no sufficient clothing, with no satisfactory military training and how these patriots could stand off, and even overcome, the elite British and Hessian professional soldiers arrayed against them. The words "perseverance, steadfastness, tenacity, single-mindedness, stamina, determination" come to mind, but most of all come the words "patriotism and the steady belief in the righteousness of your cause, regardless of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles" would be even more appropriate. Perhaps to make it more current and amenable to present-day (respectful) jargon, the militiamen's conduct could well be summed up by quoting the U.S. Marines': "Esprit de Corps" motto: "Semper Fidelis" ("Always Faithful"). This then can be represented by the name of the Battle of Princeton, and as reflected by the ship named the U.S.S. Princeton (CV-37).



U.S.S. YORKTOWN (10)

Those two sailors, gazing at the U.S.S. Yorktown (CV-10) anchored at rest with the others, seem to be wondering what it is that makes an aircraft carrier such a fascinating tour de force. Was it merely its size? No. Was it its complement of one-hundred large military aircraft? Maybe. Or was it that, just as did the Battle of Yorktown, this ship was capable of bringing finality to a military enterprise? Well yes, because it was the Battle of Yorktown, in Virginia in 1781 during the American Revolutionary War for independence, that brought to an end the military operations of that war. Actually, it would be more properly described as the Siege of Yorktown by the combined troops of the American Continental Army and the soldiers as commanded by the French General LaFayette. This army was in turn supported by French ships of the line under command of Admiral de Grasse. A week later, these forces were reinforced by the troops of General Washington and those of the French General Rochambeau. The British, being outnumbered and opposed by ground troops on one side, and being bombarded by warships on the other side, had no recourse but to surrender. This they did on October 19, 1780. Laying down their arms, they marched out of their fortifications to the tune of "The World Turned Upside Down".

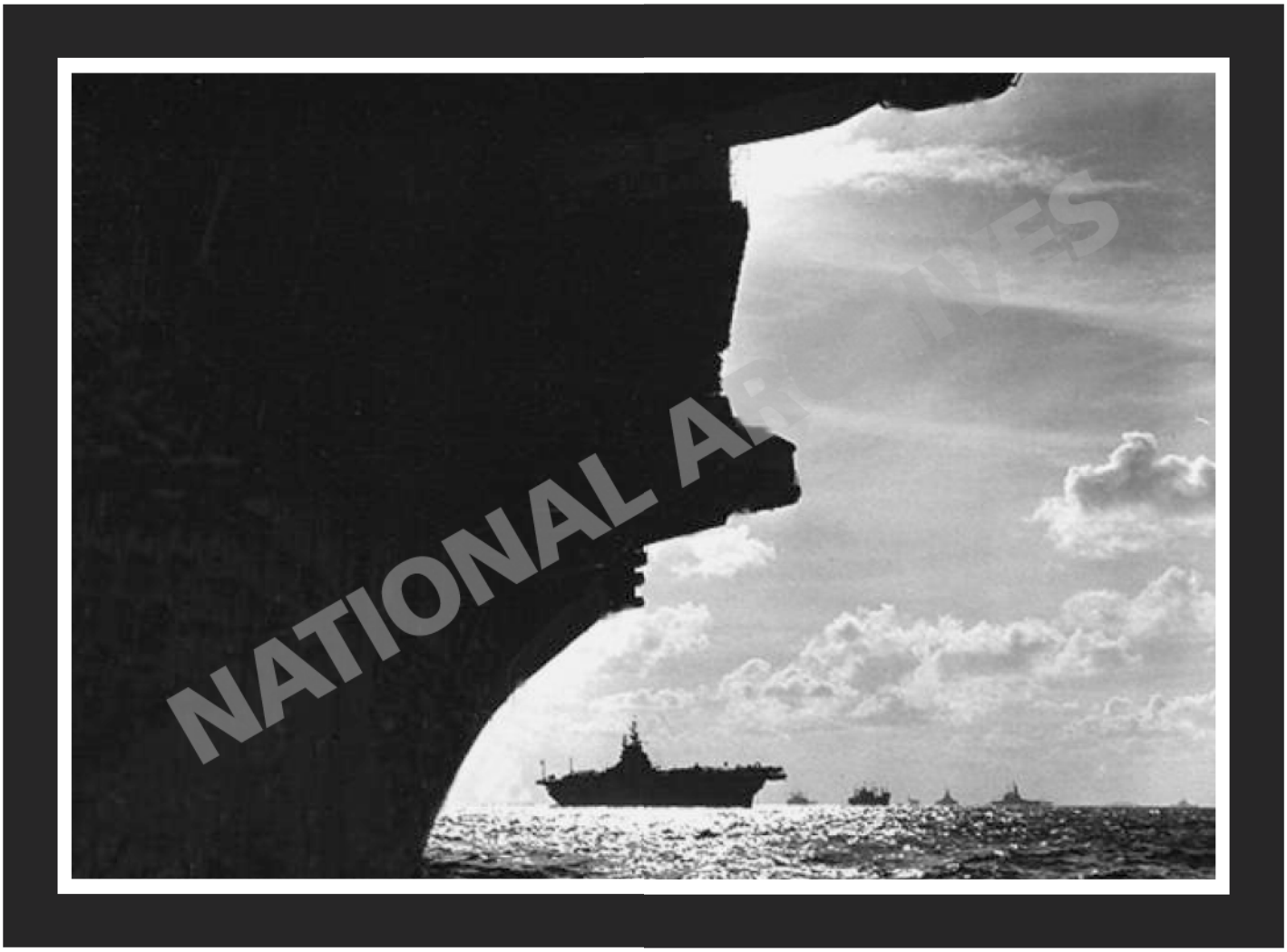
This victory at Yorktown effectively ended the fighting of the American Revolutionary War because these results at Yorktown produced adverse political consequences in Great Britain. The cabinet of Lord North collapsed and King George III appointed a new cabinet that turned out to consist of sympathizers to the American cause. This new cabinet then acknowledged the independence of the American colonies and in November of 1782 the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Peace were signed. Its terms were a tribute to the skill of the three principle American negotiators, consisting of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay. The Treaty recognized the independence of the United States and its borders which now extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River to the west, and from the northern border of Florida to essentially the northern border of the present Canada. The treaty was signed in Paris on September 3, 1783, thus officially ending the war nearly two years after the Siege of Yorktown. Vive la U.S.S. Yorktown, the name-sake derived from that splendid result in the Revolutionary War many, many years ago and which now resides as a museum ship in Charleston, North Carolina. (It should be said that this ship is resident for visitors as a tribute to its exploits during WWII, and not as a memorial to the events of that time at Yorktown, Virginia. But no matter, we can pay homage to it for BOTH events.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S.S. FRANKLIN (CV-13)

There's the U.S.S. Franklin (CV-13) standing clearly between the shining sea below and the bright sky above, all the while being "sheltered" under one of the other Essexes. On March 19 of 1945 the Franklin would have been grateful indeed for any shelter available, for it was on that deadly day that it received the most damage ever sustained and suffered by any aircraft carrier that survived the war. This event has been well chronicled elsewhere, and the Franklin will be forever remembered for its gallant and heroic perseverance. Back then, my recollection of the pictures and film of this immortal ship, as it slowly glided into New York Harbor, will remain forever much illuminated.

There's no easy way to transition from that illustrious ship to that equally illustrious man of letters, diplomacy, and science, Benjamin Franklin. That said, who was Benjamin Franklin that he should have a ship named after him? First, he was a printer and publisher of renown. It was said that his "Poor Richard Almanac" was read by more people than any other publication except the Bible. It borrowed proverbs and maxims from around the world and converted them to plain, rigorous prose in such a manner that it exerted a great deal of influence upon the thinking of the pre-Revolutionary Colonists. He also established his scientific standing both here and in Europe by his innovative experiments with electricity. As both a politician and a citizen, he was a leader in many activities that provided benefit to the Colonies in general and Philadelphia in particular. He studied such things as science, languages, and devoted much of his time to a debating club that considered morals, politics, natural philosophy, and rational thought. He became a de facto Ambassador Extraordinaire to Europe in many matters pertinent to the interest of the Colonies. In this country, one of the things he did was to participate in an assembly to unite the Colonies in the French and Indian War. While in Britain, he was called upon to address the British Parliament in debates about relations with the American Colonies. It was then, in 1775, that he was chosen to be a member of the Second Continental Congress, as he realized that conciliation with the British was merely a vain hope. He became a trusted advisor to General Washington and a crucial member of a committee appointed to draft a Declaration of Independence. Franklin was then sent to France to negotiate a treaty of aid against Britain. Franklin used his good offices to secure a treaty of alliance with France in 1778 that afforded the Colonists recognition, financial aid, and military and naval support. As it turned out, this became a critical factor in the Colonists ultimately arriving at a successful conclusion to the war, as ratified by the Siege of Yorktown. While there, Franklin wrote: "All Europe is on our side of the question, as far as applause and good wishes can carry them. Those who live under arbitrary power do nevertheless approve of Liberty, and wish for it; they almost despair of recovering it in Europe; 'it's a common observation here [in Paris] that our cause is the cause of all mankind, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own". In 1782, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay signed the preliminary articles of the Peace Treaty. The final Treaty was signed in Paris on September 3, 1783. .In 1787 the Continental Congress called a Constitutional Convention to amend the Articles of Confederation that up to then was the ruling document for the separate states. There, Edmund Randolph of Virginia presented the "national" plan which was to be the basis for the new constitution. Many iterations were necessary, and Franklin , the oldest there at 81, was a prime contributor to this process. Thus, it was eminently right and proper to name a magnificent ship after one of our premier predecessors.



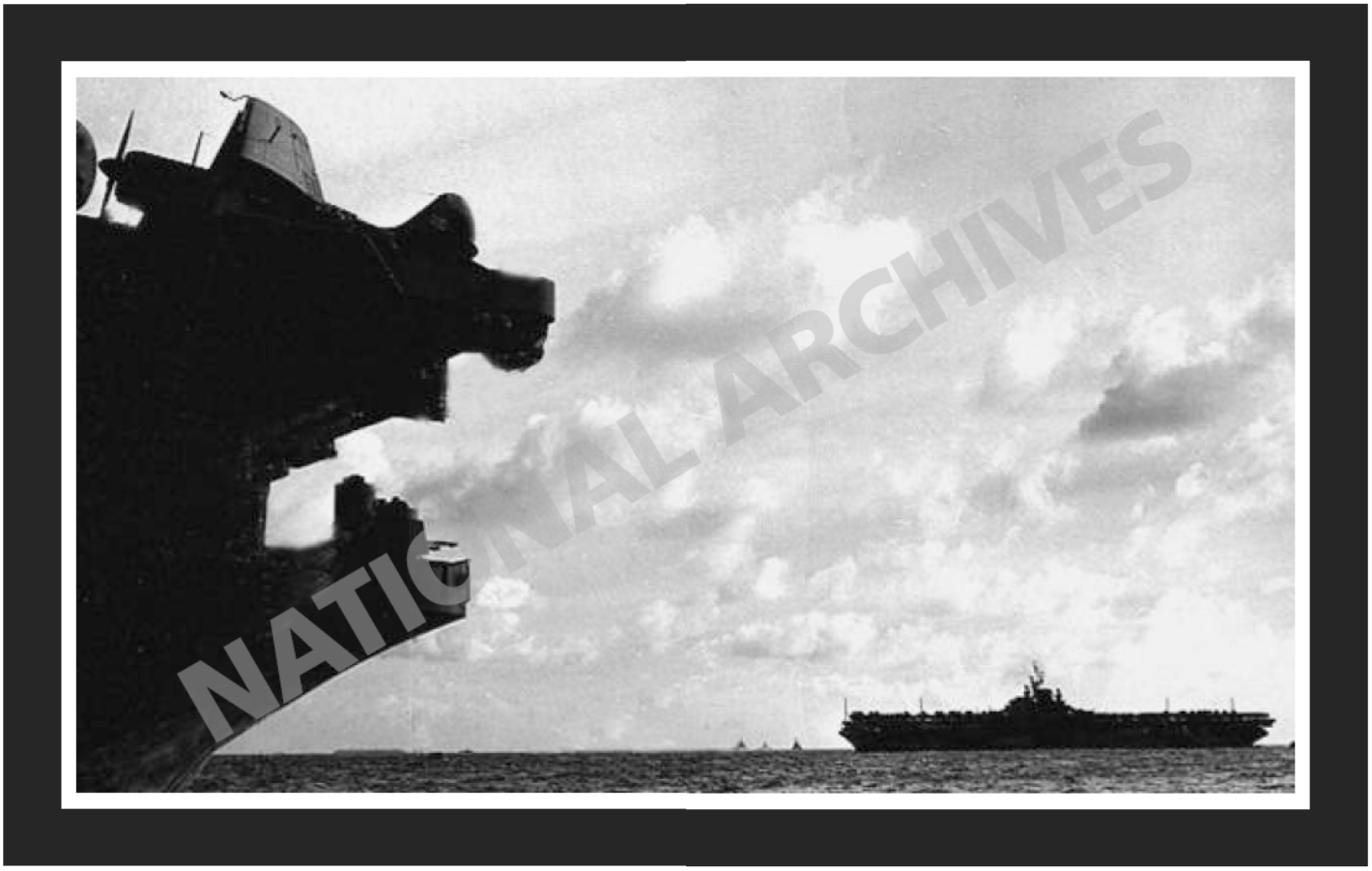
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S.S. ANTIETAM (CV-36)

With the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard (CV-31) to the left, there to the right is the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36). It was there, on that ship, that I spent seventeen months of my life. It so happens that the Antietam was the only one of the Essexes to be named for a Civil War (land) battle. And what a battle it was! The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest single day in American history, with 25,000 combined casualties. This was not a reassuring realization for a young neophyte to know that he was in the crew of a ship named for such an appalling occurrence. This was of some significance to his demeanor, but it was a much larger significance that it was this battle, and its resolution, that decided President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

This battle of Antietam Creek was one of the decisive engagements of the Civil War, as it ended the first Confederate incursion into the Northern states, even though it was a tactical draw. On the day of the battle, about 30 miles north of Washington in Maryland, General Lee's forces numbered about 40,000 against General McCellen's 50,000 troops. The next day, after the battle, Lee retreated across the Potomac River to Virginia unmolested by McCellen. Nevertheless, the battle was deemed a strategic victory for the North against the South. While Lincoln had previously been trying to find some way to end the practice of slavery, which he opposed on moral grounds, he felt he had no clear-cut justification for this vis-a-vis the Constitution (slavery rested on the laws of of the individual states). To free the slaves by proclamation would require an unprecedented expansion of the powers of the executive branch of the government. However, Lincoln had considered expanding the war powers as commander-in-chief for this purpose. On July 22, 1862, the president disclosed to his cabinet his desire to issue the proclamation. Secretary of State William Seward advised that he defer the pronouncement until there was a clear victory in the field that would raise the sagging prestige of the government. Lincoln agreed with this proposal and set aside his draft of the document for a more propitious moment.

Then, with the victory at Antietam, on September 17, 1862, the time was right and Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. This proclamation, together with the preliminary one of September 22, 1862, included five points. What follows is extracted from the Encyclopedia Americana: "The legal justification lay in the fact that the action was a war measure issued under the authority of the commander-in-chief. The proclamation applied to all communities in rebellion against the United States save those specifically exempted, namely, the State of Tennessee and the regions in Virginia and Louisiana were Union armed forces held control. In communities where it applied, the proclamation declared the slaves to be free but enjoined the new freedmen to abstain from violence, save in self-defense, and urged them to labor for reasonable wages. The proclamation announced that freedmen would be received into the armed forces of the United States. The concluding sentence read: 'And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I make the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.'" Thus it was that because of the result of the Battle of Antietam, where 25,000 men of both the North and the South, suffered life and limb, a new compact was formed, or rather forged, where all peoples were to be afforded unfettered lives completely devoid of all human bondage. And thus was the legacy of that bloody day of violence at the Antietam Creek in 1862.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SHOW OF FORCE

Because this chapter, "External Activities", does not concern itself directly with the subject of this book, "Flight Deck", the rest of this chapter will briefly include consideration of some words thought to be of significance to one and all, with a page for each word. This will start with the Motto, Oath, and Law of the Boy Scouts, for the simple reason that it is believed that these principles of conduct have validity for any age and station of life. Also, they made an impression on me early on, and this was reflected in the fact of my having achieved the rank of Eagle Scout with Bronze Palm. This was an achievement, but it was merely a beginning, a first "stepping stone", to the things to come that will be left unsaid as not being germane to my two years in the navy. Furthermore, the Boy Scout Motto, Oath, and Law should not be considered unworthy of consideration in this book about the "Flight Deck" because any organization as large and as significant as the U.S. Navy could be said to live and die by certain significant words. Everything herein will be related in some way to the proper and expeditious conduct of the most powerful naval force ever assembled, bar none.

As an example of the most powerful naval force, observe a very small part of it. In doing so, and if one is careful, one can detect about one-hundred and sixty aircraft overhead, all going off to a place of conflict that we can only imagine. This "show of force" represents only a part of the "assets" of only two Essex-class carriers. These two carriers in turn would be only a part of a Task Group, which Task Groups in turn compose a Task Force. A Task Force of ten Essex-class carriers could amass a fleet of one-thousand aircraft (although such a force was rarely assembled). (The wartime naval air force included not only the seventeen wartime Essexes, but also nine Independence-class carriers (11,000 tons), along with about seventy Escort carriers. This was truly an awesome accumulation of air power.) One can be sure that all of these ships and all of these aircraft were well prepared for their respective jobs that they were setting off to accomplish. The Boy Scout Motto "Be Prepared" here is definitely not a hollow set of words to be mindlessly mouthed periodically. It was just such preparation as was afforded by the training ship Antietam that prepared these pilots to do what it was that they had to do so as to bring victory a little bit closer today than it was yesterday. Just so too are the gunners on board the ships well prepared to accurately train their AA guns on the enemy aircraft now that they know how to compensate for the wind, the ship's simultaneous pitch, roll, yaw, and heave motions, and the target's erratic motions. Also, it is devotedly hoped that the sonar-men on board that speeding destroyer were well prepared to accurately interpret their console's screen as to the direction, speed, and depth of that enemy submarine lurking somewhere in the near environs. Let's hope so, because preparation here is literally a matter of life and death. So, let's "Be Prepared" as the Boy Scout's Motto intones, very appropriately for those years now long gone and whose tally has long since been made.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MY OATH

The next fourteen pictures will be of destroyers, the "greyhounds of the sea", those "whippets" that went were we went, and that fought were we fought. At least two of these "whippets" accompanied an Essex carrier wherever it went. Some of them were older, as was this one with single-barrel mounts, while many more were newer with the dual 5-inch mounts. In company with the carrier, one of their prime functions was to act as a "plane-guard", which meant that they'd be nearby to pick up the pilots who went into the water for whatever reason as they attempted to land on board. Of lesser frequency was the failed launch when he aircraft was unable to become airborne at launch. The "little boy", as they were called, would usually be about one to two thousand yards astern during landing operations, and the same distance up forward during launch operations. There would always be at least one destroyer up forward to "sweep" the area ahead for submarines. Sometimes this entailed destroying floating mines in the path of the carrier. Of course a prime function of the destroyer was to provide anti-aircraft protection using both 40-mm and 5-inch guns.

In a way, the destroyers that were used for this carrier-duty were similar to "bodyguards who took an oath to protect and defend" their charges. While not so critical, certainly, the Boy Scouts also have their oath that follows: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight". (The Scout Law says: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent". Each of these will be addressed later on, separately, in this chapter "External Activities".) This oath can be usefully adopted by one and all, including those who aspire to serve in the U.S. Navy. Let's restate the Oath: "On my honor ("my honor", which is a commitment to do the known right course of action EVEN when it is done unknown except to God) I will do my best ("my best", the best that I can do, rejecting all reservations) to do my duty ("my duty", that which is expected of me to do according to a moral obligation, a moral imperative) to God and my country ("to God" first, "to country" second, both being a much higher imperative than anything else) and to obey the Scout Law ("to obey", to comply with, to conform to, including to pay obeisance to lawful strictures); to help other people at all times ("to help", to give aid and comfort to one's compatriots and those who have legitimate needs); to keep myself physically strong ("physically strong", to be of usefulness to oneself and others), mentally awake ("mentally awake", so as to grow in intellect), and morally straight ("morally straight", so as to practice the right and eschew the wrong)."

This Oath can be considered to be a concise rendering to that which all of us can profitably aspire. Does one think for a moment that all of those on this destroyer , in service to this country, could be of anything but a benefit to the mission of this ship should they follow this Oath faithfully? Oaths mean something: they are not to be taken lightly or set back into the recesses of one's consciousness. Instead, they could be the shield behind which our consciences grow and nurture, and finally dwell. Sail on, you ship that guards us in our time of need, and sustain those who man you by instilling in them the highest principles that can be found in their Oath of allegiance to that which is greater than themselves.



DAHLGREN ARCHIVES

TRUSTWORTHY

This Fletcher-class destroyer, this "little boy", is just ambling along with nary a care in the world (or so it seems). The view here provides in a stark manner its capability to "pack a punch". While destroyers were "constantly" being modified throughout the war, this ship seems to be one of the earlier ones of its class: notice the lack of any search radars on its mast. Also notice the two sets of torpedo-tubes amidships (behind each smokestack). These, along with the hedgehogs (depth-charges) back aft, were eliminated in favor of additional 20-mm and 40-mm AA guns because the aerial threat eventually superseded the surface and subsurface threats. Those 5-inch single-mount guns were of course used for both bombardment and AA protection. In the latter stages of the war, the AA (anti-aircraft) protection became the dominant use of the 5-inch guns because of the consistently unwelcome appearance and intrusion of the Kamikaze aircraft that persistently carried out their attacks on our fleet. Prominent just in front of and on top of the pilot-house, is the MK 37 Gun Director and the Mk 22/12 Radar assembly on top of the director. This radar tracked the target and fed the coordinate data to a mechanical analog computer which in combination with the gun director fed train and elevation signals to the electric motors that moved the 5-inch gun-mounts. What with a moving target at high speed and the ship's pitch, roll, yaw and heave motions, it was a difficult problem that had to be solved RIGHT AWAY. The 5-inch guns could also be moved by visually tracking the targets from the small hatch at the top and back of the gun-mount.

How does a country build and man 175 of these remarkable ships in a little over two years? Remember, the Fletcher-class was just one class of destroyer, just as there were many types of ships. Two of them can be seen way out there on the horizon. Where they are far away and "weak", this destroyer here, so close and "strong" in its silhouette, provides one with a feeling of of strength. This strength in turn instills one with a feeling of security, for "here is a friend", a friend one can rely on, a friend who will stand with you "through thick and thin". In a word, here is a friend who is trustworthy, realizing at the same time that one need not be a friend to be trustworthy. A sterling example of this can be found in the staying power, the steadfastness, the the perseverance, of the troops of General George Washington at Valley Forge during that bitterly cold winter of 1777-1778. Many of the troop's enlistment had expired, and the army of 11,000 were without adequate shelter, clothing, food, or medical supplies. For this, 3,000 of them died that winter. Who among us can say that they were not trustworthy? This concept of trustworthiness is predicated, it would seem, on the confidence that one has of another's dependability vis-a-vis his thoughts and actions: do you believe that he is being true to his word? Do you believe in the steady consistency of that word in the future? (To be trustworthy, if you "change your colors, you must run that flag up to the mast-top", and thus generate a new consistency.)

Trust, by its very nature, should brook no reservations, while unfortunately, if you are not able to trust people to not do you harm or ill, you will "have a long row to hoe". Trust could be said to be the bedrock of all the virtues, for without trust, all else is surely problematical, and all else lacks even a modicum of the certainty upon which all our values rest. But having said that there certainly is one font within which we can all find satisfaction and contentment, and that is "In God We Trust".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LOYAL

A destroyer, such as this one, was built for speed as well as acceleration (they were designed to be five knots faster than the carriers and battleships, which could attain a flank speed of 32 knots). When pulling away from the Antietam after refueling from us, they would seem to "jump out of the water" (we would both be cruising at about fifteen knots during the refueling process). In addition to their relatively high power-to-weight ratio, they would also be constructed with "sleek lines" This is seen in the large length-to-width ratio, allowing it to "slice" through the water with fairly little resistance to its progress. (Being constructed of thin steel plates, a destroyer had the Navy moniker of "tin-can".) It was a thing of beauty to watch it churn up the water at its stern when the captain "stepped on the gas". (Pardon all the quotes, here and elsewhere, but they make for an economy of words, with an attendant preciseness of meaning, given that the vernacular is understood. American English has a great many such sayings, as does English English, and so this step above slang will be used throughout where necessary for conciseness and space-saving.)

When one watches one of these greyhounds of the sea, one of these tin-cans, charge off into the wide open sea beyond, one is put in mind of a friend going to the aid of a friend. In these circumstances here, this could be construed as an act of loyalty (isn't the Navy replete with instances of a friend (ship) going to the aid of another friend (ship) when it is in dire straits?) In the Navy, the decision is fairly easy; in the rest of society, it becomes somewhat less clear. But first things first: being loyal to a good person or a good cause is good, while being loyal to a bad person or a bad cause is bad. Now we have to differentiate between "good" and "bad", not necessarily such an easy task in many cases. Let's just say that loyalty has to be predicated on the resolution of this critical point. Yet to many, loyalty implies being faithful to your friend, be he good or bad, right or wrong. To these people, loyalty has no reservations. In the heat of battle or the spur of the moment, this would seem valid. Let the facts be sorted out after the "dust has settled". But once settled, what if the "king had turned tyrant"? Should one remain loyal to an enterprise, to a friend, when that enterprise, that friend, does damage unnecessarily to another person, or to society? I think not. And yet, regardless, there are those who are adamant that loyalty comes before all. ("How dare anyone propose a 'relativistic' morality? ") It is similar to a family having a "cat-and-dog" fight, yet resents outside intrusion on either side. What does one do when one party is clearly wrong? Call in the mediators, I suppose. But since loyalty can take on a primordial bent, emotion seems to trump all else, and so they close ranks and hunker down against all outside "intruders". Now external conflict sets in. Bad business. While loyalty in the form of obligation, devotion, faithful commitment, duty to a legitimate cause, allegiance to a purpose backed by consensus, are all to the good, when for the good ("good" yet to be defined), loyalty can also be a two-edged sword when it is not so ennobled. Thus, chose well your loyalties in the first instance, and then quietly revisit them periodically. The concept and the implementation of loyalty is too serious and important a matter to be considered loosely. The purpose here was to reveal, in some small way, the reader's own understanding of this significant Second Law of the Scout's Law. Now, let's go and charge forward on this greyhound of the sea to exercise our loyalty to some friend in distress out there on the bounding main. This is our mission, this is our bond.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HELPFUL

We're looking at a Fletcher-class destroyer in the makings of a typhoon, and at the same time, it is in a certain amount of distress. At the outset, recall that these "tin-cans" are made of thin steel plates, so as to give them speed. To be sure, all the hatches are battened down (all the openings are tightly secured) so that regardless of how much water is forced over it, it is watertight. But also be aware that this ship seems to be riding high, probably because the fuel oil on board is minimal, thus making it more buoyant and so more susceptible to broaching broadside to the wind. This places it in immediate jeopardy of capsizing when the wind picks up and the waves bulk up as the storm intensifies. When we (the Antietam) were caught in a typhoon, the tin-cans that accompanied us would often completely disappear in a trough of water, only to reappear on top of another trough. This visual occurrence happened when I was on the flight deck which was fifty feet above the water below. Thus, when a tin-can disappears while you are fifty feet in the air, the troughs are huge. While the tin-cans rose and fell on the surface of the water, we, the carrier, were more prone to batter (and get battered) our way through the seas, shuddering with each impact. But that was better than listening to the squeaking and groaning of the those thin steel plates of the tin-can as it rolled and pitched thirty degrees. This is a relatively modest sea, far from the full-throated typhoon that would toss those tin-cans to and fro in a fashion as if they were a child's toy.

Who could look at this picture of the tin-can under duress and not feel a desire to help, even though there is nothing that can be done. This is the time when the saying "a friend in need is a friend indeed" takes on a meaning that can not be considered a platitude. To be sure, to be helpful, it is usually considered that there is a legitimate need to be fulfilled. For instance, does it satisfy the meaning of the word "helpfulness" when a person goes to a soup-kitchen to serve soup to the destitute when they, the destitute, are able-bodied and vigorous? (Why not put the soup-ladle in the hand of one of the destitutes and let HIM serve the soup?) Here, the following platitude fits the bill perfectly: "God helps those who help themselves". One could make a strong argument that it is not only wrong, but also it tends to verge on unintended cruelty to serve these destitutes because it keeps them in a mental condition of dependency. If this imposed dependency is done deliberately, then it is outright cruelty.

But the subject here is of the enlightenment of being helpful. It's fine to help a man build his house, but ONLY if his labor is included in the construction of the house. The purist kind of help is that which is provided to those who are unable to help themselves. We can all agree on this. This is also to be found where one helps another to help himself, as for instance a parent giving aid and encouragement to a child (without doing the work for the child). These are all straightforward concepts. To help someone who is under duress is perhaps the best example of the meaning of the word "help", while the most profound exercise of helping another person is when one helps save another person from a life-threatening situation. Now we are entering the realm of heroic action: jeopardizing one's own life to save another person's life. What could be more helpful than that? Those who do so are far and few between, and if it doesn't involve a family member (an automatic reflex), it stands as the zenith of human conduct. Only this can be called heroic, and "Au Succor!" is the rallying cry for such action. Let's hope this tin-can here won't require such a cry, the third of the Scout's Law.



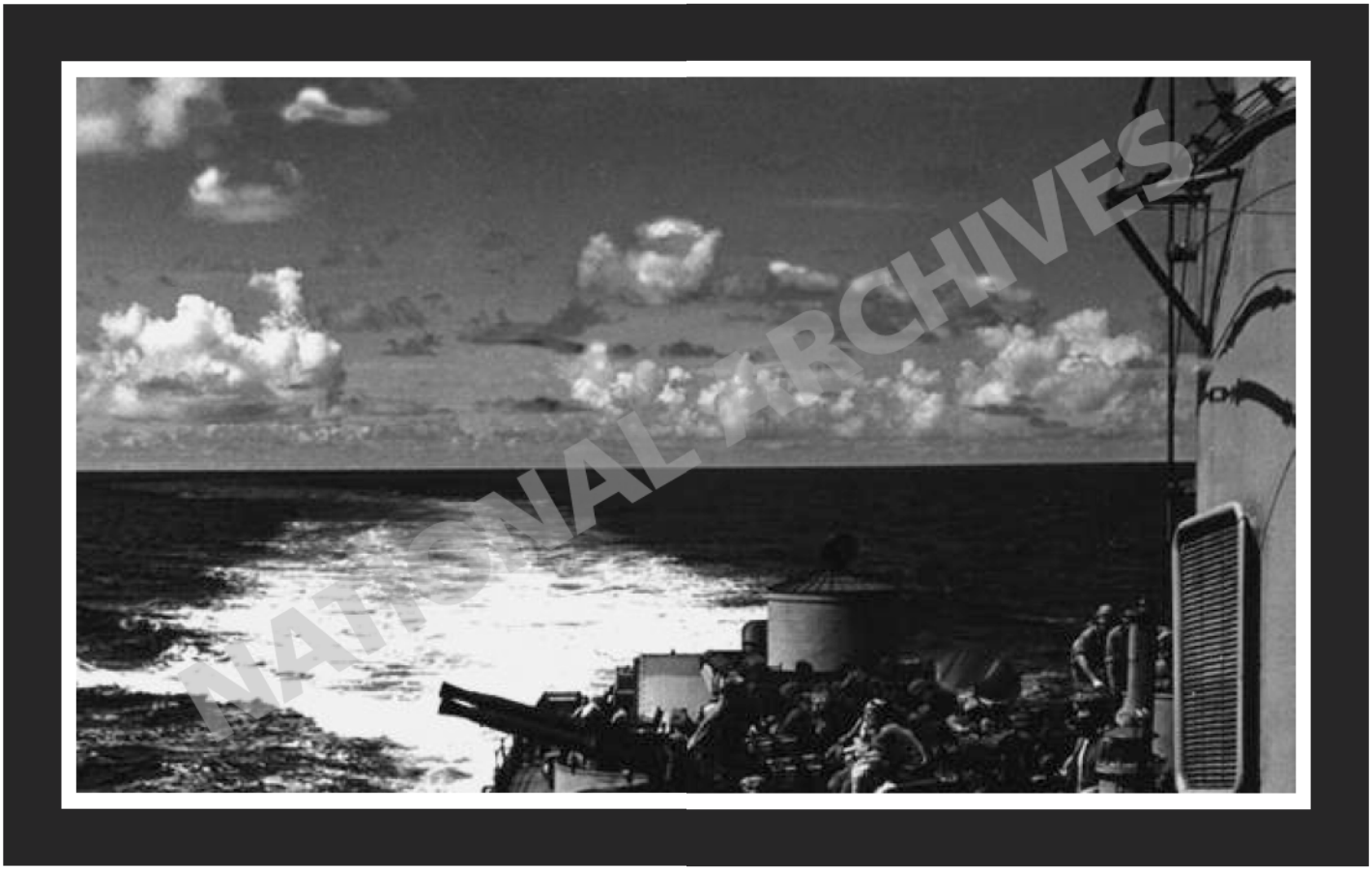
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FRIENDLY

Being a patron of clouds, especially these cumulus clouds that are so well displayed here, I had to include this picture. This sky here is recognized by one and all as a fair-weather sky. In times of strife and stress, especially, we can all use the uplift provided by these clouds that show themselves to be intrinsically beautiful in all their panoramic splendor. One of the great advantages of being at sea so much is the opportunity that is periodically provided for one to enjoy the incomparable "show" that is up overhead, whatever the compass heading. Notice the straight, dark horizon. This compels one to look upward toward this ongoing pageant. How different it is than when the atmosphere, drenched in humidity, lacks that "cleanness", that sharpness that comes with the arrival of the cumulus clouds. At those other times, the sea seems to meld into the shy, and ships and things become indistinct and thus somewhat distressful in time of war. But here, all is clear and well defined, the sea is being churned as the Fletcher is "making tracks", and for now, all is well with the world.

With such friendly skies, who would not be friendly? This is not a matter of friendly as in "friendship", for friendship is not friendliness, and friendliness is not friendship. One could be completely friendless, and yet be completely friendly, could he not? This is a reasonable thing to say, for to be a friend, as well as to have a friend, can be a difficult and sometime thing to accomplish, if it's done properly. But to be friendly, and yes universally friendly, this is something every last one of us can do, and without any great effort on our part. In fact, without any effort at all, unless, heaven forbid, that person is a KNOWN scoundrel. Here, reserve would probably be the order of the day. But then, but then, who is it among us who can say that so-and-so is a scoundrel?? Is hearsay sufficient for you to condemn a person your disapproving scowl? your cold-shoulder? Does not the admonition "Judge not, lest ye be judged" ring true here? My approach to these matters is that it saves a lot of wear and tear if you just simply give the other guy the benefit of the doubt when it comes to whether or not he's a scoundrel, especially if you don't know him. On the other hand, how respond to someone who doesn't like you, who dislikes you? It would seem that that situation is best handled by a strongly neutral demeanor, unless, of course, one would want to reverse the hostile attitude toward one. But let's not become complicated here. This is the page of the "friendly skies", right? And also, friendliness doesn't cost a thing, even if one is rebuffed.

We're becoming too analytical for a book of this type. The important thing is that everyone likes to see a happy face, a smile, a pleasant demeanor, and the nice thing about this is that it doesn't cost anything (not that one should or should not do a thing because it does or it does not cost something). Most everyone responses in a positive manner to friendliness, and the world is a more pleasant place to be because of it. This is a pure case of "virtue being its own reward". And remember, there are those who have had a "tough row to hoe", or they have had a bad day, and so they are not prone to being amicable and chummy. Again, give them the benefit of the doubt; it doesn't cost anything. One final thing before closing this rambling discourse: should you be in a bad mood, for whatever reason, this doesn't give you a ticket to "take it out on others". Thus we'll close out this fourth of the Scout Laws.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COURTESY

The ship shown here is newer than that of the previous page since it is fitted out with those dual 5-inch gun-mounts. To the right of the upper gun-mount can be seen a 40-mm quad gun-tub. These newer ships were designed to handle the aircraft threats, and though it is not evident, these ships probably therefore lack the offensive capability as provided by the torpedo tubes. After the first year of the war in the Pacific, there were no ship-to-ship confrontations that would require torpedo attacks by destroyers. (The one exception to this was the big surface Battle of the Philippine Sea during the latter part of October 1944. There, destroyers were required to make torpedo runs against larger enemy ships as well as to interject themselves between smaller friendly ships and larger hostile ships so as to lay down a protective smoke screen.) In the later stages of the war when the U.S. Fleet was "stationed " near enemy territory, the DDs (destroyers) would act as "pickets" between the American carriers and possible Kamikaze attacks. Their purpose was to alert friendly ships of imminent attacks, and in the process, they themselves would be attacked. Many DDs were thus savaged in performing this duty. Their protection was the proficiency of those 5-inch guns pointing skyward. (Notice the carrier the left, and the battleship to the right.)

This DD is coming alongside another DD to transfer items between the two ships. (Notice the leader-line between the two ships, just below the upper 5-inch gun-mount.) This type of transfer happened fairly frequently, and sometimes they are done simply as a gesture of courtesy (one ship has an item the other does not have.) Here, the gesture requires some measurable effort by both parties. But in a larger, less specific context, courtesy is a "cost-less" activity, able to be performed by anyone.

Unfortunately though, discounting thoughtlessness, most omissions of courtesy are due to the idea that one who shows courtesy is at the same time showing weakness. Who wants to appear weak when strength, or at least the appearance of strength, is the most desired trait of all? (of all those who have this grossly distorted understanding of what strength is). To many, to be "tough" is to be "strong", and this is true, if one equates toughness with strength of character. It's when one associates strength, and toughness, with physical strength, that one goes astray. While physical strength has its useful place in particular circumstances, it should always be remembered that that kind of strength always has its counterbalance in other physical things (such as, say, pepper-spray). Yes, courtesy implies deferring to someone else, (done voluntarily and of one own free will), but that very deference also implies a strength in not being afraid of "appearing to be weak". That is, one can feel comfortably strong while still being polite (to EVERYONE). Besides, good manners improve the social environment which in turn makes for a more pleasant place in which to be. Similarly, acquiescence in matters that are not TOO serious can simplify one's life, a life that at times is fraught with complications. This resulting simplification in turn makes room for those things that are more important and allow for more personal enjoyment. It would be interesting to have a debate about the following proposition: "Resolved, that to be courteous is to be "selfish". The "pro" side could say that in being courteous, one makes possible more pleasant surroundings, and in seeking a more pleasant surrounding, one is being "selfish", i.e., thinking of himself. Whether one subscribes to such reasoning or not, one must admit that the fifth item of the Boy Scout's Law does indeed make eminent sense.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

KIND

Having just completed their exchange of items (see previous page), these two destroyers (DD) are parting company and are picking up speed, leaving the carrier (CV) and battleship (BB) far behind. The older DD, the one in the foreground with those torpedo tubes on its fantail, is perhaps taking the lead because there is a mission that requires a torpedo attack against the enemy. (Notice the 40-mm quad guntub in the left foreground, and to the right of that its gun-director. Also notice the searchlight just in front of the smokestack, to be used during night operations against torpedo-boats. These torpedo-boats were sixty-foot long wooden boats used to make sudden attacks against ships such as battleships and cruisers, but never, apparently, against carriers.) The class of ship known as a "destroyer" was the result of developing a ship as a counter to the threat of the torpedo-boats (in the early 1900's). Thus it was a"torpedo-boat destroyer", shortened to "destroyer". These new ships, the destroyer, had to be big enough to carry guns that could destroy the torpedo-boats at a distance before they could do damage to the larger ships. They also had to be fast enough to chase down those high-speed torpedo-boats. Thus was born the ship that was designed, and whose purpose was, to provide "aid and comfort" to their compatriots, since those compatriots, with their large unwieldy cannons, were unable to protect themselves adequately from those fast, small, and skittish torpedo-boats.

Is providing "aid and comfort" to your compatriots an act of kindness? Certainly it is not during wartime. But how about in general, when it's not a wartime necessity? In general, there are needs that should be met, kindness or not, but this is not the subject here. On a previous page, helpfulness was discussed, and while helpfulness implies a moral imperative, kindness is an act that is in no way obligatory. Rather, kindness finds its genesis in one's collection of cultivated sympathies. One could also say that kindness is a subset of helpfulness, and probably a more refined sense it is. A fanciful example of this is, "in days of old, when knights were bold" and chivalry held sway, those in need had those who took heed (or so it was told). A more mundane description of the concept of kindness is that thoughtfulness, that is, being able to recognize sympathetically another's plight, will cover most all bases. This most valuable virtue, one that we should all have in abundance, is that of thoughtful consideration of other's situations. This capability is simply gained by learning to "walk in another's moccasins" This in turn bulks up one's power of empathy, the precursor of kindness and compassion and sympathy. To be kind is to be selfless; to be selfless is to be kind. But make no mistake about it, kindness in no way implies softness or lack of "manhood". To the contrary: remember those "knights in shining armor", those who used their virility and sinews to uphold the causes of the weak? This could be called "kindness" with a vengeance. But more normally, the kindness whereof we speak is that deed done with sympathetic thoughtfulness aforethought. A gentleman certainly is kind, and weren't the Three Musketeers, those practitioners of fancy fencing, gentlemen? Again, it seems that those who are inherently strong are more prone to be kind in the truest sense. But why be kind? Because it's the right thing to do. And what say you? Let's just say that the sixth of the Boy Sout's Law is most important, and reflects well on those strong enough to practice this virtue.



OBEDIENT

This older destroyer has been upgraded by the addition of the search radar seen at the top of its mast. Though that radar screen doesn't seem to be that large, it is definitely a factor to be considered by the ship's designers in that everything that is added to the ship must be meticulously accounted for as to its weight and its location. This radar screen, being up high, significantly alters the center-of-gravity of the ship. Think of the length of the mast as a lever-arm, which indeed it is. The longer the lever-arm and the heavier the the radar screen, the more the rotation that is applied to the ship as it rolls in a heavy sea. As to the search radius, it is not much beyond the horizon because the radar screen is not that high up from the surface of the water. (This is a surface-search radar, not an air-search-radar. Also, since the visual range from the deck of the ship is about twenty miles (due to the curvature of the earth), the search radar probably has a range of about forty miles.) The lower left vertical portion seen in the picture is the left side of the the carrier, and the upper part of the picture is the port-side edge of the flight deck. Just below that point can be seen one of the many life-rafts that can be cut loose should the ship be sunk.

This view of the destroyer puts one in mind of a child being "sheltered" by its mother. While that analogy here is a stretch, it could in turn remind one of an obedient child staying close to its mother. In wartime, obedience is a given: without it, all would almost certainly be lost, militarily. Obedience is the "coin of the realm" in the military. Obedience is to the military as computer software is to a computer network, because without the former, the latter will never function properly. (In the military, where commands are issued ad hoc, obedience is always and only to lawful activities. No one, presumably, in the military can be forced to obey an unlawful command. Of course this immediately brings up the question as to what an unlawful command is. But this will not be the subject at hand here.) In the military, obedience is a given, while in private life, obedience calls upon one and all to conform to the laws of a well-ordered society and to the duly established authorities. All of this is quite straight-forward and hardly open to discussion, just as we are not free to pick and choose those laws that we will obey. To do otherwise would create chaos in the society, which would be intolerable, and would make society untenable. Yet there are those among us who believe that their "freedoms" would be imposed upon if they could not do what they wanted to do, the laws notwithstanding. It would seem that their only recourse should be to live the hermit's life, if they're looking for that absolute freedom. Should society become chaotic by the multitudes ignoring the laws, everyone's freedom would be severely limited, would it not? It would seem that a well-ordered society, where laws are obeyed, is the only venue for a well-adjusted personal life. Thus everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a well-ordered society by, at the minimum, obeying the duly enacted laws. Why should a selfish few be allowed to despoil the social environment of the many? The orderliness as promoted by obedience to the law is the only way we can all derive the most from life. (Left out in all this discourse is the question of the quality of the laws that are enacted. Should we go back to the founding of our country and reevaluate the basis for the "Boston Tea Party"? This event, we are told, was in response to a law that was written by the British for application to our forefathers here trying to forge a new way of life in a new frontier. They rejected a duly enacted law and so started down the road to revolution.) Nevertheless, this seventh of the Boy Scout's Law is an imperative, is it not?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CHEERFUL

Here we are looking at the transfer of an item from/to the destroyer and the fantail of the carrier, on the port side. Normally, all transfers are made on the starboard side of the carrier, up forward. There, there are the facilities for passing lines between the two ships. This picture was taken from the raised deck-edge elevator giving us a good view of that sailor perched on the netting used by the LSO (Landing Signal Officer). This netting was required by the LSO as a "retreat" to avoid being struck by an errant, landing aircraft. That sailor has at least fifty feet between him and the water below, and this on a ship that is not a stable platform. At least that other sailor, holding onto the wing of that TBM, has a two and one-half foot wide catwalk between him and the water (on that unstable platform). Those other two sailors are on the "scaffold" that supports those two open-mount 5-inch guns just to the left of them. This view also gives us a pretty good idea of how narrow destroyers are. This one approaching us has two single 5-inch mounts on its focsle. Putting two dual mounts there is a remarkable example of ingenuity. Finally, notice how "clean" the mast is, other than the search radar at the top. This mast became more "cluttered" with radio antennae as the war progressed and the communication equipment became more advanced. All in all, this is a very nicely composed picture, a picture that provides a good feeling, and so, a picture that actually makes one feel cheerful.

Because the flight deck was periodically and consistently a work-place where hazardous things had to be done, after the day's work was over and the anxieties and tensions of the day had subsided, a cheerful demeanor found in others was a welcome relief. No, it wasn't a "hail-fellow-well-met" or an ebullient and boisterous behavior that was overflowing with a showy and noisy facade, that prevailed. Rather, it was a subdued, more genuine type of cheerfulness, a cheerfulness with meaning, if you will, because there was always that next day looming just ahead. And there was definitely NO bravado among the Airdales.

Cheerfulness is not happiness, because the former is outward directed while the latter is internalized. For instance, an Airdale could go about his business on the flight deck with a (semi-) cheerful attitude, and yet be unhappy about being there on the flight deck, every day, all day. Thus, he's not imposing his sulk, he's not intruding his sour and dour disposition on the others around him. Cheerfulness is almost an obligation to the others with whom you work, especially in an environment that periodically and consistently was very harrowing (where one was directly dealing, in close quarters, with machines that were equipped with engines of up to 2,800-hp). So why should cheerfulness be so important? For one thing, it's good for your mental (and physical) well-being. For another thing, it's good for others to be in among those who have an upbeat temperament. And furthermore, cheerfulness can not only be contagious, but it can also become habit-forming, both of which are on the positive side of the ledger. Lastly, remember the old maxim that goes "Laugh (be cheerful), and the world laughs (is cheerful) with you. Cry, and the world goes its own way without you". So the eighth of the Scout Laws should not be considered only self-serving, but instead it should be outward directed to "make the world a better (and more pleasant) place". To put it succinctly, "Be unto others as you would have them be unto you", to paraphrase that world-wide dictum. This then in essence is the eighth article of the Boy Scout's Law (of twelve).



THRIFT

Now be honest, can't you just feel this ship shudder and groan under that fearsome impact of ship-against-water? Here then, in this picture, we find the "real" navy, the one where man must be in contest with the elements, that all-powerful sea which is pounding on a mere 2,000-ton tin-can. We also wonder about that sailor, the one between the two gun-mounts, who has nary a thing on in the form of life-saving equipment (unless he's wearing one such as we had which consisted of a belt around our waists that had to be inflated by lung-power). At least he's in an area of protection away from that overpowering, thunderous wave. But not so those two intrepid souls just beneath the outer end of the forward gun-barrel. Not having been a "tin-can man", I can't provide a good explanation as to what it is they're trying to accomplish. Notice that the sea (to the left) appears relatively benign, and yet the ship is nevertheless taking some severe punishment. The only plausible reason for this pounding would seem to be that since the destroyer is in close proximity to the carrier during its refueling operation, a wave(s) was generated between the two ships to which the carrier was impervious while the destroyer was not. In any event, it makes for a dramatic picture: the solid, angular, well-defined shapes of the ship makes a beautiful foil for the amorphous, surging sea. This was always a fascinating "show" to watch, ever changing, ever restless, ever impressive. The light and the dark of this picture make for a magnificent composition (notice the light and dark around that sailor). This presentation was provided by a photographer cum artist, par excellence!

Those sailors there on the focsle of the destroyer certainly appear to be foolhardy in not using life-saving equipment. Saving, whether it's saving money, or saving one's life, is an example of thrift (with the latter case being the ultimate "thrift"). While thrift can be accorded multiple meanings, such as "waste not, want not", or "a penny saved is a penny earned", or "good stewardship of our natural resources is our mutual responsibility", etc., we could say that the worst example of possible waste is doing something that could be terminal. Not much better though are those who waste their lives (and their talents) by not diligently applying themselves to their work and/or their own improvement. Not trying to do one's best, regardless of the outcomes of one's efforts, is the greatest (non-terminal) waste of all. Such waste (lack of thrift) leads to feelings of worthlessness, because one has done nothing of worth. (This is damaging enough in its own right, but what is devastating is to be thought worthless by someone most admired.)

However, in a more normal flow of things, thrift means saving, and saving in turn means building up, and building up means improving, and improving means benefits for one and all. Currently, thrift implies saving, but a better connotation would seem to be "waste not". Wastefulness represents the use of something to no avail. Wastefulness also implies NOT using something, such as one's talents, one's energy, one's knowledge. The phrase "A (good) mind is a terrible thing to waste" is somehow a chilling concept. The phrase "What a waste!" is just as chilling. What is most exasperating here is that it need not happen if only one would understand the real meaning of "thrift". The ninth of the Boy Scout Laws should be given its due if we are to have a better world, right?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BRAVE

One would judge that this destroyer has just finished its refueling operation from the carrier and is starting to accelerate. If a wave from the carrier back aft raised the stern of this tin-can, we can understand why its bow is "digging into" the water. Think of how much extra resistance the destroyer is experiencing right at this time. This is what is called "plowing the seas", even while the sea is fairly calm. The thin plating covering this tin-can is under great stress and since speed is one of the prerequisites for this ship, the "skin" is commensurately thinner than the larger, slower ships. Again, this picture also is stunning with its dark-light motif that causes one to be fascinated by not just the overall picture, but also its finer detail. The one plays off of the other in a satisfying way.

Are those sailors brave? Or are they foolish? Perhaps it's a little bit of both. Actually, it should be neither, for this is the navy where things are done for a specific, useful purpose, and not for bravado, and not for "proving" oneself. Based on the concept of this picture, we will consider the act of bravery, where someone does something that seriously jeopardizes his well-being, to the point of his demise. If he's doing it to "show-off" to his friends, he's foolish (or more likely, he's a fool). If he's doing it for a good and noble cause, he's brave (if the cause is to save a person at the possible expense of his life, he's a hero. Only this will qualify as heroic, in my estimation). And if he's doing it to prove his mettle, or to validate himself, or to ratify his self-confidence, he falls in the area somewhere between the first two cases. To be sure, there are those who relish the taste of danger, and the more dangerous, the better. This can be useful, certainly, in situations where there are those who are in mortal danger. Let us not diminish this quality. But it is the first example that is sad, because such people would seem to be those who are so devoid of self-worth that they do the most outlandish things MERELY to gain the admiration of the others, thereby gaining that self-worth. This is why self-respect is so important: one doesn't feel the need to do outlandish (read "hazardous") things. To try to excel is good. To excel could even be better, but not at the expense of one's health. In addition, it shows poor judgment and lack of responsibility in setting a bad example for those "followers" who have more doubts and anxieties about themselves than good sense, and whose good sense is easily impaired. In kinship with the word "brave" are the words "courageous, valiant, fearless, and gallant", all of which refer to "confident bearing in the face of difficulties or dangers". They all have subtle differences and a large dictionary will illuminate them. Some other words are "bold, intrepid, dauntless, and daring". "Bravery" is a word with many interpretations and connotations, but what it is can be found in considering the following: bravery is being able to CORRECTLY recognize something worthwhile that needs to be done within a very difficult, even dangerous, situation, and then doing something about it with conviction and resolution. The reader should develop his/her own understanding of what it is to be brave, remembering that bravery does not, and usually is not, concerned with physical situations. To wit: In March of 1775, Patrick Henry addressed the second Virginia convention "Gentlemen may cry peace! peace! –but there is no peace! The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the North will bring to our ears the clash of the resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field!.....Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God! I know not what course may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!" Patrick Henry proclaimed to the world that he was committing treason, which was punishable by death. Is this not an exemplar of bravery?



CLEAN

Compared to the previous picture, this one can certainly be considered "busy", if not "cluttered", what with all the personnel all over. While this picture is interesting and educational, the previous picture is satisfying and enjoyable by way of content and composition. In this picture here, what looks like a bomb being transferred between ships is in fact, if you look closely, a sleeve that holds the hose that transmits the fuel oil that feeds the engines that turn the propellers that propel the ship. This operation takes about twenty minutes, once the hose is connected. These refueling operations are done when away from a war-zone because the ships are going relatively slowly and in a straight line, just as the enemy submarines would have it. Because there isn't a submarine-free zone, utmost vigilance is required. But to look at this ship, such vigilance seems to be non-existent, what with "everyone" topside watching the show. Keep in mind that the duty-stations are manned "four hours on, eight hours off". That is, personnel are on duty for four hours, and off duty the next eight hours. If and when General Quarters is sounded, there will be a quick scramble to man their stations for enemy action.

Even though the ship looks cluttered, it is in fact clean and "ship-shape" (neat). It is only because there are so many personnel top-side that the ship doesn't look "clean". While the navy refers to "clean" as being ship-shape, the Boy Scout Law's eleventh injunction implies clean in both body and mind. The former is fine and should be self-evident, but the latter is not so clear-cut. While the former includes neatness of attire, the latter can not be so clearly categorized. It can be interpreted in various ways, but here we will say that cleanness of mind , among other things, means being clean of ill-feelings towards others because of their ill-deeds to you. If nothing else, to harbor these ill-feelings is to be corrosive to one's equanimity (under normal circumstances). A good antidote to this corrosion is to keep oneself productively busy: you have better things to do than to dwell on past mistakes made by others. Right? Why carry a millstone of anger around your neck wherever you go? Why not be pragmatic about these things: so someone gave you a raw deal, so someone gave you a hard-time, so someone slighted you, so someone put you down, so someone did whatever. So what? And it's not realistic to say "would that I could understand their enmity and hostility". It turns out that after all is said and done, the best policy, really, is to forgive and FORGET, literally, and so, unburden yourself. Why let someone else control whether or not you are in a bad mood? IGNORE their animosity and thus disallow their nettlesome imposition on you. (And don't allow them to provoke you.) Perhaps this seems easier said than done, but it's well worth the effort. After all, good-natured people with a happy disposition are much more content, by definition, than those who are always conjuring up the unpleasant past. Besides, it's hard to get angry if you have an easy-going demeanor. So forgive, yes, but also forget, because while to forgive is noble, to forget is smart, and it's also positive. The WWII song "Accentuate the Positive, Eliminate the Negative" had it just right. This form of self-interest does make sense, as does the eleventh injunction of the Scout Law. (Perhaps liberties were taken with the interpretation of this eleventh portion of the Scout Law, but then each person can apply his/her own take on its meaning. This one developed here was from my consideration of this picture. After all, doesn't a clean ship require a clean way of thinking about things, and not just about physical things? (Some will say that the brain is physical, while others will say that there is nothing as non-physical as the mind, and it is the mind that caught my attention here. (But can they be profitably separated?) What say the reading public to the above?).



REVERENT

This picture depicts very clearly how a person is transferred from the destroyer to the carrier and the carrier's more extensive medical facilities. The small ships had only the basic medical capabilities, and most usually, no medical officer (though they did have enlisted seamen whose rates (qualifications) were in the field of medicine). Of course, if there were extensive damage done to the ship, and hence the personnel, due to enemy action, the multiplicity of casualties would require the services of a hospital ship, if available, or alternatively, the facilities on shore.

The action depicted here is an obvious example of providing for the sanctity of life. It demonstrates what we all take for granted: the reverence of life. All civilized peoples of course subscribe to this very basic principle. But then there are other forms of reverence. One of the fundamental expressions of reverence is that deep veneration of God, by all of the world's religions: it is He who is author of ALL This is the primary focus of the twelfth prescription of the Scout's Law. This then carries over to the practice of worshiping one's God in a spiritual manner. That is an example of reverence that is, or should be, a given. But what of the other forms of reverence, reverence such as one can find in "Nature"? Nature can generate awe, reverential awe (to be redundant), when one tries to comprehend the incomprehensible: the absolute orderliness of the universe along with all the orderly changes that modify that orderliness. And how do we comprehend the miracle of the spark of life; the marvels of the complexity of the human body; the myriad of the replicating species; the huge multiplicity and diversity of the plant world; the speck called earth in an expanding universe? The very subject of Nature itself is infinite: how does one conceive of, how does one imagine, the 200 billion stars in our galaxy, a galaxy that is 100,000 light-years in diameter, where a light-year is 6 million million miles? Then, how does one account for the "fact" that there are an uncountable number of these galaxies? Not to mention the microscopic world of the atom, whose 103 varieties are the building blocks of all creation here on earth, or the fact that ALL of life is determined by a very specific sequence and up/down orientation of only TWO basic chemical pairs called adenine/guanine and thymine/cytosine. The "Creationists" and the Mechanists" will argue about this, but the "Naturalists" will take the middle ground; that would seem to be where we should be. From the mundane to the sublime, consider the amazing composition/function of a blade of grass to the "fearfully and wonderfully made" human brain/mind. If one could look at Nature in all its "infinite" variations, and then look at all the corresponding orderliness found there, and still not believe in what is called "God", then that one must, in all sincerity, be bereft of sense and sensibility. How can they not wonder in abject awe at the majesty of it all? Why, just to look at all the different types of tropical fish is a lesson in that they are created "not by chance, but by design". But by "whom"?? What a marvel!! It would seem that if one would but think deeply about all of this, one cannot but help to become "reverent". One will then know, but NOT understand, really understand, what it is to be reverent. Perhaps, to be reverent is to realize how minutely small each one of us is in the "grand scheme of things" (as if we would even know that there was a grand scheme). Why trivialize the concept of there being an entity called "God" by thinking we can understand it? Perhaps it's enough to simply BE reverent about this that we don't understand, that about which we have an abject and profound wonderment. Enjoy!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DESTROYER STANDING BY

This scene pictured here is somewhat unusual in that the transferee is going TO the destroyer, as indicated by the sailors at the far right pulling on the rope (notice the glistening, thus wet, deck. Also note that all those in the work-party are wearing kapok life-vests, as opposed to the wrap-around-the waist type we (the Airdales) would wear.) By far, the usual course of events would be for the transferee to be a pilot who was being transferred from the destroyer to the carrier. This was because one of the main purposes of the tin-cans in company with a carrier would be to act as a "plane-guard". That is, during flight operations, two tin-cans would trail the carrier by about one thousand yards during landing operations, and they would proceed the carrier by about one thousand yards during launch operations. Then, should an aircraft go into the water during landing or launching operations, the tin-cans would be close by to pick up the downed pilot (no helicopters here). The aircraft of course would be lost, but the more valuable pilot would be retrieved fairly quickly. Such problems as going into the water were usually due to an aircraft going too slowly on approach to the carrier, too tardy a wave-off by the LSO (Landing Signal Officer), or the pilot banking the aircraft too much as he turned to get into the "slot" directly behind the carrier. The problems during launch were due mostly to a recalcitrant engine not producing sufficient power at take-off.

Right behind the left 5-inch gun-mount can be seen two 3-inch guns. These were not too common because the 40-mm quad guns would fire at a higher rate, and they were four guns instead of only one. In addition, the 40-mm guns would periodically have an incendiary shell in the ammunition-clip. This allowed the gunners to "track" the targets, a very beneficial and necessary feature. Notice the life-raft to the left and a fire-hose just below the aft 5-inch gun. Because this ship has only one fire-hose in view, and because it has 3-inch guns instead of 40-mm guns, and because it has single-mount 5-inch guns, this is an older ship.

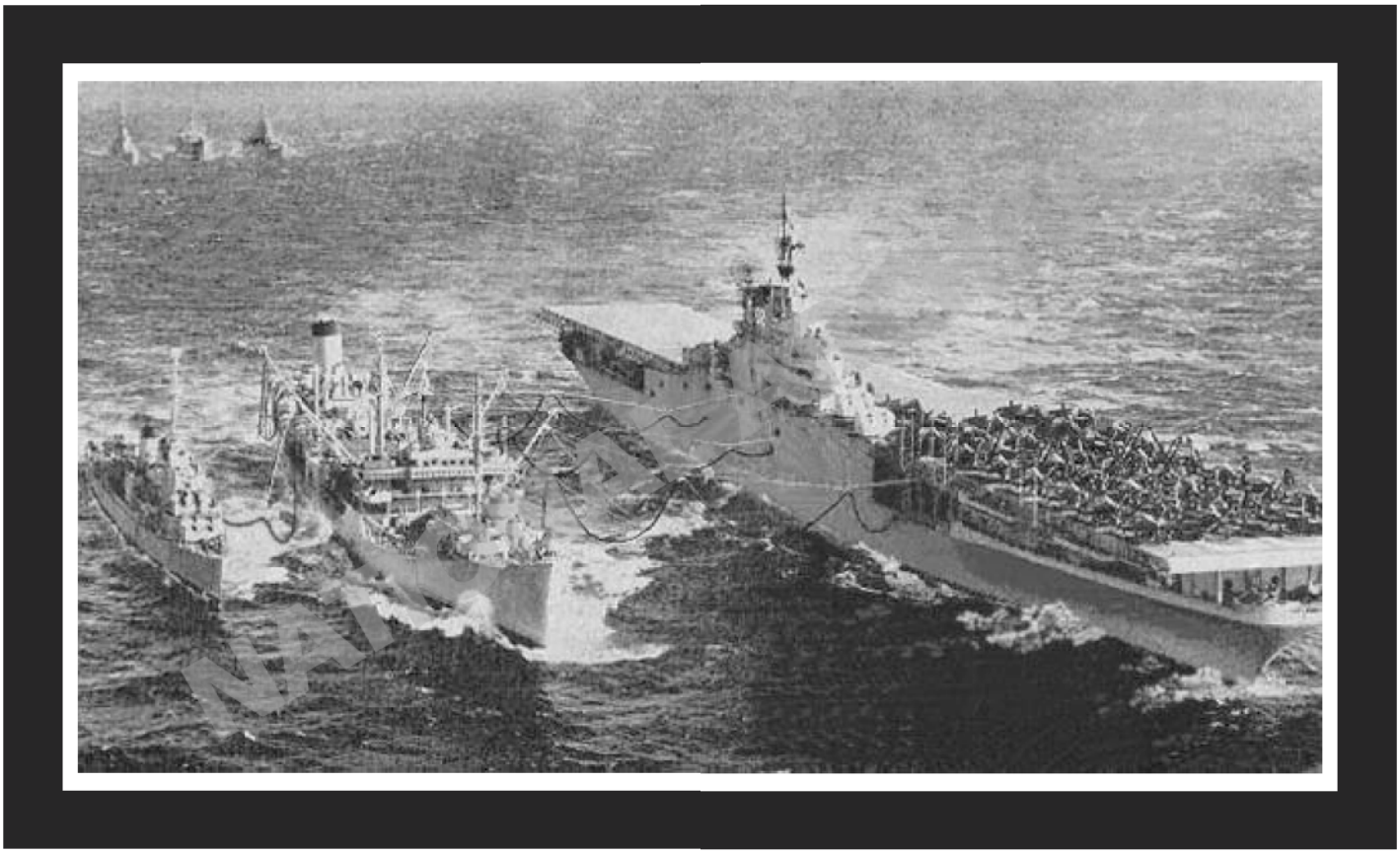
The fact that all those men are working to bring this one man aboard, it would seem that the transferee would have some feelings of gratitude. Even though all this is happening under orders, nevertheless the transferee would be having the appropriate response if he were of such a mind. Gratitude is definitely not an unmanly sentiment to have, certainly not under circumstances of legitimate effort by others. And there need be no implication or requirement of quid pro quo in the process of being grateful. Gratitude reflects the fact that one has sufficient sensibilities to recognize the kindness of others, or even just the consideration of others. This is good. At the very least, gratitude is just your basic politeness, which unfortunately is never in over-supply in some quarters. To appreciate the acts and actions of others should be the sine qua non (the "boiler-plate") of a well-run society. Of course one should not forget that gratitude and appreciation need not be limited to people. Why not be grateful for that sunset, for that fresh air in the early morning of a summer's day, for that beautiful music that has such an emotional impact, for that (now you fill in the blanks). To appreciate such things as what you enjoy is to do yourself a favor, n'est-ce pas? Oui, c'est bien entendu. (Right? Yes, it's well understood).


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COOPERATION

The first thing to be noticed about this picture is that when viewed from twelve inches away, the water (the sea) looks somewhat splotchy, while when viewed from twenty inches, the sea takes on a realistic appearance. Such is the nature of a photograph. The second thing to be noticed is the large distance between the oiler-ship and the carrier, as is noticeable by observing the configuration of the hoses near the carrier. While all three ships are parallel, the carrier should position itself about forty yards closer to the oiler, thus allowing for some transverse motion to the right or left. Naturally, all flight operations are put on hold during refueling, and in fact, it appears that about one-half of the aircraft of this carrier are airborne. They won't be able to land until the refueling operation is finished and the carrier heads into the wind (their direction now could be to take them away from potentially hostile areas). It can be seen how closely the aircraft are (always) parked (packed) so as to allow as much deck space as possible for the aircraft that will later be returning to the ship. Right now the Airdales are taking a break from their duties. However, the bunking compartments below are "off-limits" (during the day), so no one can "flake-out" down there. Some of the Airdales just "hang around shooting the breeze", some play mumbletypeg with their jack-knives, some find a secluded spot to take a snooze, and then some , like yours truly, stand on the catwalk to watch the "show" down below. In any event, it was a nice break in the normal day's activities and an interesting diversion to enjoy. But it wasn't as enjoyable as receiving that "special" letter from home that arrived about every month and a half. Mail was good, but mail was too scarce, that's for sure. At the same time, we lived in two different worlds, and that scarcity of mail should have been expected, since she wasn't "my girl", as I was painfully learning. Even so, easy to say now, but hard, very hard, then.

The oiler that is serving a battleship on the right and a cruiser on the left (top left of the picture) also illustrates the essence of cooperation (in this case, it's ordered). ("Cooperation: an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit; joint action or mutual benefit"). How could a people function without this essential characteristic of all well-operating societies? Of course, most of us do this without even thinking about it, but it's so important an activity, we hardly ever consider it to be cooperation. While individuality certainly has a very important role in society (in the form of initiative, for instance), there are many things that simply require the effort of a group of people. Cooperation is found absolutely everywhere, everywhere where people deal with each other. Again, to go to the mundane, what could be a better example of this than team-sports? Acknowledging the usefulness of having a "star-player"on one's team, experience will show that those teams do best that practice teamwork (cooperation) rather than those teams that have , and depend on, a star-player. One could even argue that the team with the star-player is at a "disadvantage" because the rest of the team could well be prone "to rest on their oars" because the star "will do it". (Lack of space requires many quote-signs.) Thus, to have an acknowledged star on one's team could cause the others to not play up to their actual potential. This then becomes not only a disadvantage to a team, but also has a pernicious result on the development of the team-members. Therefore, having a star on the team could mean achieving victories, which is good if one is only interested in that. But is it not also BAD if in achieving that victory the team itself does not improve in its own right? Thus, in cooperating, in mutually working together, individuals themselves become better at what it is that they are doing. This can be much better than your team winning a simple game.

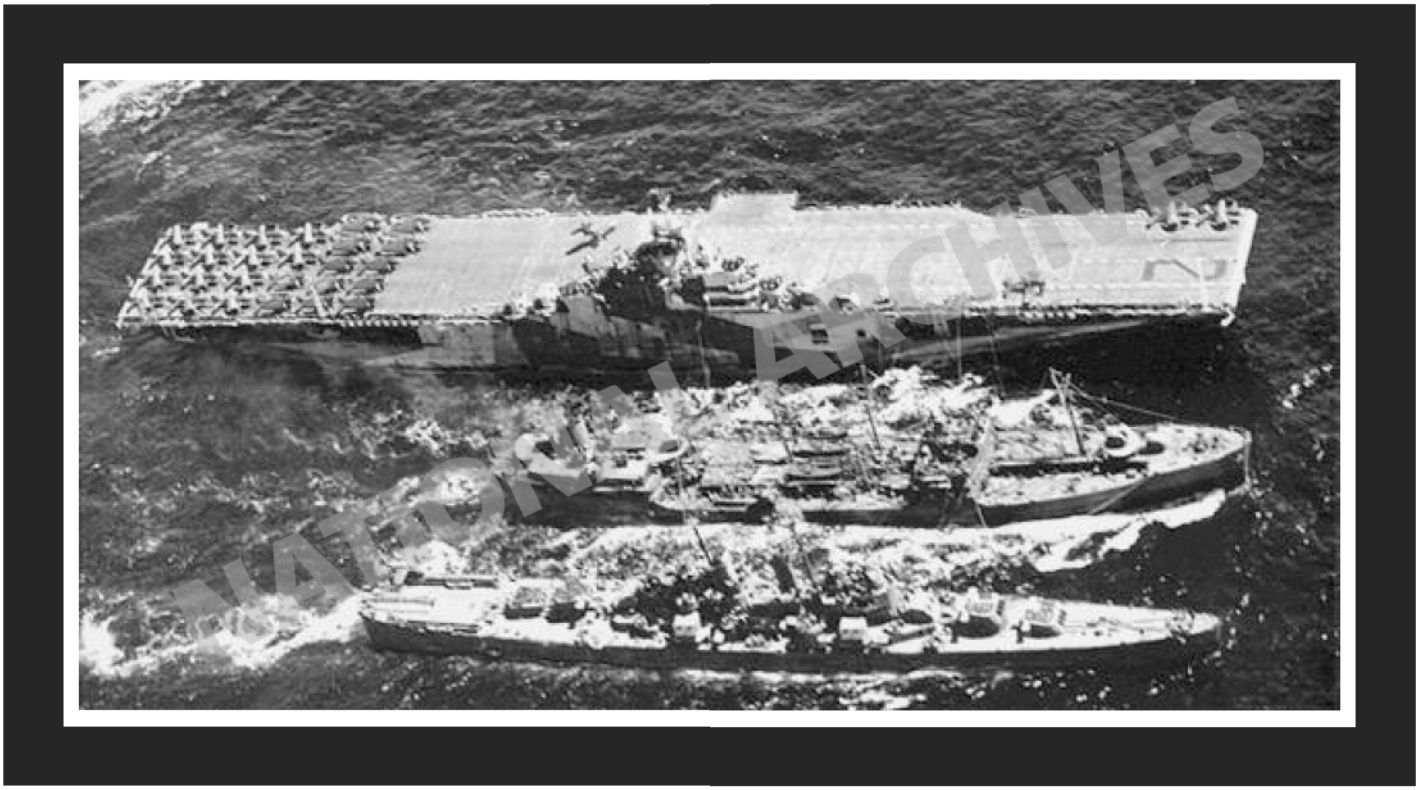


COOPERATION II

Here's a fine overview of a resupply operation that took place many times. Could there be a better example of cooperation? The cooperation not only takes the form of maintaining steady seamanship and safely expediting the transfer of supplies, but it also has the practical, the usual, result of refurbishing the tools of war that lead to the desired victory, wherever and whenever that is to be. The transfer of the bombs and torpedoes, the wherewithal to allow the conflict to proceed, are not the only items passed (cooperatively) between the ships. Such fundamental things as food and the like are required for the proper functioning of a war-machine as complex as a naval ship. Can one imagine a soldier fighting his battles without such support? How long can he effectively remain in the field, with no food to sustain him and no ammunition to protect him? Of what value would he be to the enterprise at hand? No, no soldier could long survive such deprivation. He desperately needs the cooperation of those supporting him and supplying him with food and ammunition. It's a matter of life and death.

So this then is the "color of cooperation" in wartime, where one group of people (the supply ship) support and sustain the efforts of another group of people (the carrier and the cruiser) to help assure their successful completion of some worthwhile cause. But in this consideration of the salutary results to be obtained from cooperation, it doesn't serve one well to become entirely "Pollyanna-like" because there are those who deliberately dull the cooperative nature of others by promoting hard-times, preventing encounters, and generating anxieties, and even fears, in others so as to have an otherwise amiable, cooperative person reduced to a caricature of one. The effect, if not their purpose, is to be obstructionist and definitely non-cooperative. Why? Who knows?

Quickly turning from that sour note, let us reconsider something "sweet", such as those three ships riding side-by-side. This panoramic view of these three highly interesting and complex constructs, these magnificent artifacts, if you will, is what rivets our attention. Who can deny that these three ships are marvels? Here, it's somewhat similar to looking at an object, any object, from afar, and then slowly, mentally zooming in, and into, that object, all the while wondering in amazement at the complexities revealed as one finally arrives at the lowest level of complexity. So it will be, when zooming down closer and closer to, and into, the ships, where their inner workings are exposed, even down to the very intricacies of that mechanical analog computer with all its gears and cams and.....that we will be, yes, enthralled. It's frustrating not to be able to take the ship apart, piece-by-piece, to its most basic parts, so as to realize what it is that makes this amazing construct of inert steel and wires and.....such a wonderfully functional entity. One can become almost lyrical about what is encountered in such a journey; one can become inspired by all the books that tell us "How Things Work". For this effusiveness, I apologize, but I will not take it back. In fact, these books are the most interesting, fascinating books extant, bar none, or so I would have it. The discussions, the pictures, in these books of engineering and science, are overwhelmingly wonderful, even glorious, and they bring us one step closer to this that is, in my humble opinion, that is divine. (After the above, there's nothing else to say, there's nothing else to write, and there's nothing else to do except to go to those books.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

USEFULNESS

This picture was taken post-WWII: the destroyer has the new version of the 5-inch gun (notice how much narrower the gun-mount is), and the carrier is carrying the Grumman F9F Panther jets, up forward. These aircraft were introduced to the fleet in 1950, just before the Korean War of 1950. This picture was included in the book even though it is not of the WWII era simply because it is such a good picture. Also, it was shortly after this time, in the latter part of 1952, that the U.S.S. Antietam received the first canted flight deck, a very useful feature indeed that the U.S. obtained from Britain. In January of 1953, the Antietam received the first aircraft to land on a canted (angled) deck. This feature consisted of angling the back half of the flight deck by ten and one half degrees off the center-line of the flight deck. At this angle, a landing aircraft could touch down with power applied to the engine. With the usual center-line landing procedure, the pilot would cut the engine-power when he was some fifty yards from the ship. This was to allow the aircraft to make a softer landing than if it was under power. It also improved the chances of the tail-hook catching onto one of the arresting wires that were strung across the flight deck. But with the canted deck, the pilot would touch down with the engine at landing-power (the power that it would be if he didn't cut power). Should the tail-hook not engage one of the wires in this situation, the pilot would then give the engine full throttle and thus launch himself as in a normal launch. This would of course also eliminate barrier-crashes, or worse, bounces over the barriers into the aircraft and personnel up forward. Aircraft would be saved, personnel would be saved, and nerves wouldn't be frayed. This was a big improvement and a cause to thank the British for having proposed this idea (although only the U.S. implemented it). One wonders why the entire war was completed before this idea was originated. Useful ideas during wartime were more concerned with "more" (more flights, etc.), rather than "safer". In the case of the canted deck, usefulness happened to promote both operational efficiency and safety. So the question arises, which is more useful: operational efficiency, or safety? The answer seems to be that during a war it's the former, and after the war, the latter makes itself known. This, in a way, carries over into private life: would one rather be useful and poor, or useless and wealthy? This is sometimes a legitimate question, and one that will define a person pretty well. There are certainly those who feel that in being useful, one has achieved "wealth". And there are probably others who believe that by achieving wealth, one can become useful. Entered into this mix is one's concept of "useful" and "wealthy". There are many variables representing both words and there are many gradations of each variable. To resolve this complication, one could call on the use of a computer software program called a neural network, a special kind that is based on the holographic paradigm. After generating (originating) all the variables involved in this problem, and after generating all the gradations of each variable, one would then establish a lookup table that could be interpreted only by this special neural network. When one gives values to each of the variables, the network will then determine one's predisposition to "usefulness" or "wealth". One then will be categorized, and to what degree. (Categorized is just another way of saying "profiled". Profiles are used every day in every little way. One could say that profiles represent life as we daily observe it. In fact it's literally impossible to go through the day without "profiling", where a profile is merely a template against which we make all kinds of decisions, from buying a book to buying a car. In a much more profound way, profiles can be used to make weather forecasts to making medical diagnoses to you-name-it, using a this holographic neural network In fact, anything that requires a decision to be made can be accommodated by this neural network. Hopefully, this is being done now.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER I

These next eleven pictures will show various aspects of transfers of objects being passed between naval ships in time of war. These transfers concern items such as fuel oil for ships and aviation gasoline for aircraft and aircraft engine parts for maintenance and ammunition for guns and bombs for offense and food for sustenance and last, but not least, pilots for aircraft. All of the pictures in this book (this pictorial essay) were taken by official navy photographers, both enlisted men and commissioned officers. As has been said before, these photographers were not only that, but also many of them were artists first, and photographers second. Many of their pictures could well find approbation in the art museums of the world (in my humble opinion). Not one of these pictures was staged; every picture was "candid". Most beneficially, each picture should be viewed as a whole from arm's length as well as from up close, for detail. Each picture in this book "tells it like it was", with no embellishments of content and no posing of subject matter. You are there, and there and everywhere where the photographer was. With just a little imagination and a little bit of intelligence, you can "restart the projector" that in this book has been frozen in time.

This is a picture of a tanker coming along side a carrier, with its fuel-hoses suspended and at the ready to be swung over the water to the carrier. This tanker can be seen to lie low in the water, indicating that it has a full load of fuel oil. Any sea that is even moderately active will wash over the weather-deck of the tanker as it takes the rebound-waves from the adjacent carrier's side. Thus the working-party, in their foul-weather gear, will stay on the higher level, as seen here. Even where the working-party is standing, it can be seen that the deck is glistening with wetness. Notice all the rigging that is required to suspend the fuel-hoses, thus making for an interesting play of black and white, without too much black to make it too "busy". The more one studies this scene, the more things one discovers. For instance, observe the rectangular object in the middle of the picture, to the left. If one looks closely at the right portion of this object, one will detect a small rudder and a smaller propeller just to the left of the rudder. This object then is a small boat available for whatever reason, not the least of which is the sinking of the ship (remember though that this is a tanker, and if it sinks, it would probably be due to a bomb hit or a torpedo hit, in which case there would be nothing left to save). Just below the work-party is a platform for what looks like a pair of 20-mm guns. This is of course about as minimal a source of protection as is possible, because tankers were not supposed to insert themselves into a war-zone. Finally, how can one not be fascinated by that sea roiling between the two ships and throwing itself up and over onto the tanker's weather-deck? When in motion, the water, in all its blues and greens and purples of all shades and tones and overplayed by the pure white foam, is a sight to behold. "A jolly good show!" So this then will introduce us to a series of pictures that portray various aspects of the process called "Transfers". And remember, these images should be, no, must be, viewed (and studied) from both arm's length as well as in close detail. It is only then that one will fully appreciate the story that they contain, a story that is worth the telling because those resupply ships were the "secret" for our navy to have overcome the forces ranked against it; that and the dedication of those who manned those ships, those unsung stalwarts.



TRANSFER II

Again, either up close or back at arm's length, this is a picture with plenty of play of dark against light, gray against gray, precision versus vagueness, form featuring function, and where sharply defined lines are softened in texture. It's also a static still-life even as one visualizes the tanker deliberately rolling to the starboard, then to the port, now slowly rising upward, then wallowing leisurely downward, almost as if it were in a stately dance. First the sea crashes up over and onto the weather-deck, splashing the white, restless foam into anything in its way, then the water subsides as it spills back meekly into the sea below. The sea has a way of always exhibiting its own personality: sometimes it's demure and sometimes it's frothy, sometimes it's playful and sometimes it's lively, sometimes it's vigorous and sometimes it's angry. But here it seems to be showing its exuberance. In any event, this tanker is a "load" as is seen by its riding so low in the water, what with its being full-up with fuel oil. Once it gets up to speed, its momentum is considerable, thus making course corrections slow, and putting a big burden on the helmsman. Notice that there are two fuel-hoses amidships, both port and starboard. Then there's another pair back aft, with the one on the port side "paid out" to the carrier. Also, notice the work-party huddled together just above the top of that breaking wave. They are the ones who are handling the fuel-transfer from that side of the operation, and they are doing this under fairly adverse conditions, conditions that require a commitment.

Even though the sailors are under orders to do this job, it nevertheless demands a commitment on their part if they are going to do the job properly (and they will do it properly). The more difficult and arduous the task that needs to be done, the more commitment that is required. Commitment usually infers a pledge to others to accomplish something that normally is of some significance. However, a commitment does not, or should not, imply that a pledge or promise be a part of a commitment. True commitment does not, or should not, rely upon an order to do something. While a commitment to an order is a given, commitment, less an order, is a true virtue, and commitment to a triviality is a misnomer. One could even say that a commitment is an obligation that carries with it a meaning that is one step removed from being an order. In the same manner, the more difficult the thing that is to be done, the more meaningful is the fulfillment of that commitment. Thus should a commitment be taken seriously. If it isn't, then it's no commitment at all. Here, the working-party is under the requirements of an order, but even with that, that crew can "flavor" their obligation by their attitude of agreeableness. A commitment accomplished under duress or with a sour demeanor is no commitment at all, just as to be a real commitment, one should try to fulfill it to the best of one's ability. Commitment cannot be a chore. True commitment knows no excuses, trucks no impediments, allows no difficulties, counts no days, and is moral/ethical. True commitment ultimately implies being faithful to a person, to an idea, to a cause irrespective of present or future difficulties. A credo of commitment could be that whatever eventualities befall, commitment will not shirk, and dependability and reliability shall prevail. Now what say you as to "commitment"? What do all of you think about it? And are you committed to commitment?

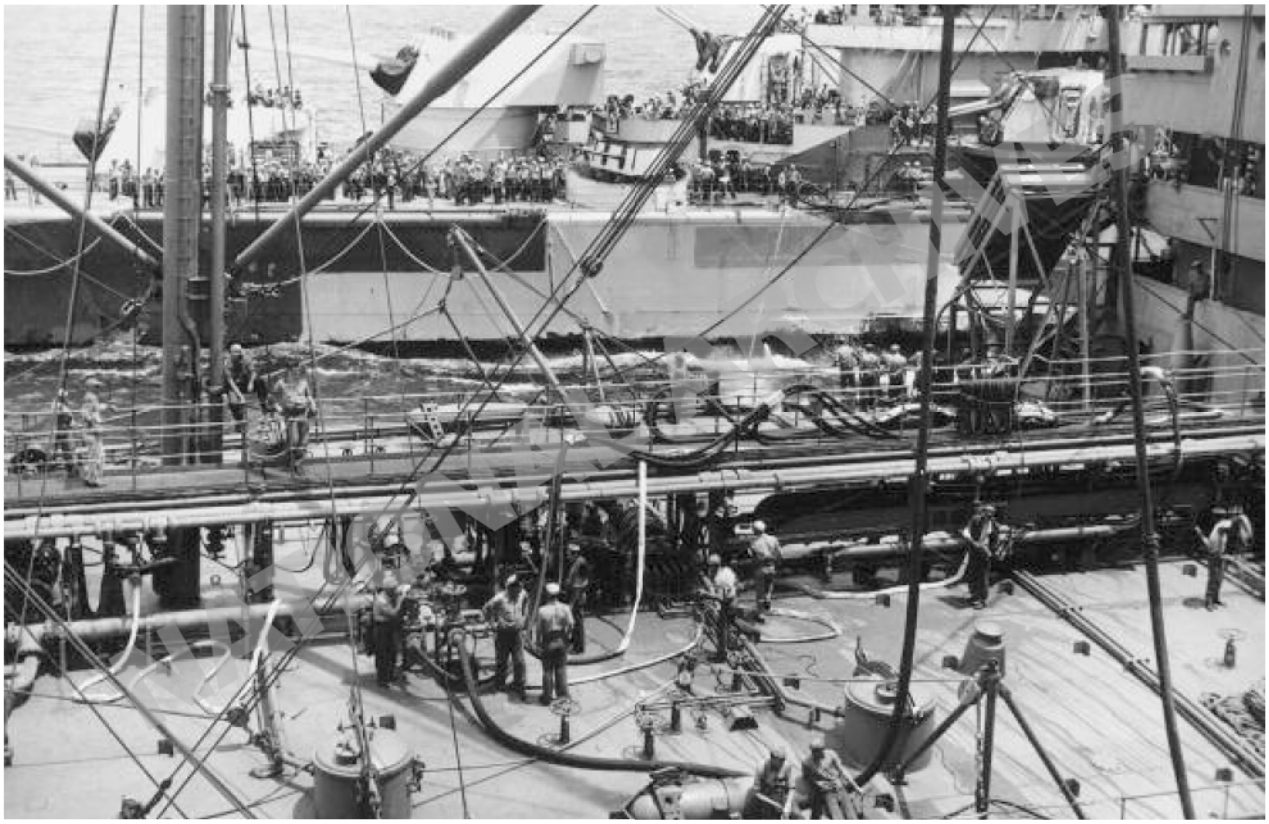
(To have been committed to a person whom you thought to have been your friend, and then to have found that that "friend" never was, is to put a strain on that commitment that should never waver from neutral.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER III

Yes, this picture is "busy", what with all its details, even while those in it are not. However, they have already done what is necessary to start the oil flowing to the carrier. It's not clear from this picture whether or not the crew on the carrier has made the connection as yet. This is an interesting view in that it clearly shows all the accouterments necessary to make the transfer of fuel oil happen. It also shows such things as the fire hose uncoiled, ready to suppress any contingency. Everything in this picture has a purpose, and if it had no useful purpose, it wouldn't be there: a navy ship strictly excludes whatever might be superfluous. Certainly all those booms, pulleys, and lines are absolutely necessary, and one is struck by how clean and ship-shape everything looks even though it is messy fuel oil that is being dealt with here. On the other side of the tanker is probably an Iowa-class battleship, carrying nine 16-inch guns, and about twice as many 5-inch guns as an Essex-class carrier, of which two twin 5-inch mounts are shown. In plain view is a 40-mm quad gun-tub. (These 16-inch guns have now been replaced by guided missiles and the navy now has no active battleships in its inventory.)

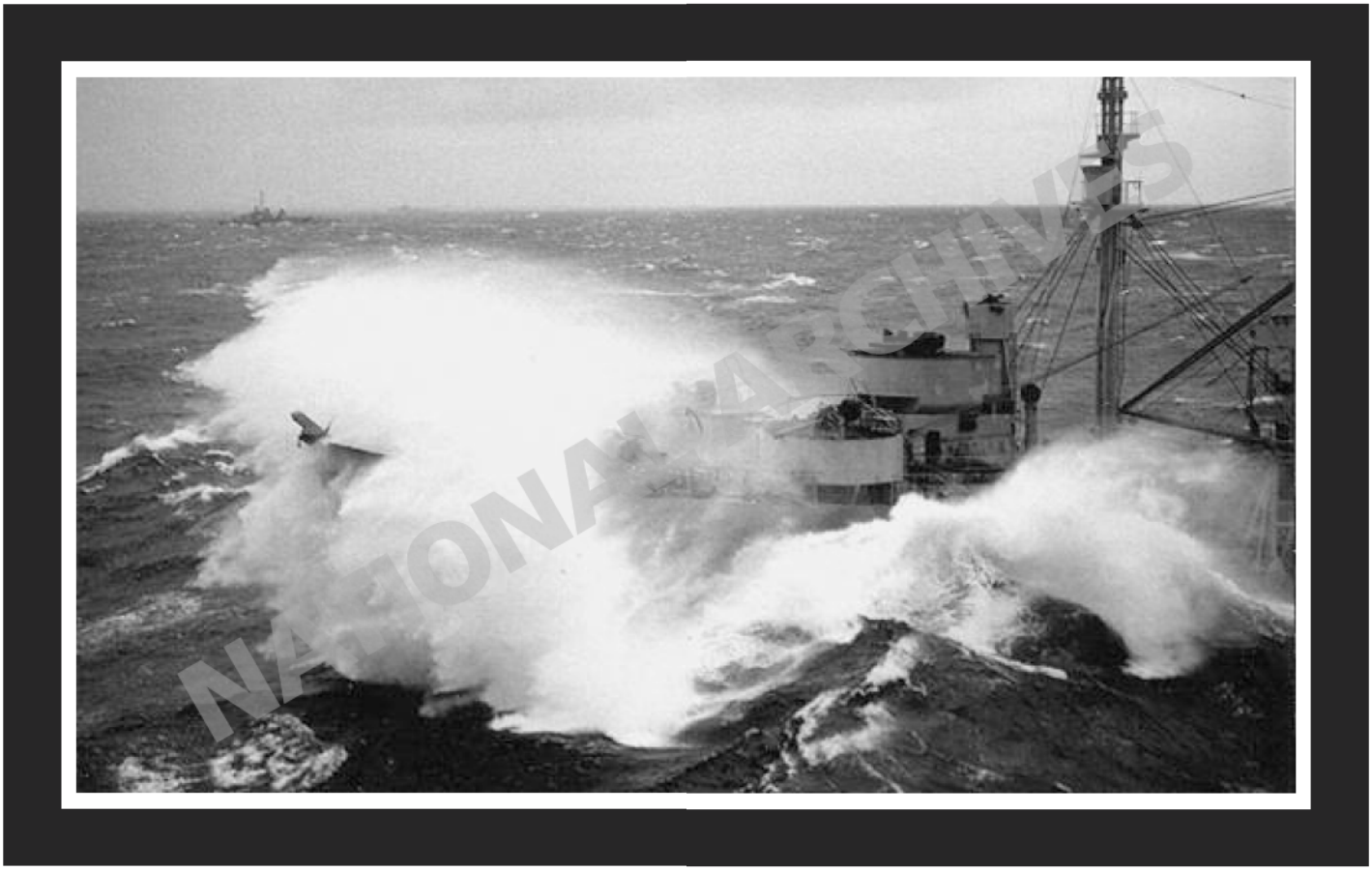
These sailors and officers have a big responsibility in assuring a proper and safe transfer of their cargo of fuel oil. They are responsible in that they are held accountable to doing their jobs well. Thus do they fulfill their assignments. Included in this meaning of responsibility are such things as trustworthiness, dependability, and even honesty in discharging their obligations. Of perhaps even greater importance (external to the navy) is that for one to be responsible, one should have the capability to make moral and ethical decisions based on knowing right from wrong, good from bad (implying, of course, that one has a well-developed concept of what is "right" and what is "wrong", what is "good" and what is "bad". This is another way of saying that one has good sense, coupled with a rigorous foundation of honesty.) Some things are easily determined to be right and wrong, but other things require a more refined understanding of what makes up given situations. This is all within the capability of all of us, given a modicum of intellectual effort. So this kind of responsibility is that one do what is right, what is proper, what is beneficial, or all of the above. The third kind of responsibility says that for every "right" there is a reciprocal "responsibility". Does not every "right" depend on someone else's "responsibility"? Without responsible people there would be no "rights". When one says one has a "right", one should at the same time consider that someone else's "responsibility" is called into play, and made that "right" possible. So a "right" implies at the same time a corresponding, a balancing, "responsibility". Thus, without the counterbalance of "responsibility" the "right" will turn around the balance-point and fall down, resulting in instability. This is not the environment in which one finds contentment, much less happiness. Thus one has a moral obligation to couple "responsibility" with every "right" raised. The problem isn't "rights", the problem is that there are those who ONLY think about their "rights" and do not think about how they can also be responsible in fulfilling those "rights". This thought can best be summed up by that maxim that says, "periodically one should get off the ("rights") wagon so as to help push the wagon". To be helped is fine, but to help oneself is finer. This is always the case, except when one is unable to do so or is in some way incapacitated. This is one of my favorite metaphors, it it should be an integral part of everyone's list. (Addendum: Leaders are responsible, and responsible people are leaders, the foundation of most of society.)



TRANSFER IV

Talk about getting drenched! Presumably though, there was no one up forward when this picture was taken. There was no need to be there because the transfer-activity was going on amidships. But even back there, there's a great deal of water with which to contend (and where life-saving vests were the order of the day) Noticing the sea on the other side of this supply ship, there seems to be little white-cap activity. So why should there be an "explosion" of water as shown here? Again, the only reasonable explanation is the interaction of the sea between the supply ship and the much larger carrier. As both ships "plow" through the moderate sea, the bow-waves from the carrier, farther forward, are essentially "thrown" at the supply ship. Here we observe the effect of this action, where the bow-wave effect is to the right, while to the left the sea has "exploded" due to the ship's bow slamming down hard on the water from a higher elevation than it now is. This is just another way of saying that the ship is pitching excessively. In a very real way, all this action puts quite a strain on those responsible for the seamanship of this ship. These conditions are hazardous; it's also a real challenge to the helmsman, the quartermasters, and the captain of the ship.

Many jobs are hazardous, and a good many more are challenges. There are some people who don't like challenges, and will avoid them at all costs. This can be understandable, certainly, but it can also be detrimental to one's best interests. Seldom can one expect to "sail through life" unimpeded with challenges of various types, and of various degrees. Perhaps it's an irony, but very often it is those very challenges that provide one with the best opportunities to experience satisfaction, and even great pleasure. An obvious example is the elation one feels when, after much diligent effort, one wins a tennis match against a superior player. Before the match, the challenge was well-defined. It was a legitimate challenge, and it was a challenge that was not prefabricated (which would have been merely a form of harassment). Even the effort to learn how to play tennis (or football) can be a real challenge to most of us, and to accomplish (gain) competence to overcome the challenge is something that can be very enjoyable. Learning to become proficient in some endeavor (challenge) is a prime source of enjoyment. Overcoming obstacles (challenges) in your career-path is a source of enjoyment. The lower your starting point, the greater the challenge, and the greater the challenge overcome, the greater the satisfaction. One can also think of adversities as challenges (this can be dicey), and thus make overcoming them a source of satisfaction. So establishing challenges (reasonable goals) and then accomplishing those goals is certainly a path to, even, your pleasure. The key here is to set one's sight's above one's known capabilities, not excessively so, but enough. To go perhaps one step beyond what most would, one could even argue, in the abstract, that those who are at the bottom of the ladder, by being there, have the most opportunity for satisfaction, because they have the most distance to go to arrive at the top. (Think of the tennis ladder.) By the same token, those who initially find themselves near, or even at, the top of the ladder, have no further room to rise, and thus they have (much) less opportunity for this type of satisfaction. How many times have we seen "portraits" of those who were "born with a silver spoon in their mouth" looking for all the world full of naught but ennui? (As for myself, I greatly admire anyone who can play the piano. That has always been one of my (distant) challenges, and when I finish this book, that is what I'll be doing: applying myself to the challenge of learning, as best I am able, how to make those keys make music that I enjoy.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER V

First off, notice that this tanker has a single 40-mm gun on a platform on the fantail of the ship. This is a mere token of protection because tankers never go into a war-zone. But more importantly to us is this wonderful scene of the sea as it constantly, and leisurely, "reformulates" itself in shapes and colors, all the while making quiet foaming and hissing sounds that lull most of us into an amiable complacency. From an arm's length, this is a very pleasant scene as we figuratively inhale that pleasing aroma of salt air. But this isn't an excursion ship. No, this is a working ship doing important and necessary work. It can be seen that the tanker has extended two fuel oil hoses to the carrier, and is now in the process of doing the same thing with the destroyer (if one looks closely, one can detect a rope between the two ships This rope in turn will be used to pull a hose over to the tin-can.) Yes, this is a working ship built for a very specific purpose. In this context, one thinks of specifications and blue-prints required for building this ship that has these specific functions to perform.

Without standards of measurements, these specifications and blue-prints would have little validity or usefulness because a standard represents a universal, authorized basis of measure upon which all specifications are compiled. Just so are standards important, no, crucial, in the correct functioning of society. Standards are rules and principles by which a society forms judgments as to what is correct behavior. Standards provide the basis and structure of generally recognized and approved features of human conduct that have been found, over time and by common consensus, to be proper, to be good, and to be ameliorative. Without standards, a society would be one step removed from chaos (this is not the chaos of the science of Fractals, a beautiful thing). Conservatism seeks to conserve those standards which have been found over time to be beneficial to the general welfare (consider conservation of the environment, for example). Standards pertain to knowing right from wrong, good from bad, tastefulness from tastelessness. So what should be considered what is right, what is good, what is tasteful? One famous definition of something similar put it this way: "I know it when I see it". While it's true that there are differences of opinion about these things, these differences usually only "nibble around the edges" of standards that have passed the test of time. To paraphrase one such tried-and-true standard, "do not do, unto others, what they would have you not do". (This is a pretty good definition of the word "consideration".) Unfortunately, there are those who do not conform to proper conduct, they do not behave properly, because they lack the strength of character that would allow them to shun the "pack mentality". Alone they are fine; in a group, they lose all sense of propriety (probably because they are weak). Standards as applied to good taste are more difficult to define, but generally speaking, they have to do with not being bizarre (calling attention to oneself). Good manners respect others and eschew excessive showiness (is lack of self-confidence, deep down, a factor here?) Proper standards of conduct will always be problematical, and in a state of flux, but conservatism is usually the bell-wether of propriety and a well-regulated society. Egoists will always push the envelop and feel that standards are only burdens, for others. (Note: standards do NOT stifle initiative.) Finally, but certainly not least, morals and ethics result from standards. The morality of chastity strongly implies that intimacy is the total expression of emotional love, and that intimacy, without love, will seriously jeopardize, and maybe irretrievably defile, any future love. Strong words, yes, but important words also. In truth, sexual virtuousness will be rewarded many-fold.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER VI

Starting in the foreground, we can notice what looks like some kind of ladder piled up on the catwalk. This definitely was not SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) and was no doubt a temporary situation. Beyond the catwalk is a container that holds a bunch of buoys for use in case the ship sinks. Next, notice that on the front of the supply ship are three 40-mm guntubs for a modicum of protection (the number "70" is painted on one of the guntubs). This is seen as a supply ship because the bridge-section is amidships while the tankers had their bridges back aft to make room for accessing the fuel oil tanks. This picture provides good evidence of one of the problems involved when transferring items between ships, especially if that item happens to be a pilot (from a destroyer). These "exploding" waves could batter hose-couplings, dangling bombs, nets full of items, and of course pilots. It was interesting to have one of the ships just appear on the horizon and then close up to us as if we were long-lost friends finding each other on that great expanse of ocean. These periodic "meetings" made you feel like you were still in touch with the outside world (even though another carrier and a few tin-cans were always "out there" with you. But they were a long way out there. Once in a while we, the two carriers, would part company at night, and the next morning we would commence having a mock battle with each other, where their aircraft would search for us and then "attack" us, and we would do the same to them. I don't know if we were ever "hit and/or sunk", but it thoroughly grabbed my attention when their aircraft hurtled down on us. Even though it was all only a "game", I couldn't help but tense a little. It was somewhat unnerving to be "bombed", even in a simulated (but realistic) way, especially when recalling those war movies and news films before I joined the navy. But those experiences were definitely educational.

Education, if nothing else, is an obligation we all should, no, must, fulfill. But the very word "education" implies that it is an activity that we must do. This would seem to be a counterproductive approach to LEARNING. Now the word "learning" implies an activity that is something to be enjoyed, and in fact, learning is one of the great rewards that life provides to us. Learning is not only utilitarian in that it makes life smoother, but as important, to learn new things, to learn about life and all the wonders of life, is a blessing that we should cherish. If nothing else, and this is perhaps a self-centered concept, learning can markedly improve one's self-confidence and one's self-esteem, which is definitely a good thing. But certainly beyond that, learning can, and does, add to one's enjoyment by opening up new worlds (and "vistas"). They say that travel broadens the mind, and it does. But simple book-learning is, in my opinion, a much more useful and satisfying type of learning. And it never hurts to become more knowledgeable. As an important aspect of learning, how can a democracy possibly function properly without a knowledgeable citizenry? This is the practical part of learning (as is that part that enables one to do one's job well). But beyond the obvious and necessary implications of learning, to learn for the pure pleasure of it would be something well worth cultivating. As has been mentioned previously, reading "How to" books is a source of rare satisfaction, whether it be about something fairly useless to something of national importance, and anything in between. There will no doubt be legitimate questions of priorities, but these can be smoothed out over time. The main point to be made here is that life can be made more fulfilling by learning more. In addition, learning is a useful form of gratification that can be had by most every one. While reading is the method, the subject matter is the substance for a better state of mind (translation: don't read trash).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER VII

Yes, that's a band there in the foreground, entertaining the personnel on the tin-can. This was done if the carrier had a band, which the Antietam did not (at least when I was on board). Notice the 20-mm guntubs to the left just above that life-raft. The later ships (tin-cans) carried 40-mm guns, providing for better protection. At the top of the picture is a 5-inch gun-director, with its radar antenna on top of it. The radar would provide electrical signals to the director which in turn would compute the train, elevation and lead orders to the 5-inch gun. It can be seen that there are two hoses in slings hanging from that crane at the top of the picture. This crane will be swung out over the water toward the tin-can, after which the work-crew on the tin-can will pull the hoses all the way to the inlet valves for the fuel oil. (A gun will first shoot a line to the tin-can which line is tied to a rope which rope is connected to a hose.) In the distance can be seen a battlewagon (battleship, BB) which gives a note of security to the scene. These officers are standing at the edge of a fifty-foot ledge above the water. Although the ship is not rolling that much, presumably they're taking appropriate precautions not to topple over the side of the ship into that churning, heaving, surging, foaming, turbulent "abyss" below, as witness that water to the right leaping up to menace someone.

Appropriateness can be found not only in deeds, but also in words and thoughts. For instance, is the word "abyss", used above, appropriate? The main definition of that word means a deep chasm, with the unknown at the bottom. Now does the watery action fifty feet below that goes on between these two ships qualify as an "abyss"? Is it justifiable to describe this space as an "abyss"? Well no, unless one is willing to allow the author some "artistic license" to use a word to convey a certain feeling of subdued awe at what was going on between these two ships. It's certainly a stretch to use the word "abyss" literally, but one could argue that the proper impression is generated, and so it could be considered appropriate within the margins of "artistic license" and reality. A much simpler example is that the word "lovely" could be well applied to that special girl, but that the same word would be grossly inappropriate when applied to a warrior. Appropriateness has consequences, as when honors and awards are bestowed indiscriminately (inappropriately), true honors and awards are devalued and diluted, and even belittled. (But appropriate honors and awards are good because they help establish a meritocracy, which in turn encourages accomplishments.) So words not only mean something, but how they are used is also critical (it is hoped that this book respects this admonition). What might be correct and suitable in one situation or set of conditions might be quite inappropriate in another situation or set of conditions. An action, a thought, a word should befit that action, thought or word. Just as science and engineering have established standards for the well-regulated applications of science and engineering, so too does society have established standards (values) to enable the determination of what is appropriate. Closely related to appropriateness is good taste and good judgment, and they could be the "coin of the realm" where appropriateness reigns. Appropriateness means action and talk that is suitable and fitting for a particular person, purpose or occasion. The "suitable and fitting" part can be ascertained in large measure by learning to "walk in the other person's shoes", as well as having a well-honed sense of propriety. It doesn't hurt to also have a knack for the subtle, but is this beyond the ken (mental perceptions) of the warrior? It certainly shouldn't be, should it?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER VIII

It appears to be a fire, but there is no fire. There is though this silhouette that has been created by an excessively active play of water between the two ships that has erupted into a voluminous spray. This happens periodically and it makes the transfer operation more difficult. The work-party has its work cut out for it trying to haul some item from the supply ship to the carrier. By the slope of that rope, that item is now fairly low down (recall that that crouching sailor holding the rope is some fifty feet above the water below). Also, the item being transferred is now probably being buffeted by wave-action down there, causing the rope to undergo a fair amount of give-and-take. In addition, when either ship rolls, that give-and-take is commensurately magnified. For instance, if the supply ship rolls to the starboard, the rope is pulled away from the carrier and that sailor, if he's too tenacious, will be pulled overboard. Here, tenacity has to be moderated, but perseverance does not. One could say that the perseverance displayed here is only the result of a lawful order. Nevertheless, perseverance it is, it being a "game" of tug-of-war next to a fifty-foot precipice. It can be noticed that the supply ship's booms are not played out to the full extent, so they have more "give" to give. It is difficult to accommodate two rolling ships, sometimes in the same direction, and sometimes in the opposite directions. Add to this the possible pounding by some rogue waves of the items being transferred. It can require something more than physical strength and stamina; it can require mental perseverance.

For most of us, we cannot avoid the vicissitudes of life, and when adversity waxes instead of wanes, we do best when we persevere. While its true that they are under a lawful order, the sailors nevertheless have to exhibit a persistence of effort. Perseverance implies the ability to maintain one's struggles in difficult times and in the face of constant discouragement. An historic example of this happened in 1779 when it could be said that the U.S. Navy was born: the American naval captain of the ship "Bonhomme Richard" was in mortal conflict with the H.M.S. Serapis. The "Richard" was afire and sinking, and the captain of the "Serapis" called out, "Do you ask for quarter?" (Do you surrender?) Captain John Paul Jones of the "Richard" shouted back these immortal words: "I have not yet begun to fight!" Whereupon the fight continued, and the Americans subsequently boarded the "Serapis" and extracted its surrender, as the "Richard" sank with colors still flying. There are difficulties, yes. There are obstacles, yes. But there also is steadfastness, there is endurance, there is tenacity, there is fortitude that all say, "never give up!" Just as you gain physical strength as you persevere in a physical activity (sports), so too do you gain mental strength when you persevere in a mental activity (studies). It is as the Rudyard Kipling poem "IF" puts it: ".....If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they are gone, And so hold on when there is nothing in you Except the Will which says to them 'Hold on!'....." This then illustrates well what perseverance is, and what we should strive to emulate: a moral courage under afflictions and troubles, and an unwavering resolve to endure.

(Who's to say that the childhood maxim "If at first you don't succeed, then try try, try again" is not the perfect definition of perseverance? A caveat could, though, be placed on what it is that has to be persevered. Some conditions of adversity beg for perseverance, while others are problematical in varying degrees. But by all means, favor the former.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER IX

This is a nice picture, this is a pleasant picture, what with the well-behaved waves, the bright early sun (notice the shadows), and the "laid-back" demeanor of the people. (The more one looks at these pictures, the more one sees to like.) It is also a good view of the basic transfer process. Apparently we're looking at a training exercise, using a small package to simplify the drill. The conditions are optimum as far as the water-activity is concerned: no waves of significance, ship's properly apart (to minimize the waves), and visibility good. The supply ship here is the standard one for providing bombs, ammunition, aviation parts, supplies, food, and the like. That screen at the edge of the ship is interesting, and its purpose is not clear until one realizes that it's there as a "marker" for the height above the deck that the transferred items should achieve. Because the ship surges and heaves vertically, provision must be made for the upward motion of the ship as the load (of items) passes over the side of the ship. Thus, even as the ship heaves upward by four feet, the load will not strike the side of the ship and be damaged as it is pulled into the ship and onto the deck. To minimize even further the effect of the deck heaving upward, thick "carpets" are spread out as shown. The deck would not have been damaged because it is made of four-inch thick steel (to prevent enemy bombs from penetrating the lower spaces). Five hundred and 1,000-pound bombs are each encircled by a thick wooden collar for protection from abrupt contact on the deck as the sling deposits them down onto the (steel) deck. These collars also allow for them to be rolled out of the way. Other items are transferred on wooden pallets which facilitate their removal from the decampment area by the use of forklift trucks. The food sent over is immediately taken to food-lockers by work-crews, a duty I had for about one month.

As this picture is pleasant, so also does it generate a cheerful attitude, and a cheerful attitude is a representation of optimism. It is optimism that is the subject here, and it is optimism, one can argue, that is the well-spring of all good deeds and eventualities. Optimism doesn't just mean hopefulness, that traditional expression that is usually implied. It also strongly infers enthusiasm of effort, confidence in outcome, and even assurance of the rightness of a cause or action (can a pessimist, the opposite of an optimist, ever be assured of anything salutary? No, not usually.) The position will not be taken here that an optimist believes the world is a "perfect" place and that there is no room, nor grounds, for improvement. To the contrary: it is asserted that a cogent argument can be made that only an optimist has the wherewithal to produce improvements and advances in all of mankind's endeavors. An optimist, it is here posited, sees the world not through "rose-colored" glasses, but rather with a mind-set that the good can be made better, and if one thing doesn't work, there are always alternatives. In the military, during WWII, there was a prevalent saying that was called the "Can do" attitude. In those years there was also a song entitled "Accentuate The Positive, Eliminate The Negative". Could you imagine a pessimist even considering such a thing? Besides, a positive attitude is good for one's disposition and it breeds optimism, which is a will to succeed. Furthermore, optimism forcefully counters the destructiveness of unbridled envy and the corrosiveness of adversity. One need not be optimistic about others, or other events, but one can be optimistic about oneself. So be optimistic and solve the world's ills, because a pessimist never will. Go to the sunny side of the street and be happy. Finally, be leavened by optimism about the things you can change, and be filled with forbearance about the things you can't change, and let God take care of the rest.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER X

In my limited experience, I would say that this supply ship is definitely too close to the carrier, and that group of people observing the situation seem to bear that out (or maybe it's just their natural curiosity). That group has the responsibility of unloading the items being pulled over, while the other group pulling on the rope does the "heave-ho" work. Both groups are most probably from the Gunnery Dept. because other than shooting and maintaining the guns, their duties are limited to the daily "clean sweep down, fore and aft". Most everyone seen in the picture is probably a seaman first class (s1/c). In boot camp they were apprentice seamen and upon leaving the camp, they became seamen second class (s2/c). After a short period of time, they were s1/c. Being at the bottom of the personnel ladder, they were the ones who did the "sweat jobs". There were many "rates" in the Navy: gunner's mate, electrician's mate, radar-men, radio-men signal-men, (gun) fire control men, machinist mates, aviation mechanics, and whoever else was necessary to run a small airport in a small town (pop. 3,000) on a large ship. These "rates" went from third class to second class to first class to chief and they were called "petty" officers, as differentiated from the commissioned officers, starting with ensign (just out of the Naval Academy), to lieutenant (j.g.) (junior grade), to lieutenant, to lieutenant commander, to commander, to captain, and to the various grades of admiral. All the large ships (carrier, battleship, cruiser) were commanded by a captain, with lesser ships by commander and lower. Within each category, such as captain, levels of command were determined by longevity in that rank. Warrant officers were sandwiched between commissioned and non-commissioned officers, somewhat akin to a "super" chief petty officer.

The determination of who will lead and who will follow, that is, the line of command, is a serious consideration in all enterprises, especially military ones. Likewise, the process of determination of one's path in life, this setting of purpose, is certainly an important one, and often difficult to discern. My own path was not that sure-footed because it was almost ten years after having received a B.S. in Business Administration degree that I chose to go full time to earn a B.S. in Electrical Engineering degree. This was quite a late career-turn, but it enabled a 28 year job in the Navy Dept. As most everyone is aware, one does best when one does what one enjoys doing. It is also true that to a more or less great extent, one feels defined by what one does. Thus, no one wants to be defined by what one does not enjoy doing, and so the determination of one's path should be attended to fairly early on, it would seem. So, what are you adept at, and what do you enjoy? Part of this process, it is asserted, should be the realization that there is a great deal of enjoyment to be had in the constant, steady progression and improvement of one's skills and one's knowledge, and that this is most likely to happen when one is "attuned" to that work. Helpful in this process is the ability to set goals, goals that stretch one's abilities and capabilities, yet goals that are also realistic. That is, whereas ambition is fine, ambition is good, ambition should also be realistic where failure is not a foregone conclusion. One's goals should also, it goes without saying, be moral and ethical (what genuine benefit accrues from breaking the rules?) If ambition means working harder, so much the better, because hard work is not only good for the soul, but it is also a source of genuine satisfaction, and even enjoyment. So set realistic goals, work hard to achieve those goals, and whatever happens, you'll be a "winner", in addition to which you'll find that life will be a much happier trip.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANSFER XI

It's probably appropriate to close out this set of "Transfer" pictures by showing the ultimate "raison d'etre" for the supply ships, the carrier, the aircraft, the personnel, the blood, sweat, and tears that have been called into play to help bring about the final battle of this grave conflict suffered for the sake of our country and our combined liberty. Here we see a microcosm of the huge, huge effort undergone by our entire country to assure the victory that meant peace and relief from death and destruction for a large segment of the WORLD. Who's to say whether it was this bomb, or that bomb, that brought us one step closer to that final day that benefitted BOTH friend and foe? (One of these well-placed 1,000-lbs. bombs could sink a sizeable ship.) Here, the officer's clinched fist signals the crane-operator to hold the descent of the load (bombs). He will then make signals to lower the load very slowly because of the ship's heaving motion. It can be seen that these bombs do not have their tail-fins (lest they be damaged), nor do they have their fuses attached, naturally. Also notice that each bomb has that wooden (or rubber) collar around it. This was to protect them as well as to facilitate rolling them on the deck in a more controlled fashion. Why there isn't a "carpeting" there is a puzzle. (But it does make for a more interesting picture in that the shiny deck isn't obscured.) The weather conditions here are noticeably less challenging than in some of the previous pictures, pointing out the necessity to take the bad with the good (some bad weather days, some good weather days. Here, the weather is absolutely benign.) During periods of heavy air operations, this transfer process had to be undergone many times because several flights of aircraft could easily use up the supply of bombs of one transfer operation. A ship, what with all its other accouterments, is of little value if it has no bombs. And these bombs in turn are of no value if they don't land where they're supposed to land (heaven help the recipients; a very, very nasty business, this).

Just as this officer is controlling the descent of these bombs, so too does one need to do what one can to control one's destiny. (What follows probably is a little afield, but it needs mention.) There are very few of us, if any, who can actually control their destiny, because we don't "live in a vacuum". Rather we interface with the rest of the world, both figuratively and actually. So what to do? It would seem best to concentrate on that which we can control (in our lives), and not be at all concerned with that which we cannot control. That is best left to Kismet. This strongly suggests that one find out early on what it is that is within one's power to control (within one's own life). It would seem that to do this adequately, one must be scrupulously honest with oneself, keeping in mind that some types of control on us are good (traffic lights, for instance) while other types of control such as are based on deceit and deception are bad, very bad, even vile at times. This personal control must be based upon the parameters within which one finds oneself, and it's a fact that one of these parameters is the financial resources available to one. If these resources should not be there, one must reevaluate one's goals in the light of those resources, and arrive at a plan of action that accommodates the reality of the situation. The situation may not be optimum, but the control can be effective. Control due to the deceit and deception of others who are "closet" adversaries is a problem, yes. Probably this can be surmounted only by depending on the culpability that accrues from this activity. What the world needs is a reinvigoration of the concept of strong culpability as a curb on the abuse of unwarranted control by others, among the other proscriptions. (It should be emphasized that paranoia has no support here, and self-sufficiency should be the mode.)



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DRY–DOCK I

This, and the next three pages, will picture various aspects of the dry-dock, a concrete basin constructed below the water-level at the edge of a harbor. These basins have a set of water-tight gates that allows water to be let in, or pumped out. There was a dry-dock at the Philadelphia Navy Shipyard that was large enough to accommodate the construction of the U.S.S. Antietam, in 1944. In fact, we (the crew) spent a few weeks aboard the Antietam while it was still high and dry in the dry-dock receiving the final touches preparatory to its commissioning (they were eager to "Go Get 'Em, Antietam", as the motto said). It was, to be sure, a novel introduction to "Joining the Fleet". Here in this picture can be seen the long stairway that leads down to the bottom of the dry-dock. Thus the workers (and sailors) descend the steps to do their maintenance work, which usually consisted of removing the barnacles from the bottom of the ship. This was necessary because sea-going ships are perceptibly slowed when their hulls are covered with these calcified crustaceans (barnacles). As a consequence, a ship must periodically visit a dry-dock to have these barnacles removed. But a dry-dock is also frequently used to build a ship from its very beginning, as was the Antietam, by laying its keel on a row of large wooden blocks. Huge cranes, on railroad tracks, encircled the dry-dock and enabled efficient construction of the largest of ships. When the ship is completed and harbor water is let into the basin (dry-dock), the ship rises off the wooden blocks to become free-floating. The ship in this picture is a newer Essex-class carrier because it has the 40-mm quad gun-tubs "tacked" onto the stern of the ship. That dark oblong "object" under the gun-tub is part of the supporting arrangement, and not a dark shadow. The evident smoothness of the side of the ship is due to the fact that everything was welded, because rivets slow the ship, and because a weld is stronger and more water-tight.

One could philosophically ask the question whether those steps in the picture go up, or whether they go down, as a metaphor for the direction of one's life. A large part of that question can be determined by one's decisiveness, or lack of it, that decisiveness which one exhibits when dealing with the elements that define one's life. What better attribute can there be than decisiveness to accomplish one's goals? (Decisiveness is the ability to make a decision expeditiously and with confidence.) Making a decision is important and it requires thoughtful and deliberate consideration, but making a decision with decisiveness is to do oneself a favor. Why? Because it represents an intelligent attribute, because others appreciate it, and because it saves time, a very important commodity. (Once time has gone, it's GONE.) Decisiveness also turns out to be a moderate measure of one's self-confidence, another important commodity, while the vacillation of indecisiveness can actually have a debilitating effect that is counterproductive to one's aspirations. Fortunately, decisiveness can be learned, and agreeably, it simplifies life. Who wants to clutter up one's life with unresolved situations? So "Clear the decks" for new things that will be coming along that will require one's undivided attention. What more can be usefully said, keeping in mind that being decisive and being deliberate are in no way mutually exclusive. In fact, the one feeds off of the other, making for a good pairing. Furthermore, decisiveness trains one to know how to separate the wheat from the chaff, an ability that is often times both critical and crucial. And why not spare oneself the wear and tear that is spawned by indecisiveness? Whether you personally appreciate the military or not, how can you not admire its required decisiveness in times of military action? Has not much of our freedoms, due to successful military battles, come at the hands of decisiveness? Think about it.



DRY–DOCK II

This interesting view of the ship clearly shows the 40-mm quad gun-tub (the barrels are pointing to the left). To the right of the gun-tub is the gun-director where a gunner points a device at the target as the device automatically makes correcting compensations for the ship's motions and provides to the director's sights the proper lead-angle to the target. All this was fairly complicated computing and was the domain of the fire control rating (not the gunners, while the fire-fighting duties were performed by the Airdales. "Fire Control" controlled the fire of the guns, not the fires due to enemy action.) The fire control rating was highly technical, involved with complicated spherical trigonometry and solid geometry (which, incidentally, I took at Andover Academy in 1943). It also involved mechanical analog computers that had to be maintained. They were far different from today's digital computers and computer software where it's cheaper to replace computer/digital cards and boards than to troubleshoot them and then repair them. Later ships added another 40-mm quad gun-tub to the right of the one seen in the picture, adding to the symmetry as well as the fire-power. This view also gives a good picture of the "screws" (propellers) that indicate that there were four turbines driving the ship. At this moment, the water is either being let in, or pumped out. Also notice the large crane to the left which is mounted on railroad tracks to allow it to be positioned anywhere along side the ship.

It can be seen that each one of those sailors on the flight deck is holding onto a stanchion (there temporarily, of course). This would indicate that they know themselves well enough to know that they don't feel comfortable with heights. This is good. That is, it is good that one knows oneself, and the better known, the better. Self-knowledge is one of the fundamental items that one should possess. To "know thyself" is an age-old admonition that will serve one very well throughout life. Of equal importance is that as one goes through the process of learning to understand oneself, ABSOLUTE honesty is absolutely necessary. Not to do so is not only counterproductive, but it will also surely come back to befuddle you. Self-knowledge, that is, understanding oneself, is in a way the creation of personal "templates" for the situations of life that require responses. (What are one's standards?) With these templates, life is thereby simplified, and made more efficient (accomplishing more with less effort). To use the vernacular, a template means that one doesn't have to "reinvent the wheel", vis-a-vis one's own personal standards in that the solutions are pre-resolved, the "computer is pre-programmed", the "look-up table is pre-assembled". (Just turn on the "neural network". Just joking.). Now all that is required is to fine-tune one's response to a given situation. This lessens the chance of taking unadvisable positions. And as a by-product, one's self-confidence becomes more stabilized, which is not a bad thing. In fact, self-knowledge tends to breed self-confidence, a good thing. Self-knowledge also breeds consistency which in turn allows others to know where you stand on the particulars of life. Another good thing. (Deceit and deception of course are a bad thing, leading to suspicions and probable confrontations and a field day for mean-minded people (a very bad thing, because most of us don't like it at all when we're lied to. Talk about corrosion!)) And finally, self-knowledge fosters circumspection not only of oneself, but also of the outside world, a very good thing. (How does one understand others without first understanding one's own thought-processes?) There are enough "good things" enumerated here that self-knowledge should be high on one's list of "to do" activities, or at least so it is postulated. And what say you about the above?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DRY–DOCK III

While this ship was floating in the water in the dry-dock, shipyard work crews, in small boats, welded the hooks on the side of the ship from which ropes were hung. Planks were probably then affixed to the ropes that had provisions for lowering the planks step-wise. The sailors then probably occupied the planks and the water was pumped from the dry-dock (Presumably the ropes could not only lower the planks, but also raise them with the replacement sailors.) Those sailors who were on the planks amidships must have had a difficult time of it because the planks there would be dangling several feet from the side of the ship (think about it). In any event, they all seem to be in precarious situations, especially when they apply muscle-power with the scrappers against the side of the ship in their effort to remove the barnacles. When we did the same job on the Antietam, we had the luxury of having scaffolding installed from the water line to the bottom of the ship. (The shipyard workers did the installation.) Then we, the unrated enlisted men, climbed up onto the scaffolding and proceeded to scrape, and scrape, and scrape those barnacles. A day of this and little was accomplished. So, the next day the shipyard workers arrived with their air-pressure sandblasters and finished the job that day. So so much for manpower. Those large blocks on either side of the ship were the type that were used as the resting place for the keel of the ship. Settling the ship down on the long row of those blocks as the water was pumped out of the dry-dock was a precision job that required surveyor's tools and a set of ropes on either side of the ship that would alternately pull the ship first to the starboard, and then the port, and visa versa. That was a very interesting day we spent down there in the "depths".

If one were of a mind, one could say that those sailors on those planks which were dangling from those hooks are all of them being self-reliant (and self-sufficient), doing their job with no help from anyone. And while no one is an island unto himself, and while no one is or can be independent in this world of massive interdependency, those sailors represent what it is to be self-reliant. To be self-reliant in this world is to be less dependent on others, and so to be less of a burden on society. There is something ennobling in being able to do for oneself as best as one is able while not in any way expecting someone else "to carry your load". To be neither dependent nor a burden is to be a worthwhile citizen (presuming of course one does not have the misfortune of being infirm). In a way, self-reliance tends to perpetuate the concept of the "rugged individualism" that our forefathers exhibited and which contributed so much to having made this country, or any country, great. Self-reliance implies "rolling up one's sleeves" and doing serious work. In a meaningful way, self-reliance is a manifestation of free choice, that cornerstone of a free society. A homely example of self-reliance, and self-sufficiency, is where one must depend on others to fabricate a lawnmower, but where one does not depend on someone else to push that lawnmower. The dependency of cooperation is good, yes, while the equivalent of "resting on one's oars" while others do the rowing, showing a woeful lack of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, is bad. (Cooperation, yes, but individualism in the form of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, is equally important.) And as a bonus, self-reliance and self-sufficiency breeds self-confidence. That's a definite "yes". Finally, self-reliance and self-sufficiency would seem to strongly tend one away from that perverse desire some have to obtain that malady called "power", the root of much evil in the world where power is truly pseudo self-reliance and self-sufficiency (for is it not true that power is built on the backs of others ——who very often are the clear superior to the so-called "anointed ones"?)



ARTSIT ARCHIVES

DRY–DOCK IV

Truth be told, this picture has been severely "cleaned up" in terms of the sides of the dry-dock and the side of the ship. Both were covered with barnacles and whatever else the sea deposits on those things that remain in the sea for a long time. The reason this was done was to clean up anything and everything that would distract from the sheer beauty of the lines of the bow of this magnificent Essex-class carrier. There is no need to wax eloquent on this "clipper bow" that is so distinctive an aspect of this ship. It should be said, however, that the bow of the first Essex-class carriers were not particularly impressive at all. They were simply your standard ship-bow, somewhat straight and vertical. Then, as the war progressed and experience was gained from the conflict at sea in the Central Pacific, it was determined that more fire-power was needed for protection against the "pestilence" of the enemy aircraft. Thus they added two 40-mm quad gun-tubs on the fantail back aft and two 40-mm quad gun-tubs up forward on the fo'c'sle as shown here. Because these guns needed vertical clearance, the two gun-tubs were thrust forward, thus providing the ship with its beautiful "clipper bow" (so named after the famous "clipper sailing ships" of the mid-1800's). When I was first aboard the Antietam and still in the Navigation Division, I would go to one of these gun-tubs in this picture and stand there as the ship "plowed" ahead, leisurely "going up the hill" and then "down the hill". I wasn't able to do this too often because this was gunner's territory, and they felt proprietary about these spaces, and they'd tell us so. But while there, I enjoyed the ride.

While this ship is generous in size and while the bow of this ship is generous in size, there is a more important meaning to the word "generous". That meaning has to do with the size of one's concern for others and an attitude that it makes a difference how others are treated. For example, it's generous to "give someone the benefit of the doubt". That is, if someone is said to be a scoundrel, set aside that opinion as expressed by someone else until you yourself are able to measure it against your OWN personal observation. This generosity of spirit will very often countermand the derogatory opinion by others of the first instance. Unfortunately, there are those who seek to elevate themselves by denigrating others, and it turns out that the scoundrel is the "teller". So it would be wise to be generous in judging others, "lest ye be judged". To judge others can definitely be a "sometime thing". To take a "holier than thou" attitude can come back to bite you, and besides, it would behoove one to remember that "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones". (What with all those quotation marks, what is there left?) To get to the fundamentals, the ultimate form of generosity is to be altruistic, where one has an unselfish and consistent concern for the welfare of others. But such people are unfortunately few and far between and we ordinary people can probably only occasionally touch upon this mode of conduct. Even though these people who are the altruists among us are in short supply, when they help others, they are helping to make society a little better, to the benefit of all of us. Thus the few help the many. But a caveat is in order: does giving aid to those otherwise able people in turn rob them of their ability, and desire, to do for themselves, and thus deprive them of a significant amount of their independence? Help and generosity for the needy is all well and good, but the same for the capable and able can be seen as a disservice. (This deserves some further thought.) While generosity, and altruism, are good in spirit, it would seem that the best policy would be to help others help themselves. That alone would be just fine, and it would be generous, where generosity and altruism need to be cultivated and nurtured.



AN OVERARCH

This view of the extreme rear port corner of the flight deck provides an interesting picture of how much the flight deck overarches out over the water. At the very extremity, just below that sitting sailor, can be seen the net that is used by the LSO (Landing Signal Officer) as a place into which he jumps if an incoming aircraft heads directly at him. Right below the netting one can make out a small part of one of the towers that support the long-range, low- frequency radio antenna. The tower remains in its horizontal position instead of its normal vertical position when there are no flight operations. (There are no flight operations now because of the chain going across the back edge of the flight deck.) Speaking of flight operations, it appears that the ship is making a test run in REVERSE at high speed, as witness the stern-wave being pushed up. This procedure was used by a carrier to launch aircraft from the stern of the ship during combat should anything happen in the engine-room to preclude the propellers from turning in the direction to move the ship forward. While very rare, some of the earlier carriers actually did undertake this procedure of bow-landings and stern-launches. Notice the floatation-nets in the receptacles at the catwalk height, and just below these are some life-rafts tied to the underside of the catwalk. Further up forward are some 20-mm guns and below them can be seen some hoses that were used to take on fuel oil. Right above the hoses is a track suspended from the overhead , used for moving heavy loads. True, this is a bizarre picture in that the ship is moving so fast in reverse, but at the same time it's an interesting picture because it shows so well how far out the flight deck overarches over the water.

Just as the flight deck overarches the agitated water below it, so too does self-discipline overarch the "troubled waters" of one's life (by maintaining stability when things go wrong). (Making the sturdy flight deck a simile for self-discipline is not such a stretch if one considers the self-discipline required of one as one negotiates the troubling aspects on an active flight deck during flight operations. The solid deck, even when pitching and rolling and heaving, is the simile for the solid self-discipline, both of which overarch over the roiling waters.) Self-discipline enables one to "keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you" (from the poem "IF"). This is a near perfect example of self-discipline in that when things go wrong everywhere about you, when difficulties abound anywhere you turn, you are able to do the right thing without the need of someone else or something else to show you the way. (This of course implies that you are already inculcated with the "correct way", the correct set of of rules of conduct. What that correct set is is a subject in itself.) Thus self-discipline makes possible the proper mode of behavior even within the worst of times and conditions without having to first always evaluate the situation, because self-discipline implies this process has already been done. Thereby does self-discipline automatically simplify life, not a bad thing in our complicated society with an overabundance of data. Self-discipline (self-control) provides for needed self-restraint and composure ("coolness") under arduous circumstances. Self-discipline, the antithesis of carelessness, allows for the accomplishment of difficult and worthwhile tasks, because with self-discipline, those tasks, by definition, are not so difficult. And self-discipline makes possible the "good stuff" such as excelling in sports, in math, in music, an you name it. But first of all, remember that self-discipline means knowing and remaining within the prescribed set of parameters of what is right and correct. (Now it behooves you to define what is meant by "prescribed".)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PERSPECTIVE

We are located on the bow of a destroyer. Normally the tin-can does not follow so closely except when it comes along side as here, presumably. (It takes fuel oil from the carrier's starboard side.) There are no flight operations now because those sailors wouldn't be there on the fantail: an errant aircraft would kill them all. The two 40-mm quad gun-tubs are clearly seen, as well as the two gun-directors between the two gun-tubs. At the back edge of the flight deck, to the far left, is the end of the catwalk where the LSO's assistants stand. To the left of that, at an upward angle, is the net into which the LSO jumps if a wayward aircraft makes this necessary. Now right below the net is another triangular object, slanting leftward. This contains the platform for the two open-mount 5-inch guns and a 40-mm quad gun-tub. These guns are not visible in this view, but they are there, as is a similar set of guns up forward, port side. By the looks of the wake of this ship, it appears to be making about 10-15 knots. This was pretty much the normal cruising speed when not in the flight operations mode. A ship never stands still except when it's in port. Therefore, if it didn't want to go anywhere in particular and it only wanted to hold its station, it would proceed in a large rectangular course, but always with an understanding that hostile submarines could be lurking in the area. A moving target is harder to hit than a stationary one.

This view, this perspective, easily suggests that different people take different views, different perspectives of one another. It's evident that the position of the viewer, whether physically or in the abstract, colors one's opinion, one's attitude, one's perception of another person or another person's ideas. The very basic idea of perspective, that is, how one sees another should be based on the concept of "walking in another's moccasins". This has been said before, but it has not been said enough, for sure. (Perspective could be characterized as "where you are coming from". That is, perspective shapes perception.) To have the proper perspective is to veer toward the truth about others, and is to bolster fair dealings with others, as well as promote justice for others. (But it does not necessarily ensure these things.) At the same time, a proper perspective buttresses the possibilities of freedom of those who would otherwise have had those freedoms denied them. But this too can be problematical, so steadfast are the prejudices that develop from inappropriate perspectives. (Prejudices could be handled if there weren't those who are so preposterous as to act on those prejudices). Unfortunately, perhaps the existence of prejudice comes down to how smart are those who are prone to form sour feelings toward others. Is it just because they are of a sour disposition themselves? Yet we could be charitable and say that they aren't really prejudiced, but rather that they are only uninformed. Or what is worse, that they are unintelligent. Or even just plain "dumb" (no one wants to be "dumb".) Thus we are implying that the way to alleviate, or even eliminate, undeserved and adverse prejudice is to have a more intelligent populace, as derived from a good education (where everyone speaks the same language, actually, not figuratively). When will we learn that we prosper as others prosper, and that it could be well said that greed is the root of all evil (partly because it feeds on itself). It would seem that there are enough upstanding people in this world that the greedy ones in our midst are an endangered species, and good riddance, certainly. If all of this sounds pedestrian, so be it. But who can say that the concept of perspective is simple-minded? Just as there are "limitless" perspectives in life, so too are there an untold number of ways of expressing the basic premise that in a complex society, people NEED to find ways of interacting with each other in a "civilized" manner.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WORK–BREAK

Not many of us have had a job which allowed us to take a break by sitting on a 1,000-lb. bomb (while the battleship U.S.S. Massachusetts makes waves as it "kicks the accelerator", a distraction to all but the jaded few). These ordinance-men (who wore red shirts on the Antietam) are receiving bombs from the opening to the left. This elevator goes to the bomb-bay deep down in the ship, to one side of the hanger deck, which has a 4-inch steel deck. The bomb sits on a trolley that allows one to transfer it to an aircraft. Probably not all of those sailors are ordinance-men, such as the ones sitting on the edge of the flight deck. They are no doubt brown-shirt (on the Antietam) "plane-captains". These sailors are each assigned to a specific aircraft and are responsible for making sure all is well with that aircraft, for helping the pilot to strap into the cockpit, for keeping track of the condition of the aircraft, etc., etc. Except during flight operations, "no one" not in the Air Department was topside. During flight operations, though, a certain number of those not in the Air Department would find their way to the island superstructure and out-of-the-way parts of the catwalks to watch "the show". Since spaces below were cramped (for about 3,000 personnel), were they went when not on watch was a puzzle. Probably they stayed in their berthing-spaces. I don't know though. But I do know that the berthing compartment for the Airdales was off-limits during the day. We never went below except for chow (meals) during the day. To my way of thinking, this was orders of magnitude better than being "confined" below, day after day, EXCEPT when the weather was foul and nasty (cold, windy, rainy, damp).

This picture says "work-break" to many, but perhaps to others it says "idleness". (Let me warrant that, at least on the Antietam, there was no unacceptable idleness on the flight deck.) Then again, perhaps for others, this picture implies a lack of initiative. My own contention is that we are looking at a work-break. The military, rightly, will not tolerate idleness on the job, and while an enlisted man does not have that much leeway to exhibit initiative, the opportunities for initiative are not barren. Certainly duty and discipline outrank initiative for an enlisted man in the military, but as a civilian, what's the limit for initiative? Initiative is what categorizes a self-starter, that person who has readiness to begin an action based on one's own decision to do so, and not based on an imperative or someone else's proposition. For another thing, initiative is the hallmark of leadership, that sine qua non of a properly functioning society. But on a more personal level, wouldn't one be foolish to think that one's aspirations would be promoted based on someone else taking the lead in getting one started on the path to one's future? The answer should be "yes". Put another way, laziness is the antithesis of initiative. (Here, I would like to say categorically that I have "never" been lazy: those walks were actually therapeutic in that they allowed mental "work sessions".) Most of the time, initiative should be based on well thought out ideas that deserve sustained effort. At the same time, each and every initiative need not, can not, be successful. The idea can be good, but the result bad (reach far, but do it in increments). Then, as they say, it's "time to go back to the drawing-board", regroup, and then either proceed or develop a new initiative. The main thing to hold onto is that admonition that says "don't give in to discouragement" (or disappointment). After all, what did they say? "Rome wasn't built in a day". Simplistic, but true, for even the best of them. And while we definitely strive "to be the best we can", we don't have to be "the best" because there is room for only one person on the top of the ladder. (I can remember trying to gain the top spot on the tennis ladder at camp. Sometimes it's me, and sometimes it's thee.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DUTY

How could one not be stimulated by feelings of patriotism when looking at this picture of our navy, assembled and surging forward, to do their duty to their country (and to help our allies in distress)? Here can be seen two mighty battleships, the close one born, the other one reborn, since Pearl Harbor, straining to seek out the enemy, as a Hellcat aircraft is positioned on the catapult, ready to "leap" into the sky, under the watchful gaze of those four 5-inch guns pointing upward and forward, defiantly ready to challenge and engage that ill wind called "Kamikaze". (Notice the close-up view of the 5-inch gun-sight, used if the electronic gun-director becomes unavailable.) That smoke from the battleship is an anomaly that usually was only seen while in port, or from coal-burning WWI ships. Making smoke was to be avoided at all costs since that would render one's whereabouts common knowledge. The WWII oil-fired ships would be able to somehow accumulate the residue of the combustion of the fuel-oil. Then the captain would periodically give the engineering officer permission to "blow the stacks", the parlance used to proceed to evacuate the built-up oil residues of combustion in the smoke-stacks. This is probably what is happening here. So perhaps the enemy is not that near after all. Nonetheless, one has the definite feel, if you will, that duty calls, that duty is being heeded, and it's "full speed ahead". The response to the call of duty is best expressed when it is ingrained to such a extent that it is not considered a duty, but rather an opportunity to do one's country proud, even in view of the hardships, and sometimes the extreme mortal jeopardy, inherent in doing that duty.

What could be more apropos of the call to duty than the Pledge of Allegiance, with flag unfurled, the right hand over the heart, while facing and LOOKING at the flag: I pledge (I promise I will do my utmost) allegiance (loyalty to a common cause) to the flag (that venerable banner, that hallowed visible symbol) of the United (in union we stand) States (that array of commonwealths of common purposes) of America (that land "from sea to shining sea") and to the republic (that which shall be governed by a democratically elected group of representatives) for which it stands (the flag and the republic are one and the same), one nation (consisting of diverse groups), under God (our being eternally and gratefully beholden to the concept that all things, large and small, animate and inanimate, are the creation of the One Almighty and Supreme Being), indivisible (not to be broken asunder), with liberty (the freedom to live and to let live) and justice (fair and equitable treatment under law) for all (not only me and thee, but everyone).

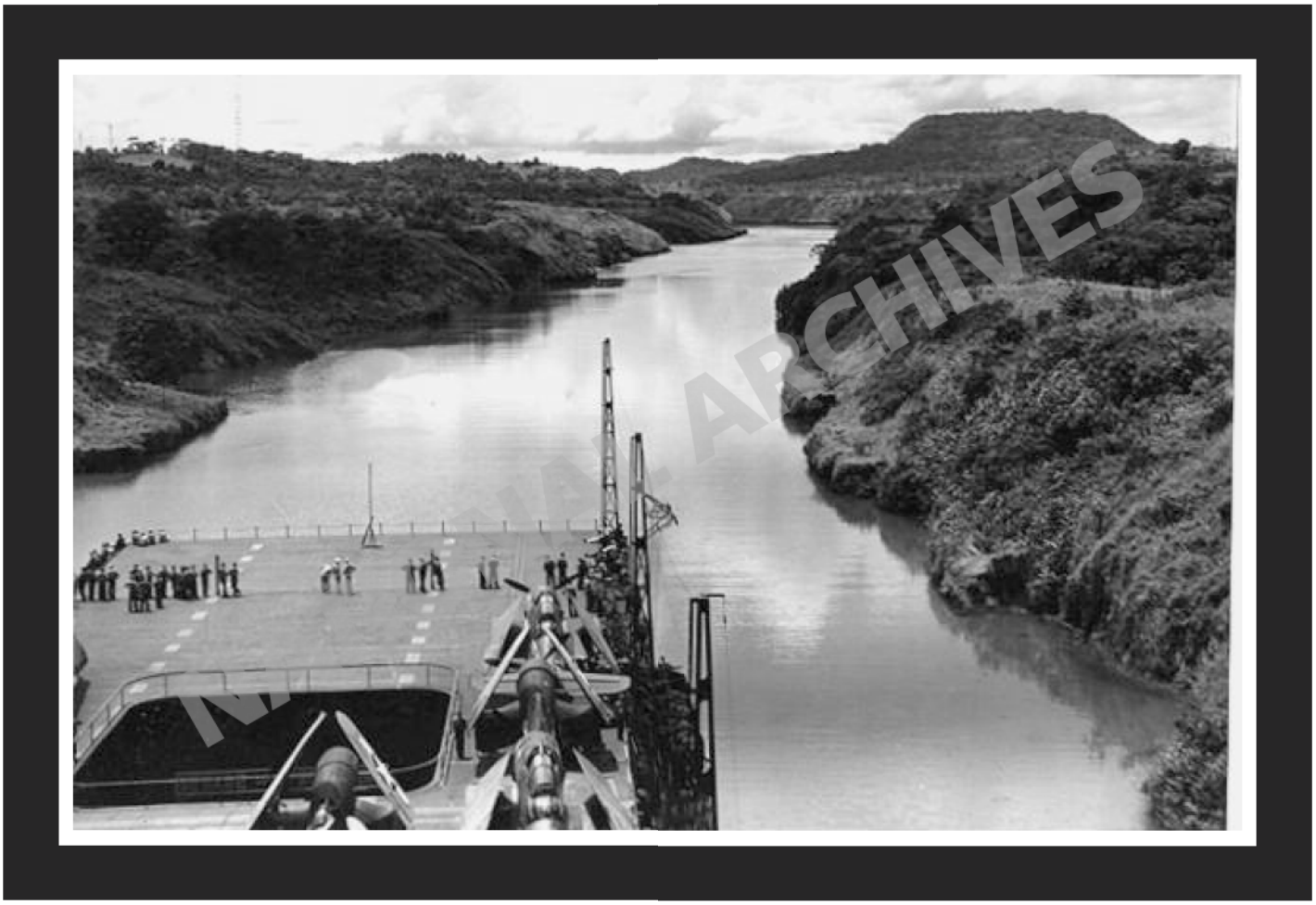
This is an oath well worth the taking, and one wonders if doing so but once a year is to do it justice. When I was young, we would start every day with the recitation of that oath. As one ages, one comes to appreciate it more and more. As a note, I would like to say that while the all-inclusiveness of the Pledge should prevail, there is vast good to be found in the long-lasting retention of the unique cultures throughout the world, including the languages that go with them. Also, to prevent setting "tribe against tribe", it must be emphatically stated that that country that insists on a single language within its borders is that country that will serve itself the best, hands down. Just as the world would be a sad place if there were only one species of birds, so too would the world become dull if there were but one culture. (Besides, "inbreeding" is bad. We all know that.) So three cheers for multiple cultures throughout the world.



PANAMA CANAL I

The next six pictures will be of the Panama Canal and an Essex-class carrier making passage through it. The Panama Canal is a set of water-locks that allow ocean-going ships to transit the 52 miles from the Atlantic Ocean (Caribbean Sea) to the Pacific Ocean in about eight hours. This canal was completed in 1914 after considerable effort and the engineering genius and enterprise of the American Army Corps of Engineers. The highest point of the canal is 85 feet and the minimum width is 300 feet where it becomes one-way traffic, with a holding area in Gatun Lake. The ships move under their own power except when they are in the locks, at which time they are pulled by small electric locomotives. All of the locks have two lanes, one in each direction, and some have three lifts. The Panama Canal saves about 12,000 miles when going from one side of the canal to the other by ship, and probably saves about three days of sailing time, including the treacherous trip around the tip of South America. In this picture, notice the pole standing on the center, front edge of the flight deck. This was there so that the pilot of the ship (a Canal employee) was able to give the helmsman more accurate instructions. There are no tugboats alongside the ship to nudge it this way or that way as it negotiates the currents and the bends in the river and the winds prevailing at that time. It's an interesting fact that as the ship proceeds to the Pacific Ocean from the Caribbean Sea (Atlantic Ocean), it takes a southeasterly heading, contrary to normal intuition.

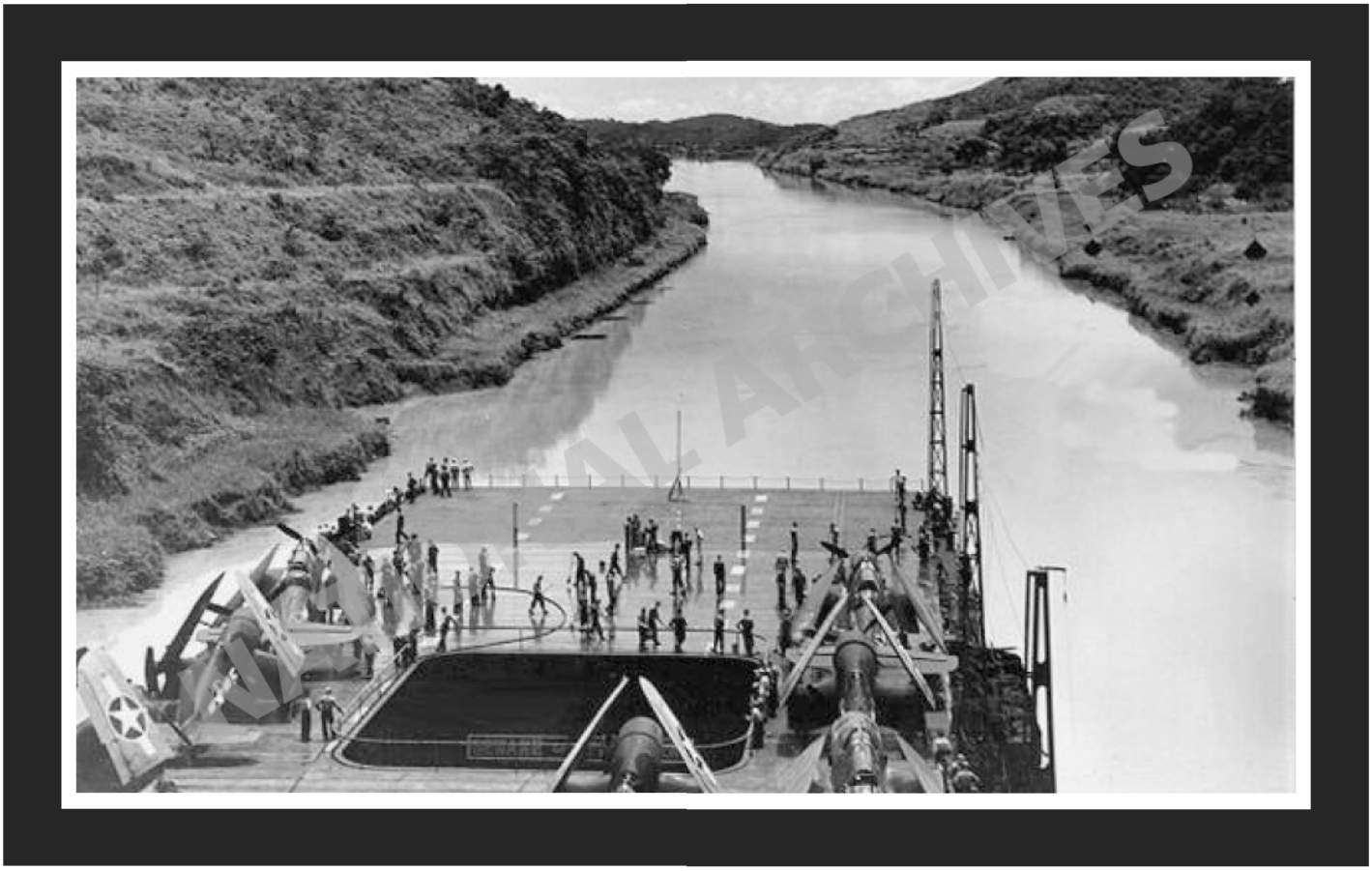
Imagine being on the middle of a large platform fifty feet high gliding on a small, glassy river whose shores were so close to each other that the water was not visible on either side, with large hills close at hand. Just so was the Antietam as we made our way through the Panama Canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Imagination can be a powerful force in our lives, sometimes beneficial, sometimes detrimental. Thus so it is that that imagination serves you the best that best adheres to the truth , while that imagination that holds the most to the false and misleading serves you the least. This is one way of saying that one's imagination often retints, and so modifies, one's attitude, for good or bad. It could also be the reverse, that one's attitude affects one's imagination, in a positive or negative way. Taking this one step further, is there a corollary between imagination and insight? And then between insight and understanding so that the better the imagination the better the understanding? There are many games to be played here, but not meaning to be esoteric about the above, how about taking imagination for what it plainly is: the forming of mental images and concepts that are not detectable by the senses. This can be a very useful, and necessary, activity for those of us who want to provide progress to our lives. Part of this process requires that we combine former images with present images to create new images. They are these new images that signify the creativity of imagination, that imagination that has the power to move us from the mundane to the rare. We don't have to be scientists, budding or otherwise, to use this faculty to our benefit. The only caveat here is that we have that personality that generates things of the imagination in a positive, and NOT negative, direction. Let's go to the dictionary to wrap this up: creative imagination is the "recombining of former experiences in the creation of new images directed at a specific goal or aiding in the solution of problems". (A less useful definition of imagination is "the power of reproducing images stored in the memory under the suggestion of associated images". This is not a creative aspect of imagination which is what we want to develop for the purpose of improvement of our own lives and those of others. But in any case, imagination is good mental exercise, something we could all use.



PANAMA CANAL II

No bow-waves will be seen here. The progress of the ship seemed almost imperceptible as it wended its way up (down?) this placid waterway. This is the part of the canal that was one-way, at least for a ship of the size of the Antietam. Notice here that there is a barrier sixteen yards from the front edge of the flight deck so as to keep personnel far enough away from that pole that thus allowed the pilot to guide the ship accurately. He lined up that pole with an object on the hill straight ahead, and he had to "constantly" change that point of reference (the sighting-point). For some reason the elevator is in the down position at the hanger deck, but it's doubtful that any aircraft are being moved at this time. Note the railing circumscribing the open elevator. This railing automatically rises as the elevator descends, for obvious safety reasons. I can't say that I ever leaned on that railing at any time, as is done here, and I know I never sat on it, back side to, as some are doing ("machismo", unfortunately). It looks like , for some reason, that some of the sailors are indeed "swabbies" as they swab the deck (note the reflections, a couple of mops, a full hose, a bucket). On deck are four F4U Corsairs and three TBM Avengers. On the starboard side the radio antenna masts are upright, and a general feeling of relaxation is predominant, which was usually not the case except when we were in port. We've already had a 12-hour pass in Colon on the Atlantic side, and the other half of the crew is looking forward to their 12-hour liberty on the Pacific side. My liberty was on the Colon side, and much to my surprise, there was my older brother standing at the bottom of the gangway as I left the ship! I knew he was stationed here, but I certainly didn't expect he'd be there (ship movements were SECRET).

While the Panama Canal provides a short-cut from one ocean to the other ocean, there is no short-cut to establishing one's integrity. This integrity that one possesses is an attribute that depends on consistency, and consistency takes time, not short-cuts. This is an extremely important aspect of building, and then maintaining, people's confidence in one's integrity. Another aspect of integrity is one's dependability, one's steadiness, and this is validated by the test of time, not short-cuts. A person with integrity can be depended upon to abide by the tenets of rectitude (knowing and doing what's right and proper for given situations, such as "playing by the rules"). Let's be honest, we feel comfortable being around those who have integrity. You always know "where they're coming from". They are not devious and they're not wavering in upholding and being true to a virtuous value-system. (So what's virtuous? This is another exercise, but one could start with "upright, moral, principled, honorable, honest, and yes, chaste".) Integrity can be viewed as one's being candid in what one does, while honesty is reflected by being candid in what one says. People appreciate leaders who "play by the rules", "go by the book", and in general take a non-selfish stance. It's well that they should admire this trait of integrity, the bed-rock of any kind of stable government (if rules are to be changed, then let them be changed in the open in the light of day. Is this one of the reasons why our government is so stable, while others are not so fortunate? It certainly has to be considered one of the pillars.) Let's just say that he who has integrity does the right thing even though to do so is difficult and even though there's an easier (but more dubious) way. He who has integrity is thus reliable as concerns rectitude, and honest as concerns demanding and difficult situations. Integrity most certainly is one of the virtues we all most admire and LIKE in other people. After all, didn't George. Washington step forward and say "Yes, it was I who cut down the cherry tree"? And it was he who became the father of our country.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PANAMA CANAL III

We're now approaching a lock which will lower us down to the level of that lake seen in the background. While not being a civil engineer, one can imagine the force of the water-pressure being applied to those gates at the far end of the lock. It's amazing that the water here is without even a hint of a ripple. One would think that at this point tugboats would be called on to nudge the ship a few feet this way, and then a few feet that way. But there isn't a single quiver to be seen in the water to indicate the presence of a tugboat. (My recollection seems to place tugboats alongside). The entire tenor of this picture belies the usual, the normal, condition of the flight deck: constant movement of the aircraft from here to there, and from there to here, along with the the horrendous sound and fury during flight operations. But now all is peaceful and calm where everything is cerebral and not the visceral of the normal conditions. A sign of the visceral sensations felt during flight operations, when all the aircraft are "cranked up", is expressed by the sign at the bottom part of the open elevator. One can make out the word "Beware", and this is in fact followed by the words "of Propellers". During flight operations, after an aircraft has landed, it taxis up forward. Many of these aircraft go down to the hanger deck so as to make room for the following, landing aircraft. (If all the aircraft were parked topside on the flight deck, there would be no room back aft to land incoming aircraft.) Thus they taxi onto the elevator with propellers still spinning, as the elevator descends to the hanger deck The hanger deck Airdales then push that aircraft off the elevator even as the propeller is "winding down", so that it's still a "lethal weapon".

It's abundantly clear that the civilian-pilot has to put forth exceptionally good judgment when directing the ship's helmsman and engine-room officer. This is primarily because such a large ship has so much momentum (the product of the ship's speed times the ship's mass). While the former is very small, the latter is very, very large, giving the ship considerable momentum, which in turn allows it to "have a mind of its own" when in motion. Thus good judgment is both critical in employment and crucial in the net effect. It can be seen that good judgment is based on the good understanding of ALL the facts all of which must be ACCURATE. Once these facts are accumulated, then good sense (also called "common sense") comes into play by translating these facts into good judgment. But what can be said about "good sense"? For starters, how about objectivity, sharp discernment, and experiences already gone by? And it would be well in this to be absolutely honest with oneself. (The "common" in "common sense" implies what is commonly understood to ring true to the tried and true value-system derived and tested against time.) The only caveat here is to be very careful when going into the judgmental mode where it concerns a person's good name. ("They steal my money, they steal nothing. They steal my good name, they steal everything") Be sagacious: "Judge not, lest ye be judged". Here, good judgment means understanding, which in turn is grounded in one's capacity to empathize; that is, to be able to intellectually and emotionally "walk another's path". Empathy could be called sympathetic insight, and let it be emphatically said that this is not a gender thing. It has been said that "gentleness is the strongest thing in the world". (Think about it, and then think some more) For isn't it true that real men aren't afraid to be gentle? Consider the proverbial "gentle giant". Let's just say that good judgment eschews self-centeredness. This will clear the mind and make it that much easier to come to the right conclusion as to what is "good judgment". Good luck in arriving at good judgment.

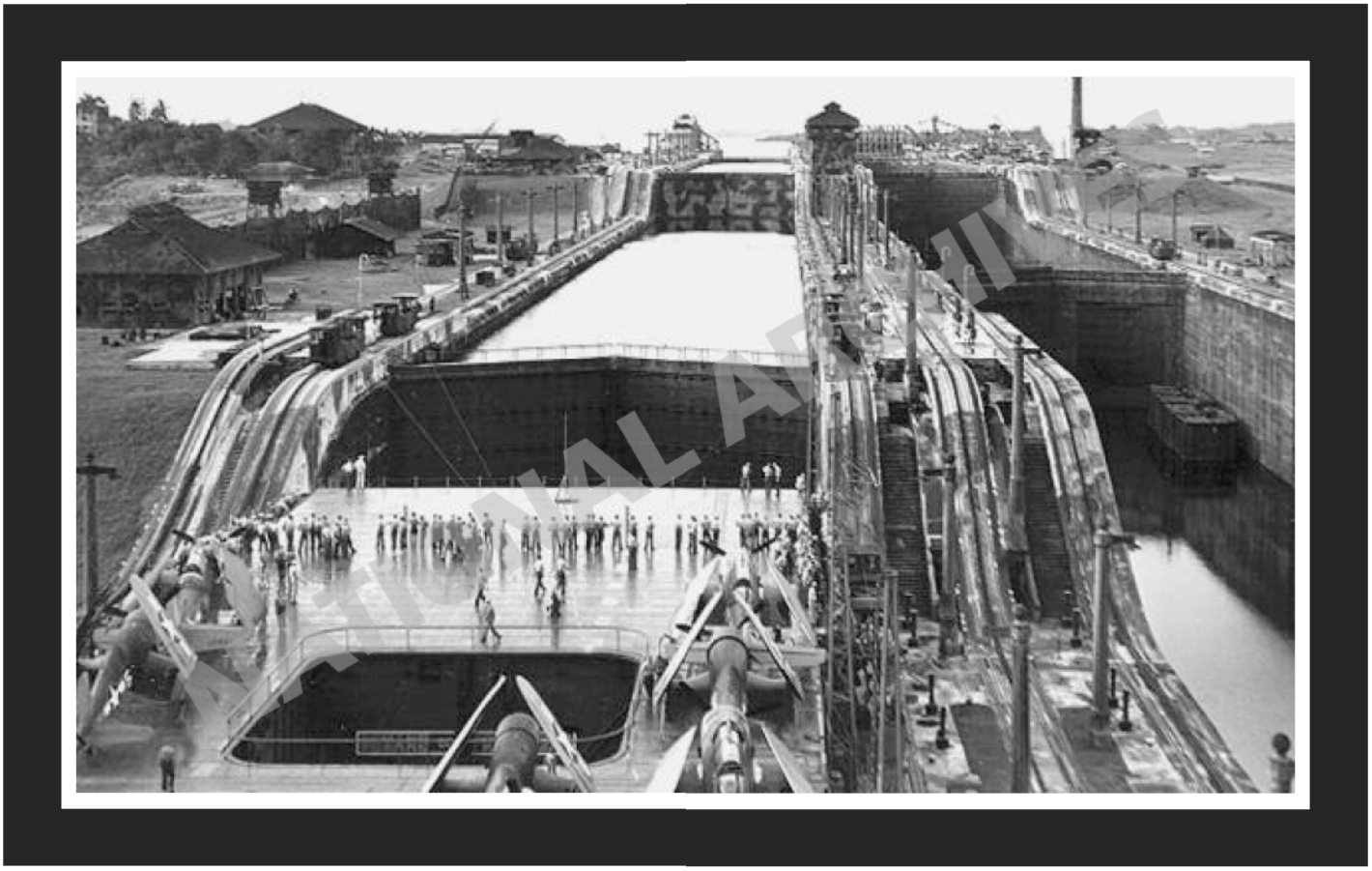


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PANAMA CANAL IV

This picture deserves to be looked at in some detail as the ship now enters one of the lifts of one of the locks that will take the ship up to the inland waterway. (And yes, the naval architects were mindful of the width of the lifts when designing the carrier.) When the ship has done so, the gates will be closed behind it, and the gates in front of it will be slowly opened. The ship will then be pulled forward by the small locomotives on the tracks on both sides of the lift, after which time the gates will be closed behind the ship. Next, the water will be let into (pumped into) the lift, thereby raising the ship up to the level of the water that is now in front of it in this picture. Thus, this process is repeated to place the ship at the level of the inland waterway, a canal that wends its way through fairly rugged terrain. The conditions that existed when the canal was constructed required arduous efforts by the workers, realizing that the equipment used was rudimentary by today's standards. The climate and the insects prevalent in the Canal Zone caused many deaths, one of the prices paid to obviate the extended passage around the treacherous Cape Horn at the southern most tip of South America. The small locomotives on either side of the lifts were electric cog-cars that had a cable connected to the front of the ship (notice the cables in the picture going to the front of the ship). While the ship has large inertia, once in motion, the applied force required to pull the ship was nominal. All of this was a good show for (some of) the crew of the ship, even though they probably were caught in a quick rain-shower moments before (notice the wet deck). All ships, big and little, all used this canal that provided this link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

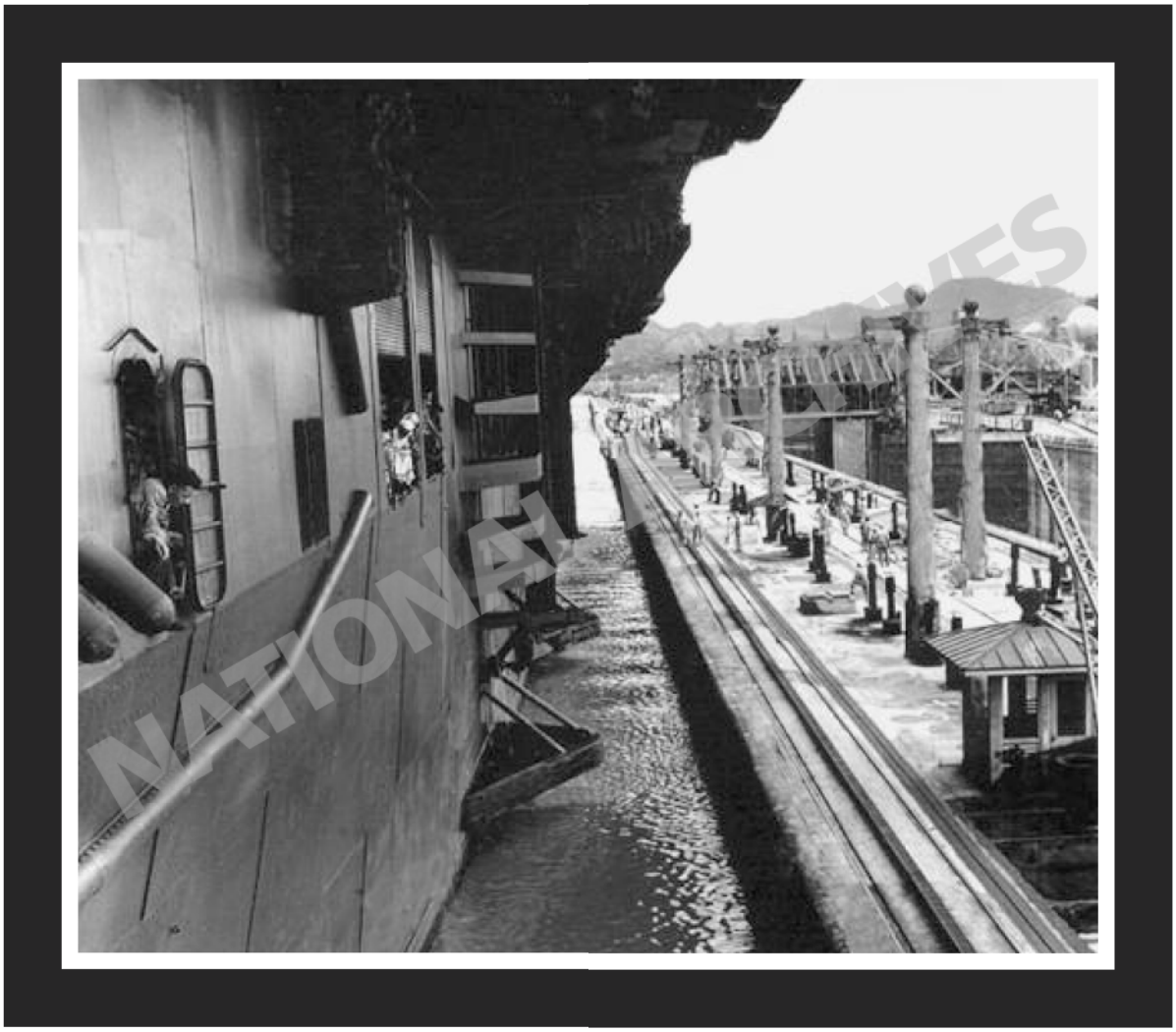
We can pick on the phrase "big and little" as a lead-in to the concept of right and wrong. Some things are wrong in a big way, while others are wrong in a little way. There can be disagreement about the little things, but there are some big things, universally agreed upon, that have withstood the test of time, things that have been widely and well-established. For example, when I was young, one of the "big" things that was understood to be wrong by most people was the act of being a bully, where it was the larger over the smaller, the stronger over the weaker, by deed or by word. Back then, bullying would get a full dose of derision, it would be ridiculed as cowardly, it would be castigated. The bully would be made to feel shame, and even mortification in some cases for intimidating the weak. Now, it seems that bullies, when caught, feel no humiliation. The concept of shame appears to be completely foreign to these low-life "creeps". It would seem that this is due to there being too many self-centered people in our midst. No self-respecting person would tolerate a condition of shame. The problem now seems to be that things that should be considered shameful are no longer considered shameful, unless it's the thief who's ashamed only of having been caught. It would seem in this day and age we need to renew more shame and humiliation to those acts that EVERYONE KNOWS are wrong. Rationalization has its place, yes, but there have to be standards set to which "everyone" can subscribe. Then, if those standards are encroached upon, shame should be forthcoming. Perhaps "shun the shameful" will allow the concept of shame to regain its impact. It seems that social misbehavior requires more than the law as a control; perhaps the restoration of the idea of shame will be the deterrent and corrective to which this day and age will respond, at long last. (Here we're of course talking about well-established and well-understood rules and modes of conduct. There are certainly those who, no matter what the point of contention is, will "dance on the head of a pin" just to be contrary.)



PANAMA CANAL V

The first thing that caught my attention in this picture is something of which I was not aware at that time (1945). Notice in the lower middle of the picture those two "bumpers" jutting out from the side of the ship. These were affixed just prior to entering the Canal and were placed there to fend the ship from the walls of the "lift" of the locks. (They are of just the right height, and they will be removed once the Canal is transited.) Right above the bumpers are six protrusions on the side of the ship. These hold the vertical "runway" used by the deck-edge elevator as it runs up and down between the hanger and flight deck. Right now the deck-edge elevator is folded up against the ship so as to allow the ship to proceed through the lift. (The deck-edge elevator is not visible except for that light-colored "V" just to the right of and above the top protrusion. This is the bottom of the elevator.) The electric locomotives are not in view ; they are out of the picture, toward us, pulling on the bow of the ship. Those speckled poles to the right carry the wires from the transformer sub-station seen further back. Those sailors, peering out at the goings on, are at the hanger deck level. That other group of sailors are shown right below an "iron curtain" that's been lowered half-way down. At night, these curtains, all around the ship, are lowered all the way down so as to "darken ship", lest an enemy submarine be lurking nearby. The ship is moving more slowly than a person walks, so we had ample time to observe the process of this large ship moving through those lifts. Notice the large hills in the background. This was fairly typical. (No, I don't know what those protuberances to the left are.)

And yes, it's a stretch to ascribe to those two bumpers an example of self-respect, where the bumpers enable the ship to respect its well-being. Self-respect goes far beyond being concerned with one's well-being, for self-respect is the "proper esteem or respect for the dignity of one's character". And what could we say about character? For starters, one's character is the sum of one's intangible characteristics, including things such as one's moral qualities, one's ethical standards and principles, one's honesty and integrity, one's good reputation and name, one's normal set of habits and activities and behaviors, and so on (you expand the list). A person of good character most usually has a fulsome set of good virtues (a set of "rectitudes", where good sense translates into good conduct and right action; now, what is "good" and "right"?) And of perhaps equal importance, a person who has self-respect (one who respects himself and his self-worth) is a person who is at ease with oneself in most all circumstances. Furthermore, such a person tends not to agitate over others' transgressions because he does not feel absolved from the requirement to understand those who have transgressed (who are "anti-social"). He usually gives them the benefit of the doubt, keeping in mind that we all have personal problems of one sort or another. To be too much "holier than thou" could be counterproductive, would it not? (However, egregious breeches of conduct nevertheless demand stern measures.) A person with self-respect will, "by definition", respect others. A person with self-respect scorns maliciousness. A person with self-respect rejects, out of hand, one-upmanship, and foul language is an oxymoron. Self-respect knows no pettiness. Self-respect allows one to ignore one's own personal concerns in favor of others' concerns. One who has self-respect abhors belittling others in an attempt to augment oneself. In sum (?), a self-respectful person is he who can get along with anyone, regardless of a person's "stripe" or station, age or appearance, unless and until that person shows himself to be fundamentally antagonistic and hostile. Those who are blessed with self-respect are those who are good citizens. .



PANAMA CANAL VI

What makes this picture look unusual is the fact that the ship is so low in the lift. That's because the water-level in the lift is at its minimum. We get a good view of the U-shaped containers that hold the kapok-threaded nets that are used when and if the ship sinks. Right below the U-shaped containers are two life-rafts. With this equipment, one should naturally raise the question as to how these, and some others elsewhere, could possibly provide for the over 3,000 personnel on board. Right behind the U-shaped containers is the platform for six 20-mm machine-guns. When the Antietam went through the Canal, one-half of the crew had a liberty on the Atlantic side, and the other half of the crew had its liberty on the Pacific side. My liberty happened to be on the Colon side of the Canal where I unexpectedly met my brother. We had a short visit while we sat in a bar for a drink. He had to return to his base shortly, so I was on my own thereafter. (No, I didn't have any alcoholic drinks for the simple reason that I didn't like them, then, or now. How can I say this without seeming prudish? Oh well, how about this: a drug is a drug is a drug, and non-therapeutic drugs are the root of much misery on all levels of society. Yes, reputable people drink alcohol, in moderation. But it is NOT necessary to drink to have a good time, to be "attractive", to be self-assured, or to be one of the "guys". I categorically reject each one of those "justifications", and as to tasting good, please.

In Colon, there was the usual "sailors'" hang-out where there were bars and where there were sexual favors being sold by very moderately attractive women. One city block had two-story buildings, cheek-by-jowl, with doorway next to doorway, each with a woman standing on the threshold casually trying to inveigle customers as the sailors sauntered about. Some of the doors were closed, and the ones that were open showed not much more than a single bed inside. I also "milled about", as I was an inquisitive one and this was my first encounter with such a situation. But no, I did NOT avail myself of the services that were being offered. I had no intention of doing so, I had no interest in doing so, and I had no desire of doing so.

So why didn't I "do so"? (If the forthcoming sounds somewhat like proselytizing, so be it.) One big reason I didn't "do it" was because I had that "very special girl" back home whom I presumed to somewhat reciprocate my feelings. Yes, it was that, but it was also a fundamental belief in the sanctity of sexual relations. I understand that to many in this day and age that that is a quaint idea. But being a conservative in the true sense of the word (conserve that which time has shown to be good), I believe that chastity for both men and women in their teens is in their best interest. This is so even for those in their teens who sincerely feel fond of, or in love with, each other. This is not to be puritanical for its sake, but rather, it is to use one's God-given good sense: sexual relations are at their very best when it is done as an expression of a sincere affection and/or love. To engage in intimacy otherwise is to diminish, even severely, the great pleasure that derives from allowing sex to be a manifestation of love. Would one be so foolish as to use a priceless dish to partake of one's barbeque at an outdoor picnic? Love, that deep emotion, should be inextricably tied to sexual intimacy, if possible (and this probably isn't possible until the early twenties. Recreational sex can be properly appreciated only by the fully mature person. And sex done as a "favor" or for gain is defined in the dictionary. Where is the self-respect?) Besides, most of sex should be cerebral.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LIBERTY CALL

On close inspection, it is seen that the gangway has been set up ahead of the island superstructure, starboard side, as indicated by the bottom part of the crane which is at the right edge of the picture. This is mentioned because the Antietam always set their gangway and quarterdeck back aft of the island, starboard side. The quarterdeck was that location where the O.O.D. (Officer of the Day) was stationed while the ship was in port. When you'd been on one ship, and one ship only, you presumed that there was only one way of doing things (such as where the gangway was placed). But each ship had its own "personality", within the basic rules and regulations. When I was on board the Antietam, there would be times when I would be (quietly) disgruntled about something that happened (as you know, typically "every" serviceman, at least overseas, had his occasional assorted gripes about this or that.). But this was normal, and gripes or no, the truth of it was that no matter how many gripes there were, no matter how much "nervous in the service" there would be, one developed an unspoken affinity for this, "his" ship. Things could be bad and the ship's work could be burdensome and arduous, but it was "my" ship, and this ship and I, we had weathered seventeen continuous, solid months together. In all that time there were only about fifteen 12-hour passes, and every night of those seventeen months were spent on board. I even have a 6"x6" piece of the flight deck because I was a "plank owner" (original crew). Again, notice the life-rafts on the racks. And those are TBM Avenger torpedo aircraft on the flight deck, the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII.

Notice that sailor just about to step onto the gangway. He's wearing bell-bottomed trousers, a non-regulation uniform. On the Antietam he'd be required to wear a regulation uniform. There would be no consideration for his preferences. In the military, where discipline was (is) necessary, lack of consideration was a non-factor, at least in wartime. But in the civilian world, one could consider consideration the lubricant that helps eliminate much of the friction in society. Parenthetically, consideration for those less fortunate is a good characteristic of our society, AS LONG AS we don't become their "nanny", thus not making them dependent on us. To do so would be a real disservice, and in some cases, in a perverse way, cruel (dependence of the able-bodied). Probably it would be far more salutary for them if they were shown respect and encouragement (in a caring way without any attendant pampering). What could be more satisfying for them than to be able to fend for themselves? (A wiseacre might sneer at what follows, but that's what makes him a wiseacre.) Concern and respect and consideration, within reason, is not a bad thing if it engenders a harmonious and pleasant environment, for who wants to be around those who are sullen and/or angry or full of animosity? This concern and respect and consideration is a natural spin-off from having learned to "walk in another's moccasins". From this derives the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", keeping in mind that what you desire certainly might not be what they desire: I like the radio-volume turned low, they like it high. (Don't subscribe to that perversion of the Golden Rule that says "he who has the gold makes the rules", even though there could be a "benevolent king" (as well as a despotic one.)) When "push comes to shove", probably the most useful maxim is the one that says "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (well almost), ever mindful that this virtue, as all virtues, must be lived to be valid. How we relate to one another is a key to a useful and productive and contented life, or so I believe. (Consideration here is to be considerate: "showing kindly awareness or regard for another's feelings, circumstances, or well-being".)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HONOR ON CALL

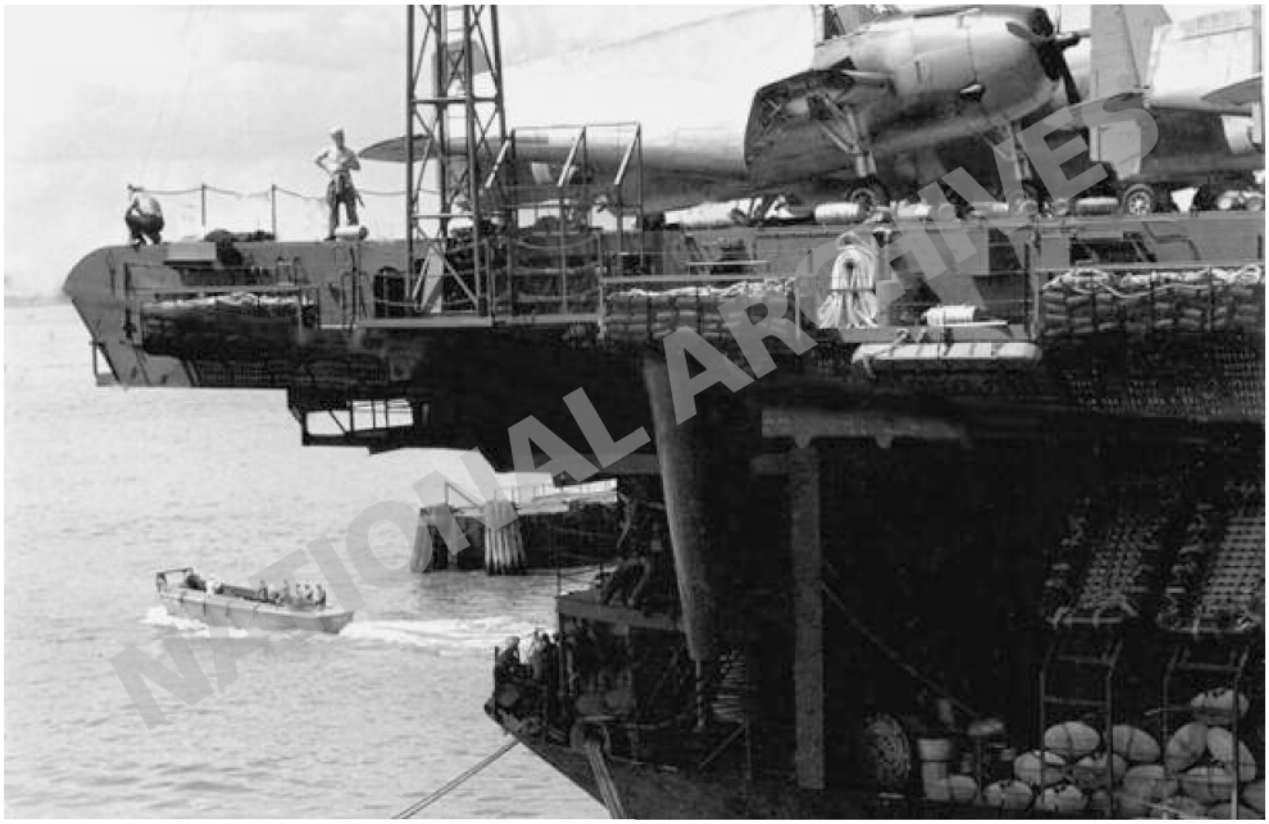
The crane of the previous picture is clearly seen here, and even the hook at the end of the crane shows against the dark background. To the left of the hook, in sharp silhouette, on the hanger deck is the tail (vertical stabilizer) of an SB2C Helldiver dive-bomber. These aircraft had a rather chunky appearance, and were thus (affectionately ?) called "the Beast". Up above are the TBM Avenger torpedo aircraft, not all that svelte and dainty either. Just below the flight deck and beside the catwalk are those containers that hold the kapok-netting for awash sailors, affording them something to which they could cling when they are tossed about by those inimical waves. Now, all is calm, all is peaceful, a far, far cry from those turbulent times when these behemoths were all revved up and roaring their impatience to become airborne so as to do their duty, with what we can all call "Honor".

So how are we to describe what it is that makes a person honorable? What are the characteristics of that person that we consider to be honorable? As a start, we can go to the dictionary where it says that an honorable person is that person who has "honesty or integrity in one's beliefs and actions". He (she) is that person "with a fine sense of what is considered to be morally right and proper". But again, what is "right and proper"? And again, to determine this we should go to that conservative concept that what has been derived over time, by consensus, to be right and proper, is very likely to be correct. This describes a method of determining what is "right and proper", but it doesn't provide the definition of what is "right and proper". There has to be an intrinsic understanding of the concept of "right and proper" (within a given society and culture). One such definition could be that that which is "right and proper" is that which provides for equal and equitable treatment for all, regardless of rank or station. Anything less than this is not "right and proper". (Implicit in this is the notion that some are more deserving than others, and this should be factored into the equation. Nevertheless, this in no way diminishes the fact that the honorable person subscribes to, and abides by, the moral virtues and "rectitudes" as encompassed by what is "right and proper".) Another definition of "right and proper" is the credo to "do the most good for the most people". But again, to implement this fairly is of course difficult because of the minority (which might be you). (The concept of democracy is all well and good, as long as minority rights are not encroached upon.) A listing will now be made as follows: An honorable person a) doesn't hesitate to do the right thing when there's an option to do something else more advantageous for himself (herself); b) never takes advantage of the vulnerable or innocent; c) is a gentleman at all times (without being weak or soft); d) does the right thing during those times when only God is a witness; e) "plays by the rules"; f) cannot be improperly influenced; g) does not dissimulate (disguise and conceal; he'll stand up and be counted); h) adheres to the truth and so is trustworthy (George Washington said, "Father, it was I who cut down the cherry tree" though it was known to none but God); i) does the morally correct but difficult without regard to the consequences; j) makes his word his bond, which is accepted; k) is a promise-keeper (except under extraordinary circumstances); l) is honest in a sincere way, ignoring the prospect of benefit or loss; m) does not "cut corners"; n) accepts responsibility for his actions; o) never loses touch with what is external to him; p) is not self-absorbed in his own interests; q) is not in any way avaricious or greedy. Now you should make your own list as to what characteristics are to found in those who are to be considered honorable. My personal favorite in this list is item "d", because here there is no opportunity, OR desire, to "win points".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A TRUTHFUL SCENE

There was much forethought spent on this picture because its content was deemed not scintillating enough for those who sought at least the implication of the action and excitement that should be found on a flight deck. But it was decided that this picture, prosaic though it is, nonetheless is a sterling example of "the way it was", in every respect: nothing was added, nothing was subtracted, nothing was posed, and nothing was altered as is sometimes the wont of artists taking their license or digital photographers making their modifications. (Only a few pictures in this book were slightly modified, such as a shirt being added to a shirtless sailor.) Sometimes the mundane is good, as here, because it truthfully depicts the way it was. What follows are independent statements concerning "Truth". With all due respect to those of a philosophical bent who are sticklers of Truth, I must ask their forbearance in what follows: precise proofs are often hard to come by, and it's difficult to satisfy those logicians among us who demand such proofs. However, most all of us will acknowledge the fact, the truthfulness, that the sun will appear in the east every morning. Yet, how to define truth? Again going to the dictionary, "truth is the true or actual state of matter; truth is conformity with fact and reality; truth is the indisputable fact, proposition, principle and the like". Truth is the actual as opposed to the supposed. Truth can be either tangible or intangible. The former can be seen in the fact, the truth, that a floating body is buoyed up by a force equal to the weight of the displaced fluid, while the latter is expressed by the fact, the truth, that I don't like oysters. These are both true statements, one tangible, the other intangible. Whether tangible or intangible, truth deals with verifiable reality, and with mental actuality as opposed to imagination. HOWEVER, there can be adulterated, partial, truths. These truths are often used to mislead and deceive. These truths then are malicious truths (and counterproductive). These half-truths can be worse than no truth because they beguile with disguise and deception, while "no truth" tends to present itself for circumspection and examination, and hopefully, exposure of the truth. Sometimes some things are made to appear true when in fact they are not, deliberately. This deviousness can be the worst, especially in a democracy. How can the misinformed be PROPERLY led? Such deceit can only open Pandora's Box, such as is done when "clever" people try to manipulate the unwary with the artifices of untruths (deliberate deceptions made to appear like truth). This brings to mind the ancient Greek who lit a candle in the darkness in search of an honest man. Society can tolerate the "social untruths", sometimes well, but the Gold Standard is still "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". Truth requires accurate knowledge, while honesty assiduously seeks that accurate knowledge. Thus, honesty could be called the manifestation of truth, both tangible and intangible, while "the truth shall set you free" because you are not held hostage to others' deceptions. In the same way, it would be incumbent on you to be strictly honest with yourself. Also, "we hold these truths to be self-evident" are the result of consensus. (Tangible) truth is to honesty as First Principles (Laws of Nature) are to such as building bridges or constructing a radio. Honesty is a function of truth, but not visa versa, for honesty can be ignorant of the truth. Thus an honest person can become unfairly embroiled in a one-sided confrontation, usually to his detriment. (Where is that reliable "truth device"?). Truthfulness can inspire, while deceit does depress one into that abysmal place called the "unknown". No matter what the rationale, to deceive is to destroy that fragile fabric that binds society together into a desirable harmony. But deception is remedial and can be redeemable. Our benefactors, the scientists, live and die by adhering to "the truth and nothing but the truth". Should we do any less in our day-to-day social dealings with one another?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

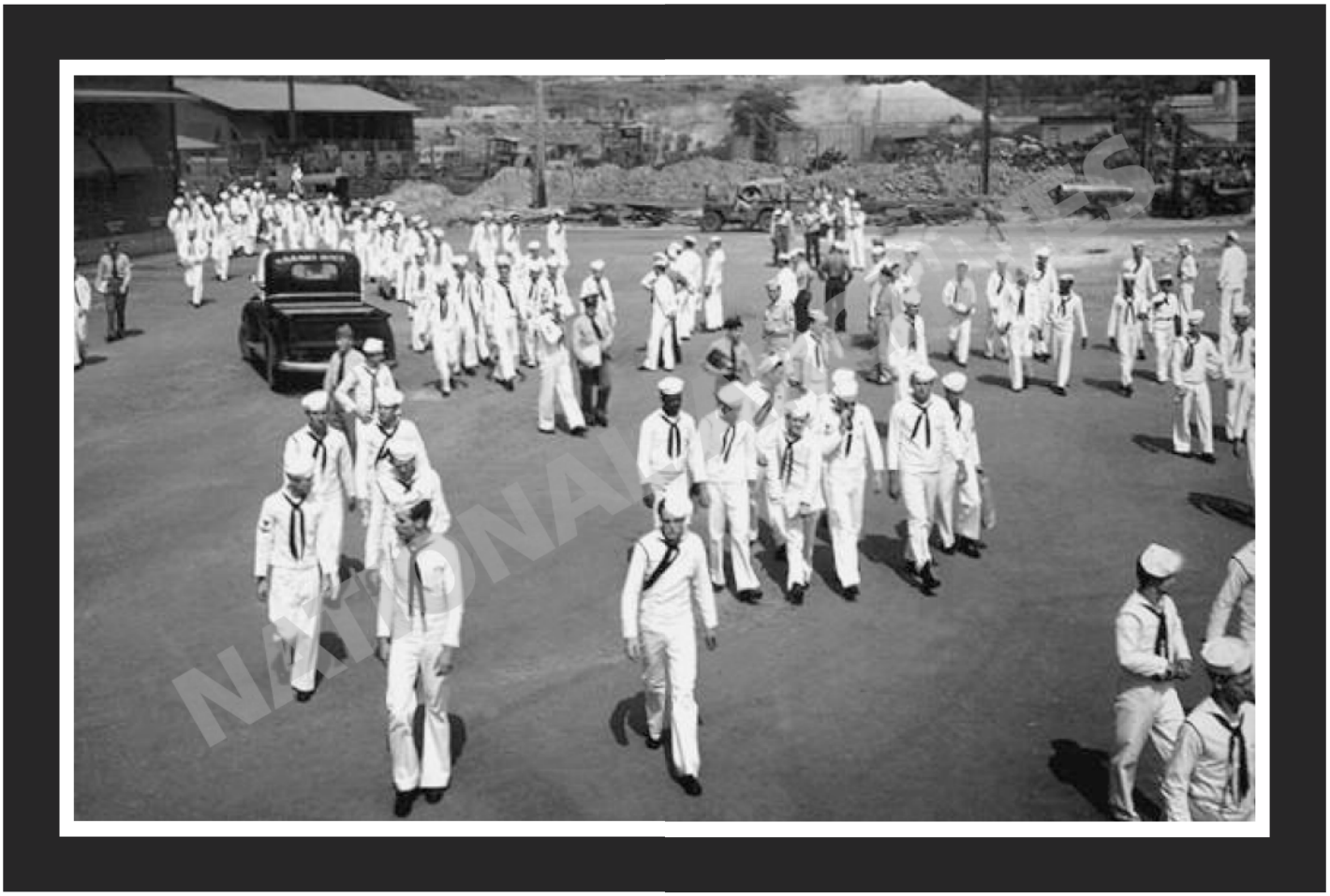
LIBERTY CALL

Liberty call ! And no one seems to be in a hurry. This implies that this port does not hold much in the way of attractions to sailors just off a ship. Sometimes, when at small ports such as this one appears to be, the uniform-of-the-day is the work clothes of blue denim shirt and dungarees. Here, there are probably buses to take the "swabbies" (they swab the deck) to town. From the picture, this does not seem to be a crew from a large ship such as a cruiser or battleship or carrier because there are no marines to be seen. These ships carried a contingent of marines on board to man the 20-mm guns and to be available for the maintenance of order, as well as provide a guard for the captain of the ship at all times. But the actual policing on the ship was done by the Master-at-Arms (boatswain's mates). They were dressed just like everyone else, and to my knowledge, there was never any big problem on the Antietam. As a small point to most today, but of importance to the sailors of WWII, was the sailor's cap. Present day pictures of our Navy show the sailor wearing his white cap dead on top, center, with rounded sides, as if it were a crown. Back then, almost invariably, a sailor placed his cap forward, tilted to one side over the eye-brow with the sides of the cap slightly bent over. Let's face it, this mode of wearing that white cap made for a jaunty style, and "salty", if you will. Actually, it made a child's cap into a man's cap! Big deal? Yes!

This picture calls attention to the fact that a ship's crew is made up of a mix of people from all walks of life and from all parts of the country. This in turn brings to mind a pair of lines from Rudyard Kipling's poem "IF":

"If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings — nor lose the common touch."

While the Navy will not serve as a model for the following comments (because of the prohibition of fraternization of officers and enlisted men) the Navy does have a broad admixture of the "high-born" and the "low-born", the "high-brow" and the "low-brow", those of high principle and those of low principle, the refined and the course. At the same time, the above couplet does not have anything to do with being poor or being of means. Thus those two lines addresses themselves to those of us who fall somewhere between those two markers of "high" and "low". The first line contends, even admonishes, that though one (properly) fraternizes with those of "lesser rank and station", one should act in such a way as to uphold, and maintain, one's value-system regardless of the peer pressure to conform to the crowd that has gone astray. Using one's strength of character, one should reject what is known to be wrong. One should not cater to a lower common denominator. One should embrace the right path while at the same time engaging the crowd. (Let it also be emphatically said that it is right and good to engage EVERYONE, right to the lowest common denominator, less those who are beyond the pale of social acceptability.) The second line clearly implies that should one somehow be favored by the "high and mighty", one should retain and maintain one's essential modesty from whence one came. While being respectful, one should be true to oneself in all ways by adhering to one's established mode of conduct which excludes mental swaggering. In a word, one should be oneself no matter what the circumstances, maintaining one's integrity in all situations. Lose not the common touch. What say you?



FLIGHT DECK ACTIVITIES

The activities on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36) included the following:

(a) launch aircraft
(b) land aircraft
(c) park aircraft
(d) respot aircraft
(e) move aircraft between flight deck and hanger deck
(f) tie down aircraft
(g) clean up aircraft mishaps
(h) put out aircraft fires
(i) load aircraft with bombs and ammunition
(j) fill aircraft with aviation gasoline
(k) repair and maintain flight deck
(l) perform gunnery practice
(m) perform minor aircraft maintenance
(n) perform catapult and arresting-gear functions

Items (a) through (h) were Airdale functions while items (i) through (n) were functions of personnel on the flight deck other than the Airdales. There were of course hanger deck activities related to those on the flight deck. These include transfers between ships of such things as fuel oil, aviation gasoline, supplies, bombs, ammunition, and even personnel. In addition, major aircraft maintenance was performed, as well as the movement of aircraft. All of these activities are briefly shown in this chapter and Chapter 5 (as activities external to the flight deck).

Launching aircraft (a), landing aircraft (b), and parking aircraft (c) are covered in Chapters 7, 8, and 10 respectively. The rest of the items appear in this chapter. Item (d) refers to the movement of aircraft from up forward, after landing (b) and parking (c) operations, to back aft in preparation for a launch operation (a). Most of this is done by the Airdales pushing the aircraft (thus the moniker "plane-pusher"). This process, while not back-breaking, is nevertheless wearing. After doing this a good part of the day, the sack (bed) felt good. It so happened that my sack was at the fourth tier high, right next to the overhead (ceiling). As a consequence, in the warm climes it became very hot (the air conditioners back then were not what they are today, especially in such a large compartment. There would be many a night when I was soaking in my sweat, so the night was hardly restful. Instead, one tended to respond to reveille in somewhat of a funk. This is just an aside and in no way a part of this chapter. Back to the respotting, part of the process included moving aircraft between the flight deck and the hanger deck. We would push aircraft onto a downgoing elevator, and off of the upcoming elevator. Since we had 100 aircraft on board and the flight deck could hold only about 70 aircraft in preparation for a launch operation, the elevators received a lot of use "supplying" aircraft to the catapults up forward on the flight deck. After the landing and parking operations, if heavy weather was in the offing, we (the Airdales) had to tie down the aircraft to the cleats that were flush in the deck These cleats will be apparent in some of the pictures to follow. Next, of course if an aircraft had a mishap (Chapter 9) during a landing (Chapter 7), then the Airdale would have to do whatever was necessary (under supervision) to remove that aircraft so that the next aircraft in the landing pattern could have a place to land. Since this was supposed to happen every 20 seconds,

we would have to act post-haste while the following aircraft had to remain in its "race-track" landing pattern overhead. And if the mishap caused a fire, then the Airdales would have to figuratively put on their fireman's hat and put out the fire sooner rather than later. This of course took longer, and the pilots still in the air had to be concerned about their fuel supply. If there was another carrier in the area (and there usually was), then those pilots could perhaps go there. But it was strongly desired to have them land on their own ship.

The other items (i) to (n) were not Airdale functions, but were nonetheless important flight deck activities. These activities will have some coverage in this chapter. The functions of catapult and arresting-gear interfaced directly with the functions of the Airdales in the launching and landing operations. The aircraft were catapulted when, as was mentioned, the flight deck was almost completely occupied with the seventy or so aircraft. The forward elevator was adjacent to the catapults and so aircraft were brought up from the hanger deck directly to the catapults. The Airdales positioned them over the catapult and the green-shirt catapult men performed the launch. As to the landing process, the green-shirts were also the ones who were responsible for operating the arresting-wires and the wire barriers if the aircraft didn't catch the arresting-wires. So the green-shirts were an integral part of the launch and landing process, and this will be highlighted in Chapters 7 and 8.

Finally, there was no activity on the flight deck after dark because there were no lights on the flight deck. Without lights it would have been dangerous beyond the telling. Just try to imagine making your way among those aircraft as they were "fired up". Besides, even if the aircraft were able to be launched, how would the pilots find their targets? And how could they land on a darkened ship? There were no automatic control systems back then where pilots could land hands-off as they do now. The simple fact was that after dark, the ship was "buttoned up" (made light-tight). That is, all hatches and hanger deck (metal) curtains were secured so that NO light was visible exterior to the ship, on pain of ..... This was of course because of the submarine menace. During the day they were a constant threat, but at night the ship had some respite from that. Sonar was available back then, but it was not all that reliable, and to my knowledge, it was the destroyer, not the carrier, that had sonar. At any rate, compartments topside had red-colored lights turned on so that when a hatch was opened, nothing would be evident from the outside a few hundred yards away. "Darken ship" was rigorously observed. So again, there were no night operations on a carrier at night. At least not on the Antietam.

THE "PLAYING FIELD"

Here we look on the flight deck, that "playing field", that represents the form and function of an Essex-class aircraft carrier. Within the confines of this "playing field" all manner of things are transacted, from launching aircraft to landing aircraft to parking aircraft to arming aircraft to fueling aircraft to subduing fires consuming aircraft to the mundane, but necessary, movement of aircraft, as above. For most all of the day, every day, our sole domain of activity was this small (875' x 108') landing strip that was constantly roving the deep blue sea, never seeming to be able to find that port where respite could be had. Not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, would we gain a measure of repose from the day's work that required two flights a day of about ninety aircraft per flight. Being a training ship, the Antietam did not have the luxury of days and days of inactivity, but then, at the same time, we, the Antietam, were not in the "zone of war" (as it turned out). But here in this picture, observing the churned up white wake behind the ship, it appears that it is hell-bent-for-leather to reach a point that spells action of the disagreeable kind.

The details are slight here, yet this very paucity allows one to view the entire scene without being distracted by details. Thus one observes the sweep of the flight deck, the subject of this book, in all its imposing significance: the repository of up to one-hundred large, lethal military aircraft (in this picture, presumably, many of the one-hundred are down below on the hanger deck, a 655' x 70' cavern). You will notice two of the three elevators are down at the hanger deck level, probably moving aircraft up to the flight deck for positioning back aft preparatory to a launch operation. This picture shows aircraft being moved back aft for that purpose, as well as showing an aircraft on the deck-edge elevator. Those small specks on the flight deck are Airdales, while most of them are in amongst the aircraft either preparing to move them back aft, or packing them in close together back aft. This is the benign part of the day, altogether different than during the launch or landing or parking operations when the aircraft engines are alive and motion and commotion prevail. To lay out the activities of the day, we'll start with the movement of the aircraft back aft, as here. If it takes at least ninety seconds to move an aircraft from up forward to back aft and properly position it closely packed among the other aircraft, as in this picture. If ninety aircraft are to be so moved (ninety aircraft per flight), then the entire operation will take two hours and fifteen minutes. There being two launches per day, four and a half hours per day will be required to move aircraft. Add to this the launch and land/park times: it takes twenty seconds to launch an aircraft, and twenty seconds to land/park an aircraft. These two operations, for ninety aircraft, thus take thirty minutes each, and doing them twice a day therefore equals two hours for both launch and land/park of the aircraft. These two hours added to the above four and a half hours means that there are six and one-half hours of busy-time each and every day devoted to the air operations. Now naturally nothing ever works out the way it's supposed to, especially when one considers the parking operation. This is a very "delicate" operation, and twenty seconds to land an aircraft, disengage it from the arresting wire, taxi up forward, and THEN PARK it in among the other aircraft is cutting it much too closely. As a consequence, another hour should be added to the total time, making a seven and a half hour day the norm. Throw in one-half hour for chow (lunch) and a full eight-hour day results. So such was the life on board the Antietam, a training ship, and a ship just like the one shown here.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"OLD ESSEX"

This is a picture of one of the "old Essexes", probably no higher than CV-12. To start, notice the four 40-mm guns seen just over the 5-inch gun mounts. On later Essexes, these 40-mm guns were not installed so as to allow for an extended Admiral's Bridge right below the Navigation Bridge. Secondly, notice those two objects right at the edge of the flight deck, to the left, that look like small wood logs. Those were actually the roundish covers that housed one end of an arresting-wire that was strung across the flight deck (here removed). Since this part of the flight deck is forward of the island superstructure, the question arises as to why arresting-wires would be at this location, instead of at the aft end of the flight deck where the aircraft land (we're up forward, looking back aft at those F6F Hellcats facing us, ready for flight). The original design of the Essexes called for the capability to land aircraft on the forward part of the flight deck as the ship went in a backward direction. This capability was deemed necessary in the event that the ship's propulsion system was somehow damaged such that the ship could not go in the forward direction. This system was tested and found to be feasible, but for whatever reason, it was never put into operational use. The Antietam did not have this system installed, nor did any other Essexes after the CV-12. A third reason that this is one of the first Essexes is the fact that this ship does not have the large 17-foot diameter SK-2 search radar antenna. Instead, notice the tower located at the upper left part of the superstructure. The newer ships did not have this configuration because that tower was replaced by the SK antenna, which in turn was replaced by the SK-2 antenna. The former was a 17x17 foot "bed-spring" antenna, while the newer SK-2 antenna was a 17-foot diameter antenna in the shape of a somewhat flattened soup-bowl. These radar antennas consisted of a 17-foot metal framework holding the radar reflector, which was a metal screen with 6x6 inch apertures (the same as the SK antenna). In the center of the 17-foot framework was a 2-foot long dipole protruding out from the frame and at the focal point. Connected to the dipole was a wave-guide to direct the received electromagnet energy to the electronics of the radar set (an analog device). These radars could detect aircraft up to 100 nautical miles distant, in addition to having IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) capability. These radars were a ship's first line of defense against enemy aircraft, and along with the ship's CAP (Carrier Air Patrol, a set of aircraft that circled the ship as a protective screen), the ship had advanced notification of enemy incursions. Using data derived from the SK-2 radars, the ship would vector the CAP to intercept the "boggies" (enemy aircraft) prior to the enemy reaching the ship. However, this was primarily a stopgap measure because the CAP was made up of only a few aircraft. If there were fighter aircraft on board, they would probably be sent aloft to dogfight with the enemy, presuming there was enough time. If the fighters were elsewhere, the ship's guns had to do the defending. And then, if the fighters engaged the enemy close to the ship, the ship's antiaircraft fire had to be well-directed. There were many combinations and permutations in this game: Were the fighters fueled? Were the fighters armed? Were the pilots readily available? How long would it take to turn into the wind? If the boggies were going at 300-mph, the ship had 20 minutes to spare. And so it goes. On occasion, I'd look up at the big SK-2 antenna and notice that it had stopped its six-second rotations. Now it was jittering nervously about a fixed position, trying to "sniff out" an unknown object out there beyond the horizon, beyond my vision. (The Japanese couldn't care less that we were only a training ship.) But after about twenty seconds of this agitation, the antenna proceeded to turn at its smooth six second rate of rotation as if nothing was amiss. But just what WAS that "sniffing" all about? And if it was a foe, just what was his purpose? .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SILHOUETTE I

Being partial to silhouettes, of course this picture had to be added to the portfolio. To start, there is that ubiquitous "little boy" (destroyer) neatly silhouetted in the background. These ships both trailed and preceded large carriers wherever the carriers went, acting as "plane-guards" (picking up pilots who crashed into the sea during landing operations).and providing antiaircraft fire support with their 5-inch guns. The aircraft that are in the foreground are the F6F Hellcat, while back further are the TBM Avenger torpedo bombers, and all the way back are the SB2C Helldiver bombers, as noted by their vertically folded wings. There are no F4U Corsairs in this picture, for some reason, and there are not the number of aircraft usually topside on an operational carrier. Because of this, and because it can be seen that some of the aircraft are tied down, perhaps this is only a "transport operation". That is, these aircraft are being brought from the U.S. to the forward bases as replenishment for other carriers on-the-line (facing and engaging the enemy). The carrier in this picture could perhaps have been seriously damaged in enemy action, and thus had to return to the U.S. for extensive repairs at a construction shipyard. (Pearl Harbor, a naval shipyard, had the capabilities to make significant repairs, but it could have been that they were full-up with other ships requiring those repairs. Or, a carrier could have been too big a job to handle if the ship was too badly damaged. Alternatively, it could have been the fact that carriers were periodically rotated to the States for overhaul.

Notice those lines that go diagonally from an aircraft to the deck. At about every ten feet are what are called "tie-down cleats" that run across the flight deck. One such cleat can be seen at the middle, very front of the picture. A line goes from the F6F Hellcat to this cleat. The "line" is a rope that is tied to the Hellcat at the point where the wing is folded, and the other end of the rope is looped around that cleat. Not all of the aircraft are tied down, and why any of them are, is curious, because the sea is very calm. My recollection of doing this on the Antietam is that we almost never did so. The only clear memory of this was when we were being overtaken by a typhoon, and each and every aircraft had to be lashed down (tied down) to the cleats. As it turned out, we didn't sustain any damage to the aircraft, although they did receive a good drenching of sea-water (from the sea-spray, not from wave action). As a picture in the first volume shows, the sea could seriously punish a carrier, large though it was. (The forward, starboard part of the flight deck was actually "folded over" at a ninety degree angle by the tremendous force of a wave crashing down on it). Normally, no aircraft are left on the forward part of the flight deck at any time, so no direct damage was done to them. To have the flight deck bent down at a ninety degree angle represents a huge wave: consider that the flight deck is fifty feet above the water and that the wave had to be sufficiently above the flight deck before it crashed down to fold it over. Would you say that the wave had to be maybe twenty feet over the deck to attain enough force coming down to fold the deck as if it were a pick of cardboard? Remember, the flight deck is made of steel members that must withstand a heavy load. This is a problem for the structural engineers to figure out, and for this typhoon, there was not the wherewithal to withstand the blow and maintain the deck's integrity. But how does one account for a monstrous wave? Certainly, the ship had to be in a deep wave-trough at the time of the impact. So are we talking about a seventy-foot wave? Who knows? But it is true that the "little boys" tend to ride the waves while the bigger ships such as the battleships and the carriers were prone to "plow into and through" the waves. In any event, it was a time of "peril on the sea" (Navy Hymn) and a far, far cry from this benign scene.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FULL DECK

An Essex-class carrier has a normal complement of 30 F6F Hellcat fighters, 30 F4U Corsair fighters, 20 SB2C Helldiver dive bombers, and 20 TBM Avenger torpedo bombers, totaling 100 aircraft in all. (The fighters also carried bombs.) The flight deck can hold 90 of these aircraft (full deck) while the hanger deck can contain 40 aircraft. Since 180 feet of clear space up forward is required to allow for the catapult operation, the flight deck could hold at most only about 72 aircraft at launch operations. This in turn meant that the hanger deck held 28 aircraft if there were 72 aircraft topside. It should be kept in mind that the fighters, the smaller aircraft, were launched first, and so the 28 aircraft on the hanger deck were the larger bombers. The above figures are all predicated on the requirement that the the aircraft are all packed closely together, as seen in this picture (space is at a premium on a carrier). It is guessed that this voyage is also a trip from the U.S. to the western pacific because the aircraft have tarpaulins covering the aircrafts' cockpit canopies. This was never done on the Antietam because we had air operations every day (or at least that's my explanation). Notice that the Helldivers have a rod supporting their upturned wings. Placing these, and removing them before launch operations, was the job of each brown-shirt plane-captain, who each were charged with "his" aircraft. Also, when "his" aircraft was being moved to another location after a landing operation, he would be in the cockpit ready to apply the brakes if and when the ship pitched or rolled excessively, causing the aircraft to accelerate in the direction in which it was being pushed (by the blue-shirt Airdales).

Those aircraft look as if they are close together, and they are close together, as they need to be to fit 90 of them topside as here. This required a great deal of effort by the "plane-pushers", we of the Airdale fraternity. I must say that this was done without the least bit of exhortation by the "plane-directors" (yellow-shirts). They would let us know what aircraft had to go where, and everyone pitched in to make it happen. I don't recall anyone being a slacker in these duties, and I don't remember anyone being called to task concerning these duties. It certainly wasn't a difficult job that we did (pushing aircraft), but it was a long and tedious job that had no particular redeeming attributes where you would feel as if you had completed a something worthwhile . That is, there were no internal "rewards" that would accrue for having done a job well, as if you had accomplished something for which you were proud. (I remember very well when I was a boy and my father specified a job to do. It was the usual job of raking the leaves around the house. I, being young and eager to go with the others to play ball, took on the "assignment" in a rather disgruntled (inward) way. I started with gusto, because I wanted to finish quickly. But as I proceeded this way, I started to take an interest in making the results "superb", making sure it looked neat. I took pride in the "finished product", and when the job was completed, my father praised me. Even though I didn't show it, was I pleased!) But a job had to be done on the flight deck, and "someone had to do it". It didn't help that at the back of my mind was the thought, the realization, that back home there were your school-mates going to college and not only earning a degree, but also gaining a commission in the navy. On the one hand, there was the inevitable feeling of humiliation, but on the other hand there was the pride that no matter how very humble the job, you were doing it for a worthwhile cause, and you were doing it well. It is thus that this book is a tribute to all those obscure sailors called Airdales who quietly and purposely did this burdensome, this nettlesome, this miserable, this thankless, but necessary, job when called upon by the requirements of one's country (pardon the above overwrought adjectives).



GRID—LOCK

The idea here is that if the aircraft are faced alternately fore and aft, more of them can be fitted on the flight deck for transportation "to the front". The reason that these aircraft can be packed together more closely, marginally, is that the horizontal tail-section extends slightly further outward than does the folded wing. This is seen by observing the TBM Avenger facing forward at a position slightly to the left of center and slightly below center. Thus, the wing can be almost touching the wing of the TBM to its right while its tail-section extends further beyond that. A small point this, but one deemed necessary. From personal experience, this aircraft-density was not that unusual at both launch-time and while the aircraft were being parked up forward after landing on board. Yes, it's dense, but it's close to what was a fairly typical arrangement (except for the reversals). This picture was taken from the top of the radio mast back aft, the one that is the twin of the one aft of and just to the left of the 20-mm gun platform outboard of the catwalk. We also have a fairly good view, upper right, of the 17 x17 foot "bed-spring" SK search antenna. In place of this one, the Antietam had an SK-2 seventeen foot antenna which was not encumbered by side-lobes (this is techno-speak for the occurrence of transmitted electromagnetic energy being wasted by not contributing radiated energy toward the tracked target. The SK-2 antenna was of parabolic design such that most of the radiated energy was directed outward similar to a beam of light. A flashlight has a comparable light-reflector.) There was no chance of mistaking an Essex-carrier for a Japanese carrier because the latter did not have the distinctive superstructure of the former. It also did not have any heavy guns at the flight deck level, while the Essexes had two 5-inch dual mounts forward of the island superstructure, and two 5-inch dual mounts aft of the island (in addition, it had two 5-inch open-mounts on the port side, aft, just below the flight deck level, and a similar pair port side, forward just below the flight deck level. Are you able to find the four 5-inch guns aft of the island? Remember that there are also two 40-mm quad guntubs aft of the island.)

Who would have imagined, just a few years previous to this picture, that a ship would be able to carry 100 aircraft on its flight deck? Consider at the present time that the huge carriers of our modern navy carry only about 80 aircraft. True, the aircraft on the present day carriers are larger than the F6Fs, the F4Us, the SB2Cs, and the TBMs on the Essexes. But realize that the deck space of the Essexes was only two acres while that of the U.S.S. George Washington (CV-70) is about four and a half acres. Thus, there were 100 aircraft on the two acres of deck space of an Essex as against the 80 aircraft on the four and a half acre deck space of the Washington. This represents 50 aircraft per acre on the Essex, while the Washington has 18 aircraft per acre. Normalizing the size of the aircraft to a "standard size" (assuming the modern aircraft are twice as big as the Essexes' aircraft were, which is a stretch), the aircraft per acre turns out to be 50 aircraft per acre for the Essex, and 36 aircraft per acre for the Washington (considering the aircraft to be the same size). Now, understand that all of the aircraft on the modern carriers are catapulted (because they are so big). Therefore their aircraft are not massed back aft in preparation for a "runway" launch, as were the Essexes' aircraft. The modern carriers line their aircraft in a long column, leading to the four catapults, while the Essexes presented their aircraft in a vast phalanx of fearful-looking fiends full of fury and malice, what with all their thunderous engine noise and that lethal jungle of propellers. The preceding sentence is a piece of fanciful construct, but in all candor, it is not that far from the mark. It had to be sensed, up close and personal, to get the right flavor. .



MOTIF NO. 10

This semi-silhouette requires inclusion into this book because it so aptly recalls that part of the day when all was quiescent on the flight deck that is normally full of activity of one kind or another. As is told by the sun's shadows, this is high noon, and all the Airdales (blue), all the ordnance men (red), all the catapult men (green), all the fuel men (red), all the plane captains (brown), all the aircraft directors (yellow), we all are down below in the mess-hall having chow (lunch), except for those two sailors. This is the time when the seemingly continuous goings and comings on the flight deck come to a halt, and one can relax for about one-half hour (at least that was the regimen on the Antietam). Who can not be taken by this motif? Who can not be caught by all those rich, dark shadows "shown off" by the broad, lighted deck? And who can not be delighted by the aircraft's metal fuselages reflecting the bright sun? And at the same time, the well-defined wings, in the mid-tones, form an attractive mid-ground. These now are not machines of war, these are objects of art. And on the left, the sharp, dark and light of the gun mounts and the guntubs make for a nice study. Everything in this picture is neat and clean-cut, and a pleasure to view at both an arm's length and up close. It is, after all, that time of day when one can "recharge one's battery" and prepare for what will come later in the day.

On more specific examination, note the arresting-wire going across the flight deck. During landing operations, it is raised about three inches by brackets that reside within the deck. Also note that just back of it, and in front of those two sailors, is a barrier whose stanchion is raised ninety degrees just before a landing aircraft touches down. Of course, both the barrier and the arresting-wire are lowered, as seen here, when the aircraft taxi up forward where the parking process begins. Directly in back of the sailor to the right is the outline of the aircraft elevator. Rounding things out, to the left is the platform, outboard of the catwalk, that holds six 20-mm guns. Just beyond those are the two radio towers that have an aerial strung between them for low-frequency communications. These are usually upright when the ship is not in the air operations mode. Why they are down now, who knows? Finally, consider that large, heavy wing on the TBM Avenger aircraft. How does the wing stay attached to the wing-stub without external support? Someone knowledgeable about the strength of materials would have to answer that. But of even greater puzzlement is how the wing swings out and snaps into position on the wing-stub in about six seconds, without any external helping intervention? As a gift from Mother Nature and the insight of a fifteenth century man named Pascal, the following equations of hydraulics pertain: F1 x A2 = F2 x A1, and F1 x D1 = F2 x D2, where F, A, and D refer to force, area, and distance. Thus, if a small force (30 psi) is applied to a small area (10 sq.in.), the large area (200 sq.in.) will move a distance (5 in.) in inverse proportion to the distance (100 in.) that the small force moved, and at a force (600 psi) that is F1(A2/A1) =30(200/10). In this way, a small force (such as obtained from a small electric motor) will move a heavy load (the wing) a small distance. The mechanism in the wing and wing-stub are such that the piston does not have to travel far to swing the wing fully forward into a horizontal position. Those details are not in the domain of the writer, and they are not in keeping with this tranquil scene. While the sparseness of the aircraft allow for open space that makes the picture more attractive, one can be sure that there are many more aircraft up forward waiting to be relocated back aft for the next launch. Again, being a training ship with morning and afternoon flights, this situation here would not be acceptable on the Antietam: the afternoon flight would be ready to go.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SILHOUETTE II

No, these ubiquitous silhouettes cannot be denied. What impresses here , as in the previous picture, is the smoothness of the curves of this metal machine, the starkness, and again the scrumptious dark on light. I sometimes wonder whether those navy photographers weren't actually artists at heart. Yet who knows, maybe these pictures are just a simple case of serendipity. In any event, we are their debtors. And here again, this picture suits both near and far observance. A silhouette, in masking the many details, allows one to make one's own interpretations. It is this freedom of one's mental reflections that gives a silhouette one of its powers of attraction.

Evidently, the Airdales shown here have just pushed this Hellcat into its position for the upcoming launch operation. Its left wheel is on the deck-edge elevator, as is made clear from noting the two and one-half foot netting outboard of the elevator. This netting was there as a safety device because going over the edge of the elevator meant a fifty foot fall to the water below. This picture shows the cleats which run across the deck, every five feet. They were of course used to tie down the aircraft before any bad weather overtook the ship. Notice that there is someone in the cockpit of the Hellcat. He is no doubt the plane-captain of aircraft No. 31, although at times an Airdale would be there. No aircraft was moved unless there was someone in the cockpit ready to apply the brakes should something untoward happen. At the time of this picture, wheel-chocks have been placed around both wheels. This is evident because the Airdales are walking away from the Hellcat to go up forward to manhandle another aircraft. Usually it takes six Airdales to push a Hellcat from here to there. Overcoming the initial inertia is the main effort, unless the ship pitches or rolls against them. Then they are at a standstill. There's no aircraft-director (yellow-shirt) there to tell them to go up forward for the next aircraft. Call it discipline, call it what you will, but an Airdale knows that until the job is done, a job needs to be done. So its do it, do it now, and don't stop doing it until it's done. There's an aircraft over there that needs to be moved; well then, go over there and move it, and make it snappy. Have you ever seen a colony of worker-ants.....? An Airdale certainly is no worker-ant, but he IS a worker, who does so until the job is done. Simple-minded though the job is, there definitely is satisfaction in doing a job well. I know, because I was there.

As one looks at the Airdales leaving this Hellcat, one could be excused for maybe perceiving this scene to be a metaphor for those who turn their backs on their compatriots, for whatever reason. Look, there he is, the man in the cockpit, "looking for some support", while there they are, those compatriots who are forsaking him by turning their backs and walking away. While I know precisely what is happening here (normal plane-spotting), this is a scene that could be taken as the concept of things that all too often actually do happen in life. One could imply that those people who are walking away are forsaking someone who is thus left "high and dry", subject to the vicissitudes from being left friendless over time and tempest. One might ask, "is he too tender and fragile to handle a little adversity?" Most probably not. But why do it? One could reason that if you give someone a "hard-time", he in turn will give someone else a hard-time, who in turn will give someone else a hard-time, who will in turn.....Thus a small chain-reaction is initiated that, carried to its ultimate conclusion, will make everyone surly (because of what?). Friendship is not required here, but rather, friendliness should be. There's not one iota of reason not to do so (except to perhaps perpetuate some perverse scheme that is unworthy of right thinkers).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THREE TO GO

The time has come to strap oneself into the cockpit and roar off "into the wild blue yonder". In the background can be seen the plane-captains (brown-shirts) helping the pilots to do just that, strap themselves into the cockpits. In the foreground, as the pilot climbs into the cockpit, the plane-captain is tightening a panel on the fuselage. This was their job: to make sure that everything about the aircraft, at least that which was outwardly visible, was "shipshape". Notice the panel on the cowling is somewhat open so as to vent the heat of the engine. All of the navy aircraft were thus air-cooled, as is clear here by noting the open cowling back of the propeller. The Hellcat also had that distinctive air-scoop opening at the lower part of the open cowling for cooling purposes. The reason that has been given for the navy's preference for air-cooled engines is the easier maintenance due to to the lack of all the pipes needed to distribute the cooling water. Also, there was easier access to the internals of the engine without having to disable part of it due to these pipes. Perhaps the main reason was the fact that air-cooled engines are studier than the water-cooled engines. This is required because during a carrier landing, the pilot shuts off the engine when his aircraft is about fifty feet from and about thirty feet above the flight deck. This in turn causes the aircraft to make a "controlled crash" by landing hard onto the deck. (It also caused the aircraft to possibly bounce over the arresting-wires, and even the barriers). Notice the prominent protrusion in front of the propeller. This hub contained the mechanisms and the gears that would allow for the slight rotation of the propeller blade. Consider the vertical blade of the propeller in the foreground. This blade could be rotated several degrees in the horizontal plane. Doing so enabled the blade to take a bigger or lesser "bite" of the air, depending on the air-density and things such as the aircraft's speed and the altitude. Now, notice the clear view of the netting around the deck-edge elevator, and again, view this splendid picture from near and at arm's length.

I must say that I definitely had (have) a partiality for the navy aircraft and their "look" because frankly, they were "my" aircraft. And those in the Army Air Corps no doubt had (have) a partiality for "their" aircraft. These feelings are perfectly natural, and in fact represent an admiral sense of loyalty to "yours". But this attitude sometimes runs amuck when it develops into jingoism, an attitude built on emotion rather than rationality: "mine is better than yours" SIMPLY because it's "mine", even though one had absolutely nothing to do with creating "mine". During wartime, this attitude of "my country, right or wrong" is understandable, and laudable. And yet, if one is in fact wrong, one should NOT allow those feelings to shield one from this verity. This is a tricky subject because while one might be wrong, one would be ill-advised to dispense with one's pride. Everyone must have at least a certain amount of belief in oneself, one's ideas, and one's "rightness", but it should also be based on truth (thus, be absolutely honest with yourself and give others their deserved due). Almost no one appreciates boastfulness, while everyone should admire self-confidence. Chauvinism, an excessive and unwarranted devotion to one's cause, can very quickly be the route to one's descent into "supply the word". Favoring one's ideas, one's opinions, one's policies, one's plans, etc. is fine IF they are well-thought out and if they also make honest allowance for others' ideas, opinions, etc. It's not a good thing to be indifferent to, or oblivious of, others' ideas, etc., and it's a serious mistake not to admit that someone, or something, is superior to you, if in fact that is the true (again, be ABSOLUTELY honest with yourself!) There's a lot of greatness in America, certainly, and this is good. BUT, there's also a lot of greatness in many other parts of the world.

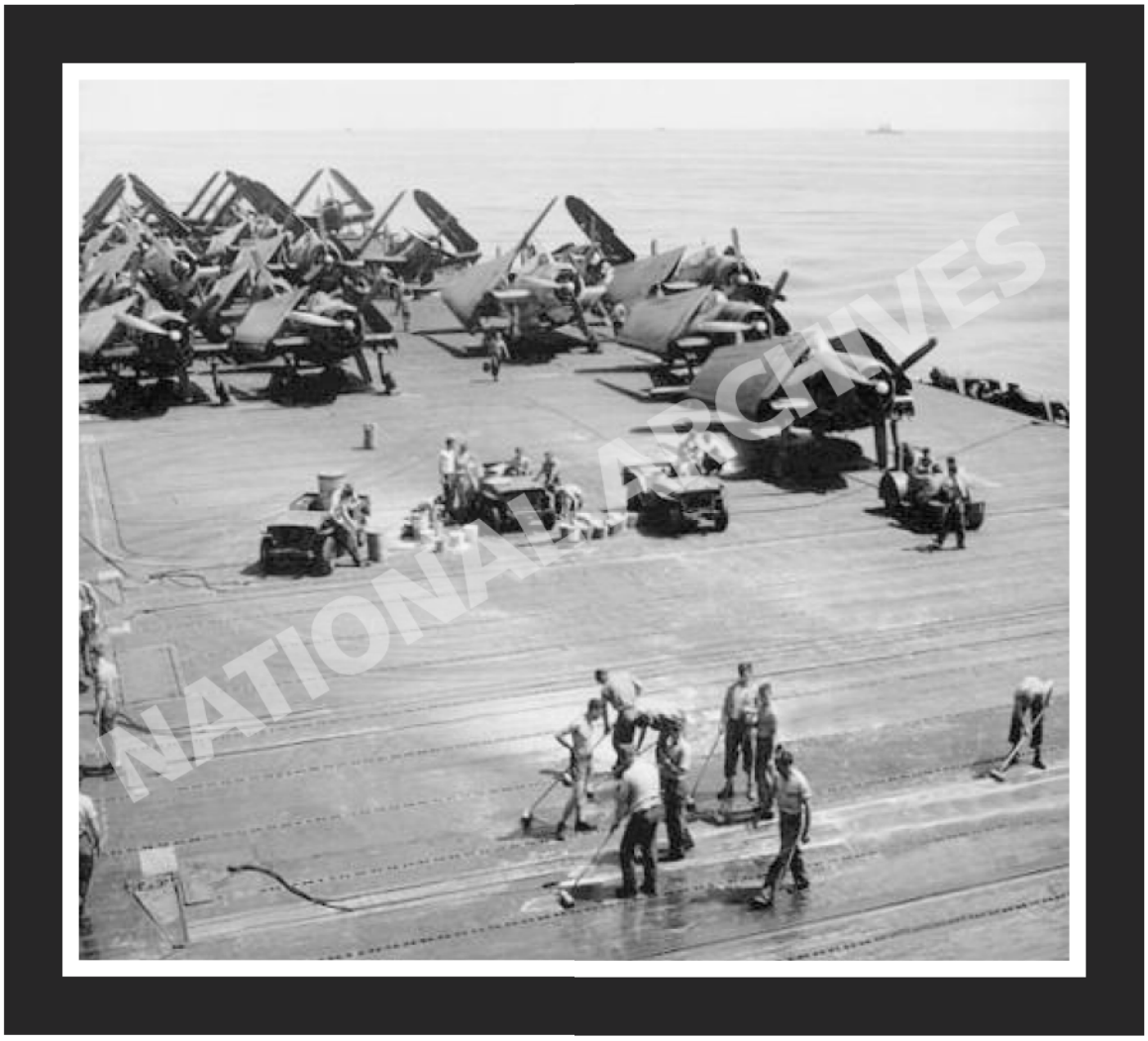


NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

CLEAN-UP TIME

The situation here shows a work-party of Airdales cleaning up what is probably oil that is on the deck. What comes to mind is that maintenance was being done on an aircraft, and in the process of doing this, oil was either spilled on the deck or it somehow found its way there through a leak. Spilling oil was in fact not all that frequent an occurrence, but over time, leaks were a problem. Actually, most of the aircraft maintenance was done down on the hanger deck below, and on the Antietam, much of this was done at night (so as to have the aircraft ready for the next day's flight). I would spend many an evening watching the aviation mechanics and machinist mates climbing over an aircraft, "stripping down the engine", putting it back together again, and so on. It was a fascinating time for a neophyte such as myself to watch these nightly activities, and I must admit, I was impressed with the work they were doing. After all, they were not much older than the teenager that I was, and I felt humbled by the fact that they could do this responsible job while all I could do was push aircraft around (plus other less mundane business on the flight deck). Long before they were finished I'd have to "hit the sack" (retire) because the lights went out at 10 P.M. The Antietam's deck never looked like this, what with all the open space, and such activity as in this picture was usually done when we were in port or at anchor, when all the aircraft were "on the beach" (at a land airfield). Also on the Antietam, we had five tractors such as the one to the right, and we did not have jeeps such as those to the left. I notice the brushes to scrub the deck, but I don't notice any mops to get the mess up off the deck. Even though the wood of the deck would tend to absorb the oil, it would still accumulate somewhat on the surface of the deck so that it would have to be attended to, as here. Oil on the deck meant less traction under foot, bad for both man and machine (when among the aircraft and when landing).

No, this scene wasn't common, but when it had to be done, it was done promptly because the flight deck had to be used to launch and land aircraft. And yes, it was a military operation where personnel had to obey (lawful) orders. And yet, one might look at this picture wondering why some people seem to be doing the work while others are "sitting on their duff" idle. It's a matter of some of the Airdales are the ones who brush, while there are others who supply and prepare the material used to clean the deck, a typical segmentation of duties. But what would one say if this were a non-military or non-paying undertaking where there was a job to be done by a group of non-differentiated people? Could one reasonably ask why some are working and some are not working? Apparently such situations do occur: some are willing, even glad, to do the work, while there are others who avoid working if at all possible. Some are doers, some are watchers. The latter take the attitude of "why should I do it if I don't want to do it (work)? Why should I pitch in and help out? I won't do it unless I'm browbeaten to do it (work)". Never mind that someone has to do it (work). The slackers take the attitude that "I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it (and nobody's going to stop me)". Isn't this an exact definition of self-centeredness? These people have not yet grown up enough to understand the meaning of responsibility, and that such selfishness tends to breed animosity from others who do work or contribute. This generates such words as "spoiled brat" and "free-loader". It should be learned early on that the more a person contributes, the more harmonious the society, and we all want to live in a society that is harmonious, don't we? Besides, helping out and contributing to a common cause does wonders for one's self-esteem, an attribute that is "gold". So lend a hand, and realize that man is not an island unto himself (unless of course one is a hermit or recluse by design).


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"KEEP CLEAR OF PROPELLERS"

Right above the words "Keep Clear Of Propellers" is the signal bridge, a small part of that imposing island superstructure. It is here that those colorful flags are hoisted up the halyards to visually signal those close by. The same arrangement is found on the starboard side of the island. Visual signals are also sent by a blinker-light, one of which can be seen on the right side of the signal bridge. A third means of signaling is that of semaphore, where, with a flag in each hand and with arms extended, letters of the alphabet can be indicated ("M" is the left-hand at 3 o'clock and the right-hand at 7.5 o'clock). As for those colorful flags on the halyard, there are unique flags for A-Z and 0-9. A square blue flag with a smaller white square in the center represents the letter "P". The flags are never used to spell out words, but rather they use a 4-flag combination to convey various meanings. Sometimes four flags are raised, and then quickly brought back down to be immediately followed by another different 4-flag combination. Once in a while, during chow-time, I would stand on the catwalk right above the signal bridge as they sent messages: the halyard had clasps on it at intervals, and a signalman would, in turn, take the clasps and "throw them onto" the rings which were affixed to the flags which were hung on a rack in one of those two bins (rectangular shapes) seen to make up the signal bridge. (Actually, these were two identical bins so that as one 4-flag combination was run up, another 4-flag combination could be assembled, thus speeding up the process.) A 4-flag combination was made up and raised on the halyard in about twelve seconds. The picture shows a normal gallery of spectators on the catwalk above the signal bridge, and right above them is a perch from which navy photographers took many of their pictures of the flight deck below. And again, this ship has not yet received their colored shirts and cloth-helmets.

That annotation "Keep Clear Of Propellers" was modified on the Antietam to the admonition "Beware of Propellers". (Note that they didn't use the more casual and restrained "Be Aware Of Propellers".) Figuratively speaking, when the "Beware" was first seen, and thereafter, one was supposed to vow to himself that he would never turn his back on a propeller lest it "leap out and devour him". Its ominous and fearful tone at first did make an impression, but soon after being immersed in the daily routine, it became "just a part of the scenery". Your attention was had, the impression was made, and you then ignored it. This was partly due to the fact that since the aircraft were so big, the propeller didn't stand out in comparison as being unusual. And yet, pace off thirteen feet next to a wall, and then reconsider an object of this diameter spinning right next to you. It's revealing, and it causes one to rethink its "usualness". But by using due diligence, no one on the Antietam had a contact-accident with a propeller, large though it is. On the Antietam, the Air Officer intoned, in a monotone voice, "stand clear of propellers, prepare to start engines, start engines" with no break at the comma-signs. There was then heard throughout the flight deck many "cracks" of the explosive cartridges as the ignition-switches were turned on. These detonating cartridges would in turn "kick the engine over", producing a whining sound as the engines "took hold", quickly followed by a loud coughing noise as the combustion of the engine settled into a continuous thunderous roar, belching smoke from an exhaust pipe mere feet from your head. The noise right next to you was like a sound out of Hell as the power of 2200 horses made itself known. The torrent of wind battered you unmercifully as the pilot revved the engine to gain sufficient engine temperature. There are those who like this sort of thing (wind and noise), but for those of us who don't, now is the time to "Beware of Propellers".



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BETWEEN FLIGHTS

Another busy, yet good, picture of life on board an Essex-class carrier. One's attention naturally wanders right and left, up and down, but it finally comes to rest right in the middle of the picture at that point of interest that is that aviation mechanic/machinist's mate sitting astride the propeller-hub. And why not? Because now, with a person on that hub, one can better appreciate the size of a 13-foot 2-inch diameter propeller with all its imposing potential for doing grievous harm. It is an object to be reckoned with, and with the utmost of attention and deference. Note that the tips of the propeller are painted yellow so as to demarcate the bounds of good and bad, life and death. As it was, this demarcation was not all that well-defined because a blur is not a proper marker. The dividing-line between good and bad was best found in the position of the Hellcat's wheel, for it was at this point beyond which that lethal yellow tip did not go to work its woe. (This is one example where "good and bad" is VERY well defined (although the word "better" is in play). The sailor just in front of "18" would be three feet from eternity. (The only thing worse is the steel-worker high up in a building under construction where inches and wind are in play.)) As I look at this picture, these are my "compatriots", the aircraft whose every detail is vividly familiar. Being in very close contact with them for as much as thirteen months, every day all day, I feel a special affinity for them (in spite of their disagreeable presence when they were "fired up"). I agree, it is somewhat strange to feel this way about large, inanimate objects, but they are marvelous examples of man's ingenuity, and their every line is "just right".

It is high noon now, that time between flights when sailors "shoot the breeze", sharing "scuttlebutt" about what will and will not happen. That aviation mechanic/ machinist's mate tinkering with that 2,200-hp (Pratt and Whitney R-2800-10W Double Wasp 18-cylinder two-row radial) engine is the center of attraction, while a chief, in khakis below, is supervising the job. These are the people who keep the aircraft flying. The pilots justifiably received the praise from the public, but without these technicians, there would eventually be no flights to receive that praise. Just so in the world in general: without the technicians and the mechanics and the machinists, the world as we know it would come to a grinding halt, for it is these people who keep things operating, correctly. At the same time, it is these very people who are taken for granted. How many of you who get into a car to dash off somewhere think for one minute of all the designers, all the engineers, all the technicians, all the skilled laborers who were responsible for designing, building, and maintaining that car? It's really too bad that most of us take these, our benefactors, for granted. So when one casually uses a car, one ought to really wonder how it came to be. The same applies to that electricity available at the outlet, of that chair in the living- room, or that lamp on the table, or even that towel that one uses every day. Trivial you say? Well try to do without these things, all the things one uses every day, and then reevaluate. Yes, we all do take things for granted, some more than others. It would seem that it comes down to many of us not appreciating not only the intangibles of life, but also the important and necessary tangibles. But back to the "right now" of the picture: those plane-captains standing on the wing of that F6F, that TBM, and that SB2C seem to be awaiting that momentary bugle-call and the "All hands, now man your flight quarter stations!" , summoning everyone topside to prepare to send off another flight of those "beautiful birds". (Well, in this day and age, the young people probably think that these "beautiful birds" are nothing but a bunch of ungainly and slow "heavy baggage". But back then, the Hellcat and the Corsair were considered speedsters.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A NEW DAY

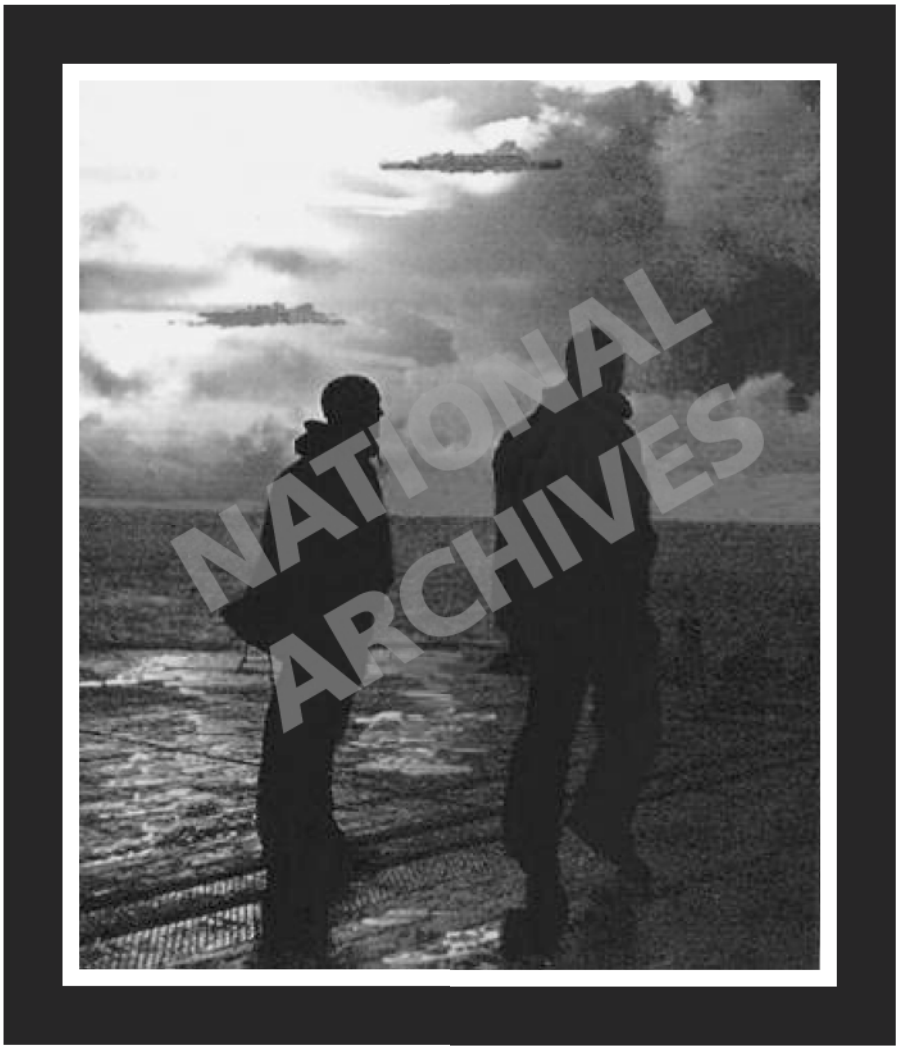
It's a new day, and we Airdales of about forty in all, we are those stalwarts here who are on call. Cold-weather gear (jackets, etc.) is the order-of the-day because the combination of the northern clime, an early morning, the winter season, and that ubiquitous wind, all conspire to make it so. An opposing wind added to the ship's speed of fifteen knots would bring the wind-chill factor down to a bone-chill. So it was button up and keep moving.

If I were to say that I was in this picture, I would say to look at that Airdale just below the front of that tractor to the right. In other words, I would typically be a part of the group, but not OF the group. This is easily (?) explained but the fact that I was almost always distracted and excessively distressed by what I perceived to be happening "on the home-front", i.e., what was that "special girl", who was attending Wellesley College, thinking? While not actually thinking about her while I was on the flight deck, that situation back home was, in my mind, so dire, so critical, that it created a mood, a mind-set, that acted as a constant, heavy mental burden which in turn precluded a normal, easy-going camaraderie with anyone. Who can be good company when "one's girl" is putting mental and emotional space between them? This is a rhetorical question, and it is only a recounting of "of the way it was", but it is definitely not a lament (even though it was back then). With that background, it should be understandable why there was no interest in "palling around" with the other Airdales when their prime subject of conversation was their supposed prowess with the girls. That kind of talk was grossly disagreeable to me because I was a "loser". (Actually, it was also distasteful because I thought that such talk should be more discrete, and yes, more "high-minded". But that opens up an entirely new topic, best left alone. So my general demeanor disfavored a free-wheeling repartee with those of, what shall I say, a more crudely oriented slant on the "facts of life". Enough said about that, but that said, I must insist that nevertheless, I was not a recluse. I was part of the group, near but not close, as shown in the picture. "Close" is when one shares one's personal thoughts, while "near" implies that one could "shoot the breeze" about inconsequential things. My behavior was quiet, yet moderately friendly, but definitely not outgoing. It seemed to work out well because I got along with everyone. There were no problems on that score (the problems were during flight operations). In addition, after hours, there was never any inclination to have substantive conversations with Airdales since this was not their mode. While I would read a mid-level book from the library on board ship about "Plato's Discourses", they would play poker, endlessly. That was "their thing", but it wasn't "my thing". Being a loner was new to me, but it fitted my mood perfectly, and I was not about to accommodate that with the existing environment (I was accepted to Yale University at the same time I was an Airdale, the bottom of the totem pole, but I was not going to drift to the LCD, regardless). If this sounds elitist, I'm sorry. If it appears intellectually snobbish, I'm even more sorry. But at the same time, I (you) must be true to myself, and for that, I stand tall. My recollection is that the Airdales were "trade-school material", and we should all be thankful for people of such caliber, and even praise the Lord that we have such fundamentally important people. We would be literally lost without them, and this has ABSOLUTELY nothing to do with "class". They are the "salt of the earth", and while one need not necessarily be their bosom-friend, they are our benefactors and our "comrades-in-arms". In this day and age, "class" is not what it used to be, fortunately. Compatibility, yes, but class no. That's easy.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DAY

This is the other side of the day of the previous picture. Now all the tedious work of pushing aircraft from forward to aft in preparation for the next flight is done. Now all those wheelchocks have been pulled to enable all those "warbirds" to lift off. Now all those wheel-chocks have been put after all those aircraft have been returned and settled into their parking spaces up forward All this was done all morning, and all this was done all afternoon. And now it's time to stop and reflect on all that which was done. Notice that there has been a slight rain-squall that had to be abided, but not so much so as to call off doing what it was that an aircraft carrier was designed to do. These two Airdales decided not to go down below along with the rest of the Airdales after having experienced a long and arduous day of pushing and pulling and wind and noise and those furious propellers. Rather, they remain topside to watch the light fade beyond those somber clouds that perhaps signal the end of the inclement weather that will possibly bring a new day of naught but fair weather. ("Red sails at night, sailors delight. Red sails in the morning, sailors take warning.") Because that's the deck-edge elevator there beyond the two Airdales, the ship is heading directly toward those dark clouds. Maybe they're wondering if the captain will change course to head toward that brightening sky that is clearing up just enough to capture some of the day's fading light. A breeze seems to be pushing on the Airdale's jacket, but it could be only the effect of the ship's forward progress, because a ship always generates its own wind. But their caps will protect somewhat against this wind, for it's the head from which most of one's heat is given off. (These are certainly Airdales, because the ordnance men, the fuel men, the catapult/arresting gear men, and even the plane-captains have long since gone below. Only the Airdales remain, and these two longer than most, in spite of the oncoming cold of darkness.) There's a different aroma in the air now, what with the rain-water on the deck, soon to dry out in the wind, and the salt air is somewhat muted by that rain-water. While the clouds are dark and surly, they are also lightened and interesting in their unique way, and if one looks closely, one notices the rain-squall continuing to work its way far off in the distance. While one could imagine that this is the bright moon causing the brightness in the sky to the left, it is most probable that that is the afternoon sun, down low, shining upward to illuminate those high cirrus clouds. All of this is part and parcel of an Airdale's life: he is constantly in touch with the weather and its ramifications, whether it's darkly menacing or brightly alluring, or somewhere in between in its infinite variety. Daily, the sky is a magnificent show for all of those who chose to partake of it. For the Airdale, this show is most available at eventide, just as it is here in this picture. Perhaps it's somewhat strange to many, but I gained a lot of sustenance from what the evening sky had to offer, and I accepted it gratefully. Mother Nature has much to offer to those who will seek it out. I found it to be a God-send, especially when things seemed emotionally the darkest. I would go up into the superstructure to a lookout's chair. There I could "survey my domain" of the wide open sea and the wide open sky. No one was topside to disturb this, my reverie, as I hummed through that hauntingly poignant song "My Reverie". What a difference between the activity of the day on the busy flight deck and the calm and peace of an evening "away from it all" when everyone else was down below after supper. The thoughts of home would work their way into my consciousness, and though nothing was resolved, there was a renewal of resolve reflecting what had been said to me in a letter, namely, that "life was a constant struggle". As it turned out, she knew whereof she spoke. And so it was for those two Airdales out on the flight deck, possibly mulling over what struggle would be forthcoming the next day, and the next day, and the ..... .


NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

SUNSET

"Now the day is over, night is drawing nigh, shadows of the evening steal across the sky". And so it is, when the sun settles down below the horizon. Here the clouds probably have that ruddy glow that first tinges their underside. This evening, on this ship, there are those who lingered a little longer than usual to enjoy the beautiful elements of sea and sky. To this observer, this is a gift from above. To others, this is just another evening that's better spent down below playing poker, or some other occupying activity. To those on the deck here, maybe it's just an alternative to being confined below, nothing more. Each one of us could make an assessment as to the value of such a scene as this. Some could take it or leave it, some could take it, and then some others of us could rhapsodize over it . So how does one, how does society, establish values for things, both intellectually and physically?

Some would say that the scarcity, or the uniqueness, of something determines its value, while others would say that its rarity is of no personal importance. Some say that the supply and demand, and the ratio of these two considerations, specifies the value, and thus the price, of something. (Those who arbitrarily try to suppress the supply to raise the price are the malefactors of society, most would agree.) Extending this, why does a company on the stock exchange increase in value today when absolutely everything about the company is identical to what it was yesterday? Does the fact that there are more people who are buyers than are sellers raise the INTRINSIC value of the company and its product? Yet the shares increase in value. Did the company's physical and managerial assets improve overnight? Well, say the proponents, the future potential worth must be considered, and because of this potential, its value therefore increased. These arbitrary games can be played ad infinitum The same can be said of real estate: supply and demand; but real value? While capitalism IS, and HAS been the engine of great progress, what is reasonable in terms of intrinsic value? Should things be valued only arbitrarily? Isn't that what inflation is? (Too few goods being chased by too many buyers). Why should the few be able to bid the many out of the market? Yes, "supply will expand to fulfill the demand". But will it? INTRINSIC value, apart from arbitrary value, should have at least a modicum of hard and fast rules, such as "cost plus reasonable(?) profit". (We're delving into politics and other such incendiary topics, and this book wants to vigorously eschew such.) But, one other item: Why should, in the best of worlds, a singer(?) be paid thousands times more than a nurse, for instance, a nurse who spends long difficult hours tending to the genuinely needed? What has happened to our sense of values? Is avarice really the "American way"? Many will say that this is the sure way to perdition, and who among us will argue the point selflessly? And yes, while there are those who are definitely better than others, who are more competent than others (and so it shall, and should, remain), are they THAT much better? The point to be made here and that is open for discussion is whether there should be such a large gulf between different competencies? Should the ratio (high:low) be 2:1 or 5:1 or 10:1 or even !00:1 ($20,000:$2,000,000)? Reasonable people will disagree about things such as these, but the contrast of singer to nurse is definitely beyond the pale. Thrown into the mix should be the concept of cost/benefit analysis. What are the benefits derived from the singer compared to the nurse? Greed is a VERY UGLY word, and the disappearance of that other word "shame" is much to blame. (If these comments put the word "ambition" into the back seat, that is to be really, really deplored. Ambition is good, as is proper pride.) Question: can anyone assign a true value to a gorgeous sunset? Yes, so why can't the same be done for a company?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SUPERB

To me, this picture is not only superb, but it's absolutely superb! For one thing, it shows the essence of an aircraft from an interesting angle, and for another thing, it was a "good and old friend". The angular, dark, and soft lines of this Hellcat are in stark juxtaposition with the comparatively ethereal clouds of a lighter hue, all of it placed in sharp relief against that brilliant sky. All of the details are there, even to the reflections from the Hellcat and those under the Hellcat as it sits on the catapult in preparation for the next day's launch. I defy one and all, including the hardened old grizzled salts, to deny that this is an exquisite picture. Everything is there, including the tie-down lines, the 20-mm guns pointing downward from the right wing, and even the bomb-clasp under the wing stub. You are there, definitely, you are there. Again, view this picture both up close and at arm's length. It's a feast worth savoring. And if you look very closely, you can even detect the radio aerial strung between the two posts atop the tail-section and the cockpit canopy. Further, notice that the forward elevator is down while the guard-rails are therefore up. This picture wins the "Best of Show", hands down. But then, there are others that certainly deserve qualitative recognition, just as in life, no one person is "Best of Show". There are many bests, all in their own way. ("Best" is a very tricky word that requires close attention. And of course, it usually comes down to a matter of opinion.) If you will, imagine all the energy involved in the updrafts that created that evolving cumulonimbus cloud. What a fabulous tableau those sailors are provided! It's so good that I won't even try to transition from this picture to a corresponding topic for discussion.

I would hope and presume that the reader is intellectually oriented well enough to understand that those who are endowed with (mental) strength are just as capable of detecting nuances in scenes such as this as are those who are supposedly more attuned to the subtleties of artistic expression. In other words, discernment and "manliness" are not mutually exclusive (or so it is hoped), with all due respect to the feminine gender. Before closing this page, it needs to be said that the word "discernment" is a very solid word: "acuteness of judgment and understanding; discrimination; insight; valuation; differentiation; evaluation; comparison; discover". A full essay should be devoted to this word, and by the reader as well. Also definitely, the word "discrimination" needs to be revived and reestablished to its proper place of distinction in the English language after years of deprecations. Discrimination, when done properly, is absolutely essential to a well-regulated society ("regulated" shouldn't be read in a pejorative way. For instance, those marvels of modern-day engineering, the automatic controls of machine tools, are basically "regulators". More simplistically, a traffic-light is a "regulator", and so on.) Without wanting to become too engrossed in the limited space left, discrimination in one's personal life is a must. We do it all the time, all day long, and woe is he who doesn't do it. We use discrimination when we use good judgment in driving at the speed-limit. We use discrimination when we use good judgment when we don't do drugs. We use discrimination when we use good judgment when we remain celibate. We use discrimination when we use good judgment when we use "adult beverages" in moderation. These of course are the easily obvious examples of the proper use of discrimination. But life sometimes "throws us a curve ball". Discrimination requires forethought to be effective. Discrimination helps us differentiate the good from the bad. We need all the help available in this age of half-truths, and those who deliberately confuse, misinform and deceive to tip the playing field.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE OVERSEERS

At their station just aft of the navigation bridge/pilot house that is the domain of the captain of the ship, these air officers look down on the flight deck which is their domain. Next to them are two enlisted men wearing outsized helmets which accommodate their head-phones that are in direct communication the the CIC (Combat Information Center) as well as the bridge, the visual lookouts, and various other combat stations. The ship stands in General Quarters condition because it is within the enemy's reach from perhaps a land-mass or a known enemy carrier. Since the search radars can detect out to only 100 miles in all directions, and since the ship is in enemy waters, a condition of readiness must always be maintained. If the bearing and the distance of the enemy carrier is known, the CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) can be placed in that sector to await any eventuality. The officer with the hand-phone is probably in contact with CIC as he looks overhead at probably his own CAP. Or, he could be in radio contact with his CAP as he vectors them to another sector based on the info he just received from CIC (which happens to be directly below him on the gallery deck immediately below the flight deck. The CIC is the "nerve-center" of all of the ship's external sensors (radars, visual lookouts) plus data that is available from external sources (radio contact with other ships of the Task Group). It is here in the CIC that are found all the many radar display consoles glowing throughout the darkened compartment. And amidst all the consoles and telephones and radio communication equipments sits the air operations officer, peering at the big screen showing all the pertinent data, as he and his staff make decisions that result in the ship being defended by the CAP and the 5-inch guns. (When the enemy aircraft close to within range, the 40-mm and 20-mm guns open up with their fire that generates a cacophony of sound and fills the air with dark, ugly puffs of shell-bursts and streaking incendiary projectiles seeking those diving "messengers of death", the Kamikazes.) Apparently, while some of the ship's complement of aircraft are are off on a strike mission, those three Hellcats are on call to aid/replace the CAP that is now overhead. In addition, further back aft can be seen Dauntless dive-bombers, the predecessors of the SB2C Helldivers. It was a squadron(s) of these Dauntless dive-bombers that was responsible for the sinking of four Japanese aircraft carriers in the Battle of Midway in June of 1942. These aircraft will either have to be launched on a mission, or else be pushed forward, by the Airdales, so as to make room for the return of the aircraft which are now airborne. This decision rests with the Captain, along with the Air Officer seen here, looking down on the flight deck below.

To disapprove of, and to criticize, others can be a normal and valid exercise, while on the other hand, to "look down" on someone is to imply one's own superiority that, while perhaps true, is entirely gauche and uncalled for and counterproductive since it only predisposes to a society full of friction and sorely lacking of friendliness. Besides, it also implies, no, it "waves the flag", that one is woefully devoid of self-confidence and self-assurance, that trait that is, and is to be, valued by most all of us (to society's betterment).

In addition, it's but one step removed from being a bully, that most undesirable of traits (and the most despicable when acted out physically by the stronger over the weaker. Isn't it true that only outright cowards would even think of doing such a thing? I have mentioned many things in the foregoing pages, and have taken the approach that the reader be brought into the discussion for either support or disagreement. But here, I will have absolutely no truck with, I will "allow" absolutely no contradiction, to the above stand.



"AIRDALES" NEMESIS

As an Airdale, you can never avoid your nemesis, bad weather. Here, the situation is not that unsatisfactory, but white-caps are beginning to show and the sky is lowering. One thing fairly unique about an Airdale's job is that it is always being done on an open and exposed platform that is "at the mercy of" the God of Weather. As is seen here, the day is raw. There are no redeeming values in this cold and damp day. Notice that thin film of moisture on the deck, a possible serious hazard if a blast of propwash catches you unawares as you try to negotiate that tortuous "labyrinth" of aircraft preparing to launch off the pitching and rolling and heaving flight deck. The lack of sunshine adds to the aura of general disagreeableness, and by the lean of those Airdales, one could estimate that it is a 30-knot wind with which they are dealing (recall that the wind over the deck is the combination of the ambient wind and the ship's speed). Since the ship seems to be going with the wave-direction (the whitecaps) it's the ship's speed that is generating that wind over the front of the flight deck. This in turn implies that air operations (launch) is now in process, of has been just completed. My guess about this is that a launch operation has just been accomplished because two of the Airdales are picking up wheelchocks that were deposited there by other Airdales after they escorted an aircraft from back aft to up forward to this position (which is at the location of the deck-edge elevator seen here). Foul-weather gear is of course being worn because of the combination of the cold, the dampness, and the wind. To me, the center of attraction of this picture is the silhouette of those two Airdales picking up the wheelchocks on that glistening deck. The second point of interest would be that Airdale to the left, the one hunched over, leaning into that 30-knot wind. And the third recollection I have is that carrier off in the distance. Wherever we went, we would always be in the company of either the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard (CV-31) or the U.S.S. Boxer (CV-21), just as seen here. And if one were to look closely, one would notice that its aircraft are up forward, implying that they are in a landing mode, while the ship here is in a launch mode. In this way, the enemy is given little respite from attack. With a modicum of imagination, one could visualize that that large expanse of ocean out there as being a huge chess-board, with the ships being small toys on that board, and with a player trying to match wits with another player. (A toy war, if you will.) But then, as one zooms in closer and closer, one observes real people doing real things, such as leaning into the a bone-chilling wind as the ship pitches and rolls, yaws and heaves in that ever present phenomenon called weather. The weather here is characterized as bad and getting worse, as indicated by a low-lying blanket of stratus clouds, whose feature is a steady, light drizzle that is enough to wet things down but not so much as to cancel activities on the flight deck. These clouds are usually accompanied by a light wind, and so the wave-action, as here, is minimal. The mechanics of cloud development is to be found in the interplay of the water vapor in the air and the temperature (dew point) at which it can no longer hold all its supply of vapor (an invisible gas). That is, the excess vapor condenses into very small drops of liquid water, or clouds. That cooling process occurs because this rising air expands. This is the same thing as the air pressure decreasing. The higher the dew point, the more moisture there is in the air, where this moisture is in the form of water droplets, each of which in turn is a million times smaller than the average raindrop. But for a raindrop to fall, it needs to coalesce around a particle of dust, pollen, sea salt, smoke, and the like. It is said that there are between a thousand and a million of these condensation nuclei in every cubic inch of air, and between 0.1 and 4 percent of the atmosphere is water vapor, that which is responsible for our weather. Mother Nature certainly is a fascinating and wonderful thing!



THE ELEVATORS

These next six pages will be devoted to the ship's elevators, those most necessary components of any aircraft carrier. There are three elevators on an Essex-class carrier, two of which are essentially on the center-line of the flight deck and one amidships on the port edge of the flight deck. These elevators are an important part of any launch or landing operation because this ship's 100 aircraft cannot all be located on the flight deck at the same time (during launch and landing operations). While as many as 90 aircraft can be positioned on the flight deck at one time, if done, there would be no room to accomplish a launch or a landing operation. Actually, the most number of aircraft that could be on the flight deck during a launch would be 60 aircraft. Thus 40 aircraft would have to be down below on the hanger deck, to be brought up topside for the launch operation. This then requires an elevator to transfer aircraft from the hanger deck to the flight deck for launch operations. Even with this, many of the aircraft must be launched by means of the two catapults that are located recessed in the first 135 feet of the flight deck. With these 60 aircraft topside at launch-time, the other 40 aircraft down in the hanger deck must be moved up to the flight deck, one by one. An elevator round trip took about 45 seconds: 10 seconds to load, 12.5 seconds moving, 10 seconds unloading, and 12.5 seconds to return. These numbers imply that everything is well organized in that Airdales must be at the ready on the flight deck to push the aircraft off the elevator in 10 seconds upon its arrival at the flight deck. Since time happens to be of the essence during a launch operation, this quick removal of the aircraft from the elevator is a must (the first aircraft, and those following, off the flight deck in a launch operation must circle the carrier until all the aircraft are off (launched), so as to go to the target as a group. This in turn means that those first off are "wasting" gasoline.) As an aircraft descends to the hanger deck, a guard-rail simultaneously rises upward as a safety device. Notice in the picture that this is so. The centerline elevators are operated by hydraulic pistons, while the deck-edge elevator used a cable and pulley arrangement powered by an hydraulic cylinder. It can be said that this picture shows an elevator descending because the aircraft's engine has been turned off. If this were a launch operation, the engine would have been revving up while on the hanger deck so as to gain the proper engine temperature and oil pressure prior to being positioned for take off. This means that the aircraft on the hanger deck are causing a veritable crescendo of noise there because there is nothing but steel surroundings them, making for tremendous reverberations. Being amidships, the deck-edge elevator was used during both launching and landing of aircraft, while the aft elevator was used during the launch operations and the forward elevator was used during the landing operations. All of the elevators were used during the respotting after the landing operations. Here in this picture is seen the F6F Hellcat on the deck-edge elevator with nary an Airdale in sight. This was because usually the hanger deck personnel pushed the aircraft off of the elevator on its descent and onto the elevator on its ascent. That is, the hanger deck personnel were responsible for the aircraft at their level, and the Airdales were responsible for the aircraft at the flight deck level. However, it was common for the Airdales to ride the elevator down to the hanger deck to help the hanger deck people push the aircraft on and off the elevator at the hanger deck level for the simple reason that their were more of us than them. Besides, it would speed up the entire respotting operation, and it would give me a chance to observe what was going on "down below". And it didn't hurt to give a helping hand to those who were apparently undermanned. It was always clear who were the hanger deck people because they did not have the blue shirts and helmets that we Airdales had. Yet I considered them to be in the same "fraternity".



DELIVERY SERVICE

There's no way of determining whether this F4U Corsair is being delivered topside or down below. And there's no way of knowing whether the ship is going from left to right, or visa versa. But it's clear that all hands are of a serious demeanor. And it's also clear that this is the U.S.S. Yorktown. This is so because the letters "RR" designate that it is so, just as "S" designates the U.S.S. Hornet, the "M" designates the U.S.S. Enterprise, the "H" designates the U.S.S. Lexington, and so on. As the war progressed, these designations phased out, and were replaced by squadron markings because the aircraft squadrons would move from ship to ship due to rotations back to the states, R and R (Rest and Rehabilitation), assignments to other ships, etc. Notice the four "rails" on the underside of the Corsair's wing. These were used to carry four HVARs (High Velocity Air Rockets) 5-inch rockets on each wing. Some of the Corsairs also had provisions for carrying two 11.75-inch "Tiny Tim" rockets that were equivalent to a 500-lb. bomb, but with an accuracy not found with a gravity-bomb. To continue this line of thought, toward the end of the war, the Corsair was fitted out to carry six 250-lb. bombs, one 500-lb. bomb, and one 1,000-lb. bomb, giving it a 3,000-lb. load. It was also discovered that a Corsair could dive at an 85 degree angle with 1,000-lb., thus putting it at a par with the SB2C as a dive-bomber. To complete this itemization, the Corsair had six 50-caliber machine-guns in its wings (whose openings can be seen here to be covered with tape). Each tenth bullet was an incendiary to provide visualization of marksmanship. In this picture is noticed a 150-gallon fuel drop-tank right under the fuselage. In Europe, the P-51 aircraft would drop its fuel drop-tank when the enemy appeared, while on a carrier, there wasn't enough room to carry replacement tanks. It is known that this is the forward elevator because of the catapult-slot right next to it, and it's also known that it's easier to push an aircraft backwards because to do so in the forward direction would require that one not place one's hands on the moveable flaps that present themselves when pushing in a forward direction (in a word, one could not apply as much force when pushing forward).

These Airdales here reflect well the mood on the flight deck: no jocularity can be seen in their faces or their postures. There was always the thought simmering somewhere that something bad was going to happen, what with all those big machines (aircraft), bombs, gasoline, and whatnot throughout the flight deck. Even little things could go wrong, leading to big things. The flight deck was a "stage upon which they were the actors, and in very near term, very serious things were going to occur, concerning someone somewhere sometime. This generated a constant, modulated kind of anxiety against which reason had little effect. The temper of the times was "What next"? It was similar to the elevator on which the Airdales are riding: is it going up or is it going down? Most elevators always go up after having gone down, and then go down after having been up. But is it going to stay down longer than it stays up? Is an elevator a simile of life ? Here in this elevator we can symbolically presume that the elevator is going "down", what with the grim faces and the lengthening shadow of a day nearing its end. And yet, we could also imagine that that is a shadow made by the morning sun, heralding a bright new day. Which will it be? A good deal of that can be answered in the overall composition of one's attitude toward life: that for every down-elevator there will inevitably be an up-elevator, and that the mind, if left to its own devices (unencumbered with the doom and gloom as spread by others), the mind will, of its own natural inclination, it will ride the up-elevator.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AHOY DOWN THERE

It's thirty feet down there to a 2,5-inch thick Special Treatment Steel (STS) hanger deck. This deck provided protection against a i,000-lb. bomb dropped from 10,000 feet (normal drop-altitudes were of course much less than this in carrier warfare). There was also a triple-bottom hull for protection against magnetic mines, and a 4-inch STS side protection against torpedoes. Aviation gasoline and armament magazines were also provided armored encasement.) These Airdales here are watching and awaiting the next aircraft to be put on the elevator for assignment at a specific location on the flight deck. Each and every aircraft was carefully tracked and placed at a specific location according to the instructions as dictated by the Air Boss (Air Operations Officer). It should be remembered that although the aircraft squadrons were integral units, and administered as such, they were also under the direct command of the ship's air officer, who in turn was under the command of the ship's captain who in turn was under the command of the Task Group's admiral who in turn was under the command of the Task Force's admiral who in turn was under the command of CINCPACFLT (Commander-in -Chief Pacific Fleet) who in turn was under the command of the CNO (Chief of Naval Operations) who was in turn under the command of the Secretary of the Navy. But who was at the VERY bottom of the totem pole? That's right, that stalwart the Airdale. And those Airdales are the ones who are nonchalantly leaning on the guard-rail peering at the show below. That show consists of the hanger deck Airdales trying to manhandle those inert giants called Corsairs and Hellcats and Helldivers and Avengers. Here we are able to have a good view of the gallery deck, that deck immediately below the flight deck. On this gallery deck is found, on some of the ships, the CIC. And there are many other compartments on the gallery deck. Unfortunately, these compartments were not well protected from the ravages that might occur on the flight deck, such as bombs and exploding aircraft. As a matter of fact, the original CIC was in the island superstructure. After having been damaged/destroyed by enemy action, it was moved to the gallery deck. And after damage/destruction there by again enemy action, it was moved to below the 2.5-inch STS hanger deck for relative security because of its crucial role in the protection of the ship. Notice at the lower left of the picture the opening to the water below. At night, this opening, and other similar openings around the hanger deck, were covered by an iron roll-curtain as seen at many store-fronts in the city. Thus the ship maintains light-integrity at night in opposition to the enemy submarines that could be lurking out there in the darkness. Right behind the Airdales, acting like sentinels, are the dual 5-inch guns that will be discussed later. The prominence of these four 5-inch gun-mounts puts one in mind of the predecessors of the Essex-class carriers such as the earlier U.S.S. Yorktown. That ship had 6-inch guns instead of the 5-inch ones here. The thought was that 6-inch guns would be necessary to do battle with cruisers with 6-inch guns. The theory of carrier warfare had not developed to the extant that carriers were not to be in visual contact with enemy surface ships (the Battle of the Philippine Sea notwithstanding). The idea was that a carrier had a "large arm" in their aircraft, and while a battleship could lob 2,000-lb. projectiles twenty miles to the far visual horizon, the carrier, with its aircraft, could "lob" a 2,000-lb. torpedo at a target a couple of hundred miles away. The Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 was the first sea battle where the surface combatants never saw each other; the battle was fought entirely by aircraft. The battle was essentially a draw, but the naval warfare of the past was from that day on a thing of the past. On that day the carrier took on the mantle of Queen of the Fleet, and a new chapter in naval warfare was begun. And now, today, the combatants can be an ocean away. The question is, "will man ever learn"?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

KOREAN WAR

The aircraft seen on the elevator is the Skyraider, of the Korean War (1950), the date of this picture. Even though it is not of the WWII vintage, this picture is included in the "Pictorial Essay" because it has so many defining features: the quad clips of 40-mm ammunition on the curved racks, the helmeted gunner's mate next to them, the four 40-mm gun-barrels pointing defiantly to the right, the 5-inch gun-mounts just below them, the aft elevator on its way up/down, the cadre of F4U Corsairs back aft, the arresting-wires strung across the deck, the barrier-wires next to them, the helmet-less Airdales on the elevator, the two 5-inch gun-barrels, way back aft to the right, pointing skyward, the strong contrast of the flight deck that makes everything else stand out so well, and finally, that carrier back there in the distance, heavy to one side giving it a somewhat awkward appearance. No doubt there are many who consider these "lopsided" ships to be ungainly with nothing but a flat-out flat deck of large expanse and with no redeeming features, and even approaching ugly. However, there's another way of looking at these Essex-class carriers with their dominating superstructures. My own perspective is that these carriers served a very useful purpose, and because of this, their very utility is their beauty. (Remember, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder".) If that large expanse that is the flight deck were used merely to carry general cargo, then even this utility would be insufficient to inspire accolades, certainly. But no, the flight deck is instead the domain of many, many remarkable machines of beauty and usefulness, namely the F6Fs, the F4Us, the SB2Cs, and the TBMs. This grand "piece of terrain" on this grand ship has a certain panache that can't be duplicated anywhere else. The island superstructure with all its electronics and guns and its symmetrical profile is the flight deck's "crown jewel", while its long lines give it a grace that few large constructs have. This is not even to mention that beautiful clipper-bow. No, no one can convince this partial observer that an Essex is not a beauty, the "Queen of the Fleet".

This aft elevator was designed to carry 14,000-lb. load, more than enough to carry the 10,500-lb. Skyraider. This elevator was different from the forward elevator in that, as the aft elevator rose upward, an auxiliary elevator would simultaneously rise upward to the hanger deck level providing a useful area of about 24x44 square feet on the port half of the elevator. This feature allowed additional space on the hanger deck that could be used to maneuver aircraft when the elevator was topside. The forward elevator was too far forward to make use of this capability. (Those naval engineers and architects were certainly a group of keen thinkers, the kind that makes our society "tick". When young, they no doubt thought learning new and interesting things was enjoyable ("fun")). Yes, elevators are extremely useful, especially when it is realized that the word is derived from the word "elevate". The world could make good use of this concept, such as (in no special order), "elevate one's abilities, elevate one's interests, elevate one's concerns, elevate one's morales, elevate one's standards, elevate one's aspirations , elevate one's efforts, elevate one's attitudes, elevate one's spirit, elevate one's fellow-man, elevate one's self-confidence, elevate one's self-reliance, elevate one's sense of self-worth, elevate one's friendliness, elevate one's trustworthiness, elevate one's sincerity, elevate one's selflessness, elevate one's intelligence, elevate one's work-ethic, elevate one's belief in the Almighty, elevate one's abstinence from drugs, elevate one's lawfulness, elevate one's zero tolerance of drunk-driving, elevate what you believe to be important as it refers not only to yourself, but also to society: elevate one's encouragement of others; it costs nothing, this gift of courage that you bestow, and that is an integral part of the word 'encourage'".



TRACTOR ON DUTY

The aircraft to the left with the unusual propeller is of unknown origin. A best guess would be that it is a Dauntless dive-bomber, putting this picture in the time-frame of 1942-1943. We are looking at the aft elevator because the forward elevator had no hanger deck space either to its sides or up forward of it. That officer below is probably the pilot of that Avenger that he's inspecting before he takes it aloft, shortly. Pilots were often seen doing this because they were assigned to a specific aircraft, and they thus had a proprietary interest in that aircraft. Who wouldn't be interested in the condition of an aircraft that one was going to fly? At the same time, perhaps that's a chief (non-commissioned officer) who was responsible for the air-worthiness of all the Avengers, for instance. He too could be assigned to this Avenger, and he too would certainly be interested in its air-worthiness. It could be that after the pilot of that aircraft landed on board from a previous flight of the day, he (the pilot) submitted a fitness report on the operation of that aircraft that included technical reasons why a mechanic should evaluate the condition of the aircraft. For instance, perhaps the pilot didn't like the sound of the engine, or he wasn't satisfied with the response of control-flap settings, or whatever. And of course, if there was any damage done to the aircraft due to enemy action, this would require immediate attention of the chief, who would determine what had to be done and then parcel out the repairs to various of those in his division. It was comparable to an auto repair shop, only more so. An aircraft launched from a catapult or landed hard on the flight deck is more in need of daily attention than an automobile.

Notice the shadows of the Airdales leaning on the guard-rail, awaiting the arrival of an aircraft from down below. As soon as an aircraft is delivered topside, these Airdales will attach tow-bars to the struts of the aircraft and to that tractor at the ready. The aircraft then is taken to a prearranged location ("spotted") as determined by the Air Boss (the Air Officer, who along with his staff, decide where each aircraft will be placed in preparation for the next launch). Just off of the flight deck in the island superstructure is a small compartment which contains a 2x5 foot table on which are cut-outs of each of the numbered aircraft of all four squadrons (F6Fs, F4Us, SB2Cs, and TBMs) With direction from the Air Boss and his staff, the yellow-shirt directors (mainly non-commissioned chief petty officers) move the cut-outs on the table as the aircraft are being respotted on the flight deck according to the Air Boss' decisions. The "word" goes out from this room to the yellow-shirts on the flight deck who in turn tell the Airdales to "move the F4U #27 up forward". There, another yellow-shirt supervises Airdales to exactly put the F4U #27 in the position as designated by the cut-out on the 2x5 table. There are no shouted orders on how to do what, but only a simple remark about what to do, such as move #27 up forward. The Airdales were given no specific assignments, and in fact had no specific assignments. Rather, the Airdale had an understood modus operandi that subsumed the trait of initiative: if there was something that had to be done, then do it without having to be told. No command or the like was necessary. The Airdale simply stepped up and did what had to be done because he knew what had to be done, given the end-result that was desired (put #27 "there"). Sometimes what had to be done was simple, such as pushing an aircraft, and sometimes what had to be done was not so simple, such as pulling a wheelchock in amongst those aircraft during launch operations. But do it he did, without the least bit of badgering, ever. In fact, one of integral traits of an Airdale was that of initiative in which he would see a need and then he would immediately fulfill that need, without being called upon. At least, that was my humble opinion.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

OFF ELEVATOR

Once again, this TBM Avenger was the biggest single-engine aircraft of WWII, with a wing-area of about 500 square feet as opposed to the F6F Hellcat's 335 square feet. Its wing-span is about 55 feet versus the Hellcat's 42-foot span. Since the ship's two center-line elevators were 48x44 feet, theoretically these aircraft could ride the elevators with their wings unfolded (the elevators diagonal was 65 feet). However, aircraft were never taken down with its wings unfolded, and since its wings were already folded, it never went up with its wings unfolded. No surprise here. But what one might find surprising is the 16 foot height of the Avenger's tail-section. However, that was no problem for the hanger deck since there was 22 feet of hanger deck height available (derived from the 30 feet from the hanger deck to the flight deck, less the 8 feet of the gallery deck immediately below the flight deck). What might seem to be a problem though was the clearance of the SB2C's and the F4U's wings which were folded upright. As it turned out, there was several feet of clearance between the wing-tips and the bottom of the gallery deck overhead. Nevertheless, there were things sometimes temporarily affixed to the underside of the gallery deck that could be a problem, maybe. However, that wasn't an Airdale problem. Our problems were different, such as how to stay alive (in truth, that's not being all that facetious. It wasn't just the possible accidents that could, and did, occur, but also it was a question of how well you kept your wits about you. But this applies to another chapter.

Notice the limited areas available for pushing the TBM aircraft. One doesn't require much acumen to understand that to push a heavy object with arms upraised is a deal more difficult than if the pushing-surface were at a lower level. But we used what was available, and we hoped for even a slight pitch of the ship to overcome that initial inertia. That sailor, lower right with his white cap turned down, is the elevator operator. To my recollection, that's all he did, although I must say that that job was rotated among the Airdales. I'll also say that I never rotated to do that job, and in fact, it never occurred to me that I would ever be an elevator operator (because I was never part of the "in-group", by design. Such trifles as whether or not I had that duty didn't concern me one bit because there were more serious things afoot, and to think about. You get that way when you're a "loner", but I certainly don't advocate such conduct. It's not very sociable or friendly, both of which are to be recommended, definitely) All those people shown in this picture are hanger deck personnel, with the exception of that Airdale just behind the elevator operator. He is identifiable because of his blue T-shirt and his blue cloth-helmet (cap) with the chin-straps attached on top of his cap as was his wont when flight operations were complete (most all of us did this). Usually the Airdales didn't ride the elevator down after having pushed an aircraft onto the elevator, but not infrequently we would do so, just for the ride. That ride down started with a sudden lurch, a sudden drop, followed by a smooth continuous motion that took about twelve seconds to reach the hanger deck. The stop at the bottom was almost completely without a jolt, which was impressive considering its size and the fact that it had a load of about 11,000 pounds on it. This was just as smooth as the cooperation between those who worked below on the hanger deck and those who worked above on the flight deck topside. We were in fact a team that exhibited the "same" smoothness as well functioning teams on the basketball court and the like. This analogy should not be considered to be far-fetched because when an aircraft was delivered to below, if those below weren't right there to off-load that aircraft, there would be a delay that would have a ripple effect all throughout the flight deck. Things would be done in "fits and starts". Bad!


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

REFUELING OPERATION

This is a typical, though posed, refueling operation that takes place after each aircraft lands. The avgas (aviation gasoline) is obtained from one of the eight outlets at the edge of the flight deck. There were two stations aft starboard side, four stations forward starboard side, and one station both fore and aft on the port side. These stations were directly next to the catwalk, under the flight deck, in the form of 30-gallon filter-tanks that were connected to the large, main double-container tanks at the very bottom of the ship (one fore and one aft). This arrangement of five avgas stations up forward and only three stations back aft points to the fact that as the aircraft landed and parked up forward, the avgas personnel (red-shirts) immediately started the refueling process even as succeeding aircraft were landing and parking. The reason for this was that no time could be lost in the event that it would be necessary to send the fighters (F6Fs and F4Us) aloft post haste to oppose the enemy aircraft that were on their way to make an attack on the ship during these landings. The fighters always landed first for this very reason. Some of the fighters were sent below right away via both the deckedge and forward elevators to be refueled on the hanger deck, while others were kept topside to be refueled there so as to be ready as quickly as possible. All of this simultaneous activity of parking aircraft, moving them below, and refueling them made for a fairly hectic scene that cried out for that much-used word "teamwork". The aircraft, should they be needed to be sent aloft "immediately" to contest the enemy aircraft, would have to use the catapults since there wouldn't be enough room to make a normal run off the flight deck, what with all the returning aircraft landing and taxiing forward to allow following aircraft to land. This in turn meant a great deal of "shuffling" of aircraft on deck, and this is where the air officer and his staff earned their pay. It is also where the Airdales earned their's. Even if there were no enemy aircraft in the area, prudence required that they be prepared for such an eventuality. Thus, aircraft were refueled as soon as they were set in a parking position. As was said, this could include the hanger deck as well as the flight deck. This is what is referred to in the business-world as contingency-planning, only here, it was literally a matter of life and death if conditions contrived to make it so. And although "haste makes waste", there was no alternative but to make haste. Part of the equation to be considered was the fact that the returning aircraft were running low on fuel. Thus, the capability to both land and launch aircraft at the same time was crucial, and this is where the catapult was so important: the aircraft could be saved by landing them back aft at the same time that aircraft could be launched up forward. So both the returning aircraft were not sacrificed and the ship could protect itself from the enemy by launching aircraft at the same time. (While the AA guns on the ship were valuable, aircraft in the air were more valuable in the defense of the ship.) In any event, refueling aircraft as soon as possible was the established protocol.

These avgas personnel have a very responsible job, as is apparent by that ubiquitous fire-extinguisher. Avgas is highly volatile, that is, flammable, and so great care must be taken while handling it. Fire on a carrier, with all those aircraft carrying large quantities of it, make it a constant threat that has to be guarded against at all times that refueling takes place. While that chief to the right is older and certainly more experienced, those others are fairly young and they have to learn responsibility quickly with no ands, buts, or ifs. There is too much at stake, there are too many others involved, to do otherwise. Responsibility has two parts: recognize the responsibility, and second, fulfill that responsibility. These two things separate the men from the boys, especially among those on an aircraft carrier.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DOWN-TIME

The next six pictures concern themselves with that most important function of aircraft operation, maintenance. While most of the repairs (corrective maintenance) and inspections (preventive maintenance) were done on the hanger deck and during the night so as not to impede the normal air operations of launching, landing, parking and respotting the flight deck, there was some maintenance done on the flight deck, especially when there were no air ops scheduled or if the ship were at anchor and the aircraft were still on hand. (Often, when the ship was going to anchor, and always when in port, the aircraft would fly to the "beach" (land airfield)). It appears that here the situation is that the ship is at anchor because the aircraft are being tied down, and a stand is available for reaching the higher parts of the aircraft for minor engine repair/inspection. (This picture too looks like it's posed what with that officer "at attention". The stand next to the officer is a small one, whereas others have "telescoping legs" to allow the mechanics to reach all the way to the top of the cowling of this big Avenger. Once up there, the mechanic removes the panels that encase the engine. These panels are secured with screws that are flush with the panel so as, it is said, to reduce the wind-drag that round-head screws would occasion. (Those aeronautical engineers thought of everything, but then, that's what makes them so highly regarded.) One can't help but notice those white symbols indicating the number of bombing missions this Avenger has undertaken. (It is said that the Grumman Aircraft Co. first started producing these aircraft at just about the time of Pearl Harbor, and so they named it the "Avenger", to avenge that day.) This view provides a good look at the shape of the wing of this, and every aircraft. The direction of the wind, as the aircraft moves forward, is in line with the seam of the engine-cowling. This wind, when it violently impinges on the front part of the wing, splits into two parts: one part continues essentially straight back under the wing, while the other part of the "packet of wind" takes a longer path over the curved upper part of the wing, meeting at the trailing edge of the wing with the lower part ("packet"). This results in the upper "packet" going faster than the lower "packet" under the wing. Then, again thanks to Mother Nature and the insight of a man named Bernoulli, the pressure decreases as the velocity of a fluid (air) increases. Thus, since the air moves faster over the top of the wing than the air moves under the wing, there is less pressure exerted on top of the wing. This differential of pressure creates a resultant force upward, in proportion to the area of the wing. The Avenger's large wing-area generates a large upward force to support a large aircraft. This large force is noticeable during the landing operation: the large bombers, with their large wings, approach and land on the flight deck at perceptibly slower speeds than did the fighter aircraft with their relatively smaller wings.(Many technical factors contribute to the design of the wing, but suffice it to say here only the above and the fact that these wings had trailing-edge in-board flaps to allow for a lower landing speed of both fighters and bombers.)

And who doesn't need a lift in this all too often contentious world? Fortunate are those who have the support that friends provide. Those who are friendless have a difficult row to hoe, and this certainly also includes those proverbial "tough guys" portrayed in the entertainment industry whom we can't seem to avoid thanks to the producers/directors that decide what and who we do and don't view. They imply that we need confrontation to be "whole". Even without specific friends, a friendly demeanor and even a friendly face will do wonders. Isn't it true that society would definitely benefit immeasurably when everyone is cheerful and congenial? YES.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

REARMAMENT

Apparent in this picture is how "neat" it is with only two points of interest as opposed to a "busy" picture with many points of interest. Other than that Corsair in the background, the point of interest here is the ordnance-man (red-shirt) standing on the wing of the Hellcat. The panels are open revealing the machine-guns in the wing (pointing downward). The red-shirt is attending to those .50-caliber and 20-mm guns. The original configuration for a Hellcat and Corsair was four of the former guns and two of the latter, although some only had six .50-caliber guns, while others only had four 20-mm guns. While access to the guns was from the top of the wing for the Hellcat, it was from the bottom of the wing for the Corsair. That access was between the four sets of brackets seen here that were used to secure four HVAR (High Velocity Air Rockets) rockets. One thing that impressed me was how "cavalierly" the red-shirts climbed on, stood on, and generally seemed to be oblivious of the integrity of the aircraft. But no apparent damage was done because these were not fragile machines, by any stretch of the imagination. For one thing, consider the considerable amount of G-forces endured when these aircraft pulled out of a steep dive. Another thing that was impressive was the relatively young age of the red-shirts. Again, responsibility immediately comes to mind, because a jammed gun(s) during enemy action could be fatal to the pilot. (Nineteen years old is considered a relatively young age within these circumstances and conditions A red-shirt, unlike an Airdale, was responsible for someone ELSE, whereas an Airdale was responsible essentially only for himself. The machine-gun ammunition was secured by loops to a flexible belt, which belt was in turn folded into a metal container. These containers were loaded in this way down in a compartment on the gallery deck just below the flight deck. To my recollection and limited observation, there were about 250 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition in a belt (in the container). (The 20-mm rounds, being larger, were fewer in number.) Since the firing-rate of the .50-caliber guns was, say, 600 rounds per minute, the total duration of a gun's expenditure of ammunition was about 25 seconds. Thus, the pilot had to show steely restraint when firing his guns lest he become defenseless because of his exuberant use of his guns. To run out of ammunition while in the air was far more serious than doing so on the ground where there was some expectation of having one's supply renewed. Part of the red-shirt's job was to readjust the guns' alignment to the proper convergence. This was necessary because the guns' violent recoil vibrations caused a disruption of the setting of a 600-foot convergence of the rounds in front of the aircraft. (This was based on the assumption that a pilot would not fire his guns unless and until he was within 600 feet of the enemy. (The 600 feet translates into the length of two football fields for those who relate to those distances.) But isn't it always the way that (non-physical) violence disrupts life's essential "alignments", such as enthusiasm's convergence with enterprise, right's convergence with responsibilities, friends' convergence with friends, happiness' convergence with harmony, and so on. Who can deny that violence, either non-physical or physical, isn't odious and vile? Why not adhere to that WWII song "Straighten Up And Fly Right" so that one can align oneself with one's better self? Do yourself, and others, a favor by being brave by looking deeply into the inner most recesses of your intellect so that you too can "straighten up and fly right". This is called being absolutely honest with oneself. It will surely allow one to unburden oneself and get rid of "excess baggage", and it will make one much more productive and useful. (This is pretty far afield of "Rearmament", but on the other hand, one could rationalize that one is rearming one's outlook on life in general, and even in specifics, even in this age that is definitely a "busy" picture. A little solitude is very good for the soul.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE BIG ONE

The first thought, no, the first sensation for most of us on looking at this TBM Avenger is its sheer magnitude (the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII). I had a chuckle when, on being anchored at Tsingtao, China, I had a surprise visit from my hometown marine buddy. The first thing he wanted to do was to go topside to the flight deck to see the aircraft close-up. Once there, we walked to an F4U Corsair, and his first comment was "Geez, I didn't realize that these planes were so BIG". If we had gone back aft to look at the Avengers (here), he would have been even more impressed. (For comparison, the highest point of the F-14 Tomcat (the top of its tail-section), the Navy's present-day, by far largest fighter aircraft, is 16 feet, while the top of the Avenger's fuselage is also 16 feet. However, the Tomcat is 62 feet long compared to the Avenger's 40 feet.) To stand next to an Avenger was to be impressed, but you soon became used to that. But when you stood next to its wheel while it was being "fired up" prior to launch, then it was downright imposing. As the previous picture, this one seems to be posed also because normally, when a mechanic was so high up, he had the use of a stand. And that hub actually was used sometimes as a seat of sorts, but as has been said, it's function was to house the gearing that varied the pitch of the propeller-blades. This was done when in the cruise-mode so as to conserve fuel (keeping in mind that a Navy pilot had no auxiliary field on which to land if his fuel ran out (was expended). These mechanics are only tinkering for the benefit of the photographer; the serious work was done on the hanger deck below. It can be seen that the front part of the fuselage is covered with detachable panels allowing access to the engine and its ancillary parts. The open flap at the top of the fuselage was to vent engine-heat and the other open flap was open, it is believed, to vent the heat as generated by the engine-oil cooling system. That pipe just above the mechanic's head exhausted the combustion products from the engine's cylinders in the form of flames about a foot long during the warm-up period just before launch operations. No harm resulted from this, but it did get your attention as you stood a few away during the launch operations. Just below the exhaust-pipe can be seen the bomb-bay doors in an open position. The original bomb-load for an Avenger was a torpedo, but it also later carried bombs of the 500-lb. and 1,000-lb. sizes. The Navy preferred air-cooled engines such as this one because the maintenance and repair of such engines was easier in that there were no water-cooling pipes with which to contend. Not being a mechanic, I can still envision the complexities involved in removing things to get to other things.

And why not avoid those complexities, just as it would seem wise to avoid those things in life that only make for complexity, thus avoiding possible frictions in a society that already has too many competing demands on one's limited time? Wouldn't it be better to do some things well than to do a lot of things in a mediocre way? However, there's a school of thought that would have it otherwise. Perhaps it's only a matter of age where the young want to try "everything" (moral), while the others already know what it is that they want to do and what they consider to be important. Does this have something to do with what is called "maturity"? Or does it have to do with what is called "being set in one's ways"? I do know one thing though, and that is that those young people who serve in the military have a significantly different way of looking at what is and what is not important. That is not to denigrate those who are not in the military, but it is to point up the fact that the former "grow up", at that age, much faster and to my way of thinking much better. To be specific, they are definitely less self-centered, and they have a better semblance of self-assurance. The latter group, they'll get there.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2002

Today is September 11, 2002, a beautifully clear day, a day of profound remembrances for the people of the United States of America and yes, for the whole world. That day, a year ago today, has been chronicled and eulogized in a fullness that has given sustenance and resolve to all those who would receive it. This is good, as is the wholesomeness of the patriotism shown, as are all the American flags unfurled and standing out in the breeze in honor, as is the inspirational song "God Bless America" ringing in our collective ears, that has been engendered by that fateful day one year ago today. This page will not try to, it cannot, embellish those solemn words already presented elsewhere. Instead, it will reverentially record what is, simply stated, the most magnificent words ever assembled as a tribute to those who have fallen in battle (a battle that consumed 51,000 casualties in a period of three days.

LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO OUR FATHERS BROUGHT FORTH ON THIS CONTINENT A NEW NATION, CONCEIVED IN LIBERTY AND DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

NOW WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR, TESTING WHETHER THAT NATION OR ANY NATION SO CONCEIVED AND SO DEDICATED CAN LONG ENDURE. WE ARE MET ON A GREAT BATTLEFIELD OF THAT WAR.

WE HAVE COME TO DEDICATE A PORTION OF THAT FIELD AS A FINAL RESTING PLACE OF THOSE WHO HERE GAVE THEIR LIVES THAT THAT NATION MIGHT LIVE. IT IS ALTOGETHER FITTING AND PROPER THAT WE SHOULD DO THIS. BUT, IN A LARGER SENSE, WE CANNOT DEDICATE, WE CANNOT CONSECRATE, WE CANNOT HALLOW THIS GROUND. THE BRAVE MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO STRUGGLED HERE HAVE CONSECRATED IT FAR ABOVE OUR POOR POWER TO ADD OR DETRACT. THE WORLD WILL LITTLE NOTE NOR LONG REMEMBER WHAT WE SAY HERE, BUT IT CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID HERE. IT IS FOR US THE LIVING, RATHER, TO BE DEDICATED HERE TO THE UNFINISHED WORK WHICH THEY WHO FOUGHT HERE HAVE THUS FAR SO NOBLY ADVANCED. IT IS RATHER FOR US TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THE GREAT TASK REMAINING BEFORE US, THAT FROM THESE HONORED DEAD WE TAKE INCREASED DEVOTION TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION; THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN; THAT THIS NATION, UNDER GOD, SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM ; AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH.

November 19, 1863



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LET'S GET SERIOUS

Now that the ship is at anchor, the mechanics can do some serious work topside. With most of the panels off, the engine is exposed to the multiple ministrations of these mechanics. The first thing that attracts attention here is the youth of these mechanics, for this is not an automobile, which if improperly maintained, will come to a halt on terra firma. No, a malfunction of this engine when the aircraft is 100 miles from ship or shore is a situation to be devoutly avoided. So how does the pilot feel when he sees these "youngsters" grappling with the vital innards of "his" aircraft? In the first instance, he knows that all of these mechanics have attended no nonsense schools with a great deal of hands-on experience. For another thing, he knows that they are not assigned to a ship at sea upon graduation from these accelerated schools (remember, we were at war, with a vengeance). Navy mechanics received a thorough grounding in the fields of airframe, engine, and avionics (instruments). They then went on to specialize in one of those areas, which was a two-part process: preventive maintenance and corrective (repair) maintenance. The former type of maintenance was just as important, if not more so, as was the corrective maintenance for the simple reason that it was more cost-effective. That is, it costs less to nip a problem in the bud before it can blossom into costly repairs (it's more cost-effective to do it right the FIRST time). To the pilot, it of course is indisputably the ONLY sensible way of caring for an aircraft because it is not only a "100-mile problem", but it is also the "enemy-aircraft problem". For this reason, pilots worked closely with the mechanics in writing up malfunction reports, such as an improperly operating engine gauge. Thus, as an integral part of their repair work, the mechanics must be adept in the use of various test equipment (but no computer-driven test gear here). The air-frame mechanics work was fairly straight-forward, such as forming and reforming metal panels, welding airframes, machining aircraft parts, etc.

The engine mechanics had to be well-versed not only in the functioning of an internal combustion engine, but also the precise measurements of the operating parts of the engine. They also had to deal with the electrical components of the ignition system, alternator/generator and other parts of the familiar gasoline engine. The avionics group had to understand all the cockpit instrumentation (but not the more esoteric computer-based devices of today). Accurate instruments and gauges could well be the difference between a pilot "making it" and "not making it". Nothing that has been said here is new or novel, but what could well have been new and novel was the complete adherence of these young people to the notion that something far more important was going on than their own personal interests and wants. In a word, their new-found sense of responsibility was remarkable (or was it?). I took keen note of this attitude of responsibility by these mechanics because they were not all that much older than I was and because it compared so vividly with the simple-minded things that I was doing, day-in and day-out, such as pushing aircraft from here to there. How was it that they were doing these things that required, no, demanded, that they perform technical duties impeccably while I was doing something that almost anyone could do? After all, that is why I joined the navy: so that I could learn a trade that would not only be interesting but also useful later on in life (even though I was schooled in the academics, and not the trades). When I was being assigned for a rating on the Antietam, I chose the navigation division because its duty-station was the bridge of the ship and I thought that that would be where the decisions were made (i.e., it would be interesting). But no, politics deposited me into the Airdales, and I foolishly missed my chance to learn something of real interest, such as schooling in radio-electronics. In any event, I greatly admired those who had such a responsible job and did it so conscientiously and well.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MAINTENANCE SCHOOL

Here we observe two SB2C Helldivers receiving close attention that all aircraft on a carrier receive, either to prevent or to correct unsatisfactory operation. One of the cautions of doing this work on the flight deck, as here, was to avoid as much as possible the spillage of oil and grease, a hazard if and when an aircraft crashes on landing. On the hanger deck, the site for most all of the maintenance, the steel deck could be quickly and easily cleaned up, unlike the wooden flight deck that absorbed oil and grease. This page makes an attempt to itemize those things that combine to make an aviation mechanic useful on an aircraft carrier. In effect, what will be presented is the "flavor" of what it is that is required of an aviation mechanic. First, part of the nomenclature of aircraft maintenance is as follows: "Inspect" means to examine by sight and touch; "Check" means to verify proper operation; "Troubleshoot" means to analyze and identify malfunctions; "Service" means to perform functions that assure continued operation; "Repair" means to correct a defective condition (Repair of an airframe or reciprocating engine system includes component replacement and adjustment, but not component repair); "Overhaul" means to disassemble, inspect, repair as necessary, and check. Of course, overhauling anything on board ship was not usually done because of the limited facilities and because there was not space on board to carry all the necessary parts. However, non-critically dimensioned airframe parts could be fabricated on board ship. A typical set of curriculum subjects for a new recruit at an aviation mechanics school might be the following: General Subjects (basic electricity, aircraft drawings, fluid lines and fittings, materials and processes, cleaning and corrosion control, mathematics, maintenance forms and records, basic physics, maintenance publications); Airframe Subjects (sheet metal and non-sheet metal structures, including all types of fasteners, welding, assembly and rigging of flight control surfaces, airframe inspection); Airframe Systems and Components (aircraft landing gear systems, hydraulic and pneumatic power systems, aircraft instrument systems, communication and navigation systems, aircraft fuel systems, position and warning systems); Powerplant Theory and Maintenance (reciprocating engines, engine inspection); Powerplant Systems and Components (engine instrument systems, engine fire-protection systems, lubrication systems, ignition and starting systems, fuel metering systems, engine fuel systems, induction and engine airflow systems, engine exhaust systems, propellers, and auxiliary power units.) After these subjects were covered, the trainee ("striker", anyone trying to earn a rating to become a petty officer (enlisted)), then went to a specialty school to earn a rating in either the Airframe, Powerplant, or Instrumentation areas. Given the fact that this was being done in an on-going sense of urgency (we were at war, remember?) it was not an easy curriculum to handle by sailors just out of boot camp (unless they came from a high school that emphasized the trade/technical curriculum. For those who consider some academic courses to be irrelevant, they could be right. But remember, no matter how well educated you are in the trade/technical courses, you cannot consider yourself educated unless and until you have a good grounding in good academic courses. "You can bank on that"). When I left boot camp, instead of being assigned to a school of some sort, I was sent directly to a receiving station (Newport, RI, Nov. 1944) as a crew-member of a newly minted carrier, the U.S.S. Antietam. My duties were yet to be determined, but there would be no class-room schooling, the only way to advancement. The exigencies of the time required a new crew for a new carrier, salted by a small cadre of experienced officers and rated petty officers, including aviation mechanics. It was to be a quick 30-day practice cruise and then off into the distant Pacific Ocean to places and destinies unknown, to do our part of the war.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MUNITIONS SET

The next following set of twelve pictures concerns the raison d'etre of this mighty warship. To the point, this ship's destiny, its purpose, its unyielding intent was to thoroughly destroy an implacable, a tenacious, a ferocious foe that relentlessly sought only to soundly thrash and maul our fleet, that fleet that was the defender and the protector of this country, our country, that we held dear. And how does a fleet destroy such a lethal enemy? With bombs, and plenty of them, those ugly and crude objects of death and destruction that render both bodies and buildings asunder with equally repulsive results. (Who can deny that war is a very, very nasty business? Shortly there will be a re-enactment of the Civil War Battle of Antietam, that battle that produced the bloodiest single day in American history with its 26,000 casualties. But how can they realistically reenact the carnage of that day with sham shot and shell that pretends to rip and shred real human beings? We all know that real wars don't pretend to maim. Real wars, with real bombs, leave scars that remain throughout life; real wars, with real bombs, leave real orphans; real wars, with real bombs, result in the real pain of both a mangled mind and battered body; real wars, with real bombs, create real widows; and this just begins to tell the story. Real wars, with real bombs, cannot be shut down by an OFF/ON switch on the console until the next day's play-period. Real wars, with real bombs, are not play-time as is the case for those gamesters who have never been anywhere near a shot fired in anger, much less a 500-lb bomb dropped on them with malice aforethought. Real wars, with real bombs, are not played out on the silver screen with grossly contrived pyrotechnics to "satisfy" those who have become "the jaded". Many large volumes have been written by competent writers about what has only been alluded to above, but it was felt that it had to be said as a disclaimer for including the twelve pictures that follow. And follow they must in order that this pictorial essay be as complete as possible. So even though the violence as generated by bombs is sharply disagreeable to most of us, it was felt that the ensuing depiction of bombs were part and parcel "of a day in the life of an Airdale". (One caveat needs to be said: defensive wars, with real bombs, are certainly a necessity, even as they turn into offensive wars. After all, the desired, the required, demise of the enemy demanded the use of real bombs that became not so repugnant after all.) A set of 250-lb bombs, one bomb of which is seen here in the foreground, is to be affixed to each wing of the aircraft, while the larger bombs are being loaded into the bomb-bay of this TBM. All of those handling any ordnance (on the Antietam) wore red-shirts. This includes everyone in this picture except for the officers and that aviation mechanic (right) and brown-shirt plane-captain (left) sprawled out on top of the fuselage. Oh yes, and then there's that inquisitive blue-shirt Airdale, goggles on his forehead, who's being an intent observer of what's going on. This was what I liked to do when I wasn't pushing aircraft during the respotting process, but actually, I wasn't quite so "pushy". Besides, the red-shirts didn't mind this curiosity because it gave them a sense of doing something important, which it surely was. After all, we were all in this situation together, and so there was no attitude that "this is my turf, so clear out". Red-shirt, yellow-shirt, blue-shirt, green-shirt, we were all "on the same team", and I never sensed any hint of exclusion or the like. However, it's true, and normal, that we Airdales stuck together, as did the others. After all, "birds of a feather flock together", and that is to be expected, and should be no problem. The problem would have been if we Airdales associated only with other Airdales to the exclusion of everyone else, as if we were somehow superior to others. Of course we weren't, but if we were, SO WHAT?



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

EASY DOES IT

We are watching a 500-lb. bomb being raised by that single braided-wire that goes up to and in that tube being grasped by the right hand of the "red-shirt" at the right. At the end of that tube, out of sight, is a crank connected to gearing that, when turned, raises the bomb. I do not know the mechanical advantage of the device used, but the concept depends upon the ratio of the force B exerted by the machine to the force F applied to the machine. This concept can be applicable to various machines of various complexities, such as the inclined plane, the lever, the the pulley, the gear, the screw, and the cam. In our case here, the machine is a combination of gears to form a pulley. The efficiency of this machine, or any machine, is the ratio of work output to work input. Thus, for our machine, if the red-shirt at the right-border of the picture applies a turning force of F through a circular distance of D, then the bomb B will rise by a length L: efficiency = BL/FD, where B = 500-lbs. Many turns of F are required to raise a 500-lb. bomb that distance D of about six feet. Another thing that I found to be very impressive, at that time, was the fact that a wire (cable, if you will) of that diameter would be strong enough to hold a load of that weight. Not to worry, apparently, because to my knowledge that wire never did break. If it did, there would have been no catastrophic result because the fuse had not attached as yet (where the red-shirt to the right has his left hand). The dolly under the bomb was of course used to transfer the bomb to here. After the bomb is raised up to the top of the bomb-bay, those two wires to its right will be looped under the bomb and then attached to the aircraft to the bomb's left. Again, would those two "thin" wires be sufficient to hold the bomb in place once the aircraft started to vibrate as the aircraft engine went through its warm-up process? And would those two wires be strong enough when the the aircraft rumbled down the flight deck at launch-time? The answers are "yes" and "yes". But definitely not so certain was whether those bombs would stay in place when the aircraft landed with the bomb still unexpended due to a malfunctioning bomb-release mechanism. If the bomb did detach itself when the aircraft landed, due to the strain put on the wires holding the bomb, the bomb would not have exploded unless it somehow dropped in such a way that it landed nose first on its fuse. Then I presume there would have been a detonation with all kinds of "hell to pay". It never happened on the Antietam, as it turned out, and I don't know if it happened elsewhere. But nevertheless it was a possibility that would never leave my inexperienced mind, especially when we had "hard landings" when retrieving aircraft. A hard landing was when the pilot was given the "cut engine" signal by the LSO even though he was too high to land properly (after a while, you could pretty well tell when an aircraft was too high at the "cut" signal). We did have instances when aircraft landed too hard and a rocket on the wing would be jarred loose. They would then scoot down the flight deck, but they did no damage. There were times when the LSO gave the cut-signal to an aircraft that was obviously too high (instead of giving the pilot the "wave-off" signal) because that pilot was very low on fuel and would not have had enough of it to make another "go-around". This was known to the LSO because he had an enlisted man near him at his platform who was in contact with the Air Boss' station just behind the navigation bridge. The Air Boss in turn was in direct communication with all of the aircraft still airborne This particular aircraft might have been low on fuel because he was one of the first aircraft off the deck at launch-time, and thus he had to circle overhead until all the aircraft could form up as a group before going to their destination. In war, communication, both internal and external, was vital not only for the well-being of the ship, but also for the pilots who were airborne. And so it is in life in general. I strongly believe the world will prosper the most if all spoke the same tongue.



OLEO STRUT

Even though this is a set if pictures concerning bombs, we will take a diversion from that topic to the important one of landing gear. But first, yes, that is a 1,000-lb. bomb on its dolly, with fins attached. (Try to imagine your moving that dolly among parked aircraft as the deck pitches and rolls.) That "white line" at a 45 degree angle sloping to the left is a radio antenna. Notice the lifting eyelet on the top of the bomb (the other one is being covered by that red-shirt's hand). It's difficult to imagine that this huge hunk of iron, and explosives, is going to be raised by anything available here. But there it is, that device described on the previous page. Clearly seen here is the hand-crank and the circular housing for the gears that provide the mechanical advantage to ratchet up, inch by inch, that implement of death and destruction. The red-shirts have their work cut out for them when one considers that multiple bombs have to be loaded into up to 40 aircraft (20 TBMs and 20 SB2Cs).

This 10,700-lb. aircraft (TBM) required a sturdy "set of legs" when it landed on board a carrier, especially should the ship heave upward just as it touched down on the deck. One of these "legs", a wheel-strut, is clearly seen to the left. This strut had to absorb the impact of a 10,700-lb aircraft hitting the deck from a height of up to 40 feet. (Remember, the pilot shut the engine off at the "cut" signal from the LSO, when he was up to 40 feet above the deck, so as the pilots are wont to say, they had a "controlled crash".) The struts were shock absorbers, not unlike those of an automobile, designed to absorb the kinetic energy of that hard touch down. Thus the aircraft could, and often did, bounce to such an extent that it missed all of the arresting-wires strung across the deck. This resulted in barrier crashes. If the bounce was high enough (about five feet), the aircraft would go over the barriers and into the aircraft (and personnel) up forward. Bad news! So how is a "graceful" landing made possible by these struts? The answer of course is a device similar to the car shock absorbers called the Oleo Strut ("oleo" is Latin for "oil"). The shiny metallic part, middle left, is the piston-rod that slides up into that white cylinder as the wheel makes contact with the deck on touching down during a landing, thus absorbing and dissipating the kinetic energy. The oil in the cylinder is forced against dry air that is compressed that in turn "cushions" the impact of the landing. It is in effect a spring. The air pressure then forces the oil back so as to allow the strut to go to its normal, at rest, position. The sink-speed of an aircraft can be said to be up to 10 ft/sec for an unpowered landing.(if the pilot gets the cut-off signal when he is 40 feet high, and he hits the deck in 4 seconds, his sink-speed is 10 ft/sec. These numbers are only estimates by a non-professional, but they do put one "in the ballpark". The technocrats should go to the literature. The sink-speed must also consider the ground effect and the flare-out.) Thus the total energy absorbed is given by $E = WxVxV/2g + (W-L)(S+D)$ where W is the aircraft weight, V is the sink-speed, g is the gravitational acceleration, L is the wing-lift, S is the shock absorber stroke, and D is the tire deflection. All of this is no doubt esoteric to many (most?) but it was of vital importance to the pilots who landed on carriers, and I might add, of vital importance also to the Airdales who had to dodge and then clean up the aftermath of a "bouncer" landing. due to an ineffective wheel strut. Just as a wheel-strut has to absorb the shocks of landings, so too do people have to endure the down-phases of life's vicissitudes. Why do some manage this well while others, apparently, can not? Is it a certain endowed construct of neural pathways, or is it a learned technique? Most of us, hopefully, would say the latter. Some optimally turn to religion; others to nature; while others turn to Kismet.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PUSH-PULL

You can observe that we Airdales were not the only ones who pushed heavy objects around the flight deck. But while these two red-shirts only had to handle 1,000-lbs., we on the other hand had to push objects of 10,000-lbs. (Yes, yes, we had multiple hands to do our job.) With one of the red-shirts pulling this sinister-looking manifestation of death-and-destruction, you presume each was responsible for 500-lbs. of the load, not an insignificant job, even with that dolly that had a swivel-handle. They no doubt are moving this bomb to another one of those SB2C Helldivers like the one seen in the background. The red-shirt pulling the load is stepping on, and looking at, that 1 ½-inch arresting-wire cable that will somehow have to be passed over, and which certainly is not a trivial undertaking. (One would think that a large-wheeled dolly would simplify things immeasurably. Do you suppose that the dolly-designer ever worked on a flight deck?) Aerial bombs were classified as fragmentation, demolition, armor-piercing, chemical, and incendiary. The WWII carriers primarily used only the second and third types of bombs. A bomb can be distinguished from a projectile in that the latter are projected from a cannon-barrel. Thus the casings of aerial bombs are thinner than those of projectiles, which in turn allows for more explosive (TNT, for instance) to be carried by a bomb (a cannon-projectile must be able to withstand the impact of the firing-charge). By the same token, a demolition bomb's casing is thinner than an armor-piercing bomb because the latter must be able to pierce the armor of a ship. Recall that the hanger deck consists of 4 inches of high-grade steel which is further protected by the flight deck and the (very thin) gallery deck (while British carriers had a steel flight deck). Fragmentation bombs were used by the F6Fs and F4Us for low-level attacks against personnel (nothing nice there). When occasionally watching the red-shirts do their business of attaching fuses to these bombs, it was instructive to observe their (young) faces. Although I can't rightly say that I saw beads of sweat appear on their foreheads, I can say that it was very evident that serious things were going on by noting their very serious demeanor. At the same time I wondered whether the fuse that they were attaching to that BIG bomb was of a spring-loaded type (not knowing very much about fuses, and not chummy enough to ask). Thus, by not knowing, I surmised the worst: what if it was spring-loaded, and what if something, somehow, by chance, caused the spring to trip?! Well, I'm here to say that no such thing happened, and that bomb fuses were a good deal more sophisticated than depending on a simple-minded spring being tripped. But when one is young, and ignorant, and has an imagination, one tends to conjure worst-case scenarios such as a young red-shirt thinking that he was indestructible. The fact of the matter is that young people can be destructible for the simple reason that they are young and and think that they are indestructible. (Not that I was unique, certainly, but I never once thought that.) Actually, young though the red-shirts were, they were very sober-minded. Just as those young people were sober-minded with 1,000-lb. bombs back then, so too should young people be sober-minded with 2,000-lb cars now. There are many out there now who think that speeding cars and minds fogged with alcohol, individually and/or in combination, are the great equalizers. WRONG. This is not only stupid, but it's also absolutely contrary to what is real and what is verifiably criminal. Speed kills. Those who speed should realize that kinetic energy (force) is a function of the speed SQUARED, and of course the faster the speed, the greater the momentum that takes longer to stop. Why not be courageous, why not be brave, why not be benevolent by resisting the detrimental peer-pressure to be "one of the boys". Usually those "boys", both literally and figuratively, might seem smart, but actually they're pretty dumb when all's said and done. Is DWI comparable to homicide? YES.



PRIME MISSION

The prime mission , and the design of, this TBM Avenger was to carry a torpedo, as seen here. For some unknown reason, this torpedo has yet to receive its warhead. These torpedoes weighed about 2,000-lbs. (with a warhead), so to ratchet them up into the bomb-bay was no easy task. This picture provides a good view of a red-shirt cranking the lifting device as referred to previously. There were usually as many as six red-shirts and officers actively involved in installing this heavy ordnance, and they worked smoothly as a team, so things usually went smoothly. However, there was not unlimited time to accomplish this installation, meaning that sometimes there was "spicy" language to facilitate the process. Considering the task to be done, it "went with the territory", but it was always a professionally done job. One of the things that caused difficulty was aligning the dolly precisely under the brackets that were to hold the torpedo. If not precise, then the torpedo would swing unnecessarily and perhaps dangerously. Even after seeing it done, I couldn't help but wonder how that gearing/ratchet was strong enough to raise a 2,000-lb. torpedo (car).

Since this book is about Airdales, I consider it important to try to clearly describe this innocuous device called a wheelchock that was an Airdale's "stock in trade". It is seen here "holding" the TBM's tire. A wheelchock consisted of two wooden blocks and a wooden beam about 30 inches long and about 1½ inches square at the end. One of the two blocks (the one on the right) was secured to one end of the beam and the other block could slide along the beam to the right and left. There was a linear 10-inch ratchet affixed to the left end of the beam (away from the fixed block), and over which the moveable block could traverse. Within the moveable block was a straight pawl that could move into and out of this block at a right-angle to the beam such that the pawl could either engage or disengage the ratchet affixed to the beam. This pawl was spring-loaded so that it could be pulled, by a wire tab, against the spring, and into the block, or the wire tab could be released so as to allow the pawl to jut out from the moveable block by about an 1/8 of an inch and so engage the ratchet. When the latter was done, the moveable block could not move. So in operation, the Airdale would pull on the wire tab, adjust the position of the moveable block around the tire, and then release the wire tab, locking the moveable block in that position (of having the chock snugly "hold" the tire). This was needed to restrain an aircraft with faulty brakes from rolling and thus doing damage to itself and other aircraft on a pitching (and rolling) deck. This restraint that was necessary on the flight deck can find many examples in everyday life. A well-run society needs restraints by its populace just as surely as does the activity on the flight deck. In fact, one could argue that the larger the populace, the more, and more refined, need be these restraints. In no way is this word "restraint" an antonym for the word "liberty". In fact, it can be postulated that the more intelligent the restraints we have, the more real liberty we attain. Unfortunately, there are those who believe that what they want transcends what society best requires. This is called, in a most fundamental way, self-centeredness and egoism, both of which are most unsavory. What is needed is that useful balance between restraints and freedom of action that a well-regulated society of many, many people require. Restraint is definitely not inimical to freedom. Again, restraint is a bulwark to our freedoms. As to what restraints are required, this can be a useful exercise for all of us, remembering that one person's liberty is another person's infliction. On a personal note, someone who was high on my list of people to emulate and esteem said to me "you have to sublimate those desires that you can't fulfill". Words to positively ponder.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Perhaps the photographer meant to do it, that is, he meant to frame that point of interest, that ugly bomb, with those two wings. And being directly illuminated by the bright sun causes that ugly bomb to stand out in stark contrast against that dark background. Since the wings of the aircraft are unfolded, we can presume that there other aircraft aloft doing whatever it is that they do to place the war that much closer to its terminus. And so, so much for the war and all its ugliness. Let's move on.

Let us move on to the more prosaic things of carrier life such as that sailor walking with hands in pockets. Lacking proof, I will therefore simply say that that sailor is none other than yours truly, me, because it definitely looks like me when I was still in the Navigation Division. So there I am, ignoring that ugly bomb, hands dejectedly in pockets, head down, deep in thought, oblivious to the world, while pacing the deck because things back home seemed exceedingly grim as they pertained to a certain very special girl. The big sky, the wide ocean, the sea-breeze all had a way of engendering flights of fancy that boded no good, and left me discombobulated ("upset, confused, frustrated"). Quartermaster duty on the bridge of four hours on, eight hours off, left me with excessive time to ponder the imponderable, with no relief in view, being a "prisoner" on a ship that endlessly sailed the seas having no contact with the outside world. And so I walked and walked and walked, agonizing about my fate back home. (Question: why ALLOW someone to make you dispirited and morose? Answer: young love, you fool.) But also notice, to change the subject, that right at this time I'm walking on, over, a metal seam that runs across the deck and perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the ship. This seam was repeated every 160 feet and they were in fact expansion joints to accommodate the rough weather by allowing the flight deck to flex vertically about two inches every 160 feet along the longitudinal axis. When I was standing on the aft end of the flight deck during a storm, the aircraft being secured on land, the bow of the ship made a particularly heavy impact with the water. I was startled to watch as the entire flight deck undulated from front to back, every 160 feet. This happened each time the ship hit down hard from a swell of the ocean, which was not infrequent because the ship was longer than the waves, crest to crest. The wind howled and the sky was dark and low, but there was no rain to drive me below. So I stayed topside, and I watched, enthralled by the show that was unfolding as a great ship was being tossed and turned about, and no one was there to see the Almighty do its will.

But here today the sea was a picture of calm as notice the flight deck being even with the wide horizon. Thus this red-shirt had relatively little trouble handling this heavy load. Yet wait, it seems that he has put down that heavy load so as to rest, and that his job of moving a 1,000-lb. bomb by himself is too much, and that he is in need of succor (aid). However, I over there am too lost in my own miseries to even notice. And yet, if only I would have noticed and given that red-shirt a hand, I would not only be helping him, but I would also be helping myself immeasurably by thus taking my mind off of my own troubles. It is a well-known "fact" that in becoming usefully involved in others' travails, one casts off one's own wretchedness. (Let's face it, much of this wretchedness is primarily, or even only, a matter of someone feeling sorry for himself.) This immersion in another's problem, IF invited, is the proverbial way out of one's own mental afflictions. It's called serving others who ARE in need and are unable to do for themselves (self-help).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NOT A WHEELBARROW

Notice the length of the handles of this dolly carrying that ugly bomb. (The lifting eyelets are on the side of the bomb towards us, leaving one to wonder how it's going to be lifted into place.) Making use of the mechanical advantage, again, of the long lever-arms, this red-shirt can relatively easily lift this 1,000-lb. load. But then to move that load, even with the mechanical advantage of the large wheels, required a sinewy back and arms, as witness the hunched over shoulders and backward lean of his arms, a clear indication of maximum effort. Since the ship is presumably at anchor, there's no ship's motion to either aid or impede this red-shirt's efforts. Notice his cloth-helmet. After flight operations, most all of us did as he does here: fold the straps of his helmet over the top of the helmet and buckle them. Then when flight operations commenced, we'd buckle the straps under our chin, don our goggles against the wind-blasts of hurricane proportions, figuratively grit our teeth and then make our way into the fray of "angry" aircraft so as to pull the wheelchocks. Close attention will show part of a wheelchock on the wing-stub (next to the fuselage) of the Hellcat back there. This would indicate that there are Airdales to the left pushing this Hellcat up forward for whatever reason. My guess here is that most all of the aircraft are on the "beach" (on shore on that island in the background) and that this bomb is being transported up forward to be loaded onto another aircraft that is already on the catapult. As is apparent, there is a minimum of activity here on the flight deck because the ship, as said, is at an anchorage off of that island. Parenthetically, that Hellcat was the premier fighter in the Pacific Theater, having had a kill-ratio of 19 to 1 and having been responsible for most of the "kills". (The Corsair advocates will of course say that the Corsairs didn't appear in action until some time later. True. And also true was the fact that the enemy called it "whistling death".) While the Hellcat was not elegant or have the "sex-appeal" of a Corsair or Mustang or that beauty, the Spitfire, it did have a rugged attraction and it was a solid, reliable workhorse that did the job demanded of it, namely, to be sufficiently superior in performance, if not looks. (But none of the allies' aircraft could contest the Japanese Zero's maneuverability though). Yes, the Hellcat was chunky and angular but it could carry two 1,000-lb. bombs in addition to other armament. And in a period of 25 months there were 12,275 of them built, attesting to its firm acceptance (and American productive capacity). In a period of 23 months, 5,160 Japanese aircraft were downed by the F6F Hellcat with a loss of "only" 270 Hellcats, a 19:1 ratio. This reflects the superiority needed subdue a fierce enemy.

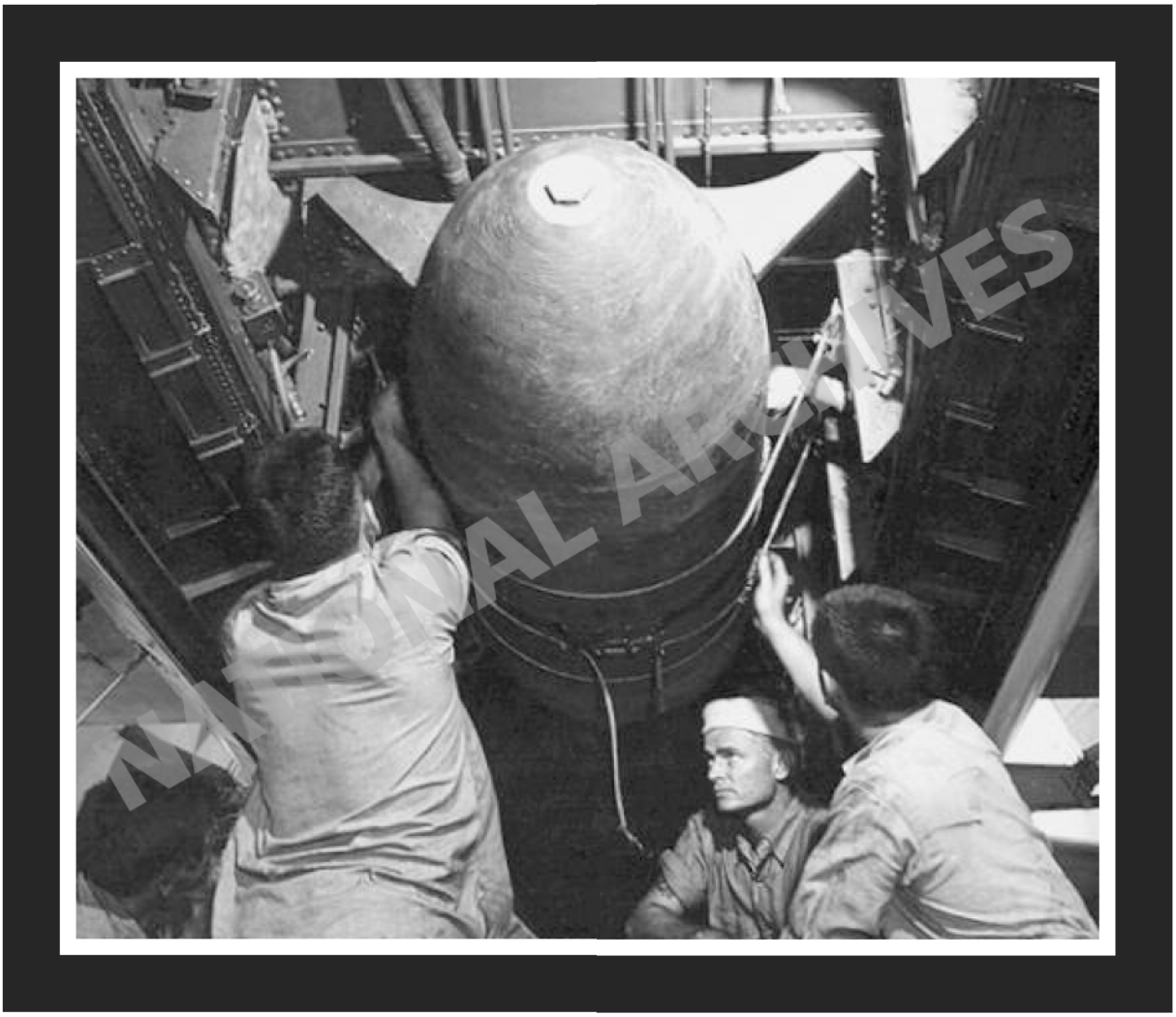
No one would be faulted for saying that this is not an exciting picture of a flight deck. One could even almost say that this picture is "bucolic" what with the mountains in the background and the uncluttered deck in the foreground. But beneath this veneer of tranquility is the undertone of serious business in the offing, as emphasized by this big bomb being rolled out. It heralds the upsurge of activity to come that will later on disrupt this peaceful scene and convert it into an unsettling din of sounds and commotion where the blase need not apply. But now, right now, all is calm where there is easygoing banter and repartee, a time to slough off the tensions and anxieties of the days before. For the habitues of the treacherous, and sometimes dangerous, flight deck, these periods of quiet inactivity were golden. In this day and age when so many seem to resolutely seek the hectic and even frenetic life, have they no concept of the joy and satisfaction that accrues from quiet times? The young will scoff at this, the old will embrace it. Perhaps both would do well to seek some little interchange. Yet, all would benefit from the current adage, "Wake up and smell the coffee. Wake up and smell the roses". .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A BIG ONE

No, this isn't the "doom's-day bomb" of 1945, but it looks deceptively like it could be. Instead, it is judged to be "only" a 2,000-lb. torpedo snugly fit into the bomb-bay of this TBM Avenger, for which the Avenger was designed. (As will be seen later in a picture from the first volume, for comparison purposes, an Avenger could also carry a load of five 1,000-lb.bombs. It should be added that the Corsair also could carry a 5,000-lb. bomb load in the configuration of two 1,000-lb. bombs under its fuselage and six 500-lb. bombs under its wings (during the Korean War of 1950). This made it the equivalent of a medium bomber. Parenthetically, I wonder what that set of 500-lb. bombs did to the lift-integrity of the wings: did it substantially diminish the effective wing-area of the Corsair? (Where's an aeronautical engineer when you need one? Since this comes under the category of peripheral info, the question will be left open.) Continuing the comparisons, the B-24 Liberator 4-engine bomber carried a normal load of 5,000-lbs., but could carry a maximum of 12,000-lbs., while the B-17 Flying Fortress carried 17,000-lbs. of bombs and the B-29 Superfortress carried 20,000-lbs. To add to these comparisons, it should be understood that the above bombers dropped their bombs from level flight and from high altitude, making accuracy problematical and collateral damage probable, while the navy aircraft "aimed" their bombs by diving at their targets. The key point here is that collateral damage tends to be redundant: damage is always collateral. Back during WWII, a "smart bomb" was only a "gleam in the eye" of a few theorizers who harbored visions of bombs under automatic controls (a wonderful branch of electrical engineering that is responsible for many of the marvels of productive lines in manufacturing plants). Talk about collateral damage could lead to an academic/practical argument/discussion that could only be hinted at in the confined space of one page.

Speaking of confined space, consider the difficulty these red-shirts are having in working in such confined spaces, both for themselves and for their hands, all the while trying to make an object, which weighs as much as a car, do their bidding. The process of raising that torpedo was, again, done by winching it up, inch by tortuous inch, using the cranked-device mentioned previously. While "youngsters" did the manual labor, take my word, there was always a veteran ordnanceman nearby, such as the (probably) first class petty officer ordnanceman (with his funny hat) looking gravely at the proceedings. But surely this is not a funny matter, this lifting of 2,000-lbs. of death and destruction. Notice that the fuse has not as yet been installed. This will be the last thing done before the aircraft rumbles down the flight deck for launch. It was somehow somewhat disconcerting to realize that these red-shirts, not much older than I was, were responsible for handling, installing, and fusing such a lethal object. As witness the "game face" of the petty officer, seriousness was de rigueur at all such times. While an easygoing attitude is a nice trait, a serious demeanor is an even nicer trait when dealing with 2,000-lbs. of bomb hanging by a few "thin" wires. Actually, there was a lot of seriousness all around the flight deck for all kinds of reasons: here, heavy, high explosives, there, high-octane aviation gasoline, everywhere, "angry" aircraft with huge propellers, and on and on. On a flight deck it doesn't take much intelligence to know when to be serious, but in civilian life, there are times when a serious attitude is appropriate and even required. One needs to know and understand when serious things are afoot. This might call upon a level of intelligence that is found wanting in many who are not sufficiently well-developed and who are too self-engrossed. But then, with a modicum of serious and quiet reflection, they'll soon realize that the world also consists of things of a serious nature. ..


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HEAVE-HO

This is a typical example of an SB2C Helldiver getting a 500-lb. bomb installed under its wing. One could say that this is an auxiliary bomb because an SB2C's normal bomb-load was installed within its fuselage (note the bomb-bay doors are open. Also note that the Airdale had to place the wheelchock from the inside side of the wheel.) Speaking of the Airdale (and why not), that is an Airdale to the left, as is identified by his blue cloth-helmet and his non-skid flight deck shoes (I still have my exact same pair of shoes in the attic, as well as my blue cloth-helmet and goggles.) I never did carry a knife as this Airdale does. Why he has one, I don't know, because Airdales never had a use for one. Notice how the handle of the dolly is removable so as to allow unimpeded access to the SB2C's wing. Since this bomb weighs 500-lbs., it can be said that each person is hefting over 120 pounds. To lift this weight from a crouching position is not a trivial thing for mere mortals (even though this process was repeated over and over). However, to see an Airdale doing this was uncommon. In fact, I don't recall it ever happening on the Antietam. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that on the Antietam we all wore our "colors", blue for Airdales, red for ordnance and fuel, green for arresting/catapult, and yellow for aircraft directors. It would have seemed very inappropriate to have a blue-shirt mixing in with the red-shirts, and visa-versa, vis-a-vis the work that each "color" was assigned (if they were mixing, they wouldn't have been doing their job). There was a sharp distinction between what the "colors" did, and that wasn't to be trifled with. They would do "their thing" and we would do "our thing", and the only connection was that those things concerned aircraft. I suppose that if we didn't have those colored shirts, the separation would have been much less (is this a pitch for a same-dress code in school?) In a way, we had our team (color) and they had their team (color), even though we were on the same team. In point of fact, there was very little fraternization between us, even though there wasn't the slightest hint of an attitude of "us" and "them". It was instead a matter of their having their work to do, and we had our work to do, and it didn't include fraternization. Now it's true that I was essentially a "loner", so maybe this explains my impressions above. However, I will categorically say I never noticed any suggestion of hostility on the flight deck within or between the "colors".

Actually, the theme here in this picture is that of giving a helping hand to someone who could use it (such as that Airdale doing so). Helping someone sometimes is not a cut and dried matter. For instance, one should know if help is needed. One should know if help is wanted. One should know when to offer help. One should know how to offer help. One should know when not to offer help. One should know how to offer help when it's not sought. One should think about it before letting one's better self impulsively reach out to do what comes naturally to one. Giving help is unfortunately a tricky business. Here in this picture it's pretty straight forward: three people were obviously having trouble lifting a 500-lb. load, and the Airdale saw this and was not involved with anything else at the time. So voila, he went over to the trio and probably without a word, he added his two arms to the task at hand (to raise the bomb to advance the work that had to be done by the "team"). The red-shirts certainly weren't going to say that the Airdale wasn't welcome when they had a 500-lb. load to lift. So a natural instinct to help those in direct and obvious need was satisfied, to the satisfaction of the trio of red-shirts. This example of helping out is about as basic as one could set forth, and it is a good starting point for evolving other scenarios that include the more complex set of conditions that were posed above. To help or not to help, that is the question.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"MAIN BATTERY"

Just as the 16-inch guns were the "main battery" of a battleship, so too does this picture depict the "main battery" of an aircraft carrier. It is this set of five 1,000-lb bombs, carried by aircraft to targets over 100 miles out, that define the essence, the power, the purpose of an aircraft carrier. This picture (which appears in the first volume) is included here as a comparison to the preceding picture of a torpedo snugly fit into another TBM Avenger bomber. While the torpedo weighed 2,000-lbs., its payload was only 600-lbs. of high explosive, this picture shows five 1,000-lb. bombs that together had 2,000-lbs. of high explosive (0.4x5,000). So why use a torpedo at all (600-lbs. vs. 2,000-lbs.)? Not being an armaments exponent or proponent, I can only surmise the following: a torpedo was used because it was more accurate. This is suggested because aircraft torpedo runs were made on a more linear or shallow-slope course, whereas bombs dropped from a steeply diving bomber (SB2Cs, F4Us, and F6Fs) had a definite parabolic component to their trajectory. Thus, these trajectories were harder to control, and therefore they were less accurate. However, I defer to the pilots themselves to supply the explanation as to why an Avenger would continue to take 600-lb. loads as opposed to 2,000-lb. loads as is dramatically shown here in this picture. In any event, this picture shows two red-shirts installing fuses to the bombs. This work was done either on the flight deck, or on the hanger deck as seen here. Since these fuses were so critical, I will extract verbatim the description of a torpedo fuse from the Encyclopedia Americana (Lt. Cdr. J.P. Jones, U.S. Navy): (supply "air" for "water"): "The exploder mechanism is a device used to explode the main charge. Since the high explosive used in the warhead must be stable enough to be insensitive to minor shocks, it requires a sharp detonation to set it off. This is performed by a detonator of some relatively unstable explosive which is fired by the exploder mechanism. The detonator is amplified by a booster charge which finally explodes the main charge. In the unarmed position, the detonator is withdrawn from the main charge cavity. An impeller (read, small propeller) projecting from the nose of the warhead is turned by water when the torpedo is moving through the water. The rotation of the impeller is translated to the detonator through gearing, moving the detonator up into the main charge cavity and arming the exploder mechanism. For safety to the launching vessel, this movement of the detonator is usually completed some distance after launching. After the exploder mechanism is armed, if the torpedo should be arrested in its forward movement, as by striking the target, an inertia weight strikes a firing pin and commences the instantaneous chain of explosions." My question to the above is, "What if the wind on the flight deck starts turning that impeller (small propeller) on an installed bomb to the point where the bomb is in effect armed and then a sharp blow to the nose of the bomb is applied, such as falling nose-down onto the deck?" (In making comments to the pictures in this book, I must confess that I do not render meticulous research into each and all of the (highly) technical questions. A motivated reader might well want to do so however. Please be my guest. Actually, these pictures are in large measure meant to be closely perused in detail just so as to engender questions such as these by the reader. I, at the same time, try to anticipate some of these questions to "get things rolling". However, I firmly believe that these pictures are best viewed at arm's length so as to obtain their full impact. That first, then the detail later. But enough tutoring). While admitting that I don't know that much about it, nevertheless, how about those young people being given that tremendously responsible job sans supervision?! I believe it's a testament to them that they be given this responsibility, and would that we had many more of that "tender" age able to accept such a job. I'm sure there are many such here and now, but why not "everyone"?

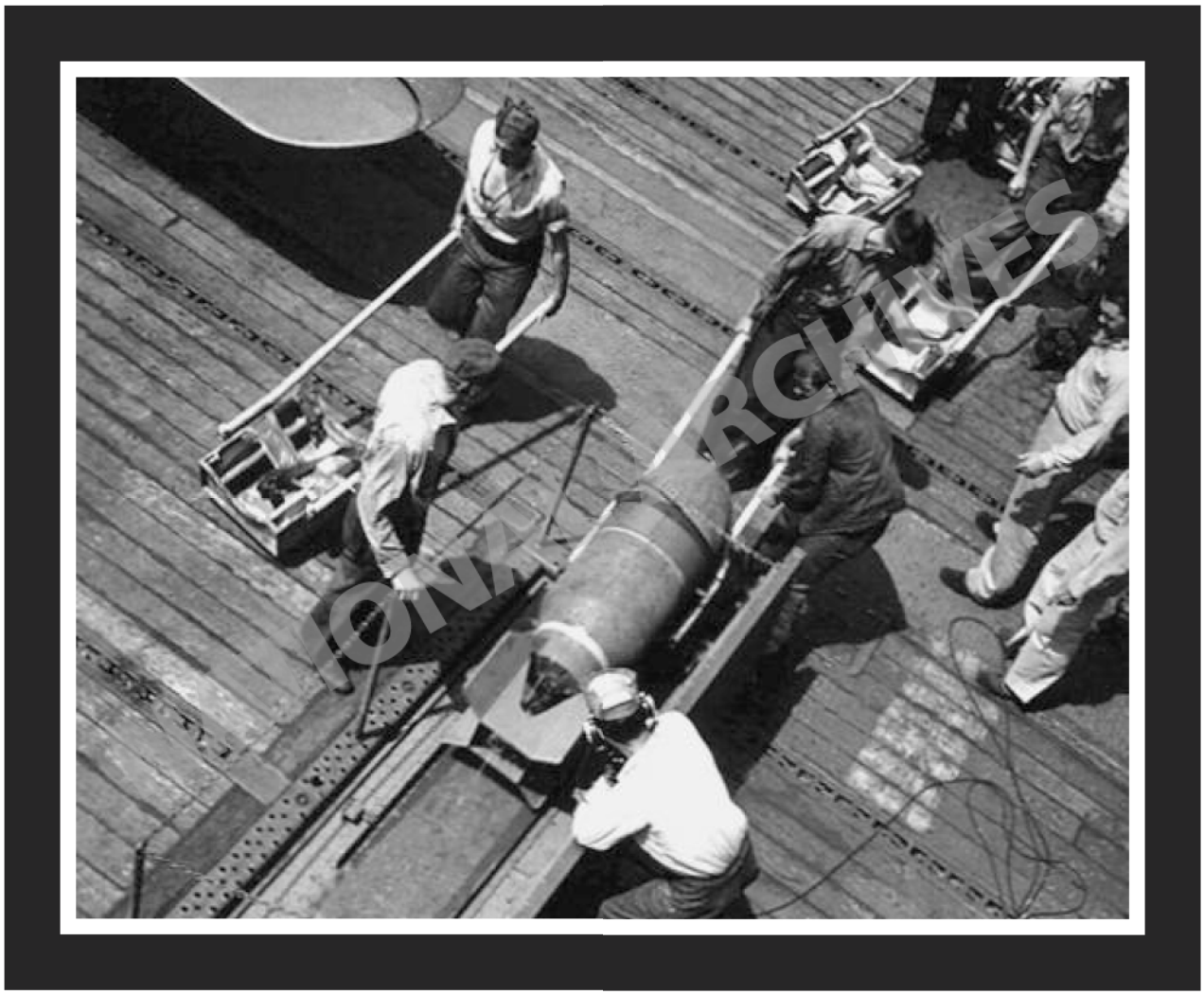


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

UP ELEVATOR

Front and center is one of the elevators on the starboard side of the ship in the vicinity of the island superstructure. These elevators delivered bombs from the protected spaces down below. To start at the beginning, the bombs were all stored in racks in a protected compartment four decks below the hanger deck. Also stored there were dollies (seen here), but without the long handles. These handles were stored at both the flight deck and the hanger deck. The process started with that phone-talker (bottom center with the head-phones) who relayed instructions, from those two officers at the right, to the bomb compartment below.. The ordnancemen down below would then hoist (winch) a bomb from the rack and place it on a dolly, and roll it onto the elevator. When it arrived at the flight deck (here), an ordnanceman would insert a handle into each side of the dolly and push it to one of the aircraft as specified by the officers. The empty dollies would be returned to the elevator to be sent back down (without the handles). And so it went, bomb after ugly bomb. Since the flight deck was relatively smooth, the rolling-friction was minimal. (The flight deck consisted of 0.2-inch steel covered by 3-inch teakwood planking, with a tar substance forming the seams between the planking.) Notice that the officers are standing on that metal strip running across the flight deck that accommodates the flexing motions during heavy weather (mentioned earlier). This was certainly not a haphazard operation, this movement of 1,000-lb. bombs. In fact, these ordnancemen (red-shirts), young though they were, were very professional and preferential toward these bombs and their duties seen here, as well they should have been. In further fact, they dealt with these bombs with a great deal of deference and respect.

Would that the respect that they showed here with these bombs was emulated throughout our society. This desired respect consists of respect shown to others as a person regardless of his/her position in the social strata. This respect goes well beyond mere friendliness (though friendliness should be hopefully and beneficially, second-nature to one and all. However, this friendliness need not be "hail fellow well met", because there are as many versions of friendliness as there are people. And it need not imply a close friendship (how many of those are there?). "Respect" here refers to respect for another person's thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, as long as those thoughts, feelings, and aspirations are legal (and moral). Further, one could well make the case that one would be hard put to think of a value more desirable and beneficial and felicitous than genuine respect for others. Within the meaning of respect is the concept of consideration for a person's conduct and foibles and eccentricities that don't coincide with yours (as long as they are not illegal or immoral). Included here, certainly, is the desired capability for regarding the unfamiliar with social tolerance, implying that you are not the only repository for all that is right and good. No one need necessarily agree with something, and no one should be disallowed from disagreeing with whatever it is that is thought to be disagreeable. Disagreement can be useful, and even beneficial, but tolerance must not be negotiable (as long as it's legal and moral). Parenthetically, I will say that, in my opinion, THE problem in schools is the lack of discipline (parental disinterest, and lack of self-confidence, are close seconds). Without a healthy discipline, little worthwhile will be accomplished. The motivated student will be impeded, and the unmotivated ones will be lost to almost irrelevance. This discipline absolutely requires an atmosphere of respect and regard for others. It is fine to be "big man on campus" (a leader) IF one is genuinely respectful of others. Otherwise, the "big wheels" are only playing the fool (and you know who you are, don't you). Show intelligence.



TORPEDOES

These torpedoes were pulled by red-shirts from the hanger deck to the aircraft elevator for delivery to the TBM Avengers topside. This page addresses the interest of the technical readers, but it should also be of interest to anyone with an inquiring mind. Aircraft torpedoes were steam propelled because the electric ones (submarines) were not as sturdy. The steam torpedo had a speed ranging from 27 to 45 knots at a range of 4,000 to 10,000 yards. It weighed 3,000 pounds. These torpedoes consisted of four sections: war or exercise head, air flask section, afterbody section, and the tail section. The warhead contained 800 pounds of high explosives, and had fusing equipment described earlier. The flask section consisted of about a third of the length of the torpedo, and was made of steel to withstand the high pressure of the compressed air that it contained. In the after part of the flask section was located the fuel and water tanks and various valves of the air and propulsion system. The afterbody section was the engine-room of the torpedo. In it was located the propulsion turbines, steering control devices, and depth control devices. The tail section contained the horizontal and vertical rudders, the exhaust valves, and the propellers.

The steam torpedo propulsion system is centered about the combustion flask which performs the function of a boiler When the torpedo is launched, an igniter is fired, supplying a strong flame of short duration. Alcohol fuel and water were introduced into the combustion flask by compressed air. This alcohol and water was premixed with air to form a mixture which would generate steam when in contact with the igniter flame. After the flame burned out, steam continued to be generated due to the great heat evolved by the process, until the fuel was exhausted. The steam left the combustion flask, and was diverted to the turbine wheels. These turbine wheels were geared to two shafts, one inside the other upon which were keyed to the propellers. The turbines and, consequentially the propellers, rotate counter to each other to overcome the torque produced by one propeller which tends to veer the torpedo off its prescribed course. The direction of the torpedo is controlled by a gyroscope that tends to keep the axis of the flywheel in the same position that it had when it was originally spun. When the axis of the gyroscope is in line with the longitudinal axis of the torpedo, the torpedo will run in a straight line. Should the torpedo deviate from a straight line, its axis will rotate out of line with that of the gyroscope (which remains the same regardless of the movement of the torpedo). The gyroscope, through a system of linkages, actuates an air-powered steering motor, which operates the the vertical rudder in such a way to bring the torpedo back in line with its original direction (the axis of the gyroscope). Depth control is maintained by a pendulum-diaphragm combination. The diaphragm is controlled by sea pressure and a spring which may be set to the pressure encountered at the desired depth. The action of the diaphragm is linked to the pendulum, which also controls the angle of inclination of the torpedo and tends to keep it on a given horizontal plane. If the torpedo exceeds the set depth, pressure on the diaphragm is greater than the spring-tension and the diaphragm is turned inward. The diaphragm action causes the pendulum to tilt, actuating the depth engine, which is air powered, and moves the horizontal rudders to bring the torpedo upward to its set depth. If the torpedo is above its set depth, the spring forces the diaphragm outward, reversing the procedure of the horizontal rudders. This discussion about the operation of a torpedo will be continued on the next page so as to be as complete as is possible in the limited space available in this book. Since a torpedo is such a large device, this seems only reasonable.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TORPEDO II

Continuing the dissertation begun on the previous page, we will wind it up on this page. The speed of a torpedo is controlled by the amount and rate of fuel delivered to the combustion flask. This speed usually is designed to be constant. When the torpedo is released from the aircraft, a starting valve is opened which permits compressed air from the air flask to fire the igniter, spin the gyroscope, force fuel and water into the combustion flask, and supply the depth and steering engines. It is now armed and ready to detonate against the side of a ship. While the submarine service destroyed most of the enemy's merchant fleet, and many military ships, the carrier aircraft did the most damage to the opposing military fleet. Obviously, the torpedo was not used against shore installations.

The problem of hitting a moving target with a torpedo was not a simple matter of aiming it directly at the target It was necessary to aim the torpedo on a certain course to allow it to collide with the target at a point somewhere ahead of the position of the target at the instant of release from the aircraft. The determination of this course was called the fire control problem. The factors which entered into the solution of this problem were many: target speed, aircraft speed, torpedo speed, range between target and aircraft, maximum range of torpedo, target course, aircraft course, and bearing of the target from the aircraft. The factors pertaining to the aircraft (speed, course, bearing, torpedo speed and range) were known, but those of the target (speed and course) had to be estimated. Then those six parameters had to be combined to solve the aircraft's required course and required speed. Here the aircraft is at a definite disadvantage vis-a-vis a submarine which has the use of sophisticated (a la 1945) computers and the capability of firing a salvo. However, this was primarily a submarine situation, while a torpedo aircraft had to go in low and slow within the target's gunfire. A nasty business, that. Note that these torpedoes are facing south/north instead of north/south, and it will be a difficult job to turn them 180 degrees on dollies without a swivel. Those "open boxes" seen on the back part of the torpedoes were installed to protect the steering rudders during handling. They were of course removed when the torpedo was placed in the aircraft.

Before allowing them to handle these potent weapons, the navy rigorously tested these torpedomen until they could show that they had achieved the requisite abilities in the management of these expensive devices. Underachievers were not welcome, because a great deal depended on the torpedoman's competence. The sooner that we all acquire proficiencies, and thus accomplishments, in a subject, the better for us and those we serve (we all serve in one way or another). Optimally, one accomplishes achievement due to due diligence and not due to favoritism, because the former is self-sustaining while the latter is quite often self-defeating. Besides, the latter does not reflect kindly the proficiency that those who serve require. It's true, it's hard to work hard and only obtain pedestrian results. (But this need not be a worry as long as one is not beleaguered by deliberate denial of opportunities to achieve one's aspirations. Yet success never was all it was made out to be, and in some ways, being ignored can be, in a perverse way, a condition to be desired (especially if one is a natural loner)). To achieve, based on doing something well, is, or at least should be, its own reward. The trappings of success, if they accrue, are useful only to those whose self-esteem is on the wane. Is it not true that very often it is the ones without the wherewithal of "things" are the very ones who learn to appreciate the more substantial things in life? Set your sights to the challenge.

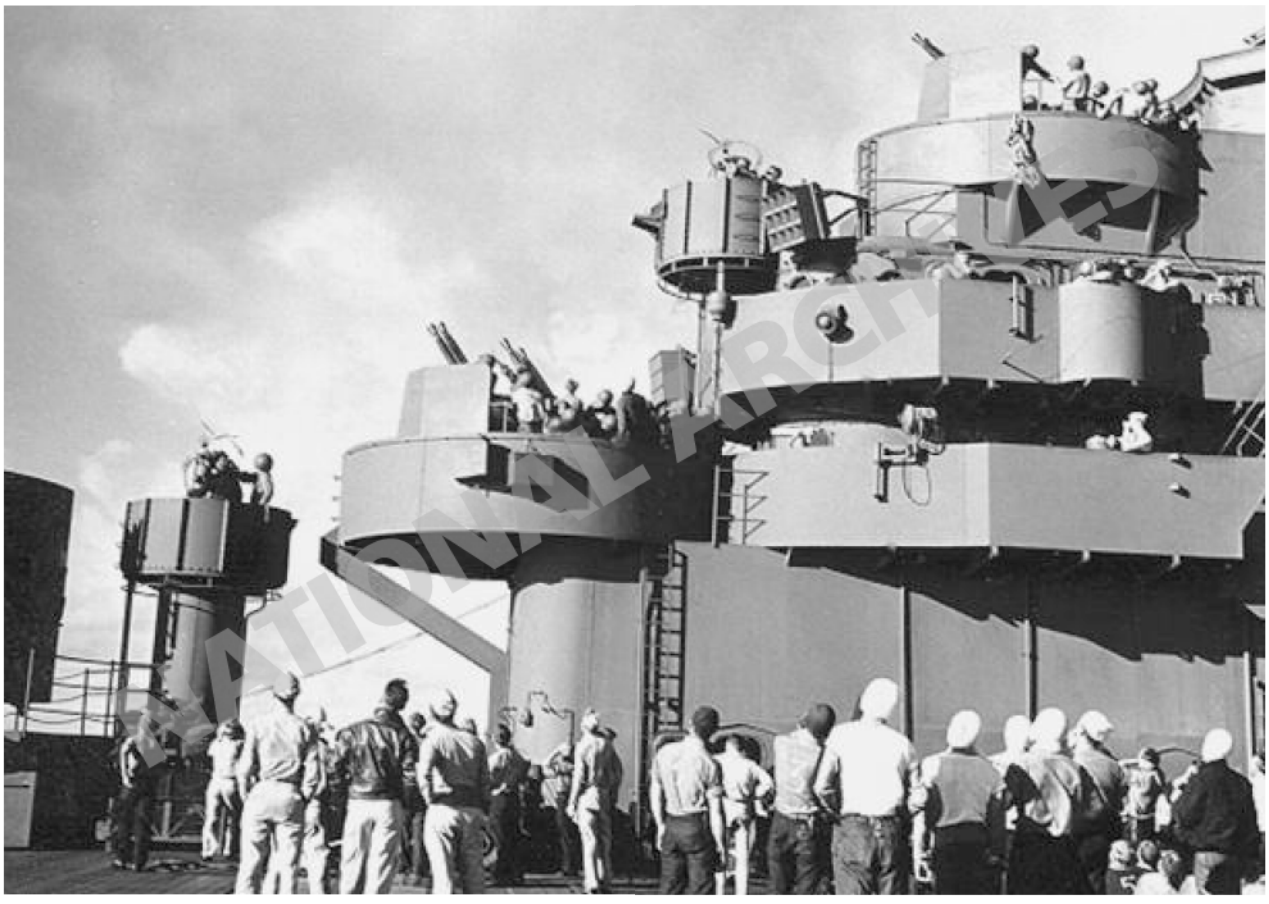

39
52

BOGEY, TWO O'CLOCK HIGH

Follow the direction of those 40-mm gun-barrels and a little further, and you'll see that bogey (enemy aircraft) circling overhead. Admittedly, the flight deck personnel in this picture are the picture of casualness. While the gunners are donning their steel helmets, being at GQ (General Quarters) stations, those air department people look for all the world as if they're watching an air show at the local airport. It gives the appearance of a strange juxtaposition. Of course if it were "merely" a single bogey up there circling out of range, this picture would make some sense. But if it were a bona fide enemy air raid of many aircraft, that would be a different matter altogether. Actually, it was often times a fact that if a few of the onlookers were blase about something, then the others who were anxious would take on that same stance so as not to appear afraid. (But why not feel afraid if some zealot up there was doing his utmost to drop a bomb right onto your head?) Fear has many ways of manifesting itself and most "he-men" don't want anyone to know that he is afraid. Appearances were more important than reality. Sometimes this could be good, and sometimes this could be bad (ill-considered). One has to question those who expose themselves to danger rather than seeking protection (on a carrier, this unfortunately was not an option. Where to hide as that demon zooms down hard and fast on your ship, AND you personally?). There are times when that rhyme "run away to fight another day" is appropriate, and there are times when that is exactly the wrong approach (dealing with a bully could be one such occasion). We have all seen a picture of a soldier who stands up to exposure and blasts away with his gun, whose ammunition would last about twelve seconds, while other more prudent soldiers conceal themselves to "fight another day". Leadership (setting an example) is all well and good, as long as it provides the right and sensible message. But I have rambled enough.

Let's return to that flight deck that has a problem overhead and that is hopefully being remedied by one of the 5-inch guns. This picture can be placed before 1945 because by then all the Essexes had their island superstructures modified in the following way: that 40-mm guntub in the middle of the picture was removed, as was that gun-director right above it to the right. The removal of this guntub allowed the admiral's bridge to be extended out further to the left, providing for an unimpeded view, and the removal of the gun-director allowed for the navigation bridge, directly over the admiral's bridge, to extend out a little further to the left, also unimpeded.

As was mentioned in the first volume, when I was in the Navigation Division, I would sometimes make myself at home in that admiral's compartment beneath the navigation bridge (we had no admiral on board the Antietam). It was full of communications equipment, it had a couple of leather couches, and it was "always" empty. In retrospect, I can only think that I had an abundance of unmitigated gall to even venture in there, much less "camp out" there for the purpose of writing a letter. Think of it, here was the lowest of the low, a puny seaman, having all to himself a relatively spacious compartment reserved for the admiral, on a ship crowded with 3,000 others, most of whom were of a higher rank and grade. This is not to mention that the compartment was presumably full of "sensitive", secure, communications equipment. It was here, I would like to think, that while I was deep in contemplation I arrived at the conclusion that it would be very wrong to betray one's integrity to gain a friendship, because the former is timeless while the latter could be as secure as the shifting sands. Also, although it came much later in life, I regret to say, it was apparent that patience is a virtue only if it is well-founded. One person's idea of patience is another person's agony. Learn to walk in another's moccasins.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LIBERTY INSPECTION

Whenever we reached a liberty port (and that was few and far between), the ship's crew that was due liberty was reviewed by the "brass". (The marines always were reviewed). One-half of the ship's company would have liberty at a time. The next day, the other half of the crew had its liberty. This is the marine contingent, of which each capital ship (battleship, cruiser, and carrier) had a group. These marines were traditionally on board to preserve law and order among the ship's company. However, in the modern navy these marines were there only as a backup to the ship's group of masters-at-arms, the actual policemen of the ship. These masters-at-arms were dressed just the same as all the other enlisted men, except that they had an insignia on their arm identifying them. I never once saw them "arrest" anyone or in any way have a discipline problem. As far as I was concerned, they were just "there". I must say though that I once had an encounter with one of them. The occasion was when we were at anchor in the Tsingtao, China harbor. As was there habit, some Chinese merchants came out to the ship in their little sampans (little boats). They wanted to sell their wares and trinkets, all of which seemed innocuous enough. But no, this commerce was not to be allowed by the masters-at-arms in charge of the integrity of the ship. In any event, these masters-at-arms proceeded to use the standard 5-inch fire hose to mercilessly spray those little boats with people of all ages in them. The force of the water coming out of a fire hose is a force to be reckoned with, especially when little old people are hit by it. So, the people were battered and the things were scattered. To no one in particular I caustically remarked that it was a rotten thing to do. A master-at-arms happened to be near by and overheard my comment (I was on the flight deck and the hoses were on the hanger deck). He walked over to me and with a steely look in his eyes said, "what's your problem?" I told him, and he then told me to follow him (to the master-at-arms' compartment). When there, I repeated my objections to the whole process, and I wondered why they couldn't have just sprayed near to the sampan to persuade the boat to leave (some of the people in the boat were so fragile that I thought surely they'd be knocked right out of the boat). Well, with a little more of this largely one-way dialogue on my part, he realized that I was not a trouble-maker and that I was not "a wise guy just shooting off my mouth" and that I was honestly angry ("teed off", as they used to say). So he was satisfied to let me go (I had seen this particular master-at-arms before and sized him up as being pretty much of a "hard-nose", so I was somewhat apprehensive that he might want to be tough ("play hardball"). It turned out that he was perfectly reasonable and he wanted to hear what I had to say. In other words, appearances were misleading, and it turned out well.) That was my only encounter with the law while I was in the navy (in fact, ever). A hellion I definitely was not (but neither was I in any way priggish about myself, or others, and I don't know why I felt like I had to say that, unless it be for the record.

This detachment of 36 marines was on board primarily to man the 20-mm guns. They were responsible for 18 of the 55 guns (20-mm). Each gun required two gunners, one to fire and one to load. The marines wore their typical green fatigues, but were otherwise indistinguishable from all the rest of the enlisted men on board. They did have their own separate compartment and gun-racks (under lock and key), but they used the same mess ("cafeteria") as everyone else, etc. So they were just "one of the guys" as far as everyone was concerned. But they were gunners, and this did distinguish them from the non-gunners. They also, of course, had their own officers. Why there was that bugler, I haven't the slightest idea. That was strictly a navy function as will be seen on the next page.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

GENERAL QUARTERS / FLIGHT QUARTERS

These two sailors are standing right adjacent to the Air Boss' position overlooking the flight deck, and directly aft of the navigation bridge. The microphone, at the end of the bugle, is connected to the loudspeakers that appear at various locations on the superstructure. (Behind bugler) These loudspeakers were used to address the personnel on the flight deck even during engine warm-ups. The microphone attaches to all of the loudspeakers throughout the ship so that the captain can speak to the ship's crew at one time. In this instance, either General Quarters (GQ) or Flight Quarters is being sounded. The GQ was sounded whenever the captain thought it was necessary based on the info he received from the ship's CIC (Combat Information Center) that might have picked up a bogey (enemy aircraft). Bogeys weren't the only reasons for GQ. Perhaps one of the picket ships (destroyers surrounding the carrier) detected an unknown submarine lurking somewhere close by on its sonar. GQ was of course a call to "all hands" to go to their assigned stations when a battle was imminent: gunners to their guns, pilots to their ready rooms, quartermaster to the helm in the pilot house, etc. Everyone on board had his assigned duty. On the Antietam, we had one real GQ and several exercise GQs. We had a few GQs when I was in the Navigation Division (January 1945 to April 1945), and on one of them, my station was in the After Steering Room. This was at the very bottom of the ship all the way back aft and was so small that I couldn't stand upright. This was the worst, or so I thought at the time. If the ship sustained damage to the helm at both the pilot house and the after bridge at the same time, then I and another striker were to move the rudder by means of mechanical advantage and muscle-power, under the direction of those topside on sound-powered phones. Being so far away from anything, it was hard to get there before others had closed the hatches (doors) and dog-eared (latched) them so as to maintain watertight integrity (if one part of the ship was flooded, the adjacent compartments would retain their watertight integrity). That duty-station was NOT my cup-of-tea. Soon, by April of 1945, I was transferred to the Airdales and so I was spared a return trip to that "dungeon". Sometimes we had GQ drills, and every day, twice a day, we had Flight Quarters operations (once in the morning and once in the afternoon). The GQ call consisted of four items: first the bugle call, then the boatswain mate's pipe, next the verbal order, and finally the gong. A clearer rendition follows: the bugle call was presented twice in rapid succession in a quick-time, staccato, urgent manner(covering the middle-C and up octave): GGGD BBBG (D+1)(D+1)(D+1)BGDG. Then the boatswain mate, with that pipe in his left hand, blew on the pipe making a sound similar to a shrill whistle, trailing off in a hissing manner: too-WHEE, too-WHEE, too-WHEEEEEE that went like this: C-(C+3) C-(C+3) C-(C+3)(B+3)(A+3)(G+2)(F+2)(E+2)(D+2).

Next, the boatswain mate intoned, in a strong, sonorous, low-key matter-of-fact tone of voice devoid of any inflections, "Now hear this, now hear this, all hands, man your battle stations". Finally, there was heard a loud, persistent, one per second mid-tone "BONG BONG BONG BONG ....." By then, certainly, everyone was running pell-mell to their assigned battle stations. On the other hand, early in the morning, or early in the afternoon, every day, we would hear the same call to duty for flight operations, except now the bugle call would be different, the boatswain mate would say "Now hear this, now hear this, all hands man your flight quarter stations", and there would be no BONG BONG..... At the same time, the signal bridge ran up the halyard the "Fox" flight quarters flag which consisted of a white square flag with a red diamond-shape emblem filling the center of the flag. This was to tell the escorting destroyers that flight quarters was beginning and to take their stations fore and aft of the carrier. It was time to "let the games begin".



NARA ARCHIVES

MASKED MEN

No, the ship hasn't been taken over by masked men. What we are looking at is a 40-mm guntub gun-crew dressed against the elements. The ship of course is at GQ stations and the gun-crew is awaiting whatever eventuality is in store. Foul weather gear was often not enough to protect the crew that was exposed to the wind that seemed always to be present. If it wasn't the ambient winds, especially in the northern climes, then it was the wind generated by the ship's forward motion which was never less than fifteen knots, or so it seemed. The wind-chill factor was ever present, just a fact of life that one came to accept implicitly. While this gun-crew had no choice but to stand there and "take it", we on the flight deck could (and did) move around doing our work, thus generating some warmth from our activity. But then, we were out there on the flight deck EVERY day, GQ or no. However, we also could take advantage of using the aircraft as a windbreaker now and then. So no, we never used face-masks on the flight deck. Perhaps we should have done so because we spent a fair amount of time during the winter of 1945-1946 off the coast of Korea in the China Sea. There the winds swept out from the Chinese mainland and over the frigid waters off Korea, making for cold conditions in spades. (Our mission, so it was said, was to patrol and police the situation in Korea, as it had been totally occupied by the Japanese forces. It was then that we sent aircraft off our decks laded with bombs and rockets. They didn't come back with the bombs and rockets, so presumably they expended them against practice targets. Even though they were not as expensive as torpedoes, they were real cost-items that needed accounting. But this thought is only a retrospective, and at the time we didn't make such calculations.) On looking at this picture, this stoic tableau, it's easy to place oneself there and empathize with their situation. It was not merely the fact that they could only stand there and endure, exposed to the elements and the bitter cold and wind, but it was also the long wait in anticipation of that possible enemy attack forming up just beyond the horizon (even though the radars knew; but they weren't telling). When and if that should happen, these frigid mortals would have to spring into action, firing their 40-mm guns after having been numbed by the cold for who knows how long. Not very reassuring. (As an aside, this particular guntub was was removed , circa 1944-1945, to make room for extending the admirals (flag) bridge (refer to the page two previous). But there were fourteen other such guntubs elsewhere on the ship with their own unique tableaux. And don't forget the some fifty 20-mm, 2-man gun-crews on station spread throughout the ship. All of these gun-crews were literally "those who serve who only stand and wait". Unquestionably, the very safety of the ship could well have been in their hands. In the background can be seen some Hellcats that appear to be parked as a result of an ongoing landing operation. This was not unusual during GQ. After all, the enemy wasn't going to time their attacks at the convenience of the ship. Actually, if they knew the situation, the enemy would attack when the ship was just about ready to launch aircraft. This was when it was most vulnerable: having a deck-load of aircraft all gassed up and loaded with bombs. Then, even a single bomb dropped on this deck would generate such death and destruction that the ship could easily reach a violent demise. Just such a fortuitous event (for our side) occurred at the Battle of Midway in that famous four minute time-span that "turned the course of the war in the Pacific around". The enemy lost four carriers in that battle, and some say it was retribution for Pearl Harbor. The Gods of War certainly looked down kindly on us on that day, even though we suffered a stunning loss of torpedo pilots. These are the misfortunes of war, while the enemy also absorbed losses that were staggering. But remember, it took over three long years after that battle to finally subdue our adversary. .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RESPITE AND REFUGE

Airdales can be an enterprising group when the situation calls for it. Here, they made their way up to the upper 40-mm guntub on the after part of the island superstructure so as to find respite and refuge from that seemingly irrepressible and everlasting wind that will never let them go. That's right, the wind, sometimes moderate, sometimes fierce, and usually somewhere in between, would somehow always seek them out. Even on benign, cloudless days with a following wind and with the aircraft settled and quiet, there would be that wind. Or was it so all-pervasive on a moving platform in the middle of the ocean that I automatically sensed it when it wasn't actually there? But no, the wind was always a presence in that it was always "there", whether for good or for evil. When it was there to help lift the aircraft from the deck, it was good. But when it was there to whip the ocean to a fury, it was bad. When it was bad, it was very bad. Again, when it was a following wind and the day was pleasant, it was good. But when it was an approaching wind (heading into the wind) and the aircraft were in full throat, it was not only bad, it could be deadly to those who were not supremely careful. The wind was a way of life for an Airdale, and he either learned to live with it and understand it, or he was bedeviled by it When an Airdale had to go into that phalanx of aircraft just before a launch, it was "the devil to pay" if he didn't learn it and learn to live with it. I don't think that I ever really learned how to come to terms with it, but I did learn how to overcome it and survive it. (Somewhat florid, this).

Since the flight deck had been respotted, and the bulk of the aircraft were airborne, some of the Airdales made their way to this location that provided respite and refuge from the wind, considering that the wind is off the port beam (coming from the left side of the ship). Notice that the 40-mm gun-barrels are pointing to the left, meaning that the gun's shield is broadside to the wind, while the 40-mm gun below them is pointing back aft. To my knowledge, this was never done on the Antietam, illustrating the fact that each ship, like a person, had its own personality, and especially so that group called "Airdales". This was probably a function of the leaders of that group. (But we are not in the business here of suggesting the subject-matter for a full-scale treatise or book.).

The following fourteen pictures feature the guns of the Essex-class carrier. These guns, unlike the big guns of the battleship and the cruiser, were used only for defensive purposes as protection against enemy aircraft. This suite of guns consisted of the 20-mm guns (about 56 of them), the 40-mm guns (17 quads, or 4 x 17 = 68 of them), and the 5-inch guns (12 of them). This firepower was about equal to that of the most modern battleship (the Iowa-class). Each type of gun is seen in this picture, if somewhat obscurely. Beyond the heads of the Airdales is another 40-mm guntub; just beyond that are four 5-inch gun-barrels, and to the left of the flight deck and outboard of the catwalk is the platform supporting six 20-mm guns. Everyone on board ship is a specialist of some kind (or "striking" to become a specialist), and the gunner's mates are no exception. In fact, each ship has its Gunnery Department, headed by a Commander (one step below a Captain). It starts with the strikers (unrated seamen), followed by the rated petty officers (third class to first class to various chief petty officers. Next are the relatively few warrant officers and then the commissioned officers (ensign, lieutenant (jg), lieutenant, lt. commander, commander, and captain. Periodically, the gunnery department would have gunnery practice when the flight operations were over, but while we were respotting the deck. This made for some interesting, if noisy, times.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BE PREPARED

Neat and clean, even while being posed. That's the first impression one gets when looking at this picture. There's little to distract us from the motif here that says it's prudent to be prepared and ready for that possible eventuality in the form of an enemy aircraft hell-bent on destroying you. At the same time, that carrier, far away, is also symbolic in that there's no one near by to perhaps provide aid and comfort in a forthcoming crisis of an enemy attack. That carrier out there also brings to mind, previously mentioned, that we were always in the company of either the U.S.S. Boxer (CV-21) or the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard (CV-31), both Essex-class carriers. They too were always far away, turning to starboard when we turned to starboard, and turning to port when we turned to port (or were we following them? No matter). In a way, it was as if we were looking at ourself, and observing our own isolation and vulnerability.

To the subject at hand, the 20-mm gun. These were machine-guns that fired at a rate of 450 rounds per minute, and at an maximum effective range of 1,000 yards. As they say, doing the math, since there are 1760 yards in a mile and since an aircraft traveling at 300 mph can go 5 miles, or 8800 yards, in one minute, it will take that aircraft only 6.8 seconds to cover that 1,000 yards (x sec./60 sec. =
1000 yd./8800 yd.). Since 450 rounds per minute is 51 rounds per 6.8 seconds (450/60 = x/6.8) and since every fifth round was an incendiary, only about 40 rounds will be effectively fired at that aircraft during its 1,000-yard run in at you. However, probably twenty other 20-mm guns are firing at the same target, in addition to the 40-mm guns on that side of the ship. Now if there are multiple aircraft making this run at you, you are in a bind. (The 5-inch guns were not all that effective at that range.) The 20-mm gun was an Oerlikon gun of Swiss design licensed to our government. It was placed on a simple pedestal mount with a 60-round magazine-drum (just enough, >51, to cover an incoming aircraft at 300 mph from a 1,000 yard range.). It was aimed manually by a gunner who was strapped in by a harness to allow him to conveniently lean back while training his gun on an elevated target. The early models used a ring-sight but later versions were equipped with a Mark 14 lead-computing gyroscopic sight (the gyroscope provided a static reference point). The 20-mm gun did not require electrical or hydraulic power to train it. It used an explosive projectile and so was more effective than the standard rounds. The Mark 14 gun-director allowed the gunner to manually set the target range and then aim directly at the incoming aircraft, with the necessary lead-angle being computed by the gun-director. This gun-director can be seen by looking at the 20-mm gun second to the left, just in front of the gunner's head. The sailor next to the gun places the 60-round magazine-drum into the gun's breech. The drum is expended every eight seconds (60/x = 450/60) if the gun is fired continuously. Being a relatively large gun, it was equipped with recoil-springs on the gun-barrel to reduce the vibrations of firing to a manageable level. None the less, the gunner, being strapped to the gun-mount, was thoroughly shaken as he fired the gun. It was comparable to being strapped to a jack-hammer. As a consequence, one could watch the tracer-rounds making a jerky path as they arced outward. The protective shield in front of the gunner was adequate against the an aircraft's 30-caliber and 50-caliber bullets, but were obviously of no use whatsoever if an aircraft crashed into the gun as did an errant kamikaze. If the CAP or the 5-inch guns didn't get the enemy aircraft, these 20-mm (and 40-mm) guns were the "court of last resort". The decision of that "court" often determined the life or death of many people, and for the smaller ships, the life or death of the ship itself. (Just imagine yourself standing there watching as an aircraft zooms in on you.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FAST AND LOW

In the smoke and heat and DIN of battle, these sailors, these unentrenched warriors, they "blaze away" at what they perceive to be a demon, a Kamikaze, moving toward them fast and low. Because it's so low (note the gun barrels), they think that this is a personal attack on them (it's definitely disconcerting to know that there is someone out there who wants YOU dead). Look at those gun-barrels, with their frenzied pump-action, the periodic flashes erupting from them as they "spit out" the incendiary rounds, and the repercussion that resounds in every direction in a deafening noise. Just one of those guns doing this was mentally numbing, but with a group of them doing it, THAT was numbing. (I can only say that I was very glad that I wasn't a gunner and that I was able to back away from them when they held forth during gunnery practice. I know that it's being "tough" to put up with noise, but noise has always been my bane.) What an image: that wide, empty ocean in front of them, the open, bare flight deck behind them, and there they are, that thin line of intrepid sailors in between, fighting to live while a demon fights to die, taking all with him. Usually a Kamikaze tries to crash into/onto a group of aircraft, hoping to start such a conflagration that not even the will and dedication of the crew could save the ship. Perhaps in this case, not seeing sufficient aircraft on deck, the Kamikaze chose instead to slam into the side of the ship and thereby cause volumes of water to flood the ship, sinking it. It becomes a question of who "gets" whom first, the ones who want to live, or the one who wants to die. Here we watch one of the first examples of a true guided missile, an aircraft loaded with fuel and a large bomb, and a pilot with the will, desire, the capability to crash it against a ship. It was a matter of life fighting against death.

On the other hand, perhaps we are witnessing "only" a torpedo bomber making its normal run against the ship. In point of fact, a torpedo with 800-lbs. of explosives would not be as destructive as an aircraft laden with aviation gasoline and up to 2,000-lbs. of high explosives. But on the other hand, a torpedo was meant to explode below the waterline, a potentially more devastating hit. But again, an Essex-class carrier had four inches of STS (Specially Treated Steel) wrapped around its hull below the waterline. We'll let the experts sort this out. In any case, it's instructive to realize that these young sailors were in large measure responsible for the safety of this sizeable ship that held a crew of 3,000 personnel, to the extent of their very lives. One could even say that they were the last line of defense, and that sometimes their efforts were just "too little too late". Here in this picture we observe just such an effort. The cynics might say that these sailors were just doing this only to preserve their own lives, but the greater number of us who are not cynics would like to think that, yes, they wanted to stay alive, but they were also genuinely fighting to preserve everything that those stars and stripes overhead stand for (the reader must be astute enough to derive his/her own well-considered list of things that make this country that which is admirable, that for which we can be proud. Certainly there are times, such as here, when country transcends our own wants and desires). Changing gears, we have a good view (nearest sailor) of the magazine-drum which is either being yanked out of or being slammed into the gun's breech. Notice the gunner of that gun looking into the MK 14 gun-director as he is pressed against the curved shoulder brackets (for some reason, his helmet is turned backwards). Rest assured that right now he is being vibrated violently as the gun is firing. He might as well be strapped up to a jack-hammer. Further up the line is an officer or chief (khaki) who designates the target (if there are multiple targets). A small group, this, with a large responsibility, larger by far than they will ever probably ever face.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

40-MM AMMO

The next item of interest is the 40-mm gun which will be considered in the next four pages. Here we see the elements of a carrier's fire-power: the 40-mm ammunition in the foreground, the two 5-inch dual-mounts behind that, the Hellcat on the starboard catapult, and the whole package in the background, another Essex-class carrier with a deck load of aircraft. Perhaps that forward elevator is down on the hanger deck to bring up another Hellcat for the left catapult. The 5-inch guns will be discussed subsequently, but this picture provides a good view of an aspect of the 5-inch gun that is not seen in any other picture. To wit, note the open hatch on top of the closer 5-inch gun-mount. Just to the left of the open hatch can be seen a gunner with his headphones on his head. And just to the left of his head can be discerned a small circular-sight which is used to manually aim the gun-mount (and guns) using motor-controls if the Mark 37 gun-director for the gun=mount is damaged. While the Hellcat was used primarily for offensive purposes, those guns were used exclusively for the defense and protection of the ship.

In the foreground is the 40-mm guntub located just in front of the flag (admiral's) bridge on the forward part of the island structure. In receptacles on the curved wall of the guntub are the 4 per clip projectiles of the 40-mm gun. These clips were inserted into the gun's breech as a four-projectile unit. This is a Bofors developed gun of Swedish design produced in this country under license and used extensively as an anti-aircraft weapon during WWII. The naval versions were water-cooled instead of air-cooled as were the single unit army version. And the naval units were powered by hydraulics in the train motion and by electrical motors in the elevation motion (if I'm not mistaken). All four guns were trained and elevated as a single unit, and they were manually loaded with ammunition. The empty shell-casings were ejected by spring and recoil action, allowing a rate of fire of 160 rounds per minute per gun-barrel and a range of 2,000 yards. This quad mount was aimed by the Mark 51 gun-director which was placed near to the guns. This director was a slight upgrade of the 20-mm Mark 14 director, but later in the war it was replaced by the Mark 57 director which had a Mark 29 radar and a Mark 28 radar dish which in turn was placed onto the gun itself. This picture here gives a "flavor" of the ship and its components topside. While my domain was down there with those Airdales next to the Hellcat and elevator, I was curious enough, on my free time after the afternoon's flight operations, to "investigate" those multitudes of other things topside such as this 40-mm guntub. The gunners weren't hospitable to having you loiter in their spaces, but if you were friendly and showed an interest, they would accommodate that curiosity of yours. For instance, I learned that the gunner's mates were responsible for the mechanical aspects of the gun, such as stripping it down, cleaning it, and reassembling it, while it was the electrician's mates who were responsible for the Mark 57 gun-directors and the radarmen were responsible for the Mark 29 radars and the Mark 28 radar dishes. I can't deny that I was envious of these sailors, about my age, who were heavily involved with all the fascinating aspects of those Mark equipments. It was a real revelation to this academically oriented, technical novice. It was not unlike how I felt when watching those young sailors who maintained aircraft engines. I was just "a babe in the woods", or so I thought, when I saw all that interesting equipment and machinery. But no, my job, my duty, was to "sweat and strain, to tote that bale", and often "go in harm's way" to serve my time. But that was alright, because that was my assigned duty. They had their's, and I had mine. And I believe I can honestly say, "serve I did, diligently".


NATIONAL ARCHI

PRACTICE

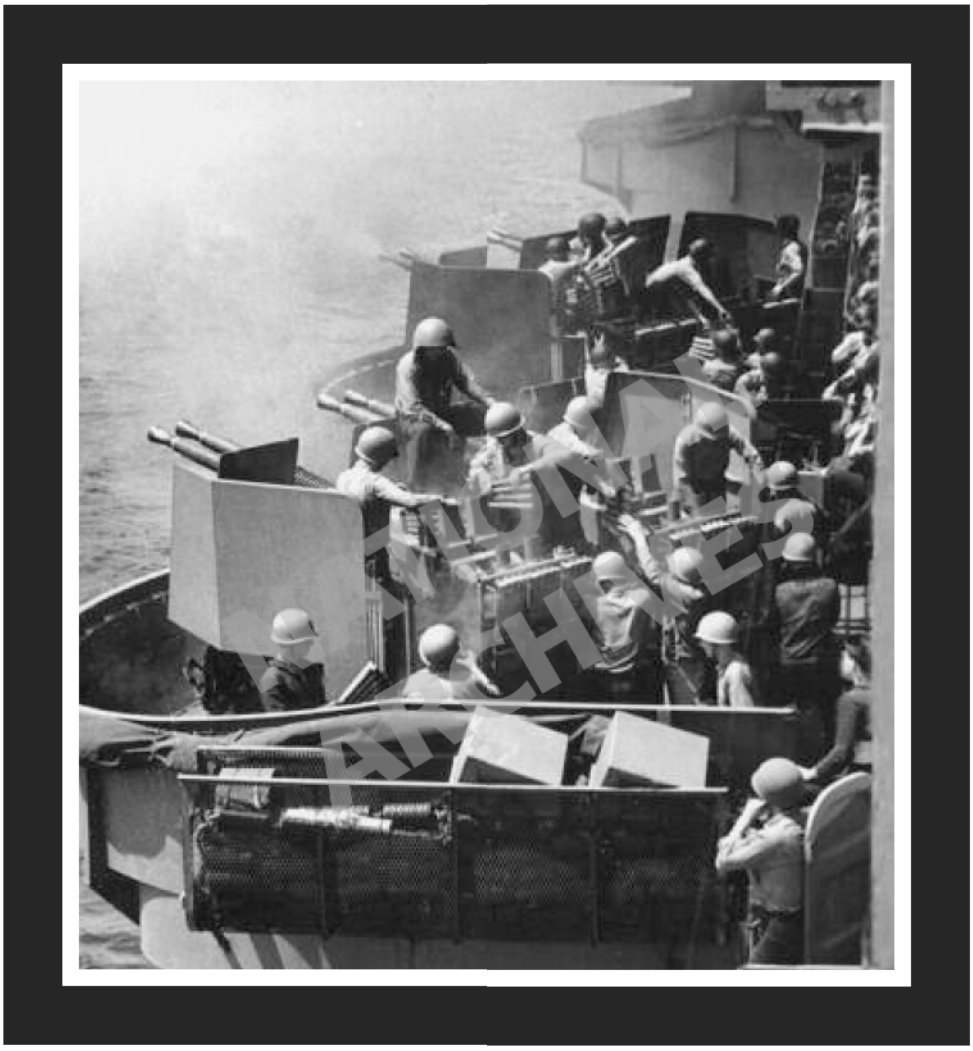
We're looking at a 40-mm gun exercise as is clear because the gunners are wearing their white caps instead of their steel helmets when at GQ. Ordinarily, at least on the Antietam, the 40-mm gunners would practice while the 5-inch guns remained silent, and visa versa. This was probably to allow the Gunnery Department officers to concentrate their evaluations on one gun-type at a time. The target that these gunners were using was the standard towed-sleeve, and it's apparent, as shown in this picture, that the gunner who was controlling this 40-mm quad had to be careful not to shoot at the adjacent 5-inch gun-barrels. To my knowledge, there was no automatic cutout switch that disabled the 40-mm quad's firing mechanism should this interference occur. It would seem that that would require computer technology of today's capability (such as a holographic neural network decision-maker). What we're looking at here is a 40-mm guntub at one level above those two dual-mount 5-inch guns at the right. The location of this picture is the after part of the island superstructure with the flight deck below at our backs. In the background are the Airdales and a TBM Avenger. (Notice the sailor, in front of the Avenger, with his hand(s) to his ear(s). I definitely relate to this, and you would too.

A description of this scene is in order. First, in the lower left of the picture is seen a gunner, the top of his cap toward us, leaning forward and looking through the MK 51 gun-director's sighting-mechanism. Both of his hands are at waist-level grasping two handles which enable him to move the MK 51 in both elevation and train. As said previously, the MK 51 was a gyroscopically-stabilized device, which along with several servomechanisms (electrically controlled mechanisms) allowed him to track the enemy aircraft directly without adding any manual lead-compensation. This greatly simplified things and made for more accurate tracking. Notice the counter-weights on either side of his shoulders used to ease the physical movement of the MK 51 in the elevation plane. Keep in mind that both the ship and the target were moving simultaneously in three coordinates, and without the tracer-rounds, hitting an enemy aircraft would have been much more difficult. As the MK 51 gun-director was being turned in the horizontal plane, the entire quad gun turned in the horizontal plane, and as the MK 51 was being elevated, all four guns were elevated in unison, thanks to the servomechanism. (The description of this operation of controlling this gun, including the geometries and mechanics, is fascinating and much of our present-day production capabilities are a direct result of this war-derived technology. It is also the reason I eventually went back to school to obtain an electrical engineering degree.) The gunner next to him, with the headphones, was in contact with the gunnery officers elsewhere who have overall control of the defense of the ship. Each of the four guns were fired in no particular sequence; it was rather a function of how fast the gunners were able to drop the 4-projectile clips into each gun's breech. Each gun had its own loader, and each loader in turn was fed a clip by another gunner. One of those gunners is that one, lower right corner (out of view), who is reaching up with a clip in his hands, ready to pass the clip to the loader whose back is to us and who at this moment has a clip that he is going drop into the gun's breech. The guns of course could fire faster than they could be loaded, but all the guns were being fed as fast as the gunners could feed them. The expended shell-casings were forcefully ejected back into that "pipe" immediately back of the breech, and thence to the deck. Thus the deck was covered with spent shells. Finally, that gunner with the headphones facing us was to report any mishaps. This was one of 14 other quads throughout the ship, and along with the 20-mms, the last line of defense.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"THIS IS NOT A DRILL"

If a ship had General Quarters exercises often (and we did have a fair number of them), and if it turned out that it was a bona fides GQ alarm (and we did actually have one such), then the boatswain's mate at the P.A. microphone would intone "Now hear this, now hear this, all hands man your battle stations. This is not a drill". These gunners here apparently have an enemy aircraft bearing in on them at low level, implying either a torpedo attack or a Kamikaze attack. The same players in the previous picture are here in this picture, except that this gun-sponson is "tacked onto" the starboard side of the ship just above the hanger deck level and right below the navigation bridge. There were five such along the starboard side, three of which (one dimly) are seen in this picture. These five 40-mm quads were not controlled by the MK 51 director (as were all the other nine quads). Instead, the guns were controlled by two gunners , one sitting on the right who tracked in the elevation direction and the other on the left who tracked in the train direction. They both sat next to, below, and forward of the two outside loaders (out of view, just in front of and below the gun's breech). They each had a metal open gun-sight, and by means of gearing, electric motors, and hand-cranks, the "trainer" would cause the entire quad to train, and the "elevator" would cause the guns to elevate. This of course could be done simultaneously, but the coordination between the two had to be superb in order to track the target going at 300-mph in 3-dimensional space from a moving platform that was both pitching and rolling at the same time. Usually though, relatively speaking, the ship was not pitching and rolling that much, and the target was usually boring straight in and the tracers provided instant feedback. Nevertheless, these two gunners had to be "on the same page" because any motion in the transverse direction would affect the elevation direction, and visa versa. Having "resolved" that, it's hard to convey in a few words what an extreme amount of noise was being generated here, especially when that sound was being reverberated off the side of the ship. Perhaps these gunners were somehow inured to, accustomed to, that noise that shatters the air around them. (Notice that gunner, lower right, with a finger in his ear.) In addition, how were the gunners able to fetch the ammo-clips from the side of the guntub (sponson) under the gun-barrels while the guns are firing? I suppose they just set their jaw and got them (the ammo-clips). Even though not much physical work was done here, it would seem that nevertheless, these gunners would be (mentally) exhausted after that occasion of terrible noise and direct confrontation with a fanatical enemy zooming in on them at high speed.(At least this was a "straight up" enemy rather than one of stealth such as a concealed submarine.) But then, they were probably hardened to it, just as the Airdales were hardened to pulling and putting wheelchocks. Changing gears, notice that open hatch (door) at the lower right. The way I kept track of time was that every Sunday evening we would have the makings of sandwiches for supper, because except for that, every day was just like every other day. I would take my sandwich up to this sponson shown here to have my Sunday supper. The reason I did this was that that hatch opened on the Airdales' (my) compartment. These were pleasant evenings, sitting there on "my" private conveyance. No one seemed to ever take advantage of this spot, and so I did, gladly. That was pleasant after the fatigue and tumult of the day. It could be that this picture was, after all, only a practice session because of that sailor standing beside the hatch, watching the goings on. Why would he be there instead of his GQ station? I can further speculate that that person is actually yours truly, being nosy watching the drill. It could well be that the flight operations were over for the morning (or afternoon) and I was fulfilling my curiosity (which had many opportunities throughout the ship during my (limited) free time during a long day).



IN DEFENSE OF "OLD GLORY"

Even though this is only a practice session, it's a practice session in the defense and honor of "Old Glory" in its time of need. Seen below are the MK 15 optical-sight gun-directors, not radar augmented, but both of which made use of gyroscopic stabilization to compensate the ship's pitch and roll motions. These rate-of-turn gyros were driven by dried, compressed air which was at constant pressure and temperature so as to maintain a constant speed of rotation of 8,300-rpm. The MK 15 also contained a Wind Transmitter to solve the geometry of the wind ballistic corrections using inputs of ship's own heading and speed and true wind direction and speed to resolve these into transverse wind-rate and horizontal range wind-rate. These rates were sent as electrical inputs to torque motors secured to the output shafts of the train and elevation gyros. The MK 15 had to be warmed up for 30 minutes to bring the damping fluid to its proper operating temperature and viscosity, while the gyros required 6 minutes to bring them up to operating speed. Thus, when in a war zone, the MK 15 had to be constantly "at the ready". Each gyro rotor was mounted in the gyro case by a frictionless suspension. In operation of the MK 15, the appropriate estimated values of range and range-rate were manually and continuously set into the gun-director. The correct range was determined by observing the projectile's tracers. For the usual case of an incoming target, the range would be set initially so that the tracers passed just behind the target, indicating a lead angle that was too small. As the target flew closer, the actual and the set ranges would converge, and the tracers would hit the target. As the actual range becomes less that the set range, the lead would be too large. All this while, the gunner doing the sighting kept the target as close to the central dot in the window as possible, letting the MK 15 do the lead calculations, adjusted for wind and ship's motion. Thus, the manual range-setting was crucial to be done and critical in the doing, and so it was practice, practice, practice, because a quick response was essential.

In 1946, personnel were being discharged at an accelerated rate, and thus there was a deficit in the Gunnery Dept. This department still wanted to maintain trained MK 15 personnel, but didn't have enough of them to pass the ammunition. So some of us from the Air Dept. (Airdales) were delegated to do this (after flight operations were completed and all aircraft were airborne). I was assigned to that 40-mm guntub next to the 5-inch gun-mount. My job was to take ammo-clips from the racks on the side of the guntub and hand them to the one who handed it to the loader. We had gunnery practice with no problems and I was able to "survive" the chaotic noise of the 40-mm guns with no detectable deleterious effects. Then, with the practice being over, everyone seemed to "just disappear". I had thought that part of the job was to clean up the spent shell-casings on the deck underneath the gun-barrels. Since I had nothing better to do, I started to push the casings down the chute in the front part of the guntub. Not a big deal that it was I alone doing this (so I thought). No sooner thought than "BOOOOOM!!" It took about one-half second to realize that I should "hit the deck". I did this by reflexively lifting my knees up to my chest while simultaneously putting my hands down to break my fall. Before I hit the deck I had straightened out my legs so that in that instant plus three-quarters of a second, I was flat on my face on the deck. Once down there it came to me that the 5-inch gun right next to me had fired a round. It was still gunnery practice! And no one told me! Oh well, let's face it, no one gives an Airdale any respect anyway. What did I expect? So I peeked over the side of the guntub (for some reason), got up and "in a flash" climbed up to the next guntub and up onto the after navigation bridge, repeating various expletives on the way.



USNA ARCHIVES

LEISURE TIME

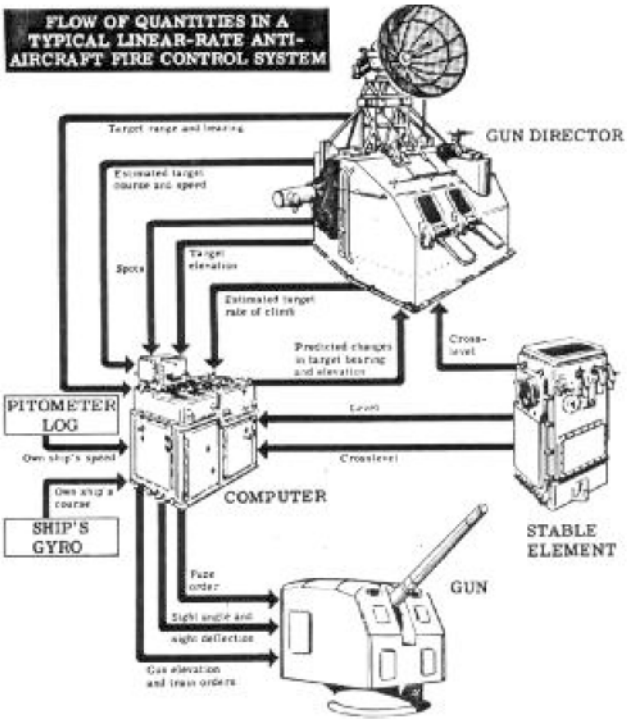
The morning flight has been launched, the remaining aircraft have been respotted, and now these Airdales can lounge for a short while. Now that they are taking a well deserved rest, we will consider, in the next eight pictures, that first line of defense of the ship after the CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) has done what it could before the enemy attack aircraft could reach within about 10,000 yards of the ship (12,000 yards against low flying aircraft). The 5-inch anti-aircraft (AA) gun is being featured here because it is complex, it is very interesting, and it is so important to the well-being of this magnificent ship. Thus essentially all of the following eight pages will be devoted to an exposition of this gun and how it functions, from the geometry of the tracking problem to how that problem is resolved by means of the integration of various equipments. This system was created by a group of extremely ingenious theoreticians and engineers of the mechanical and electrical persuasions. The discussion needs be technical in content, but I hope to present it in such a way that all those who are interested (and that's all of you, right?), regardless of your background, will find it interesting and understandable. We'll start the discussion slowly by saying a few words about that device that made this gun an order of magnitude better than a gun whose projectile had to actually impact the enemy aircraft. This device was the proximity fuse that caused the 5-inch projectile to explode only when it was in the prescribed proximity of that enemy aircraft. This fuse consisted of a miniature radio transceiver with its own power supply (battery). A radio transceiver was an electronic circuit that both transmitted and received radio waves. After the projectile was fired, the fuse un the projectile started to transmit high-frequency radio waves. When the projectile approached within a specified range of the target, the reflected radio waves were strong enough to be picked up by the receiver in the projectile's radio transceiver. This reflected signal activated circuits in the projectile which in turn switched on the detonation sequence (which was "instantaneous"). This was what generated all those black puffs in the sky during a battle with the enemy aircraft.

The normal rate of fire of this gun was 15 rounds per minute, but it could be increased during the duress of action against fast flying aircraft. The gun was manually loaded, one 55-lb. projectile along with one separate propellant-shell. (The Essex-class carriers had 12 of these guns while the Iowa-class battleship had 20 of them. Thus, the battleships were very useful when AA was required.) The Essex's had four dual-mount guns, two forward of the island and two aft of the island. Up above them, high in the island, were one dual purpose Mark 37 gun-director forward and one dual purpose Mark 37 gun-director aft. Each director served two dual gun-mounts. The MK 37 director, around 1944, was fitted with a MK 12 distance-finding radar. Its parabolic trough antenna was mounted atop the director along with the MK 22 height-finding radar parabolic antenna. This forthcoming dissertation will concern the technology of the 1940's, and not even the basic techniques of the 1960's such as analog and digital computers, servomechanisms and feedback loops, advanced radar & display techniques, digital communications and data manipulation, mathematical methods such as transfer functions and conversions, analysis in the frequency and time domains, transistors and miniaturization, and so on. No, we will delve into the areas of mechanical and electromechanical devices, synchros, gyros, mechanical linkages, and a little bit of nascent radar. The problem to be solved by this impressive system was to down a marauding enemy aircraft flying at 300-mph in 3-dimensional space from a ship that was simultaneously pitching and rolling while moving in evasive directions. Just how does one solve such a complex problem?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"AT THE READY"

The 5-inch guns and the 40-mm gun are "at the ready". Notice the Mark 37 Director/Radar Antenna above and to the right of the 40-mm guns. Above and to the right of 5-inch guns are the Flag (Admiral's) Bridge and to its right is the Signal Bridge. Now to the 5-inch gun system as shown below. This dissertation will be based on my close study of the system and the NAVPERS 10798 and 91900 technical manuals. The presentation will be very brief and devoid of most of the details by the necessity of limited space.



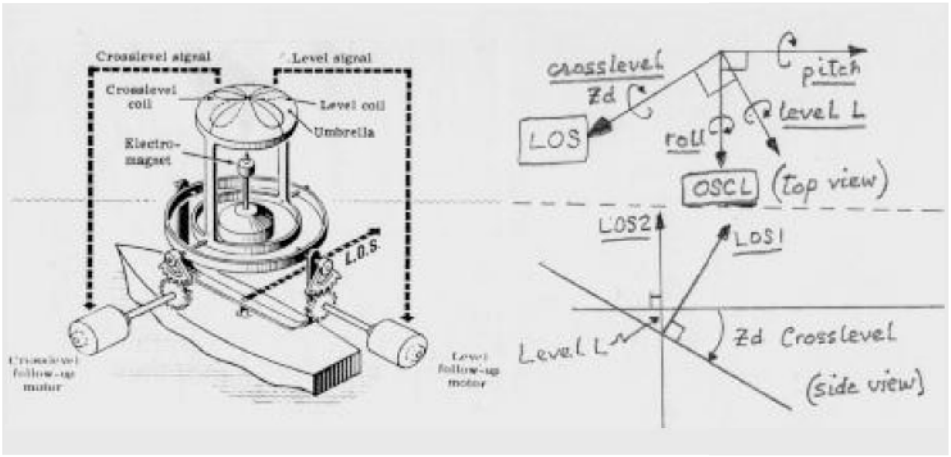
The first order of business will be the director/radar system (very briefly) because it is the source of the original parameters to solve this geometric problem. The steps involved are: determine continuously the present target position in relation to own ship; predict future target position in relation to own ship (line-of-sight (LOS) displaced from line-of-fire (LOF) by time-of-flight (Tf) and corrections); stabilize the various units; calculate required corrections to gun train and elevation; and transmit data to the gun. So, the system must determine target range, bearing, course and speed, and make corrections for own ship course and speed, wind, drift, pitch and roll, etc.

But first, the radar (and its LOS) , on top of the director, must be stabilized to counteract the effects of the ship's pitch and roll (so as to obtained stabilized measurements). To do this, the pitch and roll are resolved into level and crosslevel so that the LOS remains in the vertical plane. This will be seen in the following diagrams on the next page. (Pages will be continuous in this way.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COLD AND BLUSTERY

The writer, lower left, is standing on the After Bridge (Bat 2), a covered sighting telescope behind him and a signal lamp back of that. Above the signal lamp is the P.A. loudspeaker and to its left is a lookout with sound-powered headphones. And yes, it's cold and blustery (and miserable) out there, especially for those Airdales who are unprotected on the flight deck going about their business.



The Mark 6 Stable Platform measures the level angle L and the crosslevel angle Zd used to main- tain the radar antenna perpendicular to the horizontal plane (surface of the ocean), thus keeping its LOS in the vertical plane (a requirement for the geometries to follow). This is done by using the characteristic of a gyroscope, the rotor of an induction motor that spins at 140 rev/sec, to establish a true vertical and its associated true horizontal plane. A gyroscope has the properties of "gyroscopic inertia" and "precession". Because of inertia, a spinning gyro tends to keep its axis pointed in a fixed direction at right angles to any force applied to it. The gyro's spin axis is maintained in the vertical position automatically by two mercury tanks connected by a tube. As the gyro wheel tilts out of the horizontal plane, one tank files as the other loses mercury. The added weight of the filled tank will cause precession to return the gyro wheel to the horizontal by means of a "gimbal rotation motor". The stable element receives own ship's course Co and target bearing B'r from the computer to orient the gimbals to LOS. It transmits crosslevel Zd to physically stabilize the radar antenna to true vertical LOS2. Above, the electromagnet is the primary and the "umbrella" is the secondary of a transformer. When the ship's deck is perfectly horizontal the electromagnet points directly at the intersection of the level and crosslevel coils, and the voltages induced in the coils by transformer action are equal and opposed so no current flows. If the ship is tilted, however, the gimbals move and the magnet then points at some other location on the umbrella thus creating unequal voltages. These level and crosslevel voltages are transmitted to the follow-up motors to reposition the gimbals to their undisturbed state. The crosslevel voltage represents the value sent to the radar antenna motor that in turn maintains the LOS2 (above) in the true vertical plane (the LOS is generated by the radar).



GUNNERY PRACTICE

The spent shells on the deck have been ejected from the openings of the gun-mount. Also, just below the 40-mm guntub, on a pedestal, is its director (probably MK 51 with a MK 14 optical sight. The gunner simply tracks the target, letting the director generate the lead.

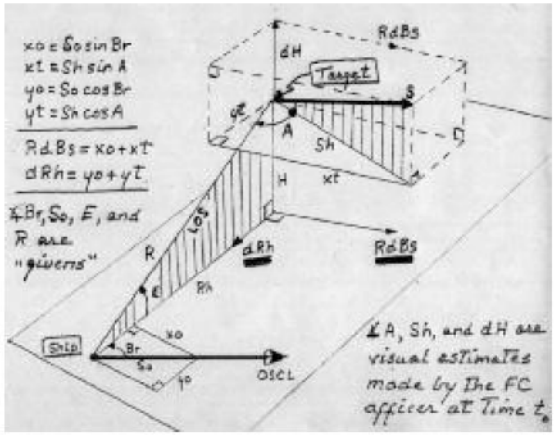
Now that the Stable Element has physically righted the radar antenna in the true vertical plane, the director/radar generates the target's slant range, elevation (Eb, elevation of the antenna LOS above the deck measured in the vertical plane through the LOS), and bearing (B'r, the angle between the vertical plane through the fore/aft axis of own ship (OSCL) and the vertical plane through the LOS measured in the deck plane clockwise from the bow of own ship) of the target from the ship. This is a tracking radar whose function is to follow a moving target wherever it goes.(as opposed to a search radar that keeps track of all ships and/or aircraft in the area).

A Radar MK25 detects targets by sending out pulses of UHF radio waves from a high-powered transmitter. These pulses are concentrated into a narrow beam by means of a conical or parabolic antenna (such as a directional searchlight). When the transmitted energy (beam) strikes a metal object (aircraft), a portion of it is reflected back towards the transmitter (such as a sound-echo). This returned energy is detected by a radio receiver and then translated into a form of useable data on a radar console (similar to a computer console). Since radio waves travel at 186,000 miles/second, the elapsed time of the transmission and return of the reflected wave can be converted into the range that the target is from the ship. That the transmitted radar beam is narrow and directional, so too can the direction of the target be determined (by recording the direction of the director/radar antenna at the time of detection of the target). The radar system consists of the following: modulator (a timer that synchronizes the transmitted pulses with the indicating units); transmitter (generates short, powerful radio pulses); antenna system (radiates the pulses in a narrow, directional beam and receives any returned energy from the target); receiver (amplifies the weak returned signals from the target and reproduces them as video on the displays (indicators)); indicator (cathode-ray tube (similar to a computer screen) to provide a visual indication of returned pulses that provide the required data for continuously tracking the target); power supply (supplies all the regulated dc and ac voltages required by the system). The range measurement is determined by applying the transmitted pulse to the indicator (CRT) along with the received pulse. There is a time scale on the horizontal axis of the CRT that indicates the time for the pulse to go out and back. This in turn is applied to conversion circuitry to produce the range. For elevation and bearing, returned pulses are greater or lesser in magnitude in direct proportion to the target's offset from the center of the narrow beam. The transmitting feed-horn at the center of the antenna is physically rotated about the LOS at a 5 degree angle, and at 10 cps (cycles/sec.). The radar's modulator generates two 10 cps voltages separated by 90 electrical degrees (sine and cosine). The returned beam is modulated at 10 cps (a high value when directly on the target and and a low value when off the target). This return-beam is demodulated (the "sine wave" component is removed from the UHF component). Now this demodulated wave is compared with the generated sine and cosine waves. The greater their phase difference with the returned demodulated wave, the further the beam is from the target (sine=vertical, cosine=horizontal). These two differences are error signals which are used to drive a motor to bring the beam (and the radar/director) back into coincidence with the LOS. As the director moves, it moves the rotor of a synchro whose stator windings' voltage represent the director/radar's elevation and bearing.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"BOOOOOM!!"

When I was participating in gunnery practice, previously described, I was standing in front of the 40-mm gun-barrels to my left (pointing outward) with the 5-inch gun-barrels to my right, also pointing outward, almost within arm's reach. Then, with nary a word of warning, the 5-incher lets go with a pulverizing "BOOOOOM!!", as here. I still think that I made a world's record vacating the site.

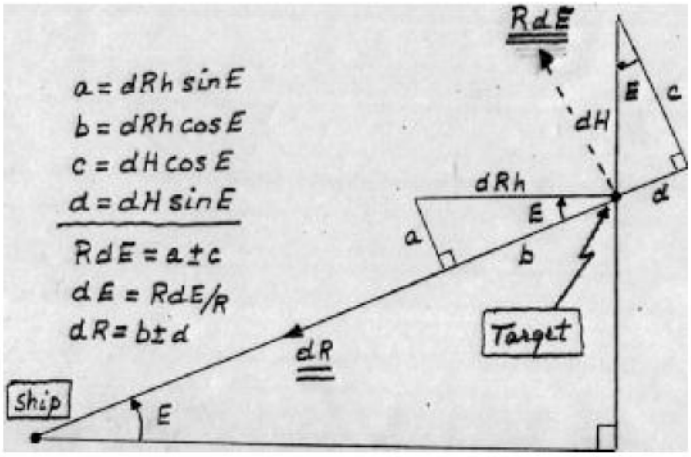


The fire control problem that must be solved includes continuously determining the present target position; performing ballistic corrections, whereby the axis of the gun bore is offset from the LOS; performing corrections for the gun platform motions of pitch and roll; making up gun orders; and providing corrections to inaccurate solutions of the analytic problem and for equipment inaccuracies. The target position is of interest at three specific times: (1) present target position, (2) target position at any given instant (generated target position), and (3) target position at the end of a specific time, that time being Tf (advance target position at point of impact with the projectile). The analytical solution starts with the determination of the target position with respect to own ship: (1) Present Range (R) along LOS from ship to target; (2) Relative Target Bearing (Br) from ship to target in horizontal plane; (3) Target Elevation (E) of target above ship along LOS. These values are continuously provided by the director/radar. The ship's speed So is continuously provided by the ship's pitometer. The values of the bearing angle A, the target's horizontal speed Sh, and the target's vertical rate of climb are all estimated by the FC Officer visual observation of the target. As is seen on the diagram to the left, the values for dRh and RdBs are obtained by simple geometry. These values will be used on the next page. But first, mention must be made as to how these, and other computations, are accomplished. There were no digital computers back then with all their speed and capacity. No, there weren't even any electronic analog computers that preceded the digital technology. What was available was an ingenious device that made mathematical computations using mechanical instruments (a rangekeeper, the Mark 1A computer). These instruments were; (1) shafts whose rotation represented a number; (2) gears whose teeth generated ratios; (3) differentials that performed addition and subtraction; (4) cams that represented nonlinear functions; (5) component solvers that resolved vectors into right angle values; (6) integrators which multiplied a constantly changing value, such as time, by a variable such as range rate, the output being a continuous value of their product which can be accumulated as a shaft rotation; (7) multipliers which can take two continuously changing input values and deliver an output that is proportional at every instant to the product of the two changing inputs. This rangekeeper has tracking, prediction, and correction sections. There are many hand-cranks to manually, continuously input values. What a mechanism!


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

GUNNERY PRACTICE

These are two open gun-mounts, back aft, port side, being pointed by an optical-sighted gyro-stabilized director. Notice the LSO's (Landing Signal Officer) wind-screen, and safety net into which he dived should a landing aircraft come that close upon landing.

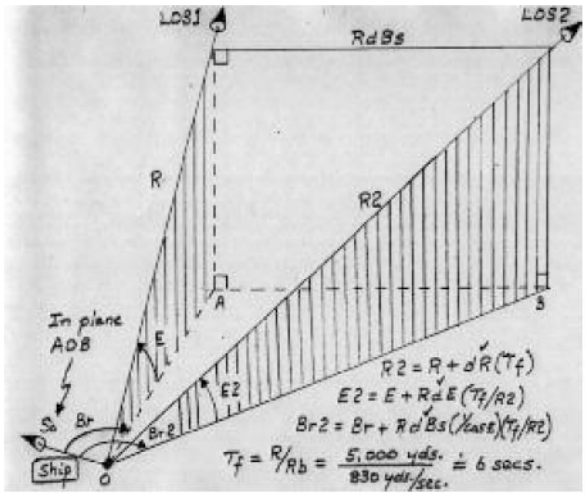


The director/radar can measure only changes in range along the LOS, changes in target elevation perpendicular to the LOS in the vertical plane containing the LOS, and changes in target bearing at right angles to the LOS in the horizontal plane (the letter "d" before a quantity means "time rate of change", such as mph). This diagram shows how the linear rates of change in range dR and elevation dE are obtained (they are both in the vertical LOS plane). The components dR, RdBs, and RdE form the basis for the generated rates and predictions of future target position. Three steps are required if accurate values of gun train and gun elevation are to be continually and accurately computed: (1) checking and correlating the FC Officer's estimates of target movement (angle A, Sh, dH of previous page); (2) maintaining a reliable figure at all times for the present value of target range, bearing, and elevation of the future position of the target. Having dR and dE, it remains to obtain dBr so as to compute the generated (computed) target position (cR, cBr, cE). The value dBs is measured in the LOS slant plane ("s"), but it is necessary to find the value in the horizontal plane (dBr). Thus, RdBs is divided by RcosE to obtain dBr. Now the generated target position is derived from cR = jR + #T(dR), cE = jE + #T(dE), and cBr = jBr + #T(dBr), where "#" means a change in that quantity during some specific time (i.e., it's an increment of something) and the letter "j" means a correction to a quantity (the difference between generated and observed change in range, bearing, and elevation). Now predicted target position refers to the diagram on the next page. Based on the assumption that the present rates of relative motion dR, dE, and dBr will remain constant for very short periods of time, they can be used to predict the target's position at the end of the time of flight (Tf) of the projectile. The results may be considered as determining an appropriate "line of fire" (LOF). Because of the high speed of the target, the LOS and the LOF may be far apart. (The time of flight Tf may be computed thus: Tf = Range/Rate = 27,000 ft./2600 ft./sec. =3.46 secs.) The future target position is indicated on the diagram on the next page and is defined as R2 = R + dR(Tf), E2 = E + RdE(Tf/R2), and bearing as Br2 = Br + RdBs(1/cosE)(Tf/R2). The next order of business is to determine the gun orders E'g and B'gr as modified by the ballistics of the projectile: gravity, drift, wind, loss of initial velocity (I.V.), and certain geometric errors introduced by the fact that the motion of the gun is limited to train in the deck plane while elevation is perpendicular to the deck. That is, the guns are affected by the ship's pitch and roll as well as is the director/radar. Since the target is relatively close, these errors are less significant than with ship targets.



FORWARD GUN-MOUNTS

These are the open gun-mounts, up forward on the port side. Notice how high the gunner must lift the projectile (55-lbs.) and the shell casing when the gun has such a low elevation. This is real work, especially when time is of the essence when an aircraft is boring in at you. Also notice the scuppers at the outside edge of the flight deck used to drain water away from whatever is below the deck.



The sum total of ballistic offsets from the LOS is called the sight angle (Vs) and sight deflection (Ds). Vs is the difference between elevation of the gun axis (LOF) above the horizontal plane (not the deck plane) and the elevation of the line-of-sight (LOS) above the horizontal plane (not the deck plane), measured in the vertical plane through the LOF. And Ds is the angle between the vertical plane through the LOS and the vertical plane through the LOF, measured in a plane perpendicular to the vertical plane through the LOS. (See the figure on the right, next page. Since this figure does not show the deck plane, E'g = Eb + Vs instead of the final value of E'g = Eb + Vs + Vz, where Eb = E + L and Vz accounts for the gun tilt due to the crosslevel Zd (pitch and roll). Similarly, B'gr = B'r + jDd + Dz, where Dz accounts for the same crosslevel Zd. Vs, Ds, Vz, Dz, and jDd will be explained later.) In the figure, this page, the predicted change of range dR(Tf) equals Rt. The predicted angular change of elevation RdE(TfR2) equals Vt, and the predicted angular change of relative bearing of target from ship RdBs(1/cosE)(TfR2) equals Dt. Thus, Vs = Vt + Vw + Vj + Vfm + Vf - Vu - Vx where Vt is the elevation prediction, Vw is the wind elevation correction, Vj is the visual elevation spot of the projectile explosion, Vfm is the initial velocity elevation correction, Vu is the air density correction, Vf is the superelevation correction (the higher the target, the more correction required), and Vx is the complementary error(due to the target's linear motion while the gun-trunnion trains in an angular mode), Also, Ds = Dt + Dw + Dj - Dfs where Dt is the deflection prediction, Dw is the wind deflection correction, Dj is the visual deflection spot of the projectile explosion, and Dfs is the drift correction. Finally, the range Rs, which enters into the determination of the above enumerated ballistics factors, is Rs = cR + Rt + Rw + Rj + Rm + Rx + Re where cR is the generated present range, Rt is the predicted range, Rw is the range wind prediction, Rj is the visual range spot, Rm is the initial velocity range correction, Rx is the change in advance range due to the deflection (train) motion, and Re is the change in advance range due to elevation Vs. Unlike the figure on the next page, right, the deck is "never" horizontal. Also, the gun orders are based on the director's LOS, and the lead angles Vs and Ds must be continuously corrected for the ship's pitch and roll motions. Since the gun's motion is limited to train in the deck plane and to elevation in the plane perpendicular to the deck, gun orders must be

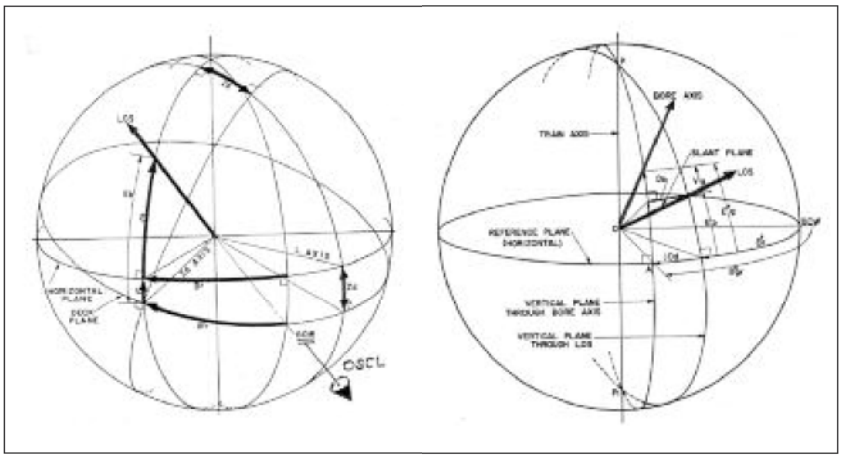
(continued on next page)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

POSED BUT REAL

Should the automatic director become inoperative, the gun must be directed manually by hand-cranks as shown here, one for train and one for elevation. A grim picture indeed, but then, this is indeed a grim business, especially if it is a kamikaze bearing in at you.

(continued from previous page)



computed in those planes. These corrections are not included in Vs and Ds due to how fast they change., but are included in the gun orders. Accordingly, gun elevation order E'g contains (1) the elevation of the dir-tor LOS above the deck plane Eb = E + L, (2) the vertical offset Vs to account for prediction and ballistics, and (3) the trunnion tilt correction in elevation Vz, or E'g = Eb + Vs - Vz. The gun train order is made up of (1) director train B'r, (2) the lateral offset Ds to account for the prediction and ballistics, and (3) trunnion tilt correction Dz. Actually, Ds is in the slant plane and must be projected into the deck plane as jDd ("s" is slant, "d" is deck, and "j" is correction. Remember, the above, right, figure is in the horizontal plane.) Thus, the gun order for train is B'gr = B'r + jDd + Dz. The above description of the solution of the fire control problem, as has been said, makes use of the proximity fuse which accounts for those bomb-bursts that are seen in the final chapter of this book. So there it is, that veritable marvel of engineering prowess, the 5-inch gun system whose sole purpose was to protect the ship and those on it. The preceding pages did not even scratch the surface of describing the intricacies or the technical wonders of this system. What was said is fully accurate, I believe. But in truth, it only provided the "flavor" of the system. The engineering acumen exhibited in this system was a very direct progenitor of the sterling capabilities of our present day productive infrastructure, to which we all are in debt. It's really too bad that so many take so much for granted. To paraphrase of one of the wartime leaders, never have so many owed so much to so few (engineers). My entire career has been in this field (Navy Dept.) and I only wish I could have had more impact in it. I'm subdued.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RESPOTTING TIME

Up to this point in the book, many things have been featured other than the Airdales. But since the title of the book includes "A Day In The Life Of An Airdale", everything that now follows will be a specific presentation of a day in the life of an Airdale, on the flight deck, where the action was and where his "business" was conducted. (Actually, the "action" will not appear until the next and following chapters). An Airdale spent the better part of the day, each day, being in some way involved with the aircraft and their disposition. As will be clear from the pictures, the aircraft were not of a sleek and slim design, but they were instead of a bulky and burly construct, large in dimensions and weighty in avoirdupois. Still, these aircraft were the Airdales' "stock-in-trade", their one and only item of concern. Their sole job was the energetic and efficient movement of these sizeable machines from one end of the flight deck to the other end. It took little in the way of know-how, but much in the way of brawn (well, at least a fair amount of brawn, to withstand the rigors of the wind and the strain to push the aircraft). During launch and landing operations, four times each day, nerve and sinew were combined to see the job through. Since the enterprise of an aircraft carrier included the landing of aircraft on a moving, pitching and rolling deck, mishaps were always in the cards. When these mishaps did occur, the Airdales had to be johnny-on-the-spot to clean up the aftermath quickly, if not first to squelch the ensuing fire (which sometimes was a veritable conflagration). The Airdales life was essentially a repetition of a very basic regimen which easily flowed into a tedium. And yet, this course was not without its many, many moments of unique details that required an alertness that determined one's well-being. These moments encompassed any time an aircraft was "fired up", and when they were "fired up", these moments, though broadly similar, were uniquely different in detail. This was good, because should an Airdale become lulled into complacency due to the repetitious nature of his chores, then rest assured that that would be the time that the "deities of the flight deck" would strike him down. The simplemindedness of the job had to be forfended lest one make the wrong turn at the right time when an aircraft was wheeling about during a launch or a parking activity. (There was absolutely NO chance of being inattentive when you went into that raging pack of aircraft, during launch operations, to pull a wheelchock. Then, every nerve of your body was at peak attention, and every circuit inside your cranium was gripped in tension. No truer words have been said.)

From afar are seen some of the SB2C Helldivers that have been respotted back aft just after having been parked up forward. after having just landed on board. There usually weren't that many Airdales pushing one aircraft, and it's obvious that the more Airdales that pushed an aircraft, the easier it was to do so. But by the same token, this meant that each Airdale would have to push that many more aircraft. So it was either push more often less strenuously, or push less often more strenuously. Six of one, a half-dozen of the other. Notice the wide spread of the wheels of the SB2C, a unique characteristic of this aircraft. Because of this wide spread, the landings were more stable than for the F4U Corsair or the F6F Hellcat or the TBM Avenger. (The Corsair's gull-wings made it particularly unstable. This was the reason it didn't join the fleet until later than it could have been. But join the fleet it did, even with the instability still uncorrected satisfactorily.) Since the SB2C's wings folded upward instead of backward, its "footprint" was less. And notice the foaming wake of the ship, indicating that now that the flight operations were over, there was a rendezvous that had to be met post haste.



ONE UP AND ONE DOWN

Is it not true that the soft edges of this "painting" enhance it? Is it not also true that the lack of piercing details of this "painting" gives it more appeal? Is it not further true that, should you let your gaze slowly wander over the picture, the contrast of the light and dark gives this picture a richness? Whether looked at in parts or in whole, one must agree that this "painting" is worth more than a passing glance. (Well, to each his own.) To interpret this picture, these Airdales are probably moving this SB2C Helldiver up forward after it had a difficult landing, as witness its missing nose-cone and the fact that only one wing is in the upright position. This implies that the hydraulic system for the right wing was damaged on impact of the SB2C with the deck (the cut-engine signal from the LSO was given when the SB2C was too high, maybe). Furthermore, one could imply that the hydraulics for the wheels were defective, for the same reason, because all aircraft are pushed only if that aircraft's plane-captain (brown-shirt) is in the cockpit ready to apply the brakes if needed. (If an aircraft is taxiing, the pilot is in the cockpit, and if the aircraft is being towed by a tractor, no one is needed in the cockpit.) As it appears here, an Airdale is closely tracking the aircraft, wheelchock in hand, ready to chock the wheel should the aircraft accelerate due to undue pitching of the ship. (In truth, an Airdale always tracks a moving aircraft, ready to place the wheel- chock around the wheel should it be required. This applies especially if the aircraft is under its own power, with a spinning propeller jeopardizing anything, and anyone, in its path. That was an ever present possibility whenever the aircraft were "fired up".)

This is a picture of something I did many, many times over, over and over, whether carrying the wheelchock or doing the pushing. It was at once a plebeian job and yet also a job that produced genuine satisfaction. This was because I was aware of the fact that I was an integral part of a team, if you will, whose efforts were both necessary and useful. I clearly recall that there were no slackers out there on the flight deck. Just look at those legs, each pair straining to move that 10,000-lb. giant from here to there. It has been said that a military unit that doesn't grouch and complain is not worth much. That might be true elsewhere, but it definitely was not true on the Antietam's flight deck. Not once did I hear grumbling or complaining among the Airdales. First, understand that most, if not all, of the Airdales on the Antietam were just recently out of high school (from the NJ-NY area), simple civilians with absolutely no previous military training or experience in doing it the "Navy way". Would it not be thought that it was this genre that would be the malcontents? And that it would be those who lacked the inculcated discipline of veteran warriors who would be the shirkers? But that was not the case at all. To my knowledge, to an Airdale, everyone stepped up to the job at hand with but "one word" from the yellow-shirt plane-director. For others, I don't know, but for my part, I implicitly felt that here was a job that had to be done, a job that was entirely useful and worthwhile, a job that contributed directly to the well-being of my country. As said, this was an implicit mind-set. Bu in the lowest common denominator, it was my assigned job, and so it was done, no matter how plebeian. That was a given. Beyond that though, there was also that earnestness as described. I must add, to be entirely accurate, that I was fortunate enough to have had a father who was very firm indeed in that when one did a job, one did that job to the utmost. And I also remember that I was quietly pleased when he was very pleased that I had done a job with such thoroughness, even though I was very disgruntled that I couldn't be playing ball with the others in the neighborhood, instead of raking that abundance of leaves (down to that "last leaf", almost literally.).



THE TRACTORS

These were the tractors, five of them, that were used to pull aircraft from up forward to back aft, after the aircraft were parked, having just landed on board. And no, I was never assigned to drive a tractor for a simple reason that I was not one of the original Airdale crew. The aircraft could be pulled either from the front or from the back, but usually they were pulled from the back so as to go back aft. This naturally eased the burden of our having to do the pushing, but there was always a great deal of close-in maneuvering required to properly position an aircraft, and this could only be done with muscle-power. At the beginning, some of the carriers had GI Jeeps to do the pulling, but these were apparently underpowered and overgeared. So these tractors here were specifically designed to have sufficient power at a lower gear-ratio. (It would have been folly to have had these tractor-aircraft combos racing down the flight deck. As a matter of fact, when hitched up to an aircraft, the combo didn't go any faster than a normal walking-pace.) Tractors notwithstanding, we still were not relieved from pushing an aircraft from one end of the flight deck to the other end. All the tractors did was to replace about eight Airdales. This brings up the subject of aircraft weight. The following enumerations are for the unloaded and the maximum take-off weights, with the latter including both full tanks of gasoline and a full load of bombs: F6F Hellcat, 9,100-lbs. and 15,000-lbs.; F4U Corsair, 9,200-lbs. and 15,200-lbs.; SB2C Helldiver, 10,500-lbs. and 16,600-lbs.; TBM Avenger, 10,700-lbs. and 18,200-lbs. Parenthetically, later during the war, the Hellcat and the Corsair were taking-off from the flight deck with loads comparable to the fully loaded SB2Cs and TBMs. However, the aircraft were gassed up and loaded with bombs only after they had been respotted. (On the Antietam, since we didn't load our aircraft with bombs that often (being a training ship), we were able to respot our aircraft much closer together, cheek-by-jowl, if you will.) Those two sailors, their backs to us, are probably boatswain's mates, with the one to the left with the faded shirt being the "old-hand" (boatswain's mates liked to wear a knife on their belt, and also often, a bunch of keys) while the one to his right is probably a "striker" (new recruit) with his mint-new shirt and dungarees. (After about six months, my own shirt and dungarees were not only well faded, but also the fabric over my knees had become thread-bear and shortly to become severed from the constant crawling required due to the strong blasts of wind generated by the aircrafts' prop-washes as I "scratched" my way to a wheelchock during a launch operation.) Redirecting our attention, that forward Hellcat is on the catapult, probably ready to "scramble" should the need arise to augment the CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) overhead. Notice the brown-shirt plane-captains on the wings of both aircraft helping the pilots to strap into the cockpits. The only Airdale in view (blue T-shirt, blue cap, and goggles on forehead) is that one, back to us, carrying what might be an hydraulic jack. One will notice that most all of the people in this picture have their backs to us. This brings to mind the figurative implication of "turning one's back on someone" (giving someone the "cold-shoulder"). If that "someone" is someone who is in need, to do so is to do real harm (this does not refer to hurt feelings, though that is not to be scoffed at or ignored). To turn one's back on a scoundrel is one thing; but to turn one's back on someone else, deliberately, is quite another. (First, is it a FACT that someone is a scoundrel, or is it rather only malicious hearsay?) Then there are those for whom shunning is for the "greater good". But that strongly begs the fundamental question as to what is the "greater good"? What is valid? Shunning is not becoming and shunning belittles the shunner. Methinks it might also reveal a certain unattractive superciliousness. No one would want that, would they? Besides, shunning should not get a free pass. Shunning is aptly "for the birds".



TRACTOR ACTION

After having said, on the previous page, that most of the time the aircraft were towed from the rear, here is one being towed from the front. Most of the time, aircraft were moved from up forward to back aft, but there were times when, perhaps as here, an aircraft had a malfunction at launch time, was passed by, and then after the launch operation was over, the recalcitrant aircraft was pulled up forward to go down to the hanger deck on an elevator for repairs. Alternatively, this aircraft could have been perfectly alright and it was being pulled up forward to a catapult for later launch (before the now airborne aircraft returned to land). Then again, maybe this picture represents something quite different. Who knows? What is known though is that that propeller-blade is 6 feet 8 inches in length and that it was an imposing presence, even when stationary. (The Corsair's propeller was the same size). That object right below the fuselage ia an auxiliary gasoline tank that was not disposable, as is explosively evident in a subsequent picture in the chapter "Mishaps". If one looks very closely, one will notice a wheelchock up on the wing, just beyond the propeller-tip to the left. The Airdale, by the Hellcat's left wheel, put it there as he walks alongside the F6F. This would not have been done if the Hellcat was being pushed by the Airdales because of what has been said previously: if the brakes of an aircraft should fail while it is being pushed, an Airdale has to "throw" a wheelchock at the wheel so as to stop the aircraft from rolling onward to who knows what mischief ? But with the aircraft under tow by the tractor, the tractor's brakes provided the control. Everyone in this picture are Airdales even though they are not all wearing a blue shirt and blue cap. It wasn't until later in the war that Airdales started to wear the "blues". The ship seems to be making normal speed, and/or else the ambient wind is fairly strong as is evident from the dungarees. Things are normal, and all's well. Speaking of blue shirts, when we went to chow (lunch), we would keep our blue shirts on, naturally, with our blue caps stuffed in our back pocket and goggles in the other pocket. This made us an easy mark for being an Airdale as we stood in the chow-line. And it so happened that there were those who weren't reticent about showing their disdain and low opinion of an Airdale. (Everyone knows how this can be done.) Just because we Airdales were low-man-on-the-totem-pole was no reason for those superior-minded individuals to openly show and give vent to their disrespect for the blue-shirts who "had no skills". Giving a hard time to someone seemed to be their forte. But at least I knew the source of their hostility and so it was fairly simple to disregard it and to learn to live with it. (It's when you don't understand a person's hostility that it becomes perplexing, and thus very difficult to accept.) Or was this "small potatoes" ? Probably yes, but it was also completely unnecessary on their part. But at least the hostility was "honestly come by" and not the result of blatant and insidious deceit and deceptions. At least the former hostility was "up front" and understood.

The picture of the tractor "helping" the aircraft calls forth the idea of helping those actually in need. That's the crux: is the need truly needed? If not, the help only serves to make someone more dependent, while to be independent is a satisfaction that is hard to equal. (It's true, everyone is dependent on everyone, in a certain special way, but that is not what is being addressed here.) To help, consistently, the able is to perform a disservice. It is counterproductive. All normal people seek (or should seek) self-sufficiency. To be unnecessarily dependent is a blight on society. What is needed, it would seem clear, is to help those who need help to help themselves. Sometimes it appears that there are those who actually create a need so that they can fulfill that need. Is that not bizarre? Certainly yes.

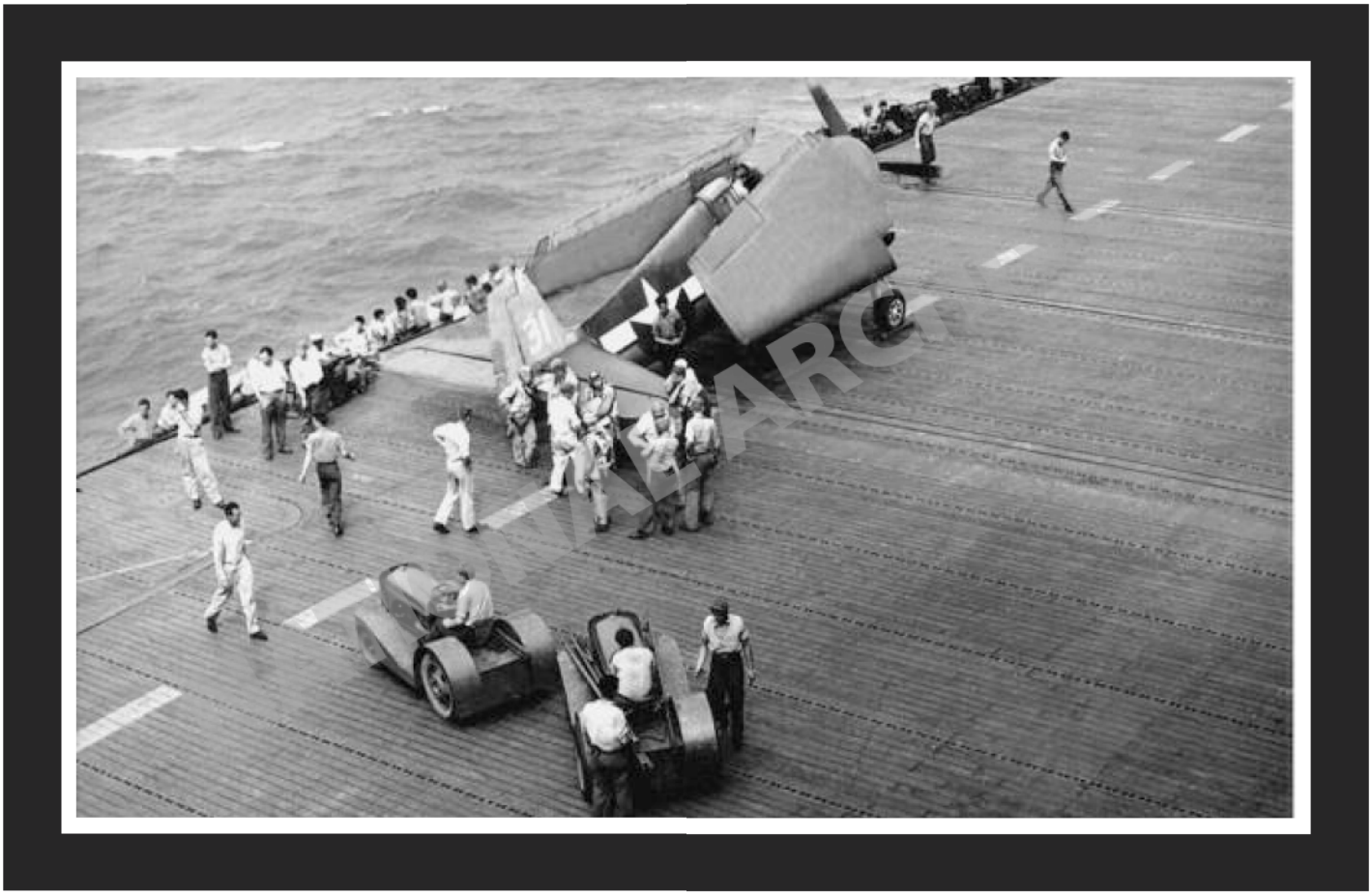


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DISCUSSION GROUP

Identifying the personnel in this picture, there are four pilots next to the Hellcat's tail-section. They're probably talking about their forthcoming CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) assignment: where they're going, what they're looking for, how they're going to protect the ship (their home), and whatever else pilots talk about when so assembled. In that same general area are five officers (light khaki) who are either pilots or else are flight operations officers (in the Air Department). There are also three Airdales near the tail-section and four Airdales either on or next to the two tractors. There's a plane-captain (brown cap) in the cockpit of the Hellcat. Everyone else seen in the picture is part of the ship's company (not part of the Air Department, whose personnel are involved with the aircraft on board). So how explain what's happening here at this time? The most probable explanation is that it's now chow-time, which explains where the Airdales are. In addition, these four pilots are going to go aloft to take up their CAP duties. This Hellcat was parked here, for some unknown reason, just forward of the deckedge elevator (notice the right wheel is chocked), while the other three Hellcats are up forward at the two catapults. After chow, the green-shirt catapult-men will send these CAP aircraft off to their CAP responsibilities of protecting the ship by at least slowing down any enemy assault on the ship. There are six types of CAPs: BATCAP, DADCAP, JACKCAP, RAPCAP, SCOCAP, and TARCAP. Very briefly, these CAPs are: BATCAP, the night patrol over the ship, using radar; DADCAP, the patrols throughout the day at all altitudes (as here); JACKCAP, two to four fighters flying at low altitudes in each of the four quadrants around the ship; RAPCAP, a radar picket patrol using radar detection instead of visual sighting; SCOCAP, scouting aircraft stationed over radar picket destroyers (ships); and TAPCAP, patrols that search out targets for future attention and possible destruction. This last CAP was taken over by the Commander Support Aircraft, a unit whose sole responsibility was to designate targets. Further, all of these CAPs had inputs as provided by the ship's SK-2 search radar (good to 100 miles out. The SK-2 also had an IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) antenna attached to it to provide for detecting the enemy "boggies" from "friendlies).

This is surely a scene of quiet and tranquility, with no activity to break the spell. That's because it's chow-time, that time of quiescence and calm that nicely breaks the day into two parts, where both parts were filled with work and woe, and where there was some ebb but mostly flow. What a contrast this serene scene is to that twice daily serving of what was congestion and commotion, wind and weather, cacophony and clamor, stress and strain, fury and fear. But now, here at chow-time, all is easy-going relaxation where the tensions of the morning are overtaken by this period of unwinding. In a peculiar way, it was the "yang" after the "yin", the "bright and positive" after the "dark and negative" when that terrible and fearsome storm that was the launch operation had subsided and this "rainbow" had broken through. A trite analogy, no doubt, but when thoughtfully considered, a valid one (I believe). The point to be made here is that one should embrace those times of release from anxiety, such as, for instance, a solitary walk in the woods. Yes, one should cherish those times as God-given gifts, because once gone, they are gone except and unless one can retrieve them from one's memory-bank. (And how many of us take the time to nurture that memory bank?). It may be a stretch to evolve the above from the "message" of this picture, but it was honestly come by. In fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea to perform this little exercise for oneself. Just find a little quiet-time in one's usual hectic schedule. Some call it meditation, some call it "time-out"; but whatever it's called, don't scoff it off. Really.



PERCEPTIONS

Later on during the war all aircraft were painted dark blue, as is this F6F Hellcat in the foreground. The purpose of doing this was to make the aircraft less discernable from overhead by virtue of the fact that the ocean was also of a dark blue color. The light blue of the SB2C Helldiver on the deckedge elevator was difficult to detect from below it, against the light sky, but an enemy aircraft was much more dangerous when he was above you instead of below you. Since each squadron was commanded by its own commander, the possibility for these differences existed. But as was said, they all later changed to dark blue. The Hellcat is being towed up forward to the catapult no doubt to do its CAP duties, while the Helldiver will be taken back aft (either flight deck or hanger deck) because its angle on the elevator implies that it will go that way. If the aircraft were to be pushed up forward, we would position it on the elevator such that the nose of the aircraft would be pointing directly toward that Airdale standing alone on the corner of the elevator. A glance at this picture tells us that the F6F Hellcat is larger than the SB2C Helldiver on the elevator. But not so. The SB2C is10,500-lbs. and 37 feet long while the F6F Hellcat is 9,200-lbs. and 33 feet long. Thus one's perception is influenced incorrectly by the position of the two aircraft. In fact, the SB2C's wing-span was 50 feet to the F6F's wing-span of 43 feet. Appearances can be deceiving.

Just as this picture is deceiving, so too can other situations in life be equally deceiving. Sometimes some things are not what they seem to be. (Nothing new here.) That is, sometimes (many times?) one's mental perceptions are often influenced, incorrectly, by things that are arranged in such a way that we think we observe one thing when in fact we are actually observing something quite different. Why is it that two people can see or hear spoken the same thing and yet from that have two entirely different perceptions? This is not news either, certainly, but this phenomenon has been unduly and unconsciously discounted. Who among us likes to be misconstrued due to misinterpretation of what we consider to be obvious? Just as the closer aircraft that was known to be smaller appears to be larger, so too should we look beyond the superficial to reach the basic truth of a matter. Not to be professorial, but careful thoughtfulness, when evaluating conflicting impressions, would do wonders (even though it requires effort). Too often perception (that unsubstantiated understanding) replaces reality. Isn't it as basic as "look before you leap"? (though there are some whose intuition allows them to "look" faster than others). It would surely seem that you do yourself a disservice should you delude yourself with false perceptions. Unfortunately, the ones who don't want to think for themselves, or who won't put forth the effort, are the ones who are too easily influenced and led astray. Upon this depends the word "fairness", that engine of a well-functioning society ("life isn't fair", as a put-down, is a dodge). Again, doesn't fairness simply connote the conformance to the rules (not to mention the laws). But if one does not understand or conform to the rules, what good are proper perceptions? Are we chasing our collective tail here? Who can straighten this out? As a wild card thrown into the mix, does anything really worthwhile occur where goodwill does not flourish? And does greed grow where there are misperceptions? (that happiness, contentment, joy, fun, whatever, is in direct proportion to the amount of money one has, or has not). Lots of questions, but who has legitimate answers? In any event, there were no misperceptions that I knew of on the flight deck of an operational carrier. We knew for a fact that a Hellcat was smaller, and lighter, than a Helldiver. But then, some things are obvious, while other things are not, such as deliberate and insidious invidiousness that cloud the real problems of the world.


75

FREE RIDE

An enterprising photographer took this interesting and engaging view of this TBM Avenger which is being respotted up forward with the other aircraft already there. This is probably being done to make room back aft for returning aircraft such as perhaps the CAP. (If one looks closely, one will see the top of the ship's superstructure just over the left shoulder of the Airdale who is hitching a "free ride" on the tow-bars. And again, isn't it true that here in this picture the lack of overwrought detail allows for the form and function of the subject at hand to predominate, and thus to enhance the message that this is a large and complex object?) The pace of the activity here was slow, that's true, but the physical exertion expended was sufficient enough to cause you to feel as if you had accomplished something worthwhile. Quickly pointing out some of the "form and function" are the following: the open bomb-bay doors under the fuselage of this Avenger torpedo bomber; the 0.5-inch machine-gun barrel pointing back aft, just over and to the right of the number "2", which could swivel in the horizontal and vertical directions (the Avenger also had a 0.3-inch machine gun in a swivel-turret under the fuselage , out of view, also pointing back aft); the four pairs of brackets on the wing that were used to hold four 5-inch High Velocity Aircraft Rockets (HVAR) which gave the aircraft the equivalent firepower of a destroyer salvo (In June of 1944 the 11.75-inch rocket was introduced with devastating effects.); the bracket supporting the massive wing of an Avenger; and finally, the extremely limited space available to push this bulky 10,700-lb. aircraft. This last observation is a clear explanation as to why tractors were very useful on the flight deck. However, there were only five tractors on board to handle 20 of these Avengers. So yes, we had to move many an Avenger using only Airdale-power. This was especially the case when we had to "jockey" the Avenger the right and then to the left in the process of fitting them into close quarters with the already respotted aircraft. It was "lock your elbows and LEAN". Once the Avenger was in motion, it was doable, but the effort to overcome the 10,700 pounds of static inertia was quite another story. [Offensive football linemen, take note: the quarterback NEEDS your help. Why help the pass-rushers by back-peddling and thus giving up your inertia? Stand fast and don't retreat. This will also block the blitzing lanes and allow the QB not to be distracted from looking for those receivers that HAVE to get that extra step. This will allow the QB to have an opportunity to bring the skills of the passing game back to football (all sports should first and foremost be about skill). It's true, the last time I played football was in 1944 when you could block only with your shoulders (no hands), when tackling was done with your shoulders, when neck-tie tackling just never happened, when face-masks were merely a fantasy, when we played both ways, and when the cerebral single-wing held sway. It's also true that since then the players have become bigger, stronger, and probably faster. But is the game better? Well, the uniforms certainly are. My only brief here is that skill should be reemphasized and cheap-shots (read "bullying") should be grounds for banishment. My apologies to one and all for my straying off the subject at hand, but for some time I've wanted to make at least a few appropriate comments about this game that is for those who are demonstrably sturdy, but also for everyone who could learn from football some useful lessons that apply to life in general. P.S.: We had a pretty good football team at Newark Academy in 1943 and 1944. I can also say with a smidgen of pride that one of my teammates on that team went on to become an all-America at the Un. of Penn. in '47, that year when they were a national powerhouse (yes, believe it or not, the Ivy League in those days was the preeminent football league in the country. When I was 10 and 11, Heisman winners Clint Frank and Larry Kelly at Yale were my semi-heroes!]


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ALMOST THERE

Making the transition from the end of the previous page of macho football with its tough-guy two-way players who played without face-masks to this motif of a somewhat cerebral image as seen here, I deign to proceed: with folded wings in quiet repose, this now docile "bird of prey" is being moved back aft in preparation for the flurry of activity tomorrow. With the light of day lowering, with the business at hand winding down tranquilly, the coming dusk heralds the end of another, at times, tumultuous day that imprinted itself onto your psyche in the form of flashing blades, noise filled with dread and doom, and the fear of being so close to those fired-up machines that they might preempt the end of your personal destiny. Pretentious words these, yet they were all too real to an apprentice Airdale such as I was. Just the blasts of wind along with the shattering noise of the aircraft were enough to almost "unhinge" you, but you eventually learned to "tough it out" as a "fact of life". That once threatening blade, now so silently etched against the sky, was a talisman of the relief an Airdale felt as he man-handled this now docile "bird of prey".

But enough talk of the trials and tribulations of these yeomen of the flight deck. This scene essentially takes on the mood of a postlude of the foregoing day as it evokes that wistful and plaintive strain of the bugler sounding Taps: "Day is done, gone the sun, From the hills, from the lake, from the skies, All is well, safely rest, God is neigh". Taps has many versions, but this one is also worth repeating: "Thanks and praise, For our days, 'Neath the sun, 'Neath the stars, 'Neath the sky, As we go, This we know, God is neigh". While the call of "Taps" is a call to rest, it cannot be said here that the Airdales have yet reached that stage of the day. It was strange, but as the day approached its span, as here, it somehow seemed that everything was being done at a slower pace in keeping with the diminishing light of day. Fatigue was a factor, but it was not the factor. It was instead because, in some way, one was looking to the coming cessation of the day's activities in anticipation of the ensuing rest and rehabilitation of the evening. It was a matter of easing into it. One also tended, as I remember it, to look back on the day's activities and feel a modicum of satisfaction in knowing one had some- times done some seriously difficult things with a no mistakes. It's difficult to describe understandably, but there was also a certain mellowness that overcame you at this time. That feeling served to displace the "hardness of purpose" that was evident during the harsh brightness of the day's events when a mental toughness was required so as to prevail over the hazards of sharing a limited amount of space with a multitude of "very angry aircraft". To many, this scene is no doubt a dark and dreary picture that has no claim to be in this book. Au contraire, as the elite would have it. Definitely, I would have been grossly remise to not to have included this picture. As a start, I find it appealing that the outline of the all too familiar Hellcat has somewhat soft edges to it. Thus, one's attention takes in the entire aircraft, and not just a specific portion of it. This is good. At the same time, the sky appears bright against the dark silhouette, providing for a strong contrast that emphasizes the form and some of its function. (A strong contrast is not necessarily de rigueur.) The sky is radiant enough to put a sheen on the deck, thereby nicely emphasizing the forms of the Airdales who are still doggedly working after a long and arduous day, while perhaps thinking about doing it all again the next day. The sky has the benefits of some gossamer-like clouds in neutral tones to add a certain amount of substance to what is essentially a silhouette. No, there was no way I would not have included this picture in this essay of the life and times of these intrepid sea-going servitors of those big, big "birds of prey".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"TURN TO!"

"Turn to!", that navy jargon that commanded the addressees to jump to the task of doing what it was that was their job to do. But it wasn't necessary, ever, to bellow this order because the Airdales were always quickly there doing what it was that had to be done. In this case it was the matter of wedging a large dolly under the aircraft's right wheel-strut because its wheel had collapsed, or the tire blew out, upon touching down on the flight deck during a landing operation. The reason that the Airdales had to react quickly was that there were other aircraft aloft circling the carrier awaiting their turn to land (and perhaps their fuel was low, or very low). The yellow-shirt is doing his bit by trying to heave the Hellcat upward with a hand grasping both barrels of the 20-mm guns. Once on the dolly, the Hellcat could be moved normally, making use of a hand-brake on the dolly. As an indication of how quickly the Airdales responded, note the pilot just now stepping out onto the wing, This mishap might have been the pilot's fault due to touching down on the deck too hard, or by the same token, perhaps it was the LSO who was responsible because he gave the engine cut-off signal when the aircraft was too high. But that in turn could have been done in spite of the poor approach to the carrier due to the aircraft being low on fuel. This in turn could have been the fault of the air operations officer who designed a flight plan that was too demanding in terms of distance from the target. There are no easy answers here, so perhaps all the players had a partial responsibility for avoiding this mishap. In any event, the Airdales were responsible only for cleaning up the effects of these decisions made by others (the pilot, the LSO, the air officer, and maybe even the red-shirts who didn't fill the tank with enough fuel for the assigned mission. Not to unnecessarily complicate things, perhaps the ordnance officer and/or air officer together placed too heavy a load of bombs on board for the distance that had to be traveled to the target, for a given fuel supply. So though physical teamwork was not required, there were many different combinations of planning decisions that had to be made that demanded teamwork (for a successful and safe mission).

I don't recall having seen any caulk-markings on any aircraft as seen on the cowling of this Hellcat. The "OK M #5" marking might mean that this Hellcat is OK as concerns the engine and that Maintenance Unit #5 need not be concerned. This picture is a good example of the Airdales responding to a requirement for action without having to be told what to do. After a while, the Airdales did these things semi-automatically because they had done them before enough times. An Airdale's raison d'etre was to serve the aircraft in all ways at all times, be it to pull wheelchocks, put wheelchocks, walk alongside an aircraft as it taxied somewhere, or expedite the removal of an aircraft in distress, as here. There was no school for this latter effort except the school where you learn on the job. These Airdales had done this often, and the more often they did it, the better they were at it. It's like everything else: repetition, repetition, repetition. It's similar to the service schools of yore: "tell them what you're going to tell them, then tell them, and finally tell them what you told them". That doesn't necessarily apply here because every mishap turned out to be unique in its own right. But something learned in one mishap was usually applicable in the next mishap (which you knew would be forthcoming even while you could and should maintain a positive attitude about what the future holds; often times this is much easier said that done, but as they say, "keep a stiff upper lip"). There will be an entire chapter devoted to the subject of "Mishaps", to be complete, but it will not cater to the morbid or to those who seem to be fascinated with the pain and suffering of others, as do unfortunately, so many of our "news departments".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INTERIM PARKING

Probably, these Hellcats are being parked here only temporarily to get them out of the way of the reshuffling of other aircraft. This location happens to be on the starboard side just up forward of the forward elevator (note the middle one of the three antenna-masts). The forward Hellcat has already been chocked and the aft Hellcat will be chocked momentarily. The Airdale to the right has a guiding-bar attached to the tail-wheel and he has the bar set to steer the Hellcat to the left, having already guided it perilously close to the cat-walk to its right. (That garb that that Airdale is wearing is something not seen on a U.S. ship, and also, this must be very early in the war because none of the Airdales is wearing flight deck shoes. In addition, all the Airdales' shirts and dungarees are not faded as are those of old-timers (except for that Airdale to the far right)). Notice the catapult-slot running just to the left of the Hellcats. There'll be no catapult launches as long as those Hellcats are there. Also, until the final spotting is done, there'll be no aircraft parked on the elevator because of course the elevators are being used to shuffle aircraft between the flight deck and the hanger deck as requirements are fulfilled. These requirements included not only whether an aircraft needed specific corrective maintenance, periodic preventative maintenance, but also such operational considerations such as which aircraft would be used for which mission. The types of missions were numerous, including bombing missions, strafing missions, reconnaissance missions, CAP missions, even training missions, etc. All of these different missions meant a different mix of aircraft for any given flight, which in turn meant that reshuffling was a constant. Some of these missions were local, or tactical, while others were part of an overall strategic plan. This connotes that war is a game, and in a way it is a game to those whose profession is war-gaming. There are of course board-games and computer-games that use war as the object to be "played". For the professionals, this is legitimate mental exercise for a legitimate desired result. For everyone else, excluding little boys playing with their toy soldiers, this gamesmanship unfortunately masks the reality of real war. There are those who know nothing of war who try to glamorize it, and there are those some who have been through war, know its reality, and yet also glamorize it so as to validate what they had to endure (in hopefully a legitimate, defensive war). But no sane person would preach the "glories" of war after having gone through the actual combat of trying to kill before being killed. If one should be confronted with a figurative monster, one has no problem with fighting that monster. But if one is confronted with someone who happens to be wearing a different uniform, it takes a certain mindless savagery to "take out" (today's vernacular) that person (unless he's trying to "take out" you because you are wearing the "wrong" uniform). "War is hell", and not a parlor-game.

As a post script to my comments about football (this is, after all, a book containing comments) made three pages previously, and to put these comments into proper perspective, I would like to add that I'm quite sure that for whatever other reasons there for my having lost "my girl' and what I thought was my life, being almost seventeen years old, one of those reasons was the fact that I played varsity football. This was in spite of the fact that we attended different schools and in spite of the fact that she NEVER heard even one word about football from me (because to me, she was the very antithesis of that genre). In fact, I honestly believe, though I can't prove it, that she completely abandoned me, permanently, because of my participation in football (I wont deny that there were other (unknown) reasons), but I'm sure this had to be one of them. Thus I have no brief for football except that I admire the athletic skill it requires.



ONLY ARCHIVES

FARM TRACTOR

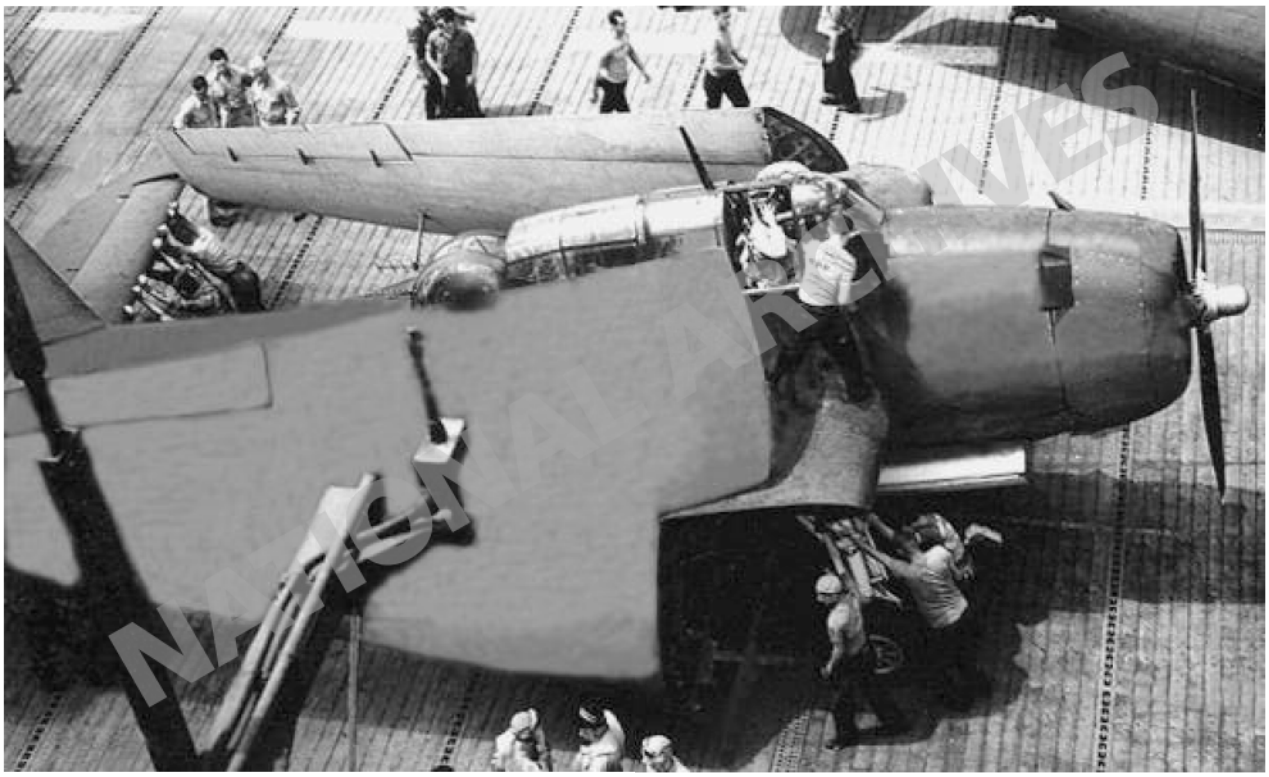
Apparently, this tractor came straight from the farm. It's definitely an anomaly on an Essex-class carrier, and the Airdales seem to think the same thing, being more interested in the tractor than the Hellcat that is being chocked, for some unknown reason, right next to the deckedge elevator (note the guard-rail beginning to rise). One would have to assume that this landlubber tractor will soon find its way back to the farm from whence it came. Before going on, it's a concern about whatever it is that is dangling out of the wing right next to the right wheelchock. It's a puzzlement. Now to the quality of this picture, or lack of it: this picture was scanned at a low resolution, perhaps as low as 70 dpi (dots per inch). I was probably doing a little experimenting with the scanning process, and when I was finished, I forgot to reset the resolution back to 150 dpi (and at times, even 300 dpi). Upon examining this picture for quality, I quickly noticed the serrations on one of the propeller-blades. On first thought, my intention was to scan the picture again at 150 dpi. But on second thought, I decided to leave it as it is now because those serrations make it look like the blade of a chain-saw whose blade cuts through a work-piece with a vengeance, a perfect allusion of what this blade would, and did, do to anything that happened to cross its path. So the picture remains uncorrected as a testimony to the awesome power of the blade to do damage when turned by an engine of 2200-hp. This Hellcat, it's true, is somewhat bulky, but it's also true that there is a certain utilitarian beauty to it, and a certain solidity to it whose lines grow on you, especially after having "lived with them" for so long. Perhaps what makes the Hellcat attractive is the knowledge of what an effective machine it was, and what a marvelous engineering construct it represented. It was a workhorse, day after day after day, defending our country day after day after day. That in itself made it "beautiful". In any event, tens of thousands of them were made, and they made an enviable record in the Pacific Theater (along with the cadre of pilots who piloted them, of course). Those mountains seen in the background, that land that seemed to magically appear out of nowhere every once in a while in that trackless expanse of ocean, was a sight to behold to a spurious sailor such as myself. I would have no idea what that land was, or where it was, but it was there, slowly, very slowly becoming larger and larger. It was enchanting, yes, enchanting, to watch this mere sliver, this mere suggestion, gradually, very gradually grow into something beautiful: solid land. As a boy, I had spent seven summers at a camp in the mountains of Vermont where as far as one could look, there were trees, tall trees, both evergreen and deciduous. And there were rock outcroppings to lend interest with different shapes and shades of gray, and I quietly regaled in these woods and hills and dales (when I was there, which was not all that much; there were too many activities going on). One thing that was evident there was that although there was great macro repetition in nature, there was also even greater micro differentiation of given objects, such as a type of tree. The point to be made is that given the above, it's easy to say that the vast sameness of the ocean was a great change for a "boy from the woodlands". While one can certainly appreciate the wonders and beauty at the ocean's edge, the constant day after day environment of an endless ocean is something else, pleasant salt-laden sea-breezes notwithstanding. So when the ship found its way, somehow, to an island in the middle of the ocean after "months" at sea, it was a time to quietly rejoice. One of the things I'll forever remember is that sweet smell of lush growing vegetation as we approached an island. It would be so strong, or "unique", that it would overcome that salt-air smell that was so familiar. But this period of detecting the sweet aroma of vegetation was only transitory. The moral of the account is that one should "grab the ring" when it is there, for good things seem to also be short.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AN AVENGER

There it stands, wings folded, engine stilled, and Airdales in attendance to this warrior of the skies. Yet, not a particularly war-like looking machine, not an instrument likely to avenge anything, this aircraft called the Avenger. But does this largest single-engine aircraft of WWII need to be all fired up for action to look the menace that it recently was to the enemy who, in trepidation, saw it coming knowing there was a torpedo in its belly? No, not at all, if once you saw its huge wings slowly, deliberately unfold into its majestic spread. Then you would feel the tingling of its incipient lift-off, as this goliath of aircraft lumbered down the flight deck, slowly reaching upward, its 55-foot span lifting it ever upward and onward to its next adversary. Now picture twenty of these "big birds", each in turn, swinging wide their wings as they taxied forward to the take-off point. Impressive this, amid the noise and din. But this business of launching an aircraft belongs in its own chapter, and so to the picture at hand which is also one of the "busy" ones (lots of items to attract our attention): Airdales at the right wheel, wheelchock in hand, applying some heft to move this "load" back aft; an Airdale on the wing-stub conferring with the brown-shirt plane-captain in the cockpit attending to the brakes; some Airdales doing the heavy pushing on the tail-section while other Airdales stand around looking to the other aircraft up forward; and pilots (bottom, middle) in a group discussing the just completed flight. All in all, a leisurely pace, now that all the aircraft have returned from their mission of having dealt out death and destruction as delivered by the torpedo that was only a short time ago residing in the belly of that Avenger (note the open bomb-bay doors). That was quite a contrast to this prosaic scene here. But who knows, maybe this same scene soon will be drastically upset by the enemy retaliating in kind (the Japanese were known to have had a superb weapon in the capability of their torpedoes). Also note the spinning wind-speed anemometer in the foreground at the end of an arm and just in front of that 0.5-inch machine-gun in the after part of the aircraft's canopy.This Avenger, being one of the last to land, is one of the first to be pushed back aft in this respotting operation. This was the rhythm of carrier operations: launch, land, park up forward, respot back aft, launch again. There are those who fit in very well with the normal ebb and flow, such as here, but there are others who do no such thing. Some of them are called mavericks, and a maverick has no place on the flight deck. In fact, they don't last very long on the flight deck, in more ways than one, because there's a right way to do things and there's a wrong way to do things. It's all well and good to be inventive, in a positive way, but to do so merely to tweak the well-established mores of a well-run society is ill-advised and perhaps self-injurious. Intellectual iconoclasts are usually created, over time, by being deliberately: belittled, frequently; taunted, excessively; thwarted, repeatedly; tricked, once too much; and in general, given a hard-time, often. Most often, iconoclasts are anti-social in that they do not contribute to the general welfare of the environment in which they find themselves. This is to be strongly deplored. Having said that, there are times when iconoclasts can be of benefit to not only to themselves, but also to the group of which they are a part. What could be more felicitous than for one to resist an activity embraced by the many, which activity is detrimental to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the participants? In brief, rejecting drugs is a winner. Why insult one's intelligence by enumerating the havoc wreaked by drugs? There will be those who say that drugs make them feel soooo good, and why should they be deprived of their "pleasures"? And "they aren't hurting anyone". That statement alone puts them at the very bottom of the intelligence ladder! The poor "dears", they're being deprived of toxic substances. "Will the oppression of the weak never cease"? M.G.!



"THE BEAST"

The first thing to be noticed in this picture is the fact that the two Airdales, one at each wheel with a wheelchock in hand, were not pushing on the wheel-struts to give a helping hand to the other Airdales doing their best to budge this "beast", that appellation given to this SB2C Helldiver by the pilots themselves. But on second thought, that Airdale is doing what he should by carrying that wheelchock in that manner such that he can quickly throw the chock around the wheel should the brakes not do so (with the SB2C, this can more easily be done from the inside because of the panels on the outside of the wheel). The second thing that one notices here is that there is little area available on which to push this large aircraft. Also, the tail-section is so high that the Airdales are extending their arms almost in an upward position. Now how much purchase can they apply that way? (The Airdales's arms form the hypotenuse of a right-triangle where the force-vector that actually moves the aircraft is the horizontal-component (x-axis) of that right-triangle. Since the arms are so close to the vertical (z-axis), the x-axis component is relatively small. That is, "Where are the Airdales?" (to help move this bulky 10,500-lb. load)). And how tiring is this? Greatly so, over the period of a day. On looking closely, one will notice that Airdale leaning on the fuselage's tail-section, trying to move the tail to the left. Good luck. What he needs, of course, is a tail-wheel tow-bar, making this an easy job. Presumably, other Airdales will appear here to help out once they've finished respotting other aircraft. Airdales were, by and large, exemplary about doing things WITHOUT having to be told to do so. I can almost guarantee that Airdales will appear to help out here after having moved other aircraft. It was as if, it should have been as if, one had the attitude that there was satisfaction to be had in completing a (worthwhile) job well, no matter how menial the job. And what job could be more menial and simpleminded than this one? It wasn't as if I had no awareness of the fact that I was just recently graduated from a very good school, Newark Academy, and that I would be a forthcoming student at Yale University, while at the same time I was being used as a "pack-mule" moving large aircraft by the sweat of my brow as my assigned duty. Was this a misappropriation of resources", I asked myself. Well my answer was of course, at first, a resounding "Yes!". But no matter, this was my lot and this was where I was going to do my part, without reservation. (Anyone who thinks that this is "corny" should revisit it, because that person has not given the idea its due, in my humble opinion. Well, not so humble, as a matter of fact, as much as being proud to be a part of this great ship and its endeavors. Actually, I was pleased no end for my good fortune to be on the flight deck and to participate in the worthy activities taking place there, regardless of the very real, and daily, threats to life and limb. And after all, wasn't this, the flight deck, the place where all the action was? And wasn't that action what defined this great ship? Yes and yes. I say all of this in spite of the fact that I originally (before having been assigned to the Antietam) wanted and intended on going into a rating such as radio or electronics or the like. The "bottom line" was that the lowest among us can be the necessary instrument that makes possible the important accomplishments of the lofty among us (could that well-trained pilot have lifted off without his aircraft being so positioned to do so?).[At times, in these pages, comments have been made that need to be made. With no particular lineage to the above, that perennial question of the "bully" raises its ugly head: that coward who satisfies his conceits by deliberately trying to engender anxiety, nay, fear itself, in others. Whether the fearsome is true or not, no matter. It is the fear and anxiety itself that the bully seeks to sow, while he morbidly relishes the unknown aspect associated with that fear and anxiety. This is equally as despicable as spreading deliberate lies about the innocent.]



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A POSED PICTURE

A quick perusal of this picture proves it to be posed: the Airdales at the tail-section are standing upright instead of leaning into this 10,000-lb. load; the Airdale by the aircraft's left wheel-strut is only leaning, not LEANING; AND there is no plane-captain in the cockpit at the ready to apply the brakes. So why include this picture if it is "not the real thing"? First, this picture gives a good view of the SB2C Helldiver and makes clear that one could walk under its wing standing almost upright. Though it was not the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII, it was a big aircraft, especially when there were twenty of them on board, as was the case of the Antietam and most other Essex-class carriers. But the main reason for including this picture was to show that there "always" was an Airdale at each wheel, with a wheelchock in hand, whenever an aircraft was on the move. Not only was there an Airdale at the wheel, but also he was holding the wheelchock as is that Airdale at the SB2C's right wheel, poised to quickly throw the chock around the wheel should it be necessary. That's a near perfect pose that he's in for the purpose for which he's there (even though there were Airdales who didn't do this this way). Also notice that both chock-men are to the inside of the wheels because the SB2C's wheel-panels required it. Additional comments are: notice the bracket providing support for the wing; notice the high-frequency antenna on the underside of the wing; notice the radio antenna just forward of the cockpit; notice the Pitot-tube at the tip of the wing, used to measure air (not ground) speed of the aircraft; notice the after 5-inch gun-mount on the starboard side seen under the engine; and finally, notice the distance between the propeller-tips and the wheels, thus allowing the Airdale to walk inside the wheels as here, as he would also do when he escorted the SB2C to its take-off point during launch.

If this is a posed picture, then, although not wanting to appear disparaging, as a former Airdale I take umbrage at the apparent lack of what I'll call "ardor" on the part of these Airdales as they pose for this picture. If it is posed, at least they could have had the decency to make it LOOK like they were expending an effort. It makes us Airdales elsewhere look silly because we were actually "busting our gut", to use the vernacular, in our effort to move those SB2Cs from here to there. Maybe the ship they're on was always pitched (or rolled) in the direction they were pushing! But no, the deck looks level with the horizon. (I still say that what they're doing in this picture is nowhere near enough to move a refrigerator, much less a load of over 10,000-lbs. (5 tons)). As has been said, we, on the Antietam, were most all of us from the NJ-NY area, and so we at least had that in common. Still, as in any group, we would tend to gravitate to sub-groups, similar to "birds of a feather gather together". This was in no way based on animosities (there were none on the Antietam to my knowledge). These groupings were natural and normal for a group from diverse backgrounds, but it didn't impede the also normal and natural semi-camaraderie that develops within a motley group that works together toward the same common goal of doing something of worth, menial though it was. I can vouch for the fact that by their actions, not their words, these Airdales took a real pride in what they were doing , "menial though it was". While I was a loner during off-hours, and while I wasn't buddy-buddy with anyone, I fitted very easily into the work of the Airdales and the associations it engendered. I was quietly a workhorse, while socially an Airdale compatriot on the flight deck where only small-talk was the talk of the day. In a word, though I was not a recluse by day, I was by night. Still, even while being congenial with everyone by day, perhaps my reserved way came across as being distant.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ANOTHER HELLDIVER

At last, here we see some Airdales who look like Airdales, with their blue caps and blue jerseys (in warmer climes, we wore Blue T-shirts). However, the visible ones are not wearing the tan flight deck shoes, those shoes that provided the friction that was required to give purchase to one's pushing. In addition, these Airdales do not have goggles sticking out from their back pockets, leading to the supposition that these were in fact hanger deck Airdales. As has been previously mentioned, there are two sets of Airdales: one set of about 45 flight deck Airdales, and another smaller set of hanger deck Airdales. Since the hanger deck Airdales weren't confronted with wind, there was no need for goggles or even flight deck shoes. Thus, the supposition that we are looking at hanger deck Airdales. In addition, the flight deck Airdales pushed the aircraft onto and off an elevator at the flight deck while the hanger dec\k Airdales pushed the aircraft onto and off an elevator at the hanger deck . Mention must be made, in light of the comments made two pages back, of those too Airdales pushing on the SB2C's left tail-section: their shoulders are above the tail-section instead of below, as in the picture two pages back. The conclusion is that those of two pages back were about 5 feet 6 inches while the two in this picture are 6 feet 6 inches, keeping in mind that the short ones are LEANING while the tall ones are standing upright. "Life isn't fair". HOWEVER, were those tall ones to be assigned to the flight deck, the tables would have been turned because the taller you were, the more of you that the wind could thoroughly thrash when you were going to a wheelchock during launch operations. This was not a slight disadvantage, because at those times, life and limb were literally in the balance due to having to negotiate the aircraft while in those wind-blasts. So an actuary would have a dimmer view of you as you increased in height. "Life isn't fair". Notice the water in the upper right corner, clearly indicating that this is the deckedge elevator. Now notice the seam running upward, just to the left of the engine exhaust-pipe. Whenever an Essex-class carrier transited the Panama Canal, this deckedge elevator had to be "folded upward" at this seam so that the ship could enter the locks. During the war, all the Essexes built on the East Coast needed to do this because they were all allocated to the Pacific Theater. (Those naval engineers were an ingenious lot. To my untrained understanding, it would seem to me that to design and construct a naval ship would be the most complex engineering feat extant, bar none. What an interesting book that would be!!) Returning to the picture, there is seen a sailor standing on the wing next to the cockpit. He is most likely an aviation mechanic who hopped up onto the wing so as to talk to the pilot about some defect with the Helldiver. The pilot probably radioed the ship, as he was in the landing pattern around the ship, that there was something malfunctioning with his aircraft. Thus, as he landed, the mechanic was there to get a more detailed report concerning the problem so that remedial work could start that much earlier, providing for a faster "turn-around-time". Aircraft too are complex, and they too need their "care and feeding". If one looks closely, one will notice that the bomb-bay doors are open. These are never open when landing, and it could well be that their not being closed was the malfunction that was radioed to the ship. Is it true that the more complex is something, the more care is required for that something? Does this apply to people too? If so, should people reduce their complexity so as to reduce their "care and feeding"? And if their complexity is reduced, does this diminish their worth to themselves, their families, and society as a whole? Always questions. But questions that deserve a hearing, less the snap opinions that the "lazy" are wont to serve up. There are those who are able to arrive more easily at sound conclusions because of their developed intuition, and I'm sorely afraid that "you guys" will have to bow to the women in this respect.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE (BIG) AVENGER

No, this picture is not staged as was that one two pages ago. And yes, this is one large "dude", again using the vernacular for those not so introduced. You'll note that the pilot is still in the cockpit, implying that this TBM wasn't able to start its engine, and so had to be moved down below where it could receive the ministrations of the mechanics there. Much less likely, this picture could also imply that this aircraft landed "dead-stick" (with no engine power) because, as the pilot eased back on the throttle just before the LSO's "cut engine" signal, the engine shut down due to mechanical trouble. This would have been catastrophic for the pilot, obviously, if this happened even further away from the LSO's "cut engine" point. In any event, we presume that this aircraft either had no power to take off (a launch operation), or he had no power to enable it to taxi up forward under the aircraft's own power (a landing operation). In the former case, time was of the essence because the TBM would be in the way of the other aircraft behind it, and there were aircraft already airborne, using up gasoline awaiting those still to be launched. But that raises the question of how it can be taken down below with its wings spread (not folded): its wing-span was 54 feet and its length was 40 feet, while the in-line elevators were both 48x44 feet and the deckedge elevator was 60x34 feet. The two in-line elevators were of no help, and the deckedge elevator could accommodate the TBM's span but not at the same time its 40 foot length. This problem was of course solved by making use of an auxiliary power supply as applied to the hydraulic folding-mechanism. The other, latter situation, that of landing "dead-stick," required quick removal also to make the flight deck clear for the aircraft yet to land. Fuel of the airborne aircraft was low, anxiety of the pilots airborne was high, and so, all in all, the pilots had a certain amount of respect for us lowly Airdales, even if no one else did. Presumably that officer in the foreground is the squadron's chief maintenance man, and he's looking to the pilot for some sign of what the specific problem could be.

We have here a good view of the wheel-well in the wing into which the wheel is folded. When one thinks about it, the wheels of this 10,000-lb. aircraft are only somewhat larger than those of a standard automobile which weighs about 2,000 pounds. Factor into this the fact that an automobile has four wheels to the TBM's two wheels, and that this means that each TBM wheel supports 5,000 pounds (10,000/2) to the auto's 500 pounds (2,000/4). That's a ten to one differential. Further, factor the fact that this 5,000 pounds is impacting the deck from a height of about 30 feet. True, the aircraft is not in a free-fall (there being a lift provided by the wings). So, in a completely unscientific way, and for the sake of argument, let's say the situation was as if the aircraft had a free-fall of ten feet. Thus, the above was only presented to back up what the pilots themselves say when they say that a carrier landing is in fact a "control-led crash": 5,000 pounds hitting the deck from ten feet in the air. I might add that most of that energy is directed forward, up toward the front of the ship where all the Airdales are assembled. These comments are of course not from a mechanical engineer, but rather from an electrical engineer who took some basic physics courses and a Strength of Materials course many, many years ago. But that doesn't stop one from being in awe of things that most everyone takes completely for granted. There' a lesson here that I believe should be grasped, and that is that there's a wealth of things "out there" that should intrigue and fascinate and enthrall us all. Not the least of these are those things that derive directly from the natural sciences such as what makes a blade of grass grow? Now how about it? .


57
57
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SILHOUETTE # 28

Once again, that dull sheen on the aircraft and the light reflected from the deck makes for a very compelling and marvelous silhouette. One could even say that this picture almost has the feel of velvet. But rest assured, we are not looking at the work of a "velvet glove". In the hot weather, it's the work of sweating and strain; in the warm weather, it's the work of striving and strain; in the cool weather, it's the work of struggling and strain; and in the cold weather, it's the work of shivering and strain. For those of us Airdales who were conscientious, and that was most all of us, it was at times sweating, at times striving, at times struggling, at times shivering, but it was always a time of strain, both physically and mentally. Being young, being healthy (but tired), and except for some residual stiffness the first thing upon arising, this work had no ill consequences. To the contrary, to me, in a way not outwardly acknowledged, the work we did brought a sure sense of satisfaction in having done a job well, a job that was clearly useful to the overall functioning of this great ship that was doing something of real importance. (In a corny, old-fashioned way, the song "What I Did For Love" imposes on my consciousness. My apologies.) In this respect, I was fortunate, simpleminded though my job was. Those of a sarcastic bent might say, "Yes, but how often does one have a chance to work for a 'glorious' cause?" Point well-taken. One answer might be that one should seek the satisfaction of the self-respect one derives from doing a job, any job, well, no matter how mundane. (True, sometimes easier said than done.) And unfortunately, there are those who feel that anything they do that does not directly benefit them is naught but an imposition. This will usually mean that they spend the better part of their lives in a dejected funk. What these poor dolts need, it would seem, is to realize that, if nothing else, to help others and so to make a better and happier atmosphere, serves among other things to increase one's contentment based solely on the fact that they are now living in a more pleasant, even happier, environment. Thus they don't need to "stigmatize" their persona by appearing to be altruistic when in fact "all they're doing is something for their own satisfaction". This is called rationalization, but enough of this ratiocination and contemplation.

The hanger deck Airdales are pushing this Hellcat off the deckedge elevator and onto the hanger deck. There wasn't much "fraternization between the flight deck Airdales and the hanger deck Airdales because, as was said, the former put an aircraft on the elevator, and the latter removed the aircraft from the elevator (and visa versa). It would probably be dishonest to say that the flight deck Airdales didn't feel just a little bit "superior" in that they worked topside in the elements of weather and the elements of the "sound and fury" of the fired-up aircraft. But it's also true that I couldn't of cared less about that: I had my job, and they had their job, no more, no less. While we were supposed to remain topside, I couldn't resist occasionally taking a ride on the elevator, just to take the ride but also to observe what was going on down below on the hanger deck. The hanger deck had its own mystique in that it was this very large, cavernous space in which somehow a lot of aircraft were being shuffled and reshuffled. The hanger deck Airdales had more problems with shuffling aircraft than we did because they had a more confined space than we had topside. They also had to deal with aircraft that were in the process of being serviced, which meant that these aircraft couldn't be moved at that time, making for even more congestion. To be even-handed (as should all those who deal with two contesting groups who look to you to moderate their conflicting positions), the hanger deck Airdales missed the inclement weather topside, but they also missed the sometimes gorgeous days we enjoyed.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE CRANE

The awkward looking crane that resembles a praying mantis was actually very agile. This agility was derived from the fact that each wheel was operated independently of each other such that as one wheel was held braked, the other wheel could be powered in either the forward or reverse direction. As a consequence, the tractor part of the crane could "turn on a dime" at a swivel-point just back of the two drive wheels. This crane was actually quite dexterous, appearances notwithstanding, moving deftly in confined spaces. It's purpose was to do what it's doing here: pick up and move an aircraft that could not be moved by other means. Usually, during a landing operation, if an aircraft lost the use of one, or both, wheels, Airdales would rush a large dolly to the aircraft while the other of us Airdales would get under the wing(s) and lift the aircraft upward as the dolly was rolled under the fuselage. We would then push the aircraft to an elevator to go below for repairs. The crane had to be agile because time was of the essence: there were pilots overhead circling the carrier awaiting their turn to land, with remaining fuel a real concern. The operator of the crane was a yellow-shirt chief petty officer (a non-commissioned officer). Yellow-shirts, except for the commissioned officer yellow-shirts, were actually former Airdales who were older and had progressed up to these positions of responsibility of directing aircraft on the flight deck while they were under power. These yellow-shirts were all in their early twenties (the chief petty officers were in their late twenties.)

Of late, I've been visiting bookstores to peruse their offerings of naval history. I was impressed with the credentials of the authors of those books I viewed. Invariably, those books were written by the famous and the near-famous, all of them of a high retired rank, and having had a good deal of experience in the areas of the command and control of men and machines. They were, without exception, commissioned officers carrying with them that cachet of "having been there, having done that". The resume would then go on to describe all their many awards and rewards on the high-road of their lives after retirement. They were presented almost as icons, right there on the book-flap. I, on the other hand, came from the opposite end of the spectrum, having been a journeyman Airdale whose perspective was that of one who looked up from the bottom of the hierarchy of those who made this great ship succeed. My own imprimatur for this book derives from having had a different set of experiences that were found in the day-to-day activities on the flight deck, as opposed to those of their more exalted positions. My insights were thus fundamentally different from those who wrote from "officers' country" (that portion of the ship that excluded the non-commissioned personnel, and especially the likes of Airdales). That is, my credentials for writing a book differ markedly from the credentials of those who came from "officers' country", just as our perspectives and presentations also differ in that I was one of the "little people" and they definitely weren't. As an aside, the question also arose as to how a low-key, basically quiet and retiring person such as myself could write a book about his experiences concerning the high-energy activities on the flight deck of an Essex-class carrier? The answer soon became evident: with difficulty. Apropos of that, it should be said that since I wrote every word of both my "Flight Deck" books, I must at the same time take responsibility for any and all errors, typos, and misspellings. (That is, my two books are also self-published, and so I am the sole editor; I know, it shows. With that, there's the tried and true maxim that goes, "Any self-published book is of interest to and has merit only to the publisher, ESPECIALLY if it's an autobiographical book". I have learned the absolute truth of this maxim and pass it on to would-be authors.)

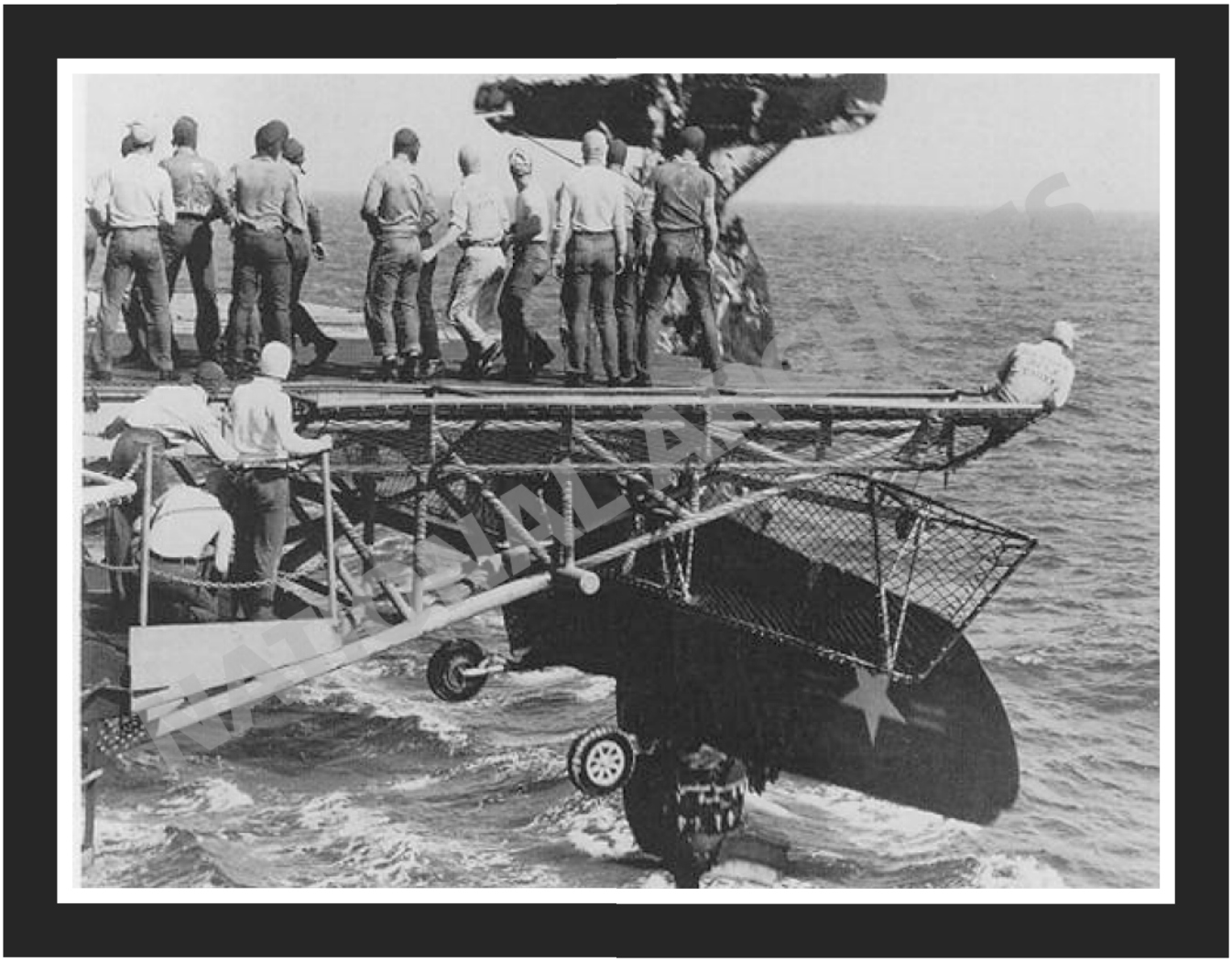


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"DEEP SIX"

It's the "deep six" for this Corsair. Evidently it was so damaged in a crash that it couldn't be reclaimed except for sundry parts that presumably had been removed before this F4U was jettisoned. These Airdales have just finished pushing the F4U over the side, without ceremony. Parenthetically, this was also the location for committing a body to sea should personnel have been killed during enemy action. Then there was a ceremony. A sailor's burial place was where he died, at sea, and not at designated, consecrated grounds such as a military cemetery where the deceased can be mourned. A sailor had no marker, and his resting place was known only to God. And who knows, perhaps some, or all, of these Airdales themselves met their Maker shortly after this picture was taken. Less chillingly, that yellow-shirt, sitting to the far right on the netting with nothing at all to his right, was fifty feet above the water below (but that didn't compare to the sailors of yore who climbed up to the yard-arm as they were buffeted by the wind and swayed by the ship's motion). Before they could jettison the Corsair, however, they had to lower the outboard netting (one corner of it can be seen "touching" the star on the wing). Although it's not evident, this netting was hinged on the outside edge of the elevator, allowing it to be dropped down for just such an occasion. The purpose of this netting was of course to provide a safety-net should someone on that edge of the elevator lose his balance due to a ship-roll or even due to the prop-wash of an aircraft coming up on the elevator with its engine fired-up (so as to launch right away). Aircraft could not be jettisoned over the bow or stern because there were pairs of 40-mm quad guns below that extended beyond the flight deck, fore and aft (this was constructed this way so as to allow the guns to elevate up to almost 90 degrees). The sides of the ship were not available because if there wasn't a catwalk there, there was a gun emplacement there. So, the deckedge elevator was the only available place, topside, for this function.

It appears that this Corsair was engulfed in a fierce fire because its tail-section and fuselage are seen to have been gutted. It could well have been the case that these Airdales had just recently fought the fire that consumed this Corsair, and having just put out the fire, they now dispose of it. No point in cluttering up the ship with a "carcass". One can detect four yellow-shirts in this picture. While there were about nine yellow-shirts on board, there was no need for them on the flight deck now to conduct landing operations. This was because this mishap had tied up the flight deck, meaning that there were no landings taking place until about now, now that the Corsair has been cleared away (we're assuming nothing was salvageable). Now that the landings have commenced, all of these yellow-shirts will be available for the continued landing operation. Everyone else in the picture is an Airdale; there were no spectators on the flight deck during flight operations. They were either up in the superstructure, or perhaps on the catwalk up forward. While in civilian life, a fire draws a crowd, here a fire only attracted the Airdales: they put on their "fireman's hats" and they then "attack" the blaze. Of course the yellow-shirts were in charge of the proceedings, but it was the blue-shirts who actually subdued the fire as quickly as possible because of those pilots overhead looking for a safe haven on board. This view provides a good idea of the structure of the deckedge elevator. In the first place, it must raise and lower a 10,500-lb. load 30 feet in 10 seconds. Next it must support that load out to 40 feet from the side of the ship (that 40 foot lever arm is a problem, especially when the heaviest part of the load is near 40 feet from the ship. This cantilevered truss is made up of steel tubes a little bigger than a big forearm. To the structural engineer, it's no problem; to me, it's well nigh amazing. To most of the Airdales, it's just another aircraft. But to the pilot who "owned" this aircraft, it was probably like losing a tried and true friend.



MUMBLETYPEG TIME

Mumbletypeg time, that time to play "a children's game played with a pocket-knife, the object being to cause the blade to stick in the ground or a wooden surface by flipping the knife in a number of prescribed ways or from a number of prescribed positions". So here are some stalwarts of the flight deck playing a children's game. As a matter of fact, there were few options during their limited free-time, and playing cards on the windy deck was not one of those options. It must first be said, again, that these Airdales were unlike those of us on the Antietam in that they are not wearing blue T-shirts (blue sweaters in the cold weather) and blue caps, unbuckled, on top of their heads. Also, all of us would be wearing flight deck shoes such as is the Airdale closest to the right. (Who knows where those white socks came from.) One other thing: no one ever rolled up his dungarees and no one was ever shirtless. Otherwise, these Airdales could be Antietam Airdales, scruffy, unkempt, and the worse for wear for working without much R&R (rest and rehabilitation). So why begrudge a little game, even if it is a child's game? This was not a particularly clean environment, what with oil drippings here and there and the tar-substance between the planks finding its way to the surface, enough so to be evident. (A close examination of the deck makes this clear, especially where the light strikes the deck. Navy ships are known for being spic and span clean, and carriers were no exception, except on the flight deck where daily traffic was being handled. The question then arises, "How is it that the Airdales have the time to 'sit around' and play games on a busy flight deck? The answer will be given by roughly delineating the standard, normal, day-to-day schedule on the Antietam (which was, as has been mentioned, a training ship that trained successive aircraft squadrons to replace those squadrons then "on the line"): At 7:30 AM, Flight Quarters was sounded. At 8:00 AM "Pilots, man your planes, prepare to start engines, start engines" was intoned. At 8:15 AM the launch operation commenced. At 8:45 AM the launch operation was completed (90 aircraft, launched every 20 seconds, equals 30 minutes of continuous cacophony). At 9:00 AM the incidental respotting was completed. At 10:00 AM the landing of all aircraft began. At 10:30 AM all aircraft were parked up forward (90 aircraft, landed every 20 seconds, equals 30 minutes of continuous cacophony). At 12:00 Noon all aircraft have been respotted back aft. Starting at 1:00 PM the same procedures were repeated, ending the day at 5:00 PM, if lucky. Thus, a typical day-to-day, seven days a week, schedule included a nine hour day with a one hour break in the morning, a one hour lunch break, and a one hour break in the afternoon: six hours on, three hours off (if all went smoothly). So what to do during these work-breaks? Our berthing compartment was secured (off limits) and the only place that "belonged" to the Airdales was the flight deck. Well, there was mumbletypeg and "shooting the breeze", as here. But I refrained from this pastime because, to be candid, I was somewhat elitist here on the flight deck during these off-hours, so much so that I refused to participate in the banter that I considered, at the time, to be gross and an adverse reflection of my self-worth. This was partly because my schoolmates were right now enrolled in the V-12 Program, matriculating at college and earning a commission as a naval officer while I was here, an Airdale, that lowest of all personnel on board ship (the doctor disqualified my V-12 application because of high blood pressure, and "politics" moved me from the Navigation Division to here). Also, because I was in a general funk about "my girl" going with a V-12 student every weekend at a college near hers, I was a bona fide loner (during off-hours). But during work-hours, I ridded myself of my "loner's hat" and I blended in very well with the others in the serious, and sometimes dangerous, work of being a good, complete Airdale in all ways. I had too much pride not to do so.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WORK–BREAK I

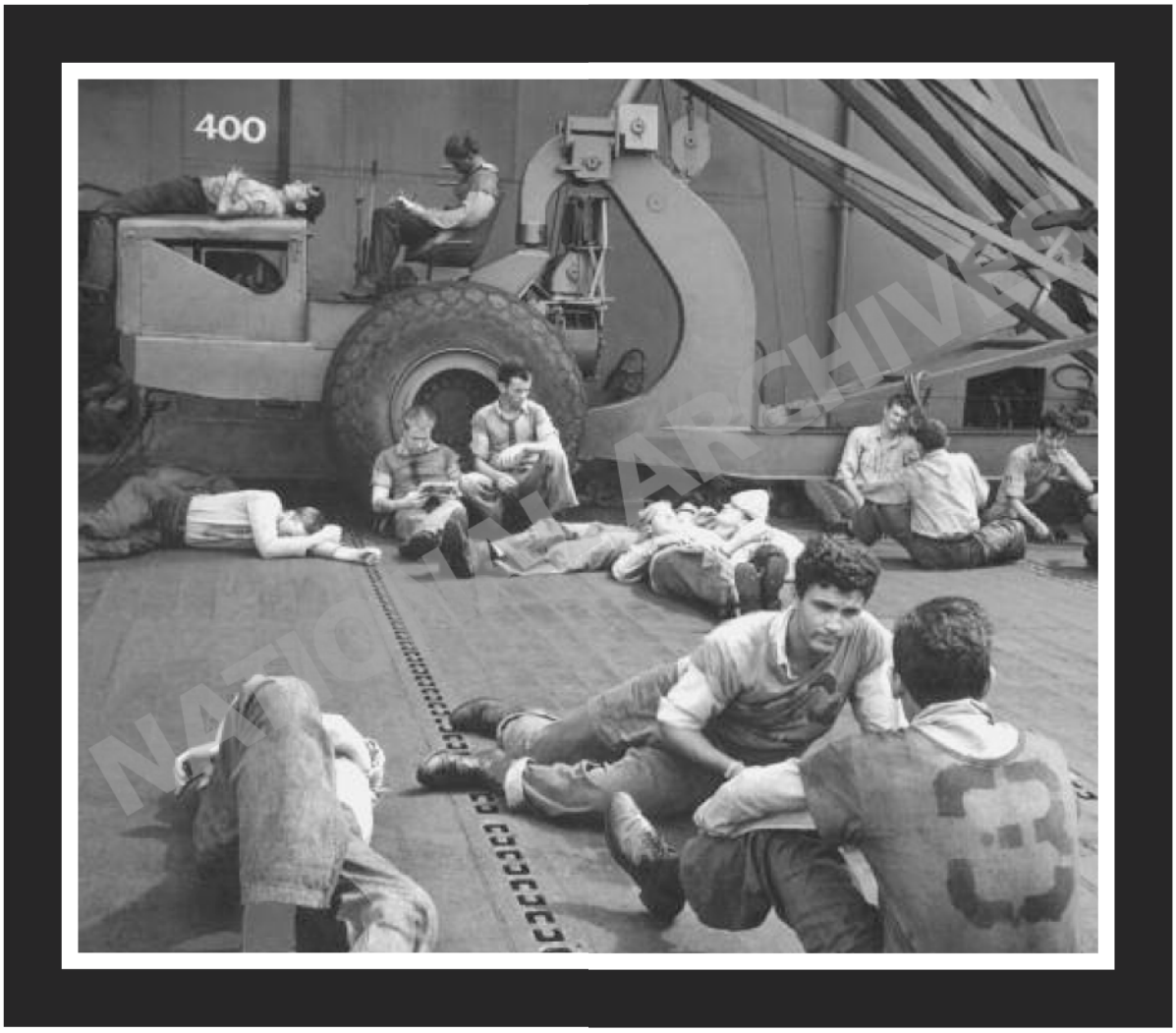
This was a very typical "tableau" during a work-break on the Antietam (less the blue shirts and caps). The backdrop for this picture is the same crane that was featured three pages previously except that here it is "folded up". This crane was located here, next to the island superstructure, to be close to where most of the crashes occurred. It was also sometimes placed back aft of the aft 5-inch gun-mount where crashes also occurred. If they wanted the crane out of the way, it was taken down to the hanger deck, right where the line formed for chow which was on the main deck below. Incidentally, note the number "400" on the bulkhead. This indicated the number of feet from this point to the front edge of the flight deck (which was about 900 feet long). It was essentially at this point from which the aircraft started their run down the flight deck during the launch operation. The following words sum up the work-break period: some would play mumbletypeg, some would read, and then there were those who took a catnap. (It's clear that when tired enough, any surface will do.) Part of this activity, or lack of it, was a reflection of, in large measure, one's personality: the effusive types would banter and joke among themselves; the thoughtful types would quietly read, while those who were diffident sought a place to snooze. I was essentially of the second type, finding reading material in the ship's small library (which was secured during work-hours). Having been a loner, I would usually find refuge at the after navigation bridge (always being vacant except during General Quarters). There, there were two lookout seats, one to port, one to starboard. I would sit in the one to starboard, away from the flight deck, the one that looked out over the limitless ocean, and let my contemplations wander to things and thoughts and places far removed from the ship and its activities. Often, too often, those thoughts would find their way to the problem, my problem, on the home-front. Other times they would dwell on what I had been reading, then they would shift abruptly to reminiscences of "my girl", and next I would wrench my thoughts away from her to find a little relief in the esoteric ideas of Plato or the smoothly written novels of W. Somerset Maugham both of which were from the library. All of these thoughts were to distance myself from the emotionally painful reality of the coming launch and parking operations shortly to come. These activities didn't seem to faze the experienced Airdales. They took them in stride. They were of the first group. While I was basically of the second group, initially, and for some time following, I was also of the third group. To have been in the third group was to be tired, was to be fatigued, so much so and so often that it was disturbing in its own right: after all, I was what one would have considered to be a healthy teenager. So why was I so prone to look for respite on a hard steel deck (at the after navigation bridge)? To be sure, the physical work of pushing aircraft that we Airdales did was not all that demanding. And yet a good deal of the time I felt thoroughly debilitated. The explanation of this debilitation was most likely the result of feeling the effects of the emotional tension and anxiety generated by anticipating the coming confrontation with the pulling and putting of wheelchocks (Chapters 7 and 10), in addition to the sometimes excruciating worry I felt (during the off-hours) about what was happening back home. Being "allergic" to loud noise didn't help. This solo, accumulated fear served to drain my energy. This was seriously counterproductive to one's survival on the flight deck during flight operations. But there wasn't a blue-shirt around who would let on to his fears, even while the catnaps belied his posturing. So prudence and grit were the antidotes for the mental dread, while the catnaps provided for some reconstitution of my determination not to miss ONE occasion of putting or pulling a wheelchock during the coming flight operations. My very self-respect was at stake in this, but hopefully, not my life. (Be SENSIBLE, for sure).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WORK-BREAK II

A short time later from the previous picture, this picture was taken, only with a larger cast of characters and as usual, essentially subdued. There are additional Airdales here who are catnapping, but also others who are not prone to do so. So why do some feel the need to take a catnap while others seem to be busy and alert? Are those others strong while those who catnap are weak? I don't think so. The latter ones are probably the newly recruited Airdales, those who have yet to become acclimated to the anxieties that are generated when big machines with big, fierce propellers creating big, over-powering wind-blasts make big threatening sounds. This is not an occupation that one blithely entered and remained emotionally and mentally untouched and unscathed. These new members of the Airdale fraternity will, in their own way, come to terms with the exigencies of a work-place that allows for no mistakes: the first one could certainly be the last one, being swiftly fatal. They, the new ones, would arrive at the emotional and mental adjustments necessary to perform their duties without becoming the worse for wear. The caveat here is that there is no time to ease into this job. I can distinctly recall the feeling of having to either "sink or swim". It did not come easily, this acclimatization, I can vouch for that. But it did eventually come and no, they were not weak, those who were initially so diffident. The catnaps were an integral part of learning to become an Airdale, a simple-minded job that was in no way simple (such as going to a wheelchock during a launch operation). Does the above ring true? Yes, it does, and remember, these newcomers were still only in their teens. When the crew of the Antietam was being put together in November of 1944, most all of the new personnel were drawn from the NJ/NY area. In this respect we had some- thing in common which we would use as a basis of making small-talk on the flight deck during working hours. (As has been said, I was not a loner during work-hours, but during off-hours I was a quiet, "contemplative" loner, in addition to being somewhat uncomfortable with my subconscious "elitism". However, there was no one with whom I did not get along with well; not buddy-buddy, but definitely not aloof. A loner, yes, aloof, no. The former usually means a certain lack of confidence (a no-no on the flight deck) while the latter usually means a certain lack of humility.) Being a loner has its drawbacks such as predisposing others to exclude you from consideration concerning possible opportunities that might arise. This is called "networking", a system that by definition includes some and excludes others. Success and networking seem to go hand in hand; there is a noticeable proportionality between the two. In a certain way this is to be deplored. In other ways it is inevitable, and understandable. One provides opportunities to those one knows, not to those who one does not know. There are two basic requirements for success: be (really) competent, and be known in a viable network. The one without the other leaves the one to be fairly useless. So one could well say that to be a loner is to be foolish. There are many ways to be foolish, and this way is one of the most foolish. As a general statement, it's not always easy not to be foolish, just as it's not always easy to not be a loner. And why does one become a loner? (Some would say "loser", the very worst of "cheap shots") However, to be a loner is not what one would call "normal", and it's not self-induced. That should narrow down the derivation of a loner, and reveal some of the reasons that someone would take himself out of the mainstream of society. To say that being a loner is wasteful is to say the obvious, and to say that there are those who like to be a loner is less clear. Still, most of us would say that to be a loner is to be avoided, if not by one's own efforts, then most assuredly, one will be by others. And yet, paradoxically, the very act of being avoided (read, "rejected") (by a significant other) is the very genesis of a loner. This is sad, but unfortunately, it's also a verity.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SIGNAL BRIDGE I

Here's an interesting view of the signal bridge, port side of the island superstructure, overhanging the flight deck by about ten feet and just below the catwalk that leads up forward to the Air Boss's Station (seen at the top middle of the picture) and beyond that to the navigation bridge and the adjacent pilot house (two pages further). There was an identical signal bridge on the starboard side of the island superstructure at the same height. Usually there were only two signalmen on the signal bridge at one time with the watches being four hours on duty, eight hours off duty, around the clock. (A sailor's off-duty hours were not idle hours. It was a time of study and practice for the purpose of advancing in grade and and rank.) This picture shows one signalman at the blinker-light, sending and receiving messages, while the signalman next to him is recording the message that was received, or, he was reading the message to be sent. One of the other signalmen is assembling some signal-flags to be hoisted up the halyard (the rope that pulls the flags upward, as on a flagpole, so as to be seen by those on the other ship(s). While the halyard method of signaling was one-way, for the most part the signal-light (blinker-light) method was two-way, with both lights responding back and forth. That is, a signal would be sent, and a reply would be returned right away, and then another signal was sent, and another reply, and so forth. When this was done, the two officers on the two ships who were generating these messages/responses would be right beside the signalmen. Semaphore flags were used primarily when ships were at anchor in a harbor. (Semaphore messages were sent by a signalman with a flag in each hand, positioning his arms in the locations of a clock-face; 12, 1.5, 3, 4.5, 6, 7.5, 9, and 10.5. Arm-positions right 9, left 7.5 is the letter "H". Thus, semaphore generated messages by spelling words, letter by letter, just as does the Morse Code, which uses sets of up to four dots/dashes to represent each letter. A competent signalman could send a message at speeds of up to 25 words per minute.). The signal-flags that were hoisted up the halyards have special meanings when in unique combinations (there are 26 of them for each letter and 10 of them for each number). These flags were hoisted in groups of two or three or four. However, urgent messages were sent as a single flag, such as the letter-flag "S" representing the message "My engines are going full-speed astern". While the U.S. Navy used the International Codes, it also had its own set of special-meaning flags. Where the International Code used the flag "F" to mean "I am disabled. Communicate with me", the navy flag for the letter "F" ("Fox") indicated to the surrounding picket ships that flight operations were underway. This flag was a white square flag filled with a red diamond shape. Thus, one-flag signals were urgent, two-flag signals were very important, three-flag signals were important, and four-flag signals standard. This method of signaling was rapid and accurate for tactical and concise messages, but it of course could not be used at night or in bad weather, where the blinker-light was the method that was used. As to why a modern naval vessel would use flags instead of radiotelephone, of which there was an abundance, the answer is of course the requirement to maintain radio silence. Even encrypted radio messages would alert the enemy as to one's whereabouts. True, a submarine could detect the visual signal of either the blinker-light or the signal flags if it was in the vicinity. And true, this same submarine could perhaps detect useful info if it were of a strategic nature, but this would be a remote scenario, especially as concerns the fact that the sub would be most interested in putting a spread of torpedoes into a ship as significant as a carrier. But at the same time, it would be presumed that the picket ships surrounding the carrier would have been aware of the submarines.

In any event, the flags were a integral part of the ship. Besides, what's a navy ship if it can't be festooned with colorful signal-flags?!



SIGNAL BRIDGE II

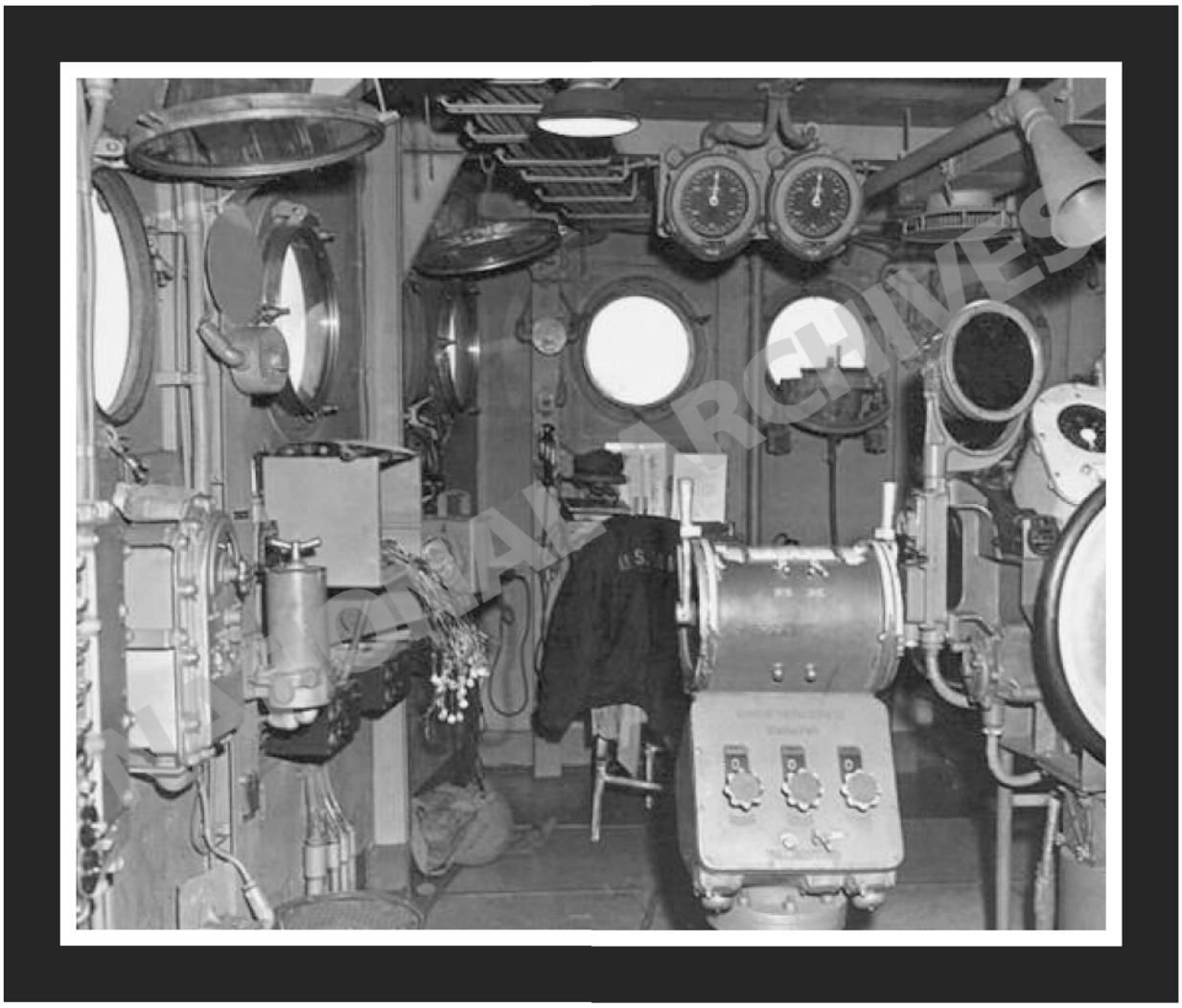
Now we're standing on the signal bridge, eavesdropping on these two signalmen sending and receiving a message by blinker-light. (The one closest to us is wearing a woolen "watch-cap" worn during cold weather.) The signalman to the left has his right hand on a lever, and by "snapping" his wrist, he opens and closes shutters just behind the glass front of the blinker-light. (Notice the lever on the left side of the light for those who are left-handed.) The Morse Code was used to send individual letters to form a message, with each letter comprised of a unique combination of up to four dots and/or dashes. The speed of generating the flashes was essentially the same as that of the telegraphic mode of transmission: taking a "dot" to be a unit (with about 2 "dots" per second), a "dash" was three units, and the pause between letters was one unit. Of course the light could be rotated 180 degrees so as to point both fore and aft and in between. There being at least two signalmen on the bridge at all times, one of the signalmen had to maintain a watchful eye on the other ships to detect a new message. As the signalman was receiving a message, he would periodically blink his light as an acknowledgment of the receipt of the message up to that point. How do I know this? I know it because during my one month at sea as a quartermaster striker in the Navigation Division, I would wander around the ship during my off-hours, and away from the books, as a matter of curiosity. The signal bridge was one of those places, right there below the catwalk, aft of the navigation bridge. It will be noticed that there are more than the 36 (26+10) plus flags in the bin. That's because some of the messages required the same flag. Also notice that there are 5 halyards available. This was to allow the two signalmen to make up a different messages at the same time, with only one halyard raised at one time. Actually, as one was running a message up the halyard, the other signalman was putting together another message, to be hoisted as the other message was being pulled down. Thus, several messages were run up the halyards in serial, not parallel. Each flag had a "snap" at its top inside location and a ring at its bottom inside location thus enabling the flags to be snapped together in the manner of the cars of a freight train. This was accomplished very quickly, with a four-flag message being assembled in about 10 seconds (each flag had its own unique slot in the bin).

This was communication at its most basic level, devoid of the possible impediments of the modern techniques of the modern age. It was an actual person-to-person contact with no intervening artifacts to disrupt the message. And just as people don't, and can't, live in a vacuum, so too do ships not operate in a vacuum. Just as people don't, and can't, live without communicating with each other, so too do ships need to communicate with each other. Carrying this idea further, the clarity of this communication is vital. If it's garbled, all sorts of mischief can ensue. Similarly, when one puts pen to paper, one should be most careful to be as lucid as possible, in every way. Just as inflections of one's voice convey meaning, so too does the proper use of the proper, APPROPRIATE words guide the reader in the desired direction. Some will call this "word-smithing". I would suggest "word-conveying" as being more to the point. The former would seem to be essentially window-dressing, which is not a bad thing, while the latter attempts to convey even the nuances of the meaning of the words. There is nothing so disconcerting as to have your written words misconstrued. And unlike the spoken word, once a written word is affixed, it is there for inspection forever. And furthermore, to convey the meaning of a single idea, a single message, to a multifaceted readership is the very dickens to do, for words have different, subtle meanings in certain different applications.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PILOT-HOUSE I

As said on the previous page, I spent a month at sea as a quartermaster striker in the Navigation Department. Thus, my duty station during that one month was here in the pilot-house within the navigation bridge of the ship, the head of the body of this great vessel. The next two pages also deal with the pilot-house, a place as quiet as the flight deck was, at times, noisy. (For the following twelve months my duty station was transferred to that "playing field", that expanse, that was the flight deck. (In the name of good usage, the term "expanse" felt like a gross misnomer when going to a wheelchock during launch and parking operations.)) The pilot-house was peopled by essentially four of us: the OOD (Officer of the Deck, a lieutenant), an ensign (the lowest ranked of the officers), a rated quartermaster, and a quartermaster striker. The OOD was a so-called "line officer", as differentiated from the specialty officers such as the Engineering Officer, the Communications Officer, the Navigation Officer, the Supply Officer, and all the other department officers on board ship. All of these officers were heads of departments with a rank of commander, one step below the rank of captain. The line officers were the "ship drivers", the ones who had the overall responsibility for getting the ship from here to there. Under the captain of the ship was his assistant, the executive officer, and next in command was the navigation officer. His chart-room was directly aft of the pilot-house, and his subordinates were either there or in the pilot-house. (The Air Department was part of the ship's company and was headed by the Air Officer, also a commander, while the aircraft squadrons were only assigned to a ship. A distinction was made between the air department, and its squadrons, and the ship's company in that the former were "brown-shoes" while the latter were "black-shoes".) The OOD, a lieutenant, "managed" the ship with the aid of the ensign assigned to him and who was primarily in a learning mode. The quartermaster was at the helm ("steering wheel") of the ship and the quartermaster striker was at the annunciator (directly to the left of the helm). These two quartermasters stood at these positions for four straight hours, a minimum effort for the occupied helmsman, but a chore for the striker who did essentially nothing but stand there for four straight hours. This was not entirely true though, because at times the striker would be given the helm as part of his training. Otherwise, he occasionally pushed or pulled those handles on either side of the annunciator, thus moving an indicator both here at the annunciator and down below in the engine-room. This action announced to the engine-room to change speed: quarter speed forward or one-half speed astern or full speed ahead or whatever. A fifth person in the pilot-house was a messenger, and periodically someone from the chart-room would make an appearance, as would a sundry assortment of other officers, even including the captain. Identifying some of the items is easily done by starting at the helm at the right side of the picture. Above it can be seen the rudder-angle indicator, and above that is the compass indicator. Above the compass is the voice-tube to the engine=room should all other means of communication fail. To its left are two dials that provide the ship's speed in knots. Going back to the annunciator we note, beneath it, three knobs and three windows. These knobs set the desired, precise RPM (revolutions per minute) of the propeller-shaft. During the time I stood watch at the annunciator, these knobs were never used. The ship obviously is in port, or at anchor, because one, no one is here, two, the RPM dial is zero, and three, that box to the left, with all the wires dangling outside, is being repaired. While the pilot-house was not much bigger than what's shown here, back of us on the bulkhead were multiple phones that were used for communicating both within, and outside of, the ship. This was a very interesting place to have been, especially when there was vital communication with the surrounding ships.



NAVAL ARCHIVES

PILOT-HOUSE II

Same location, different view. This picture shows that there were two identical compass-indicators, one to the right and one to the left of the rudder-angle indicator. Also notice a chronometer this side of the rudder-angle indicator, which indicator provides how much the ship's rudder is deflected, right or left, up to 30 degrees. Thus the helmsman had two indicators to enable him to steer the ship: the compass indicator and the rudder-angle indicator. The OOD would specify what course to maintain, or, he would tell the helmsman to come to a new heading, sometimes with the additional order of deflecting the rudder a certain number of degrees. Thus, he might say, "Rudder-angle 10 degrees, come to heading 240 degrees". Naturally, the larger the rudder-angle, the faster the turn. The faster the turn, the faster the ship approached the new given heading. The faster the approach to the new given heading, the sooner the helmsman had to ease back on the rudder-angle by readjusting the helm. If the requirement was to arrive at the new heading quickly (large rudder-angle), and that heading was far removed from the present heading, the ship would build up a large amount of circular momentum (and list). As a consequence, the helmsman was obliged to not only soon ease back on the rudder-angle, but also perhaps move the rudder to the opposite side (if it was left-rudder, move it to right-rudder; but by how much?) The effect of this was to markedly slow the rate-of-turn. But if the OOD wanted to reach the new heading quickly, this reverse-rudder couldn't be applied prematurely. And, if this was the case, then the reverse-rudder angle would have to be greater than normal. The whole idea here was to come to the new heading as quickly as possible with negligible, or no, overshoot of the given final heading. Thus, there were several variables involved, all of which were interrelated: the rudder-angle ordered, the heading ordered, the amount of change of the heading, the desired speed of achieving the new ordered heading, as well as the strength and direction of the wind (which determines the strength and direction of the waves imposing themselves on the side of the ship). All of these items interacted with each other, and the helmsman must accommodate each one of them simultaneously. This is not a little ship we are considering, but rather it is 30,000 tons of high-profile ship that at times is asked to make "agile" maneuvers for various reasons: aircraft attacks, submarine attacks, transitions from cruising to flight operations back to cruising. The most difficult type of steersmanship was making a small-radius turn at high-speed to a course far removed from the initial course. At those times skill was required to quickly reach the new course without too much, if any, overshoot of the desired course, because if you did approach the new course too quickly, you would surely tend to overshoot that desired course. But if you eased into the new course, making less likely an overshoot, too much time elapsed. Quick response, no overshoot.

I wasn't at the helm all that much, but when I was, I sincerely believe I did it well. And after all, I spent a lot of time standing next to the helmsman watching what he did and didn't do. I've always felt that one of the best ways to learn something that involved physical activity was to closely observe those who can, do that thing: there was a lot of satisfaction to be had when you quickly brought that compass pointer right onto the mark. What has been described here is an example of a human-controlled servo mechanism, that engineering technology that is so interesting and is also the very core of our present-day control systems. It was just this type of system, such as the fire control system, that was the reason that I left the banking business after two years and eventually went full time to earn my degree in electrical engineering: control engineering is a tremendously intriguing, engaging, and USEFUL subject, a favorite of mine.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PILOT-HOUSE III

Egads! There I am at the helm! At least, at first look, that was my impression. On second thought I came to the realization that it couldn't be me because I was never in the pilot-house without wearing my white cap (as did all of the Antietam personnel). That settled, that quartermaster striker wearing those sound-powered phones would, under normal circumstances, be on this side of the annunciator, facing forward, wearing a white cap, and never leaning on anything. Right now he's talking, supposedly, to the engine room, the only station to which he's connected. This picture definitely puts me in mind of an occasion when I happened to be at the helm, as here, during gunnery practice when the 20-mm and the 40-mm gunners were shooting at a towed-sleeve target. All of a sudden the OOD turned toward me and abruptly said, "Right full rudder". This meant that I was to turn the helm (the "steering wheel") such that the rudder-angle indicator showed 30 degrees to the right. Having observed such a process earlier when standing watch at the annunciator, I said, "30 degrees right rudder sir" and proceeded to put my right hand on the helm at the 9 o'clock position. Then, with all due "vim and vigor", I twirled the helm to the right three complete revolutions in about 3 seconds ! I knew this because the rudder-angle indicator told me so. Talk about servomechanisms (previous page)! In any event, it didn't take long before this action of mine took effect: the ship quickly started to turn to the starboard and at the same time it heeled over, further and further to the port side to what must have been 20 degrees. To feel a 30,000-ton ship do this is to experience both awe and a certain amount of trepidation (of going all the way over (I was a neophyte, remember). The OOD held this condition for about 12 seconds, as I recall, and then he snapped the order, "Left full rudder"! This seemed foolhardy to the extreme to this neophyte, but dutifully I "whipped" the helm to the left 6 revolutions in about 6 seconds ! That poor rudder also dutifully swung over an arc of 60 degrees in about 6 seconds. (Does this servomechanism have no limits ?!) The ship proceeded to leave a wake in the shape of the letter "S" and from a 20 degree list to the port, it inexorably leaned upright to then "descend" to 20 degrees to starboard (it heels in the direction opposite to the turn). What a magnificent show! And I was the culprit who was responsible for putting this great ship into such contortions. This was heady stuff to the simple quartermaster striker that I was. The OOD gave one additional order, 12 seconds later, to put the Antietam into another "right full rudder" mode to complete the exercise and confound the gunners. (I don't think the pilot who was pulling the tow-target was too enthused with the goings-on down below. But actually, he probably knew of these maneuvers ahead of time because, at the time, the Antietam was undergoing its shakedown cruise when all its facilities and capabilities were being tested.). Anyway, what a ride, short though it was ! When this exercise was over, no one, not a single person made mention of what had happened. It was as if it never happened. This was the first time the Antietam had done this (unless it had done so during its qualification trials pre-commissioning). But after commissioning, the only other time it did something similar was when President Roosevelt died. Then, we made a full, tight circle as a recognition of his death. But we didn't do it on VE Day, and we didn't do it at the end of the war on VJ Day. In any event, the above is a memory revived by this picture of "me" at the helm, where I can still feel the precise amount of resistance of the helm as I spun it around and around, over 57 years ago. I can even "feel" that small amount of play in the helm as I turned it a quarter turn to adjust for the action of the waves as we proceeded into a strong wind off our port quarter, for instance. These adjustments were a continuing requirement: a little left rudder immediately followed by a little right rudder, constantly compensating.



SEARCH RADAR

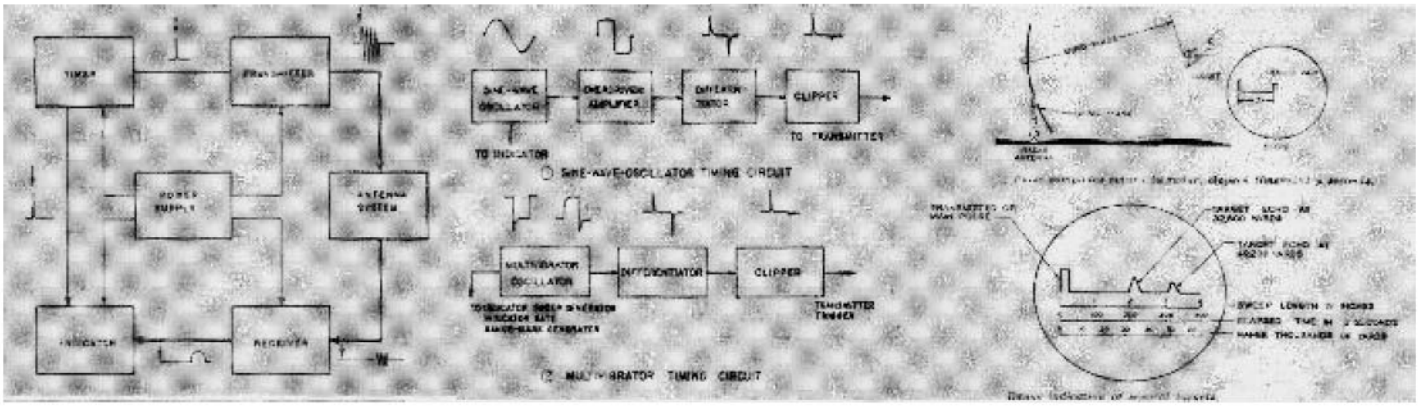
To search, and not find, could be downright traumatic in those circumstances of roaming enemy waters. "Knowing" that the enemy is lurking somewhere out there, and knowing that the enemy is seriously bent on smashing you, you naturally want to know his whereabouts. (You also know that the weather-gods can be very fickle about offering the concealment of a raging storm. And we all know that a raging storm is preferable to a raging fire. Or is it?) In any event, the exigencies of war hastened the development of radar to the extent that a search radar such as this 17x17 foot square antenna was developed (upper left). This SK Radar was probably the most important radar set on the Essexes, detecting enemy boggies 100 miles away. It also had an IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) antenna attached to its top edge. During the latter part of 1944 it was replaced by the SK-2 radar antenna which was a 17-foot circular radar dish. This configuration eliminated the power-robbing side-lobes of the SK Radar, thus increasing its directionality and range. The 15x5 foot SC-2 Radar (top right) was a backup to the SK. These radars would constantly rotate at about 12 rpm. It would sometimes stop and then jitter a few degrees about this point, "sniffing out" an unknown object(s). If the unknown(s) was close enough, the IFF would come into play. In the center of the picture is the MK 37 Fire Control Director with its MK 12 antenna on top of it, with a small-cut parabolic height-finding radar antenna MK 22 installed adjacent to the MK 12 antenna (see next page). Below the MK 37 Director is the 40-mm gun-director MK 51. To the left of the MK 15 is seen the P.A. loudspeaker, and to its left is a 20-mm gun-platform that was removed. In the foreground, looking like not much of anything are the propeller-blade covers (not used on the Antietam).

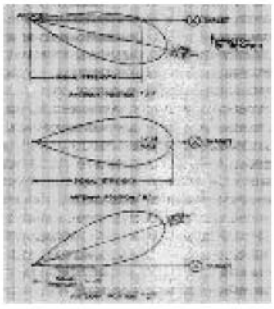
Why is it that so many of us search so hard for something we know, deep down, we'll never find? From the sublime to the ridiculous, some will search for the Holy Grail while some others of us will search for the secret of self-levitation. This is not to disparage the idea that "hope springs eternal", which is probably inbred into the character of mankind (although the years sometimes have a way of expending one's supply). But certainly this is a far better sentiment than the opposite one (of no hope). Then there's the admonition to "never give up" because "you never know", a la John Paul Jones who said "I have not yet begun to fight" as his ship was sinking beneath him (he was victorious). There are not many who could be so implacable as was this brave and admirable John Paul Jones. Instead of relief being just around the corner, many would consider that admonition to be nothing but a cruel hoax of self-delusion. Now then, such thinking leaves one completely out of the process of determining one's own destiny. True, it is the very few who can control their own destiny. But it's the effort to do so that puts a zest into one's life. It's the challenges, self-created and addressed, that make for the most satisfaction (as long as those created challenges are realistic; a whole new topic). Pity the poor person who "has it made", to use the vernacular, and has no new "mountains to climb". Is there such a thing as a preordained destiny? Not in my book. So often, it's the efforts, rather than the results, that provide the greatest satisfaction. If one approach doesn't work, try another approach. Just scheming about how to promote one's destiny is all the satisfaction one needs. All of this is a reflection of the attitude that to be dependent on others is about the worst situation one can find oneself (excluding medical problems, of course, where dependency is a given). Overcoming a realistic challenge that excludes even a taint of dependency is probably the most rewarding activity one can undertake. Physical challenges are fine, if reasonable, but intellectual and interpersonal ones overcome are the most gratifying. Try it.



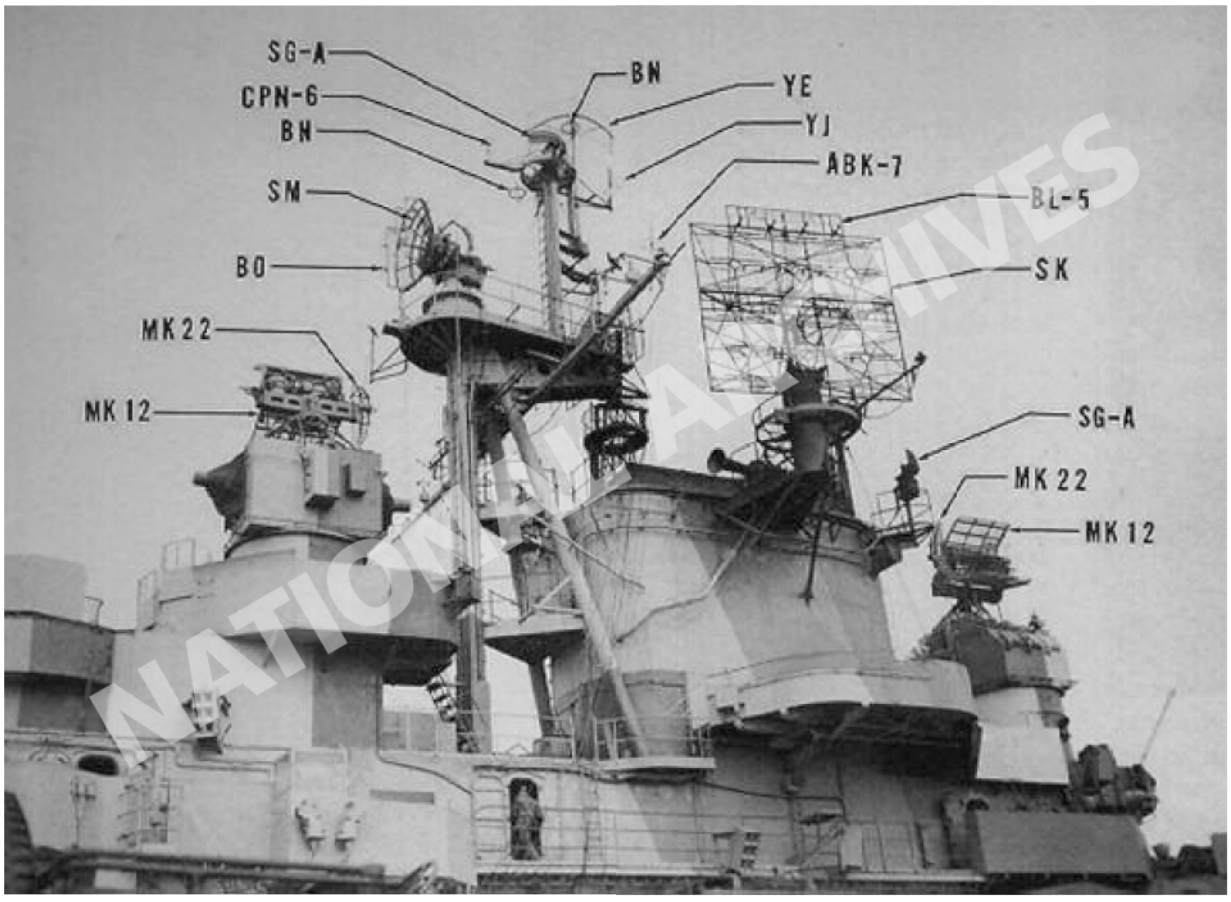
RADAR PRIMER

Less than one-half of the antennas on this ship are identified, or even identifiable because they are so small. There are antennas for air search, surface search, height determination, friendly aircraft homing signals, IFF (Identification Friend or Foe), TBS (Talk Between Ships), enemy radar detection, enemy radar jamming, radio whip antennas, backup antennas, and all varieties of high-frequency radio communications up there in the island superstructure. VERY briefly, there will follow a primer on the content and operation of radar.





Above, left, is a pulsed radar system. The Timer synchronizes the system with pulses as generated by the top, inside diagram. The Transmitter generates the h-f energy in the form of short, powerful pulses (top, right) by turning the output of constant amplitude and frequency generator on and off. The Antenna radiates a highly directional beam ("searchlight"), and receives any target-reflected pulses, sending it to the Receiver which amplifies these weak signals and applies them to the Indicator (top right). The Power Supply supplies power. Microwaves are used for greater directivity. Sufficient time must be allowed between transmitted pulses to allow for a returned echo signal before the next transmitted pulse. The antenna must be rotated slowly enough to allow for sufficient number of returned pulses to maintain the persistence of the Indicator. The transmitted pulse width must be narrow enough to not mask close-in targets. The lower left diagram shows the azimuth transmitted beam and the same is true for the vertical elevation beam of the antenna's vertical motion. Time to target and back is the range.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INSPECTION I

There now follow six pictures of the ship's crew in multiple lines of attention reflecting an estimable military discipline.In the spirit of this show of solidarity of purpose by the ship's company, each of the six pages will consider one of the six virtues of a military enterprise: duty, honor, courage, commitment, country, and steadfastness. (But first, the astute observer will note that the correct orientation of this picture is to be found in a mirror. No implications implied here.

Short of the activities of war, the most distinctive show of military bearing is the alignment of troops at attention, symbolizing a readiness to do one's duty. What a sharp and meaningful contrast to a group of sloven slackers. In the context of this picture, duty is "that which one is expected or required to do by moral or legal obligations". In this case, the prescript is the law as validated by the oath of enlistment. You SHALL fulfill any lawful order given to you, without any limits of reservation that might occur to you, or even seem to you to be life-threatening. The word "lawful", while subject to interpretation in civilian life, is not so accorded in the military life. (The killing of civilians, for instance, is clearly unlawful unless they are trying to kill you. But then, you say, which of them are trying to do so? Unfortunately, there are no easy answers.) However, where is it written that a military superior is necessarily guided by infallible judgment? What if that superior, remaining back in the safety of his lines, and with little care, requires a subordinate to undertake what can only be considered, by reasonable people, to be suicidal (without the benefit of "volunteering")? And who can say what is reasonable? We are a long way from the time when the king himself led his troops into individual combat. And how does one measure the goal to be gained to be worth the blood that would surely be shed? Must a military superior have the wisdom of Solomon?

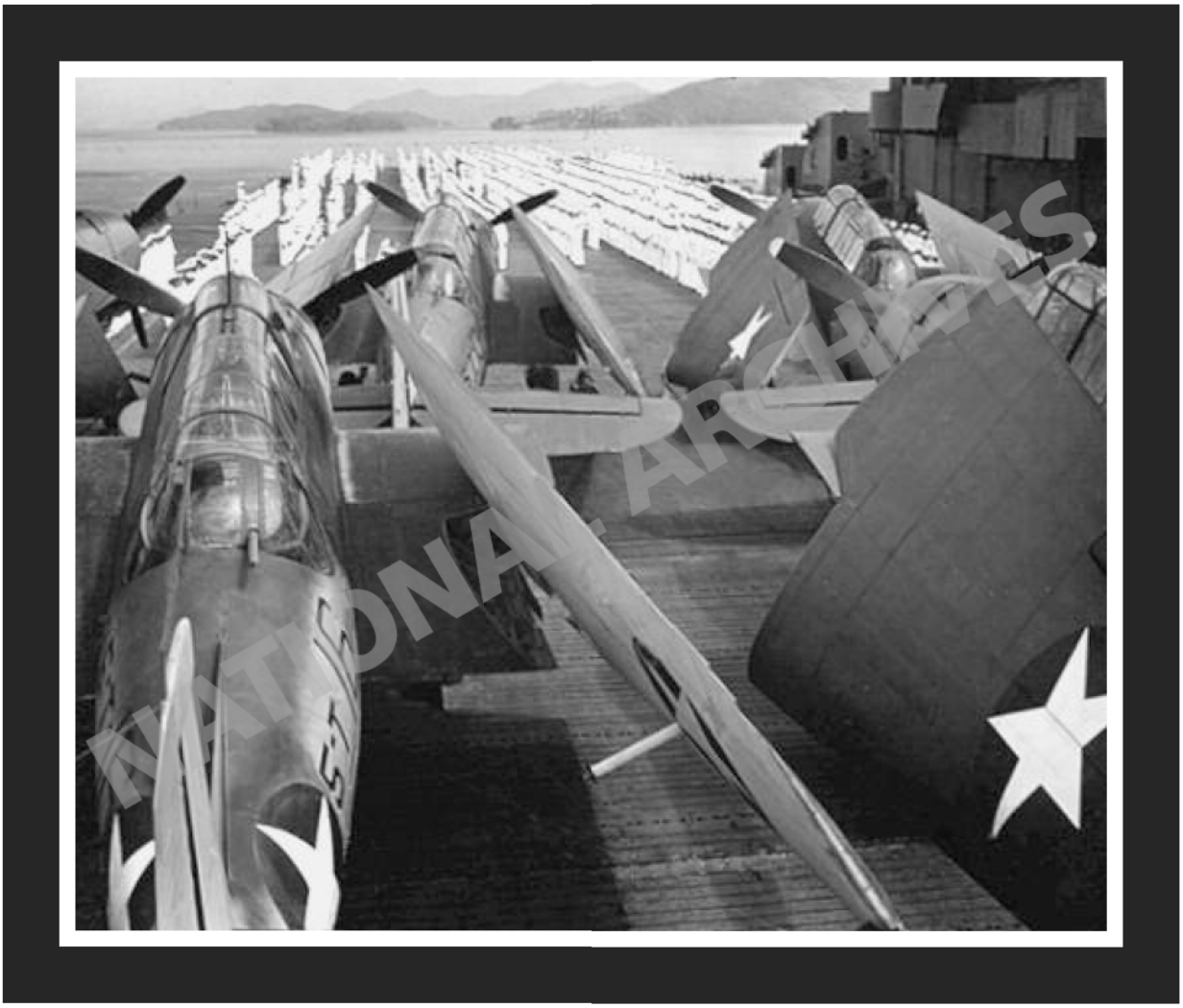
Should every military man gladly adhere rigorously to that famous poem by Tennyson, "The Charge Of The Light Brigade" that says "their's not to reason why, their's but to do and die"? But some will say that personal vengeance motivated them, and others will say it was merely the manifestation of "manliness", while others will say it was the egregious result of miscalculation. In any event, many were brought down, and the question arises, "was there a better way?" Always, is there a better way? And yet, who can deny that siren song of "the call of duty"? A more acceptable definition, perhaps, at least in the civilian arena, is "the action or task required by one's position or occupation". Or, "the RESPECTFUL and obedient conduct due a parent, superior, elder, etc." Or, "a task or chore which one is expected to perform". The word "duty", among other things, would seem, in civilian life, to depend in large measure on the satisfactory development of a well-honed conscience (it's very pleasing that the word "conscience" ends in the word "science": " a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of fact or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws" (especially of the physical world, that area that when seriously considered, brings shivers of awe.) Duty could be thought of as that concept that holds society in a marvelous equilibrium, generally speaking, without which anarchy would devour us all. While there are anarchists who believe that their way is the way to utopia, unfortunately there are not enough good people in the world to make a go of it, the pros and cons of organized religion notwithstanding. But if only the pros of organized religion were considered, and if there were a great preponderance of these good people of the church (of all faiths and denominations), then duties would take on the mantel of privileges. There will+ be the skeptics who question the term "good". Let's just say that most all of us know "good" when we see it.


NAVAL ARCHIVES

INSPECTION II

It's not clear why some of the crew is in its work-cloths while the others are in their whites, unless those in their whites are going on liberty (a 12-hour pass) after inspection. But if they're going on liberty, the ship is at a liberty-port, and if they're at a liberty-port, the aircraft ordinarily are on the beach (at a land airfield). So who knows what's happening here, not that it makes that much difference. Furthermore, they aren't giving out medals and commendations because they are instead reviewing the crew. Notice how those actually being reviewed are at attention while the others are at "parade rest". These reviews were only held while in port, and the liberty-call had been made. Here we see only a portion of the ship's company of about 3,000 personnel. The rest of the crew is below decks in one or another of the many, many compartments where space is at a premium and crowding is standard. Back aft are seen the big and bulky SB2C Helldivers. To the left is that box-looking object that is the container for the signal flags.

It was on such occasions as this that the commanding officer would present medals and citations for meritorious and valorous duty while under enemy fire. These were times when there would be those who were honored for their courage and bravery, sometimes done "above and beyond the call of duty". We would say that their courage was a reflection of their bravery while under fire, where that fire could have been from the bombs and machine-guns from above, or the actual fires generated by those bombs exploding on a deck full of gassed and armed aircraft. Courage can take several forms, among which are mental courage, physical courage, and heroic courage. Considering the last first, heroic courage is that truly rare act of someone knowingly putting oneself directly, and possibly fatally, in harm's way in order to preserve someone else's life. The hero deliberately jeopardizes his life in lieu of another's life. This is exceptional, even though the act itself could be mere instinct (not to in any way diminish what is the supreme sacrifice). To be honest, some heroic deeds are not thought about, they are just done. The former are the truly courageous deeds. Physical courage concerns threats to one's body, while mental courage concerns threats to one's mentality. The dictionary says that courage is "the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty (the mind), danger, or pain (the body) with firmness and without fear". One could well take exception with the phrase "and without fear". This implies that the courage does not require intelligence. It will be posited that when intelligence is absent, then bravery "kicks in". Again, not to belittle bravery, one could say that bravery is what occurs after overcoming many occasions that required courage. Thus, bravery is "what comes naturally" to some few people. However, bravery can take on the mantel of an addiction, and no addiction is useful. Likewise, fearlessness, a companion of bravery, is akin to foolishness. But always, courage, de facto, implies intelligence, and fear must be the hand-maiden of courage. Courage need not be associated only with physical courage, for one can have the courage of one's convictions, and suffer painfully for it. In addition, mental courage can be ongoing over time, while physical courage is essentially very finite, of a short episode. A glowing example of this courage are those who have the courage to resist the siren's song (there she is again) of conforming to the peer pressure to be apart of what is demonstrably "fool's gold". In fact, those who do not succumb to what is known to be false and foolish and fraudulent and of the lowest common denominator are to be accorded the highest marks for "courage under fire" extending all the way to the bravest "dudes" around. They are also, hands down, the very smartest "dudes". Popularity is way over-rated. It's a BIG world out there!


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INSPECTION III

It's not clear why some of the crew is in its work-cloths while the others are in their whites, unless those in their whites are going on liberty (a 12-hour pass) after inspection. But if they're going on liberty, the ship is at a liberty-port, and if they are at a liberty-port, the aircraft ordinarily are on the beach (at a land airfield). So who knows what's happening here, not that it makes that much difference. Furthermore, they aren't giving out medals and commendations because they are instead reviewing the crew. Notice how those actually being reviewed are at attention while the others are at "parade rest". These reviews are only held while in port, and the liberty- call has already been made. Here we see only a portion of the ship's company of about 3,000 personnel. The rest of the crew is below decks in one or another of the many, many compartments where space is at a premium and crowding is standard. Back aft are seen the big and bulky SB2C Helldivers. To the left is that box-looking object that is the container for the signal flags.

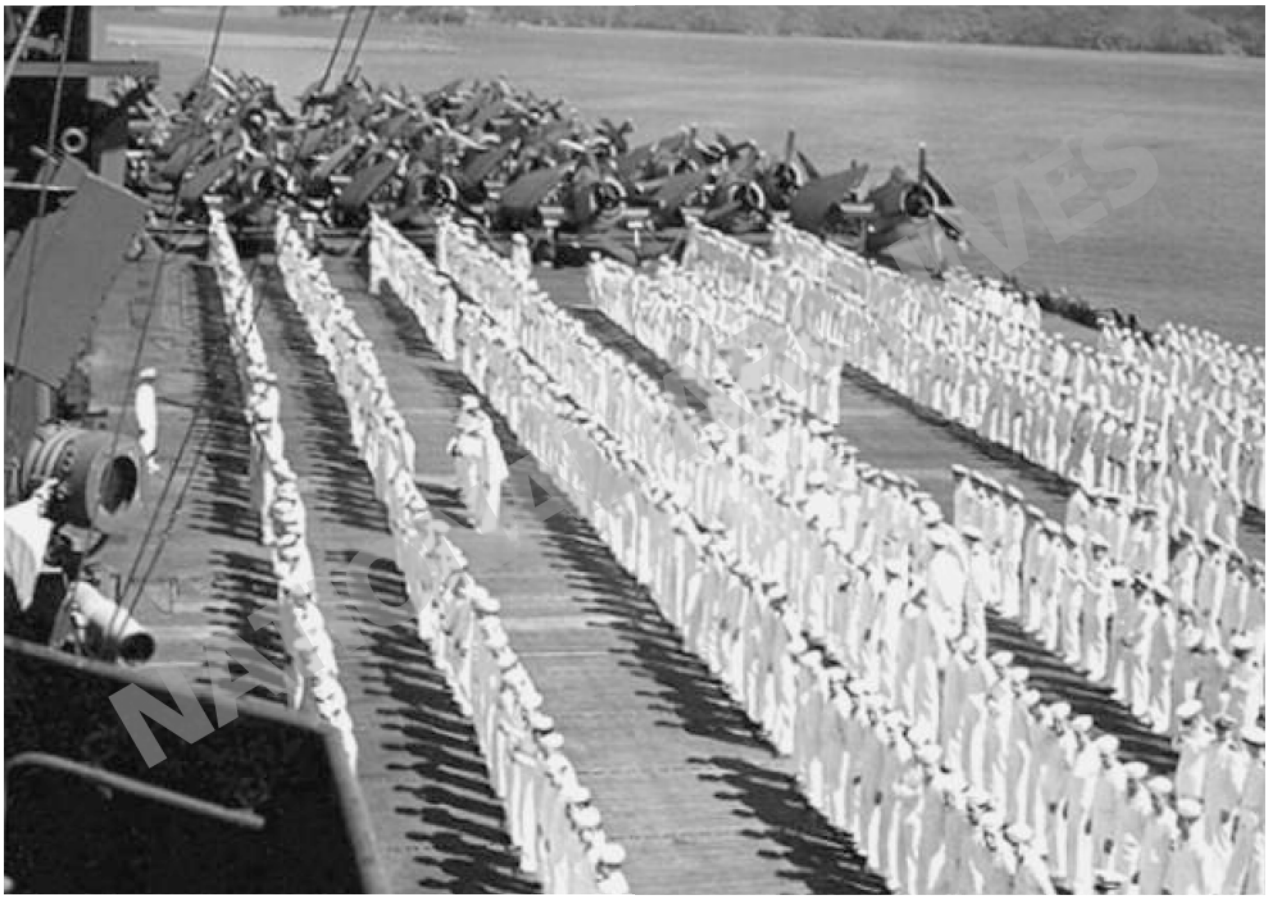
It was on such occasions as this that the commanding officer would present medals and citations for meritorious and valorous duty while under enemy fire. There were times when there would be those who were honored for their courage and bravery, sometimes done "above and beyond the call of duty". We would say that their courage was a reflection of their bravery while under fire, where that fire could have been from the bombs and machine-guns from above, or the actual fires generated by those bombs exploding on a deck full of gassed and armed aircraft. Courage can take several forms, among which are mental courage, physical courage, and heroic courage. Considering the last first, heroic courage is that truly rare act of someone knowingly putting oneself directly, and possibly fatally, in harm's way in order to preserve someone else's life. The hero deliberately jeopardizes his life in lieu of another's life. This is exceptional, even though the act itself could be mere instinct (not to in any way diminish what is the supreme sacrifice). To be honest, some heroic deeds are not thought about, they are just done. The former are the truly courageous deeds. Physical courage concerns threats to one's body, while mental courage concerns threats to one's mentality. The dictionary says that courage is "the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty (the mind), danger, or pain (the body) with firmness and without fear". One could well take exception with the phrase "and without fear". This implies that the courage does not require intelligence. It will be posited that when intelligence is absent, then bravery "kicks in". Again, not to belittle bravery, one could say that bravery is what occurs after overcoming many occasions that required courage. Thus, bravery is "what comes naturally" to some few people. However, bravery can take on the mantle of an addiction, and no addiction is useful. Likewise, fearlessness, a companion of bravery, is akin to foolishness. But always, courage, de facto, implies intelligence, and fear must be the hand-maiden of courage. Courage need not be associated only with physical courage, for one can have the courage of one's convictions, and suffer painfully for it. In addition, mental courage can be ongoing over time, while physical courage is essentially very finite, of a short episode. A glowing example of this courage are those who have the courage to resist the siren's song (there she is again) of conforming to the peer pressure to be a part of what is demonstrably "fool's gold". In fact, those who do not succumb to what is known to be false and foolish and fraudulent and of the lowest common denominator are to be accorded the highest marks for "courage under fire" extending all the wat to the bravest "dudes" around. They are also, hands down, the very smartest "dudes". Popularity is way over-rated. It's a BIG world out there!



INSPECTION IV

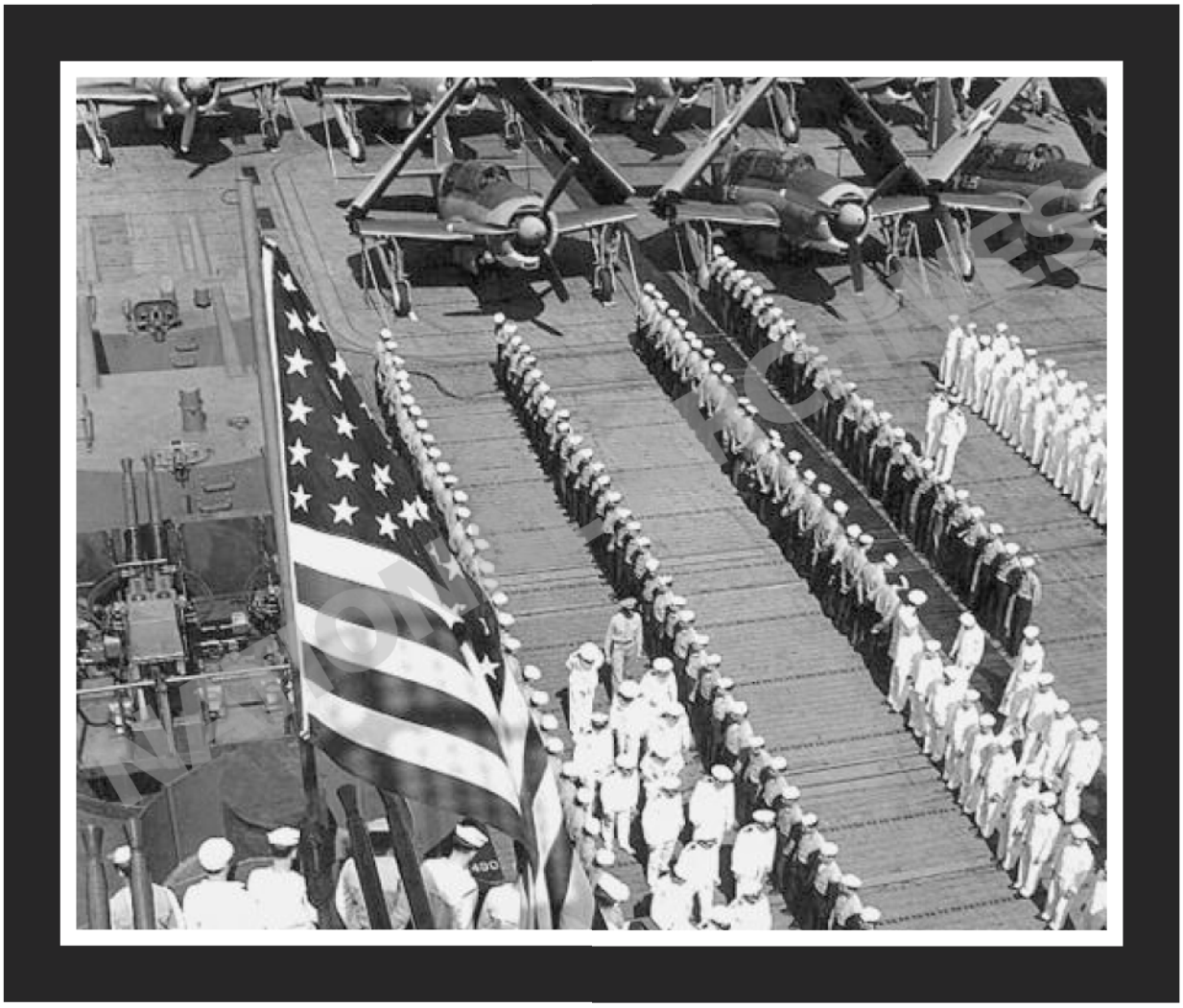
There he stands, one man alone, facing that large group of a crew that in the days and weeks before, each and everyone of them, formed just a small cog in a very large machine which was designed, built, and dedicated to the defeat of an implacable foe. Their ranks exude that sense of discipline required to accomplish this daunting task, and while some were more committed to this task than others were, each and everyone, it is stoutly averred, could be counted upon. (From a distance, note the universal uniformity of the personnel.) Actually though, right now, each and everyone of them is anticipating his release from the confines of the ship and the subsequent "liberty call". This picture was taken from the Air Boss' station held during flight operations. One level below this one can be seen the signalman's blinker-light and his telescope below that that is used to read the responding blinker-light. Above the blinker-light is the P.A. loudspeaker. And yes, the ranks could be a little straighter, but then, they're "only swabbies", and not a drill-team.

While they could better commit to straightening their ranks, their real commitment, the commitment of the naval personnel as here, was to a far greater goal: that of doing the very best job of which they were capable. And what should be said about commitment ? A commitment, as described in the dictionary is "a pledge or a promise", an obligation to honor. In this environs, one could well say that a commitment implies entering solemnly into an endeavor or cause in which one sincerely believes. One would have been hard put to find one who, deep down, while not worn on his sleeve, did not hold to this. It's true that the level of commitment could be a function of that to which one is committed. For instance, while one could be committed to learning to play the piano, that would be a far, far cry from a commitment to one's country. The difference obviously is that the former refers only to oneself (usually), while the latter concerns all that for which one's country stands. A commitment embraces not only a promise to accomplish something, but also usually a deep belief in the cause to which one is committed. A commitment, once undertaken, can not be easily shrugged off. In fact, it can not be shrugged off at all. A promise, a pledge, has the aspects of a contract solemnly taken. While there was no paper that was signed, the very fact that there was no signed promise (a promissory note) is in a fundamental way an indication that the commitment had a stronger and more binding moral force than that of a written piece of paper. That is, "in the days of old" and in some places, a "man's word was his bond". Where have those days gone ? Have they gone ? Still, a verbal commitment does not imply that it was "written in concrete". But it would be absolutely appropriate and meet to obtain a release from that to which , to whom, a commitment could no longer hold. In the navy, there was (is) no such option. In the navy, the commitment was made by a pledge and a signed piece of paper. HOWEVER, the navy did not accomplish what it did by a group of people "meeting their contract". A contract is a legal obligation; a commitment, on the other hand, is a strict avowal to complete a task no matter what the obstacles, what the difficulties, what the hardships. The task to be completed is the focus, not the "terms of agreement". To commit to a cause is to devote oneself, all of oneself, to a satisfactory conclusion of the enterprise undertaken. If one sincerely believes in the cause, the commitment follows easily. It's the concept of "above and beyond the call of duty" that best paraphrases the word "commitment". The U.S. Navy could not have accomplished its sometimes extremely difficult task without the many, many men who were suffused with the genuine will to commit themselves, their efforts, their very safety to a cause called "country" (which is addressed, with due circumspection, on the next page).



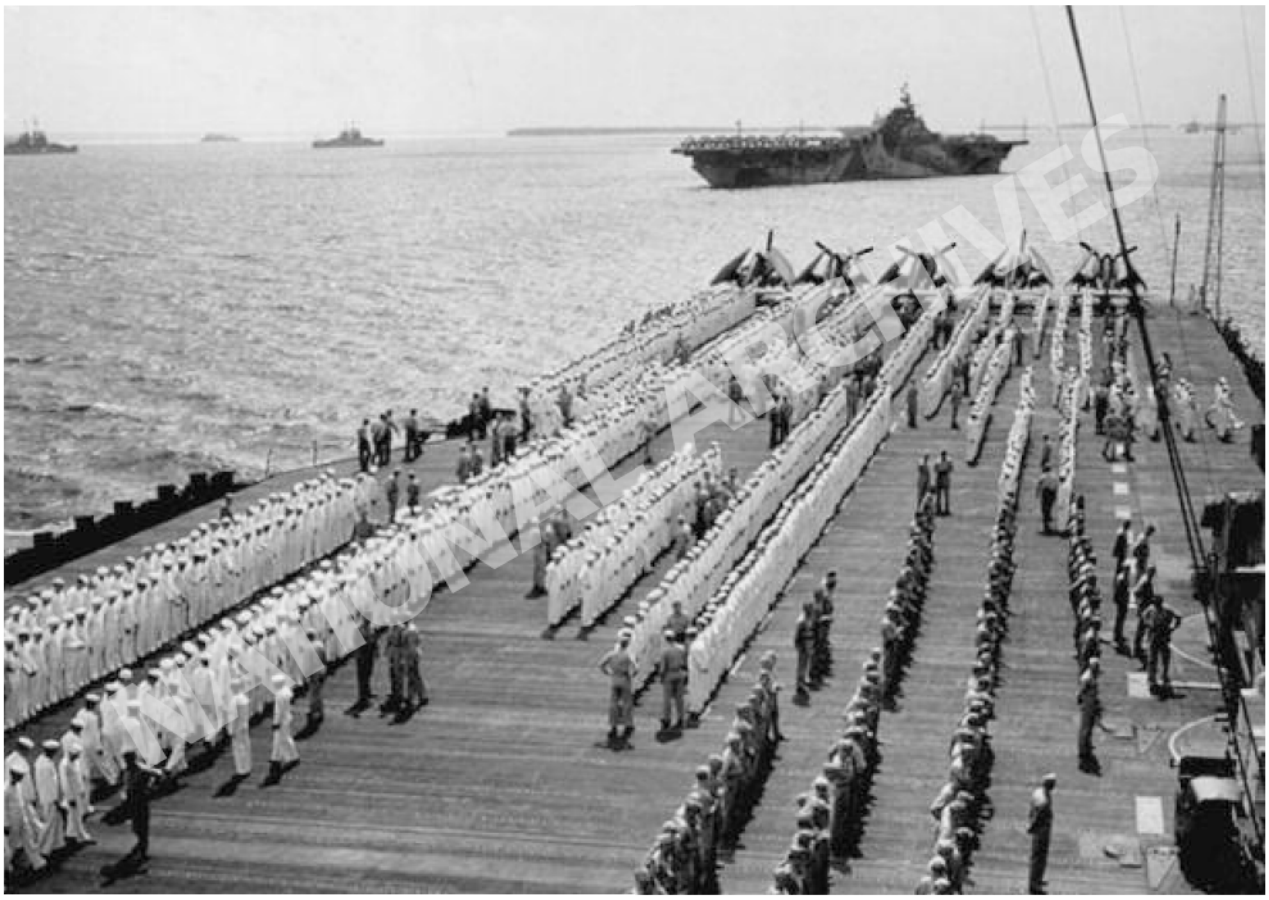
INSPECTION V

Carrying over from the previous page the theme of our country, we're greeted here by the symbol of our country, "Old Glory", the flag that always flew from the mast at the after navigation bridge in full view of all those who cared to look up from the after half of the flight deck. I always enjoyed these infrequent occasions, as here, because quite frankly I felt a certain sense of quiet pride in being a part of this great effort, this noble enterprise, if you will, that was dedicated to the defense of this great country. In short, I thought this review created the right tenor for the things that were to come as these aircraft, now immobile and inert, would spring to life, noise and all. Also, this "stand down" situation seems to symbolize well the symbiosis of man and machine as together they promote the cause of freedom from a determined would-be oppressor. Of course a machine can have no feelings, but those felt by man, in such circumstances, can more than make up for the inanimate machine. Grown men, at least some of the more perceptive ones, have been known to have cried when their land, their beloved country, was overrun by those who meant them ill and who subjugated them. This was of course the result of feelings strongly felt for all the things that "country" elicited. While there are those who say, "My country, right or wrong", and while this all-encompassing allegiance is understandable and perhaps vital and virtuous, it would seem that a stronger, a more enduring sentiment would be, "My country, and righting the wrongs". That is, "I believe we have the best country extant, but there are things that can make it even better". (That said, it would be a mistake to belittle others, and other countries, that are different merely because they are different, because these very differences could be the things that could measurably improve one's own country.) In the early 1940's, there were made several "Why We Fight" films that portrayed the many attributes of this country, along with the things our forebears and Founding Fathers undertook. Those attributes, and that heritage, were reminders of how very fortunate we were in spite of the burdens and sacrifices that we were called upon to endure. Many, many things in life are taken for granted, never given thought to, never even alluded to in our day-to-day activities. In wartime, these attributes are magnified, and we take notice of what can only be called "our blessings" that we enjoy day after day, in spite of anything else. It's sad, even while it's understandable, that we very seldom fully appreciate these blessings of ours (even while not forgetting the short-comings that exist in this country—as in ALL countries). Some of these short-comings are of a national nature, but certainly, some are of a personal sort.) What is probably needed is the emotional, not just the intellectual, realization that there is something far, far greater than self and one's small environment of family and friends. And that of course is Country. Doesn't it make sense that the better the environment, (read, Country) the better one and all will enjoy life. (Some will say, with a good deal of reason, that there is much, much more to life than enjoyment. Heaven help the Country if this is not so. Certainly a spiritual life should be at the top of the list, and it was because of this that these pages have mentioned the good to be gained by allocating quiet-time to one's schedule.) Returning to the beginning of this page, it is Country, and love of it (blemishes and all), that imbue a devoted dedication to its preservation during wartime, and salutary growth during peacetime. Some few people will devote a life, and a lifetime, to the concept of Country: certainly there is no imperative for one to do this, nor should they necessarily feel that they are being less than patriotic if they do not do so. What they should do though, in my opinion, is to be sincerely, even deeply, appreciative of what has been provided to them by the efforts of many, many others, sometimes to the detriment of their very lives. That's the very least they can do: be APPRECIATIVE of this, our Country.



INSPECTION VI

On this bright and sunny day at high noon, there "stands" her compatriot, off her bow, outlined against a shimmering sea and a brilliant shy, with a deck-load of death-dealing aircraft. Equally outlined, but on her own deck, are five of her aircraft, Hellcats all, whose menacing propellers are etched against that same shining sea. (Notice the precious little space between the aircraft that's available to an Airdale as he negotiates his way, his critical way, to a wheelchock during launch operations. Even now, the co-existing "chills" and "sweats" are recalled.) Apparently this view is one of an anchorage somewhere in the Pacific Ocean where are seen not only that Essex-class carrier but also a couple of cruisers off to the left (and surely other ships elsewhere.) Bringing our attention in closer, we're looking at another inspection that this time includes the marine contingent that manned some of the 20-mm guns. (The sea-going marines were a tradition from the days of the sailing ships. They were there, among other things, to maintain law and order.) This inspection, which no doubt includes the 45-man cadre of Airdales, is an informal one as witness the sailors' lack of black neckerchiefs, the officers wearing khakis, and the marines wearing their "greens". But this flight deck was not a parade-ground with bands and all. It was an "airfield", first and foremost, and all that that implied. Nevertheless, let's strike up the band (in our mind) and play with gusto the upbeat "Anchors Aweigh", not once, not twice, but three times! This will start the patriotic juices flowing as we look down on this grand naval panorama. For this crew, or any crew, to accomplish its mission, it would take more than the momentary thrill of rousing march music such as the playing of the "Stars and Stripes Forever". One of the ingredients essential to imbuing the crew with the sense of excellence that was necessary for satisfactory performance was the concept of steadfastness of purpose in achieving a worthy goal. Resolve must be the counterweight to transitory enthusiasm. In a crew, everyone depends on everyone else, and without steadfastness of intent, where is the reliability that every sailor owes the other? Being able to depend on someone is invaluable (which is well known), and steadfastness is key. But steadfastness also implies a determination to stay the course in the face of whatever trials and tribulations that might confront one. Each time a difficult task is overcome, it becomes more doable the next time, while at the same time helping to quell those qualms that were the "mountain to climb". Fear on the flight deck could not be easily dispelled except by the gritty determination to remain steadfast throughout, in the face of real jeopardy (of going to a wheelchock during a launch). The very act of persevering against the daily assaults of these anxieties and apprehensions only served to strengthen one's resolve to overcome the obstacles the next time. Steadfastness will wear down the doubt, and thus the neophyte becomes, eventually, the tried and true Airdale. It's easy enough to bend to the task when "the ship is taking on water" and when the task is well-defined. But what can be said when the "band stops playing" and the task is ill-defined? I was once told, long ago and far away, that "life is a constant struggle". If that should be true, then to be steadfast is to be a survivor. But where does one find such steadfastness? Hope? Faith? Perhaps, but how about "grit", pure and simple? An indomitable spirit is pure gold, especially in the face of impossible odds. If one should be of noble thought, then cling to the song that says "I Did It My Way". And to understand what real steadfastness is, listen to the song "Impossible Dream". Finally, Kipling's poem says ".....If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they are gone.....And which is more–you'll be a Man, my son!" (Daughters not excluded). And again (and always), "To thine own self be true" in everything one does and one thinks, letting steadfastness undergird the entire fabric of one's noble endeavors.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LIBERTY CALL

Tsingtao, straight ahead. Here we are on a boat going directly from the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36) to the port of Tsingtao, northern China, in 1946. (This is actually part of the Antietam's crew.) Since there was no pier large enough to handle a ship the size of the Antietam, this was our mode of going ashore. In fact, every port we visited, overseas, required this method of access (except for Pearl Harbor). While I was on the Antietam, January 1945 to May 1946, I was able to visit, overseas, the ports of Tokyo, Yokosuka (a naval base just south of Tokyo), Tsingtao, Manila, and Hong Kong twice, plus Guam, and Pearl Harbor several times. When I had liberty at Yokosuka, I visited Kamakura where is located the BIG bronze Buddha statue next to a shrine in a wooded area. While there a little old Japanese man appeared from nowhere offering to take our picture with the Buddha in the background (a 1-year Princeton University man in the Navigation Division and me. I'll include this picture in my next book, if I can finish this one). We stayed at each port of call only two days, sufficient for both watches (starboard and port) to have one liberty. One of my most impressionable liberties was a short train trip out of Tokyo to Yokohama, once a large industrial city. While downtown Tokyo appeared to be unscathed, Yokohama was completely leveled (at least the part I saw). It was absolute devastation and desolation, where not a thing was standing. It was, in a word, horrific. (Since this was some months after the cessation of hostilities, perhaps what I saw was the result of the area having been cleaned up. I don't know.) Except for my liberty to Kamakura, all my liberties, everywhere, were taken solo, partly because of my penchant to be a loner, but mostly because of my even stronger desire to do the things that I had wanted to do in the limited time available (our liberties were only twelve hours, and our port visits were far and few between). Besides, from the talk on board ship, the others' idea of a good time was essentially to carouse the bars and environs. (The carousing mode crosses the line when too much "adult beverages" have been consumed and the concept of being a gentleman at all times has been debased and befouled. A good good time can be had without being "high".) Instead of being a carouser, I was curious about places and people about whom I read. Probably the most outstanding port of call, or at least the most impressive, was the harbor of Hong Kong, at night with the city all lit up, all the way to the top of the semi-mountain that dominated the harbor. To the other side, not far away, was the less dense city of Kowloon , but still alight with activity. My liberties in Hong Kong were enjoyable in that it was not only literally a world away, but also because it was "a world away". And yes, Hong Kong had bars and girls, but there was much more than that to explore. In one walk-about I found myself on a little side street that was a market place to throngs of people, literally shoulder to shoulder. Since I stood head and shoulders above them, I could view the entire area, and what I saw was none but orientals. This caused something of a concern, but in fact, it turned out that I was just one of the many, and in no way a curiosity. That was good. I should add that I too was "good", related to the many, many pretty oriental girls, in their pretty oriental cloths, and who were very pleasing in their charming gentility. This was a real revelation that has ever since been a delight: they were the very antithesis of those scenes of "booze" and abuse of one's body, of drug and drain of one's brain, of cavorting with callousness, of displaying excessive boisterousness, of showing lack of respect for ALL others, and in general, exhibiting offensiveness and self-centeredness and self-obsessiveness. In other words, don't be rude, crude and socially unacceptable, as I once overheard someone say. Yes, those young, pretty, charming girls were definitely of a different world, and without all of our many advantages As has been said many times, "life is not fair". But why in Heaven's name isn't it?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HANGER DECK I

The following seven pages are of the hanger deck because it can be considered a natural extension of the flight deck. Where the flight deck could hold 100 aircraft, the hanger deck was limited to a maximum of 60 aircraft. This was seldom done though because while the hanger deck was an extension of the flight deck, a primary function was to provide for an area for aircraft maintenance. Here in this picture we obtain a good view of a little less than one-half the area of this cavernous space. Starting with the furthest background, we notice about forty 1,000-lb. bombs along with additional ordnance behind them. That sheen seen on the (2 ½ inch) steel deck comes from the daylight streaming in from the side of the ship which at night, and in cold weather, is covered by a steel curtain, and which is now rolled up. (It extends from the flight deck to the hanger deck.) To the left, from whence comes that light, and out of sight, are located two 40-mm quad guntubs that are "tacked onto" the side of the ship at the hanger deck level. Moving forward and silhouetted by that sheen are two old-fashioned, soon to be replaced, farm tractors. Coming further toward us we have a good view of the hydraulic, tall cylinders (resembling two telephone poles next to each other) that raise and lower the aft elevator. (We are looking toward the stern of the ship.) As the elevator, now topside, descends to the hanger deck level, that portion of the hanger deck now flush with the hanger deck, will also descend into the pit seen to the left of it (notice the outline of this portion of the deck , with no sailor standing on it). Thus, the elevator operator on the elevator has phone contact with someone on the hanger deck to make sure that no one or any- thing is on this portion of the hanger deck before bringing the elevator down to the hanger deck. The advantage, and the purpose, of this arrangement is to allow aircraft to be moved fore and aft of it with ease, i.e., it enlarges the available deck space when the elevator is topside. Moving now to the inspection, note the similarity of the height and build of all the sailors. This can be noticed also on the previous "Inspection" pictures. Interesting, but of no particular significance. What was of significance was that there didn't seem to be any particular differences in the personal make-up of all these different personalities. That is, even with the multiplicity of personalities, interpersonal difficulties were minimal to nonexistent. Perhaps this was due to there always being serious business at hand. As has been said, busy hands and minds don't engender discord and disputes. The lesson here is clear. This is a "dress blues" review in which the blouses had white piping on the flaps and cuffs, were of superior material, and black neckerchiefs were worn. The "undress blues" blouses did not have piping, were of lesser material, and had no neckerchiefs. In all cases, the white caps were worn over one eyebrow with the sides of the cap pulled to a horizontal configuration. "Dress blues" were for liberties, "undress blues" were for ashore duties, and work-cloths were worn all the time on board ship (ashore duties also were done in work-cloths). One could well say, or at least well hope, that these uniforms symbolize the dedication to duty of those who wore (wear) them. As a matter of fact, wearing a uniform does inculcate a sense of allegiance, a sense of responsibility, a sense of accountability, if you will, to that for which the uniform stands. This being very near Christmas, and this being a book of my recollections, it is not singular that I recall the Christmas of 1945 when I was on board the Antietam as it stood at anchor in Tokyo Bay. At that particular time, the song de jour was "I'll Be Home For Christmas". The feelings it generated were manifest. That was then, but this is now, from the simple to the sublime of the stirring "Oh Holy Night" in either solo or in the full crescendo of orchestra and chorus to the soothing "Silent Night". Once a year we are extremely fortunate to be uplifted and thrilled by the incomparable music of the Christmas Season. But does the hustle and bustle diminish it?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HANGER DECK II

This is truly a visual vista, a view of the previous picture as seen from afar, with the acute perspective providing a sense of spaciousness. We are now closer to the bow of the ship, looking toward the stern, and for those of you who pay attention to details, you can detect those two hydraulic cylinders right in the middle of the picture. Certainly this view of the hanger deck looks larger when not containing aircraft, but even with aircraft, it still had the feel of a cavern. (The aircraft are either aloft on a mission, or are "on the beach" while the ship is in port. As an aside, apologies are made to the purists who can't contend with my sometimes (often times ?) interleaving the past and present tenses. As I record my thoughts of yore, I sometimes inadvertently slip into the present tense because "I'm there". This disclaimer weaves itself throughout the book.) Notice what look like curtains of a dark color on either side of the picture (middle). They actually are curtains made of fire-resistant material. (We, and most of the ships, instead had steel curtains which could also be extended across the hanger deck. This ship probably will have a retrofit.) The curtains were of course used to shield one part of the hanger deck from another part of the hanger deck in case of fire, thus containing that fire. One can discern another set of curtains further back aft. Some of the Essexes had explosions, from enemy action, and ensuing fires in the confines of the hanger deck. The fires severely savaged everything in the area. Where damage was done, man and machine were unrecognizable. Only the sea could be the burial ground of those so consumed. But the curtains substantially reduced the damage that could have been done throughout the hanger deck. At least on the flight deck, the heat of the fires was not confined and thus not raised to hellish proportions as the aviation gasoline fed the fires. Yes, there were sprinklers overhead, but likely as not, they were damaged by the initial explosion. Also overhead was the gallery deck, just below the flight deck. Here were the staterooms of the senior officers, the pilots ready-rooms, the aviation supply rooms, radio and radar rooms and other compartments that served the aircraft and those who served the aircraft. That "white box on top of another white box", to the right of the left curtain, was the control station for all activities on the hanger deck, such as the movement and placement of the aircraft, as well as providing for direct contact with the counterpart on the flight deck. There was an obvious need for cooperation between hanger and flight decks. There was equally a need for coordination between those above and below. When an aircraft landed and it was assigned to go below, for whatever reason, those below had to be present and ready at the deckedge elevator to remove that aircraft when it arrived below. Recall that aircraft were landing, theoretically, every 20 seconds. Even if that aircraft didn't go below, it was necessary to have a "clear" deck (elevators topside) for the following aircraft. Thus, it was important to offload an aircraft from the elevator, post haste, so as to get the elevator back topside (to have a "clear deck"). Cooperation was the sine qua non of the flight/hanger deck relationship. This interplay between the top and bottom speaks volumes about the desirability of cooperation, whatever the endeavor. Cooperation means acting for MUTUAL benefit. That is, helping someone else also helps oneself. That is a description of cooperation, and the result is a win-win for all who cooperate. Look at it this way: helping others to help themselves helps to create a better "environment", and who wouldn't want to live in a better environment? In more mundane terms, the sports-team that best cooperates has the better chance of winning (it's called teamwork). (I'm of the school that says, "it's not whether you win or lose, but it's HOW you play": a little better than you played last time; fairly; with the will to improve; without undue discouragement; with the joy of playing; with sportsmanship; and with cooperation.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HANGER DECK III

With this being Christmas Eve, it seems more than appropriate to address this page to the celebration of Christmas and its special significance. My own heritage was one in which I attended the Young People's Group at church on Sunday evenings. Vivid and pleasing memories of Christmastime were those of attending the candlelight service in church, listening to and participating in the singing of the Christmas music and carols. I also remember, with nostalgia, listening to our minister, who, though a somewhat elderly man, would present his fine sermons with forceful, but kindly, sincerity. With my background very briefly addressed, presumably this book will be read by people of all persuasions and so a more ecumenical recitation should be made here. Thus, with a firm belief in the sanctity of Christmas and all that it signifies, I will instead put forward three passages from the bible that have a special appeal to me and which I believe should be meaningful to all of those who believe in the existence of a Being who is the Lord of us all. Here are three passages from the Bible that should be agreeably amenable to one and all:: Psalms 23, Corinthians I:13, and the Lord's Prayer:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul; He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thou rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou hast annointed my head with oil; My cup runeth over. Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

If I speak with tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass , or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues , they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hollowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HANGER DECK IV

What a beautiful rendering of what can only be called a prosaic tableau! It's as splendid as it is prosaic. How can such a simple picture of a few aircraft in a steel cavern have such a marvelous balance of lights and darks and soft grays? On looking at this picture, one could well say that one's very (intellectual) senses are soothed as one scans this scene of light playing on the aircraft at the same time as the sheen on the deck gives vivid substance to man and machine. This is one of those pictures that welcomes both a close and an arm's-length examination. Try them both as you give kudos to the artist-photographer. In particular as to the subject matter of this picture, we're looking forward toward the bow of the ship as a Helldiver aircraft has just been mover onto the forward elevator. The demarcation of the elevator is that diagonal row of five lighting-fixtures overhead. From those lighting-fixtures all the way over to the bulkhead on the left is the elevator opening. On the other side of that bulkhead, one level below the flight deck, are two open 5-inch guns and a 40-mm quad guntub. To the right, above where the light is streaming in, is the wide open sea (the steel curtain has been rolled up). Since the elevator is down at the hanger deck level, light also streams down onto everything below, giving the deck its brilliant sheen. Thus the Airdales of the hanger deck live in a world that is alternately dark and light, while we Airdales on the flight deck lived in a world of perpetual light, except when there were threatening storm clouds above. Since there was very seldom inactivity as is seen here, it is presumed that this is a posed picture. (It's suspected that the photographer had asked for inaction for this picture for reasons such as available light, time exposures, motion, etc.; remember, the film was not as fast back then. Hanger deck Airdales did not stand around "admiring" an aircraft, and they didn't ride the elevator up to the flight deck, both of which were implied here.) On an aircraft carrier, especially the Antietam, it was all about the interaction of man and machine, machine and man, every day of every week of every month for twelve of thirteen months.

It was not my intention to make an Airdale a paragon of the work-ethic by making the somewhat smart-aleck remark about those Airdales standing around "admiring" the Helldiver. It was just that the nature of an Airdale's job would not allow him to be, as I said, "inactive" (but if "push came to shove", then yes, I would say unequivocally, an Airdale was a paragon of the work-ethic. And I would add that this was not a manifestation of being under command performance, but rather it was a matter of his having been inculcated with the work-ethic by virtue of repetition over a (short) period of time (because those times were so intensive.)) Be that as it may, it would serve one well over time to emulate this work-ethic, both because one would more than likely flourish and prosper, but also one would benefit from the real satisfaction from having been productive and useful. Besides, very often the very effort applied to a "job" is an outstanding way to augment one's knowledge, and to learn is to enjoy, to say nothing of simultaneously improving one's standing in one's own the eyes, if not others'. I know the feelings of self-satisfaction of learning when one learns on one's own recognizance. This means that learning does not stop at the doorway of a school. My own experience of this was when working for the Navy Department, and when there was a lull in the work to be done, I would spend all that "free" time reading, nay, studying, technical manuals such as computers, fire-control, radar, and communications both to upgrade myself and because it was such a satisfying expenditure of time. You, anyone, can do the same, be it learning French or architecture or biology or history or whatever. But know this satisfaction!



HANGER DECK V

Here's an interesting juxtaposition: on the one hand, at the center of attraction are some 1,000-lb. bombs, while on the other hand, in the background, is a group of personnel enjoying a movie. It's not enough that the bombs are there, sitting ugly in all their squatness, but also that there are those who are "fussing around with" the fuses that are meant to detonate them. They say that ignorance is bliss. There are those who would take exception to this, while there are many who would prefer to just enjoy the movie without the realization that those bombs are there, are being fussed with, and are surrounded by aircraft fully fueled with high-energy aviation gasoline. So, so much for such a placid scene as seen daily by an "old" Airdale. Instead, just be taken by the marvelous interrelationships of darks and lights and the full spectrum of grays, as well as the all the interesting shapes and forms in the foreground. This is a "busy" picture, yes, but it's also one that will take hold of one's interest, where the shapes and forms are those of the F6F Hellcat, a machine that should be much more than a shape of interest. These machines, and those bombs, make for a lethal combination when joined together. But more to the point of this picture, let's redirect our attention to this artifact that houses all these machines. It wasn't all that much earlier that such a unique ship was "conjured", especially of such magnitude. To build a ship that could house 60 large military aircraft within its confines was a giant step from what preceded it. But for those who worked in it, it was "just another day at the office". The presence of all the aircraft was just part of the scenery. The chow-hall (the "dining-room") compartment was one deck down below this hanger deck, so when one joined the line for chow, one usually stated here among the aircraft. For an electrician's mate, for instance, who spent his time below doing what electricians do, this made an impression. But he soon became acclimated to this world of the aircraft. It should be said that we, the Antietam, never had a movie-night, for whatever reason. But we did have plenty of activity as seen here where ordnance men did their job, and maintenance men did their job, and machinists did their job. Perhaps that why we had no movies: work before play. Engine maintenance, or any kind of maintenance, required plenty of illumination, in direct opposition to the showing of a movie. Since we were having air operations every day, and not just when air strikes were scheduled, we (the Antietam) probably had more maintenance to do, day in, day out. Who knows? In any event, you do what you have to do. This in turn meant that some people did more than others. There are some who will point this out as an example of "life isn't fair". Why do some have to work more than others, they will ask. Others will see it as an opportunity to improve oneself, or even to obtain the satisfaction of doing "good works". And still others will feel that it allows them to buttress their feelings of self-worth. Certainly there are other reasons for doing "more than your share". When I was about thirteen years old, I remember almost the precise spot where my father and I were when we were walking to church one Sunday morning and he said that "you should do twice as much as anyone else" because of the advantages that I had. I wondered why this should be since I didn't consider myself any different than anyone else in that middle-class neighborhood of Upper Montclair, NJ. And I didn't think I had any advantages over anyone else. Perhaps it was that, at the beginning of WWII, my father was frequently talking about the world situation, and being a consulting economist, he would soon work for the government in Iran and Dakar, Africa. Thus, presumably, I had the advantage of being more knowledgeable than others in this area. While I was not "high-born" or wealthy, I could even grasp the concept of "noblesse oblige". So my thought was WORK twice as hard as anyone else, but not necessarily GIVE twice as much. This idea took time to leaven.

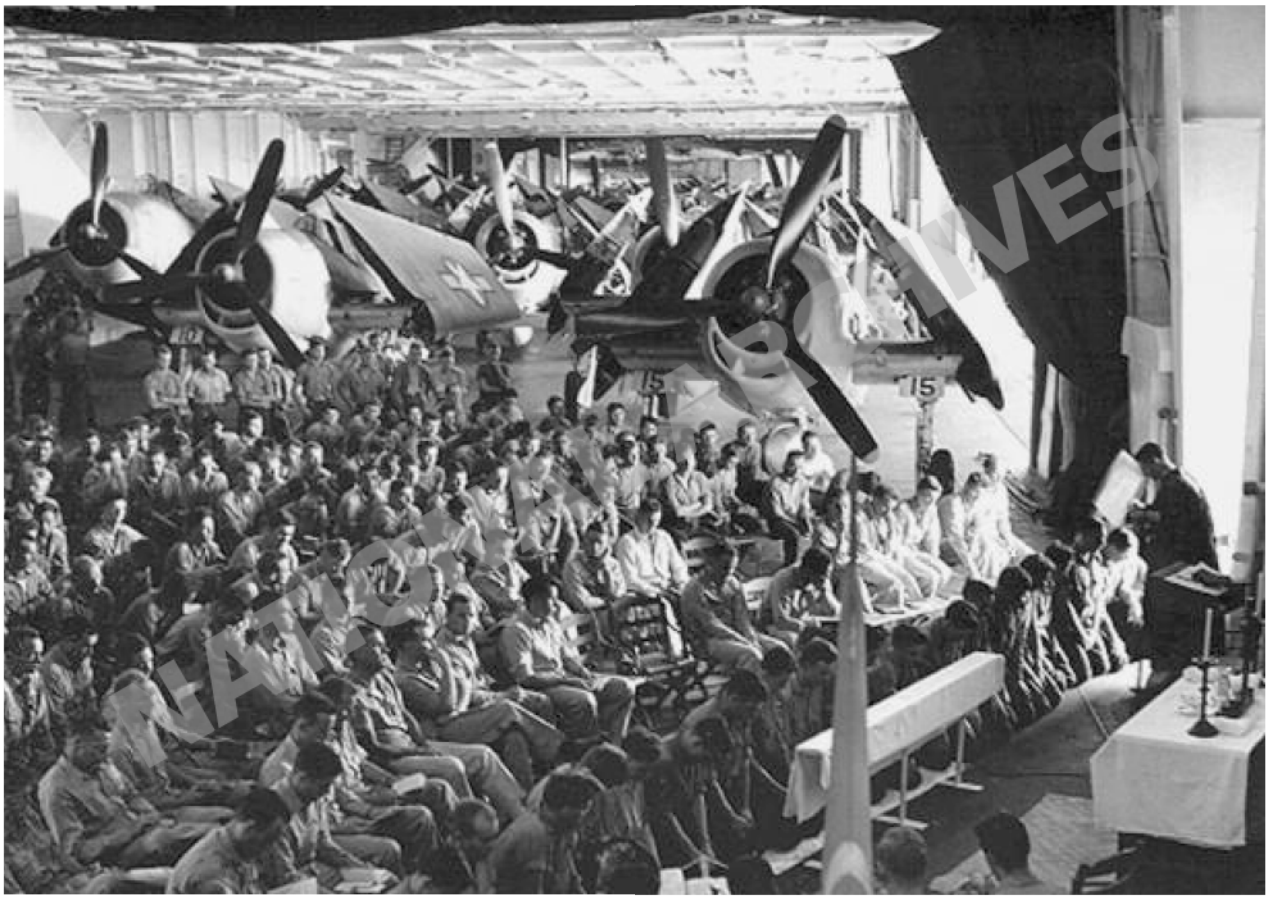


NAVSPECIALWEARCHIVES

HANGER DECK VI

On the Antietam, these religious services were held only when we were in port or at anchor, due to the exigencies of the continually continuos flight operations when at sea. This was so because we, a single ship, were delegated the task of supplying trained aircraft squadrons to the ten fleet carriers and a multiplicity of smaller ones whose squadrons were being rotated for Rand R. This resulted in there being "no rest for the weary" on the Antietam's flight deck. While religious services would not have ameliorated the physical condition of the flight deck personnel and the rest of the Air Department, they would have provided spiritual sustenance for the rigors that were always present on a daily basis. There were those who definitely would have benefitted from such services of renewal and reassurance and refurbishment of the flagging spirits that were due to the unremitting anxieties of the job. However, there were chaplains of the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths on board who were there to minister to those who had a need. While I won't say that I didn't need some sort of guidance and counseling, it never once occurred to me to even remotely consider such a thing. I was far, far too much of a private person, for good or ill, to have done that with a stranger. For others, fine; for myself, not a chance. That said, to let a problem linger, and then emotionally fester, is definitely ill-advised, for oneself and for society as a whole. For this, religious devotionals are one of the best ways to overcome one's personal problems. For all that is known, each and everyone of those seen in this picture of a religious service are in fact doing just that. That is good, and there ought to be an increase of such activity. A fall-back position could be the help that a professional counselor could provide. One would also like to think that this grouping here implies a close-knit comradeship and solidarity of purpose in a common cause, somewhat akin to what appears to be those two aircraft #10 and #15 as they join this service as comrade-in-arms. (This simile should not be looked upon with puzzlement; it's a natural.

The iron roll-curtain, to the right just beyond the fire-curtain, is rolled up thus allowing the personnel and the aircraft to be illuminated by soft indirect light that suffuses everything all the way to the bulkhead to the left and even up to the overhead. This provides a very pleasing effect considering that we are looking at what is essentially a cavern. How is it that hard metal machines can be made to look almost "velvety" in appearance? (The answer of course is the soft light.) That same light also lights up each and every one in the congregation, each of whom has his own story to bring to this service. Some attend out of habit, some out of obligation, some out of reverence, some out of need, and some because it's there. There are those who need the strength to be found in gaining and having an abiding faith, while there are others who find this ambiguous. Still others turn to philosophical tenants for the strength inherent in reason and rationality. Then there are no doubt those of neither the somewhat esoteric religious persuasion nor those of an intellectually philosophical bent who instead deem the more mundane "common sense" to be the way to go. But where "is it written" that one can not embrace each of these approaches at one time or another? At times, one approach would predominate, and at other times, one of the other two modes would be the best of the three. True, the religious venue is probably the most demanding of pure effort, but that's likely because it's probably also the most rewarding. This is not a subject that is amenable to a few words or trite remarks as might be implied here. Religion, philosophy, "common sense", they are all demanding of serious thought, but the rewards for the time spent doing this should be well worth it. The adage "no pain, no gain" is not erudite, but it can, it should, convey a great deal of good advice.



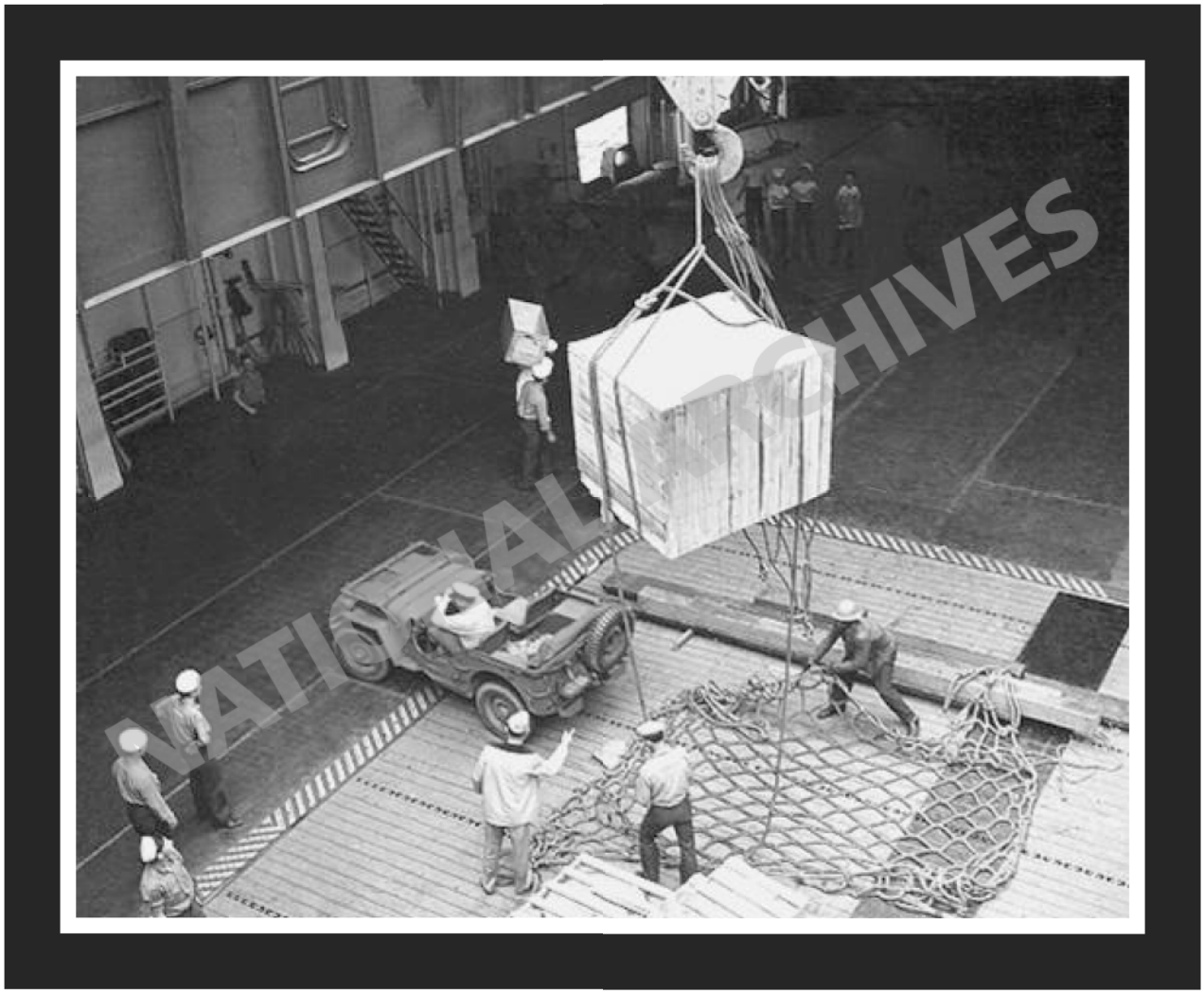
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HANGER DECK VII

This seventh of the seven hanger deck pictures is probably the most prosaic of them all. What's so interesting about a big box dangling from a large hook? (This hook holding the box is part of the shipyard crane used to build the ship in the first place.) What is interesting though is the contrast of the hanger deck and the flight deck as they lie side by side. The former is 2.5 inches of STS (Special Treatment Steel) while the latter is 0.2 inch of steel topped by 3 inches of teak wood planking. (The flight deck here is of course the elevator in its down-below position, and is probably the aft elevator, looking toward the bow.) Why the jeep is there, and what it's doing, is not clear. It could be supposed that, after that netting has been pulled aside and after a dolly has been rolled underneath the box, the jeep would then pull the box to where it could be unpacked. What the box contains is anyone's guess, but a good one would be that there are aircraft replacement parts in there. One could also suggest that it contains a replacement engine, but that begs the question whether the crate itself is sturdy enough or even whether that single rope is strong enough. Regardless of what's in the crate, the fact of the matter is that though this activity was mundane, it was of vital importance to the entire ship and to the purpose for which it stood. That's to say that things need not be stimulating to be significant. What's exciting definitely is not necessarily an indicator of either what's significant or what's important. That is, the mundane, such as providing supplies, is not to be considered as necessarily insignificant or unimportant. In the same way, the least of us, the most common of us, are significant and important in our own inimical way. (A critical variation of this idea is what someone once said to me in my more "tender" years, to wit, that her father told her that "behind every great man is a fine woman". To be sure—but nowadays, who knows, that might be reversed.

Supply and support are vitally fundamental to any military operation. The best equipment and personnel are of no avail if not only are the supplies unavailable, but also if the support-structure is not in place to furnish those supplies. As has been mentioned previously, what does it profit soldiers who, by brawn and bravery "take the hill" yet have no ammunition to "hold the hill"? He can carry only so much on his person. So too, what does it avail a ship to steam into enemy waters without the necessary spare parts on board ship to keep the aircraft flying? The Supply Department was not "glamorous" as was the Air Department, but they certainly kept them in supply parts and in bombs and in rockets and etc. As has been previously detailed, the supply ships seemed to just appear out of the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean and sidle up alongside us to begin their adagio of transferring oil and gasoline and parts and food and munitions and everything else required to keep a small city going and enable a ship-of-the-line to continue doing its duty.

Since this happens to be New Years Day, the day of resolutions, be it resolved that everyone do one's best "to walk in other's moccasins", day in, day out, and so become more understanding of others' trials and tribulations and travails, be they large or small. This would seem to be "the oil that makes this machine called society" work more smoothly and equitably. It's important to know from whence people come so as to better understand them, and thus to improve relationships with those who are both known and unknown. So let's close with the traditional "Auld Lang Syne" ("Old Long Since") which says "Should old acquaintances be forgot and never brought to mind..." (The dictionary says the singing of this song means that "times are fondly remembered". We hope so.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MAINTENANCE TIME

A typical maintenance scene, this. A carrier would be of little value if its "main battery", the aircraft, was unavailable. Judging by the youth of these aircraft mechanics, this is probably a picture of preventive maintenance because this type is less demanding and complex than corrective maintenance. If the maintenance were of the corrective variety, there would be at least a first class petty officer mechanic there, if not a chief petty officer. All organizations emphasize the preventive maintenance regimen to preclude the necessity of the more difficult, and costly, corrective maintenance. Easy or not, I was astonished at how youthful many of these mechanics were, keeping in mind that an aircraft over the great expanse of the Pacific Ocean cannot afford a malfunctioning engine. Much of this maintenance work was done at night which meant that I was able to watch what these mechanics did when working on the aircraft. I don't think it would be too much to say that I, a young "academic", was in awe of these young sailors not much older than I was crawling all over those big, complex machines making them airworthy. And with all those myriad parts lying around, they always seemed to put them all back with no parts left over. To a novice such as myself, it was definitely impressive, especially when one realized that this engine here put out 1,700 horsepower to the 2,000 to the later on 2,800 horsepower of the Corsair. (Consider the fact that the present-day top-of-the-line tank of the U.S. Army has an engine that's rated at 1,500 horsepower.) To verify the quality of their workmanship, they would "crank up" the engine and rev it up full throttle in 10 to 15 second bursts. In the enclosed space of the hanger deck, what with its steel deck and its steel bulkheads, not only was the air around you shattered, but so also was everything in that airspace, including your poor head.

One thing I noticed in all of these maintenance activities was the strict adherence they showed to doing their job flawlessly. Nothing slipshod here, for sure, for darn sure. This was evident in their very attitude, right down to the lowest striker. One could not detect a single one who did not exhibit pride of workmanship. "Pride of workmanship", what a wonderful phrase, what a boon to society! It might have been the fact that the harder the job, the more diligent the effort. In my (limited) observations of those in the military, I perceived a serious-mindedness that was unique (I believe). Apropos of that, the U.S. Army has an ad which says "Be the best you can be". This would be, should be, a motto that applies to each and everyone of us, no matter what the job or what the activity. Whatever the endeavor, it can only be beneficial to become better than you were the day before. Very few of us can achieve without the expenditure of effort and diligence of attitude. That childhood adage which reads, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" is not all that childish. Virtually everyone who has excelled has gone through just such a process. (Besides, think of the pleasure that accrues with each rung up the ladder of accomplishment (but not necessarily of success). The self-assurance gained is all that is necessary.) In closing, let it be said that this job of mechanical maintenance is every bit as emblematic of intelligence as any awards in the purview of academia or the halls of the intelligentsia. Personally, I'm very partial toward the creators and handlers of the artifacts of the world. Not only are these people useful to society, but also they represent the INTELLIGENCE to make the wherewithal that makes this world a better place in which to live. The maintenance people, the "blue-collar" people, the people who use their hands to produce and create, you are the ones who deserve a goodly portion of the acclaim that sometimes seems to go to only the "academics" of the world.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRCRAFT I

The next five pictures will feature two aircraft, the SB2C Helldiver seen here and the F4U Corsair. The SB2C Helldiver was one of the four aircraft carried by the Essexes during the latter stages of the Pacific war. The other three were the TBM Avenger torpedo aircraft and the F4U Corsair and the F6F Hellcat fighter aircraft. This Sb2C Helldiver was affectionately (?) known as the "beast" by the pilots, no doubt because it looked so bulky when compared to the smaller F6F and the leaner and meaner F4U fighters. Regardless, it was so well thought of that 7,000 were built, most of which were used by the U.S. Navy (but also the U.S. Army Air Corps, the Marines, and some foreign governments). In fact, it replaced the redoubtable SBD (Scout Bomber Douglas) Dauntless dive-bomber, that aircraft that was responsible for sinking four Japanese carriers in the Battle of Midway in mid-1942, thereby stemming the tide of the multiple Japanese successes up to that point. The SB2C was a low-wing cantilever design of all-metal construction except for the fabric-covered rudder and elevators of its tail assembly. Its ailerons , which are the control surfaces on the outer, trailing portion of the wing, had a metal top surface and a fabric-covered undersurface. The trailing edge of the wing, adjacent to the fuselage, consisted of perforated flaps that could be opened up simultaneously at an angle of 30-degrees both above and below the wings. These served as diving-brakes used to allow the aircraft to be more accurately aimed at the target below. When the flaps were used to function conventionally for a landing operation, hydraulic locks ensured that only the lower flaps were deployed (downward). The forward part of the wing, furthest outboard from the fuselage, contained extensible slats that were automatically extended when the landing-gear was lowered for a landing (observe the slat on the aircraft's right wing in an extended position). This slat ensured that even at (relatively) slow landing speeds the aileron control surfaces (at the trailing part of the wing) remain fully effective. The extra wide landing-gear provided for increased stability during a landing, even though at times this was not sufficient to preclude accidents. The Helldiver had a 1,900-hp twin-row (of cylinders) radial engine that the navy used exclusively (easier maintenance, among other things). This engine was substantially more powerful than that of the smaller SBD Dauntless. Its fuel tanks were of the self-sealing type, and many of the fuel, oil, and hydraulic lines had protection from combat damage, while the crew also had some protective armor. Each wing contained a 20-mm cannon and the rear cockpit was furnished with dual 0.3-inch machine-gun. The Helldiver could accommodate 2,000 pounds of bombs total, some of them internally and some of them externally. Later in the war this was increased to 3,000 pounds.

Though the pilots affectionately called the Helldiver "the beast", it was a solid performer. Its very appearance of solidity gave it the feel of stability and thus dependability. Also, its large wing-area allowed it to have what seemed like a soft-touch landing mode while its wide-spread landing-gear worked against the "lateral bounce" that troubled the other type of aircraft, thus alleviating the anxiety of the awaiting Airdales in the landing area. This stability, this dependability, that's reflected in its substantial appearance recalls the feeling one had when one could depend on someone. Would that one could rely on someone as much as this aircraft is perceived to personify such dependability. The phrase "A friend (when) in need is a friend indeed" comes to mind. To be dependable is to be trusted to deal only in the truth. This uprightness of conduct is called integrity, and who can say that there isn't a dangerous dearth of it in all walks of life? The repercussions of this is particularly deleterious when practiced by the "high and mighty". We need leadership.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRCRAFT II

Same aircraft, different angle. All the bombers had rear-facing machine-guns to provide protection against the deadly incursions of the faster enemy fighter aircraft approaching from the rear. For this purpose, this Helldiver had dual 0.3-inch machine guns that could be raised up on a pedestal to provide clearance. All the gunners were rated enlisted men who were also the radiomen. These aircraft possessed a fairly good buoyancy (meaning that they stayed afloat for a relatively long period of time if the water-landing was optimum). But there was an inflatable rubber raft large enough for two inside that canopy. Notice that there was enough area available for the Airdales to place their hands when pushing the Helldiver, unlike the Avenger (the ailerons and the elevators were not part of this avail-able area because they were too "delicate"). Actually, there was no good area on which to push, especially when trying to generate the initial motion. Other things to notice are: the barely visible retracted tail-hook, the radio antenna strung from the vertical tail-section to the post in front of the pilot (see previous picture), the right wheel tied down, the antenna on the underside of the right wing, and the open slat on the forward part of the right wing. Also note the very top part of the safety-net on the outside of this deckedge elevator, and beyond that the churned up wake behind that Essex that's in a hurry to reach some unknown destination that could promise to provide some kind of dangerous action that was always "just around the corner". There are 3,000 crewmen on board that ship (and this ship that we are on) which is taking them to a possible "rendezvous with destiny". And there are many types of people on that ship, some of whom are certain that they are heading directly to certain doom while there are no doubt others who willingly think positive thoughts. Who's to question either group? But the latter group, how to rationalize the rush to a safe haven? It was not in the navy's "charter" to withdraw under the duress and coercion of the enemy. To the contrary, there was that job that "was calling them" and waffling would only prolong that deed that had to be done. They didn't build 7,000 of these Helldivers only to have them sit inert and idle like this one for any length of time. No, they were built to take the action to the enemy with the firm resolve of terminating the agonies of this monumental war as soon as possible since the fate of this nation was being held in the balance. But was the resolve of these "citizen soldiers and sailors and airmen" immutable, indefinitely? To the point, is there anyone whose resolve is immutable under any circumstances? And why do some have more resolve than others while still others are bereft of any resolve whatsoever? A serviceman might enter the war with vim and vigor, and brimming over with enthusiasm and patriotism. Next, this carries over to the first battle. Then what? Does that enthusiasm wax or wane? Even if it waxes, how long will it do so? And if it wanes, is that enthusiasm redeemable? (It's almost like asking if endearment, if enchantment, is redeemable? If one feels sanguine, yes, but if one is feeling down, no.). So it definitely depends. For instance, sometimes the need for reevaluation is clear, but sometimes it's murky. What is clear though is that these questions require deliberate thought, but who has time for deliberate thought in this day and age? If you are young, who has time "to smell the roses"? Yes, that's the rub. In this sometimes (often times) frenetically paced world where speed and agitation and noise are the apparent norm, how can we entertain a serious thought? How can any worthwhile reflection be accommodated? It can't, and we are ALL the poorer, the lesser, for it. As one grows older, one certainly puts quality over quantity. So, for the young people on these ships, they are in a dilemma. Do they go with their natural inclination to "quantity", or do they grow up very fast and learn to give full deference to quality over quantity? (Bigger, of course, is certainly not necessarily better than smaller).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRCRAFT III

Yes, the marine pilots also operated from the carriers, starting when the Model F4U-4 Corsair was ready to join the fleet in the latter part of 1944. Previous to this time, the marines flew the earlier versions of the Corsair only from land bases because it had stability problems. Specifically, the Corsair had a nasty stall characteristic when banking at the low speed that was part of the landing protocol of carrier operations. (The aircraft would form a "racetrack" configuration around the carrier at 20-second intervals. The speed of the aircraft in this "racetrack" was kept at that speed at which the aircraft would touch down on the flight deck. This speed was about 60 mph relative to the deck which was moving under them. With the combination of the ship's speed and the ambient wind being 30 knots, the actual air speed of the the aircraft was about 90 knots. This speed was very close to the stall speed, that speed at which the aircraft loses lift. When in the "racetrack" , the aircraft are at about 1,000 feet, much too low to recover from a stall.) At the stall, the port wing would rapidly drop (the ship is to the aircraft's left). When the throttle was suddenly increased to gain speed, the torque of that powerful engine and huge propeller could, would, flip the Corsair onto its back with absolutely no chance of recovery prior to impacting the water. (This happened more than once while I was on the Antietam even though the problem had presumably been fix-ed. The picket destroyers quickly picked the pilot out of the water, if he survived the crash.) This problem was of real significance when coming in on a landing and a wave-off was given at the last moment. However, the marines flew the Corsair from land airfields which allowed straight-in landings. Once a solution to this problem was achieved, the marines, being experienced in the Corsair, were the first to take it to the fleet. Navy pilots soon acquired the skills to operate a Corsair from a carrier, and the Corsair then became an integral part of the carrier's "main battery". The Antietam was the training ship for the new Navy replacement pilots of the fleet.

The reason this picture was included in this book, even though it's land-based, was to indicate the capability of the Corsair in addition to its being a fighter aircraft. This is thought to be the F4U-4 model that was introduced before the end of WWII. The load that it is carrying here includes two 1,000-lb. bombs and six 500-lb. bombs. In lieu of the 500-lb. bombs, it could carry six 5-inch rockets, which it did at the beginning of 1945. The engine required to manage this 3,000-lb. load was the new Pratt and Whitney Double Wasp 18 cylinder radial engine R-2800-18W at 2,450-hp. (The engine that was in use in the Corsair at the beginning of the Korean War was the R-2800-32E at 2,850-hp (F4U-5)). Both engines were powerful enough to require a 4-bladed propeller. In addition to this bomb capacity, the Corsair had either six 0.5-inch machine guns or four 20-mm automatic cannons, while having a speed of 446-mph in level flight (but not with this load). In all, a formidable flying machine (again, not to belittle it, recall that the top-of-the-line U.S. Army tank now has a 1,500-hp engine). There will always be those who argue for one aircraft or the other as to which was the best fighter of the war. Some will say the Corsair, some will say the Hellcat, others will say the Mustang, and still others will vote for the Thunderbolt, the Lightning, the Spitfire, and so on. I am, of course, partial to the two navy aircraft. True, the Mustang, the Lightning, the Spitfire and others had a more graceful in-line engine, but on the other hand the radial engine of the Corsair and the Hellcat "spelled" the power required to do the "heavy lifting" as here. Who can say that this picture is not the personification of a workhorse diligently and tirelessly working at jobs, at extra-heavy jobs, at difficult jobs, at jobs that become more than just a job: a willful duty.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRCRAFT IV

We are at ease now, the tensions having subsided, and the aircraft having been stilled. The aircraft are now respotted back aft after having returned from a mission. It appears that there will be no further activity this day because some of the plane-captains (brown shirts) have seen fit to tie down "their" aircraft to the in-deck cleats. Under calm conditions such as this, this was the prerogative of each individual plane-captain. One of the plane-captains even left a fire-extinguisher at the ready for the next launch, though I never saw one being used at launch-time. However, an extinguisher would always be available when the mechanics started an engine that had just been worked upon. Presumably, if the repair was not done properly, a possible fire could have erupted when the engine was started. On board ship, any ship but most especially a carrier, a fire was a tremendous concern because the aircraft were always loaded with highly volatile and flammable aviation gasoline. If there were munitions in the area, a very dangerous situation was present if the fire went out of control. Moving on, some radial engine aircraft would have enlarged engine cowling to accommodate the air intake for the oil cooling and the supercharger. But not the Corsair. It had a close-fitting cowling over its engine, using air-scoops in its wing at the fuselage. The engine thus tended to look smaller, even though the Corsair always had the most powerful engine extant. But the effect was to make it look smoother, augmented by the fact that it used spot-welding and flush-riveting. It must be said that these Corsairs look all the world as if they were sentinels guarding the gates. They seem to say, "Thou shalt not pass", and who's to say nay? Normally, there were five, or even sometimes on the Antietam, six aircraft lined up across the deck. I invite the reader to measure 13 feet 3 inches against a wall of a room large enough to do so. Then step back to view this dimension, the dimension of the diameter of a circle of a Corsair's spinning propeller. This dimension was a very specific barrier that one would face as one approached a Corsair warming up its engine. Now consider the considerable unease such a large barrier would generate, because to be sure, this was a lethal barrier. Realizing that the width of the flight deck was for the most part 108 feet wide, these barriers (4 aircraft/barriers or 5 aircraft/barriers or 6 aircraft/barriers) did not allow for that much in the way of safe passages past these "sentinels". These were barriers that stood tall. These were barriers that were real and physical and menacing, and let's face it, just plain scary. Let's consider other barriers.

These other barriers were non-physical, but sometimes they were no less scary for a young man. These barriers come under the heading of discrimination, a topic that can hardly be well addressed, or even alluded to here. (Let it first be said that certain discrimination is essential. Discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad, is good and necessary. Discriminating, for instance, between good, melodic music and mindless, brash, and harsh sounds is good.) But sometimes, often times, one's life seems to be impeded by invisible barriers of discrimination. What can be said of barriers that impede one's basic legitimate aspirations? What if these barriers are universal (found everywhere), are deliberate, and there is no rhyme or reason forthcoming for these barriers? The first one is bad, the first and second is worse, and the first, second, and third is worst. Add maliciousness, and voila, the very worst. What to do? Be equanimous? Consider it a challenge? Pretend it doesn't exist? Feel sanctimonious about it? Persist? Be optimistic (but for how long)? Be prideful about not succumbing to self-pity? Dismiss it as "funny" delusions and self-centeredness? Be firm in one's self-sufficiency and proficiency? Perhaps the best solution is to just turn away from the barriers and redirect one's aspirations to other things. That's it.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRCRAFT V

How can one aircraft look so "handsome" and yet at the same time be such a "lean mean fighting machine"? This land-based F4U Corsair was included because, what with its two-tone paint covering giving it more definition, it looks like the very epitome of that perfect flying machine. Its proportions are just about perfect, and its "form, fit and function" are a pleasure to behold! If ever there was an aircraft that was built to fly, this is it! While its gull-wings are its trade-mark, they also are the result of its powerful engine that required a huge propeller that in turn made the break in the wings necessary to allow for the shorter wheel-struts that were stronger to provide for the harder landings that the shorter landings of carrier operations required. Because the wheels folded directly backwards, after a 90 degree turn, to fit completely within the wing (note the open wheel-panels) the gasoline tanks had to be moved to the fuselage, extending it and thus giving the Corsair its characteristic long nose and the pilots a visibility problem. The air-intakes for the oil-cooler and the supercharger are clearly seen in the wing adjacent to the fuselage. We have a good view of the landing-flaps on the inboard back side of the wings which flaps are now in the downward position. (In this position the aircraft has greater lift at the slower launch and landing speeds. We lost a Corsair on a launch because the flaps were inadvertently not put in the down position.) Who can say that there is another aircraft more suggestive of the urge to fly than this very photogenic Corsair? The only thing that is "wrong" with this picture is that this Corsair is not on the deck of an Essex-class carrier as it plows the seas circa 1945. (It must be said that this Corsair has been "defanged" because, I must confess, I deleted the wing-guns so that they would not distract one's gaze as it slowly peruses all the details of this magnificent aircraft. How can it be so beautiful and so powerful at the same time?

Mentioning the wing-guns calls to mind the days of yore, 1942 to 1945, when the pilots flew their aircraft "by the seat of their pants", while today, with due respect, the aircraft fly the pilots. Back then, where the pilots guided their aircraft, hands-on, in mortal close man-to-man combat, today it's equipment that serves the purpose of guiding the aircraft while the pilot essentially applies himself as the manager of the instruments that fire the weapons that hit the targets that sit in ignorance 100 miles away. Back then, the pilot used his hand on the stick, his feet on the pedals, and the sweat on his brow to bring his aircraft abruptly to a halt on the flight deck not far from the aircraft parked in front of him. Now, the pilot flips a switch to turn on the equipment to allow the ALS (Automatic Landing System) to bring his aircraft, hands off, to a stop on a canted deck with open space in front of him. This is not to cast aspersions toward the latter pilot, for the one is as brave as the other. But with today's speeds and power, technology must intervene. Changes had to be made. These changes are identifiable as adaption. (Mother Nature is the progenitor of such behavior.) While adaptions are necessary, traditions are just as necessary. They can be good, they can be very good. Some traditions are immutable, the very strength of society such as thoughtfulness, consideration, kindness, as well as self-reliance and the basic freedoms that we sometimes take for granted. The Family, that institution from time immemorial, is another. These good values, proven over time, need conserving. But then, some-times, events overtake what was once tried and true. Sometimes the exigencies of the day demand that changes be made. Sometimes time and tide will wait for no one. Thus the brilliant Corsair gave way to the marvels of Flight today. And the plans of yesterday give way to the inequities that are seen all about us. Greatness is revealed in how those problems can be resolved without reducing anyone.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLIGHT DECK I

We now arrive at the last seven pictures of this chapter, all of which bring us to an overview of the flight deck, that deck that bears the "main battery" and about which this book seeks to make familiar. (Because this particular flight deck was particularly oil-stained, I "repainted" it so that the viewer would not be distracted from the essence of this picture: a partially loaded deck preparatory to a launch operation. In effect, in the process I removed the planks and the cleats in the deck normally seen, and so we lose some accuracy here because of my "housekeeping". Authenticity must be maintained.) Front and center in this picture is that "lean mean fighting machine", the Corsair, now quiet in its docile mode. Mention was made on the previous page that the Corsair had a huge propeller. As a matter of fact, the F6F Hellcat had a propeller equally as large. This can be seen by comparing the Hellcat to the far left with the Corsair to the immediate right of it. The cowling of the Hellcat looks bigger, and it is bigger, than that of the Corsair because of the air-intake at the bottom of its cowling (also for oil-cooling and a supercharger). Nevertheless, the Corsair had the more powerful engine. In this picture, there are five columns of aircraft across the flight deck while we usually had six columns across to accommodate the 100 aircraft on board to provide the training for the maximum number of pilots. Filling up the flight deck to the middle of the island superstructure, the launch point about 400 feet from the front of the flight deck, would account for about 75 aircraft. Then there were maybe 8 to 10 other aircraft up forward in the catapult area. The rest of the aircraft would be below on the hanger deck., ready to be brought up on one of the elevators (back aft or the deckedge elevator). In this particular picture, most of the aircraft are Corsairs, while to the left is a column of Hellcats and Helldivers. This picture was probably taken right after lunch and just before flight quarters was to be sounded for a launch operation. Everyone seen here in this picture is in the Air Department, with most of them being Airdales but also included are yellow-shirts, officers and chief petty officers, and some plane-captains. Everything here looks peaceful and calm, but very shortly the entire flight deck will erupt into a tumultuous uproar as these sleeping giants awake, each one straining to break the bonds that keep them fettered to the deck that is their home. Considering that the average horsepower of each aircraft was 2,000-hp, there was enough energy generated by 75 of them to power this 36,000-ton, fully loaded ship through the sea at 30 knots. (I wont vouch for this, but 75 times 2,000 is 150,000-hp, the SHP of the ship). The commotion was excessively palpable, and I suppose its legacy is the ringing that has been in my ears ever since. The quintessence of an aircraft carrier is seen in this picture where row-on-row, column-on-column, the aircraft assembled are ready to do the bidding of those "daring young men in their flying machines". Each pilot was a volunteer, usually in their early twenties, and willing to defy the odds of meeting up with someone prepared, willing and able to do them unto death. How do you find such people, ones who will go into the "wild blue yonder" into one-on-one, eye-to-eye, mortal combat over vast, trackless reaches of an unforgiving ocean where only the seagulls deign to dwell? Is it merely the daring-do of young men eager to prove themselves and their mettle? Or is it at the other end of the spectrum where it is much more substan- tial such as devotion to duty and country? As Churchill said about the RAF after The Battle of Britain in 1940, "Never have so many owed so much to so few". Although I was close in distance to the pilots as they went to and left their aircraft, I of course was not privy to their conversations and the like, so I have no real understanding of their attitudes toward their activities.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

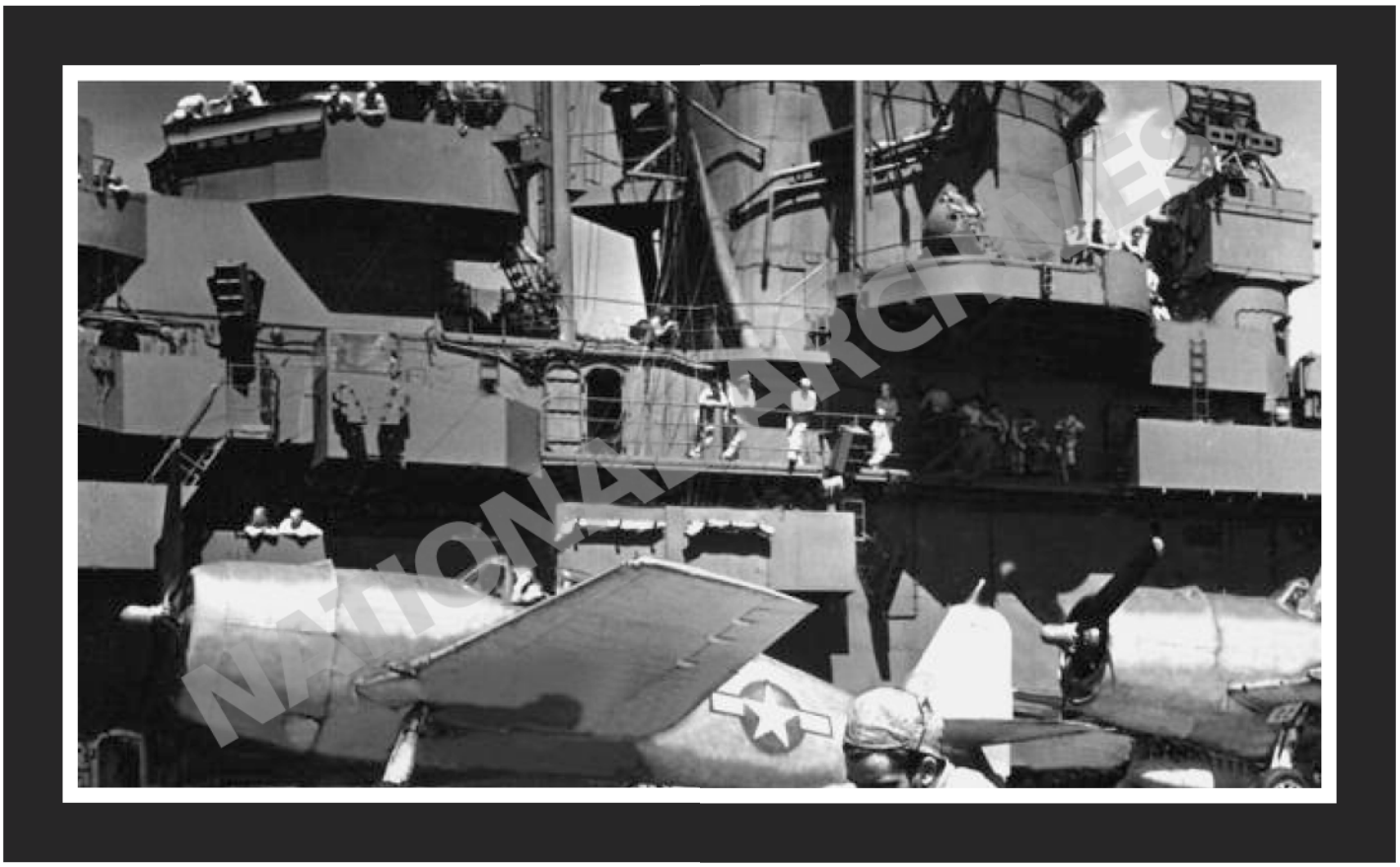
FLIGHT DECK II

I'm proud to say that I was (am) a "plank owner" (original crew) of this ship, the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36), shown here in this picture. (In fact, as a "plank owner", I have a small (5.5" x 6.0" by 3" thick) portion of one of its planks here on my desk as I write this. This portion of this teakwood plank weighs almost exactly 1 3/4 pounds.) Though the Antietam was commissioned on January 28, 1945, we went on board about the first of January as they were putting the finishing touches on the ship with welding hoses all around. After a shakedown cruise for one month at Trinidad (S.A.) where we tested all aspects of the ship, including conducting air operations, we left the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, where the Antietam was built, on our way to Pearl Harbor. En route, we transited the Panama Canal, with a stop at the San Diego Naval Base. In April of 1945, I was transferred to the Airdales in the V-1-F Division of the Air Depart- ment (V = Air, and F = Flight Deck). We, the Air Department, were part of the ship's company (crew) while the aircraft squadrons were only attached to the ship. I remained an Airdale until my discharge from the ship in May of 1946. During that time-period the Antietam was at sea for 12 of the 13 months from April 1945 to May 1946 (this I have indelibly in my mind). The one month that we were not at sea was taken up by being in port, including Pearl Harbor (several), Tokyo, Yokosuka (Japan), Tsingtao (China), Manila, and Hong Kong (twice). All the while I was on board the ship, the Antietam was designated as a training ship for the purpose of supplying trained aircraft squadrons to the fleet that was carrying the war to Japan. While the composition of the squadrons varied from ship to ship in the fleet, on the Antietam we had the following proportions of aircraft: 30 F4Us, 30 F6Fs, 20 Sb2Cs, and 20 TBMs, giving an even 100 aircraft. Later on, the proportions of fighters increased. The aircraft seen here in this picture represents that mix of 30-30-20-20 because this picture was taken in April of 1945. Those aircraft in the background reach forward to about the middle of the island superstructure, representing about 75 aircraft from that point to the back edge of the flight deck. Those aircraft in the foreground in the catapult area are probably 8 to 10 in number. The balance of 15 aircraft are on the hanger deck. There is an anomaly here in that that Avenger to the right was most usually way back aft on the flight deck. While it's true that the Avenger and the Helldiver could be catapulted, nevertheless it was protocol to launch the fighters first. I can only guess that the reason for this was the fact that the fighters had auxiliary gasoline tanks affixed to their underside while the TBM and SB2C never had these tanks. Thus the F4U and the F6F had more gasoline to keep them aloft as they circled the carrier awaiting all the other aircraft to become airborne so that they could all go to the target en masse. I can't vouch for this explanation, but it seems reasonable. As of April 1945 the 4-bladed 2,450-hp Corsairs were available for fleet duty, and this was the only type of Corsair that we carried. While the 4-bladed propeller looked more menacing its diameter of 13 feet 3 inches was the same as the 3-bladed version which was turned by a 2,250-hp engine. By the looks of the shadows this picture was no doubt taken at chow-time (lunch) with the aircraft having been positioned for a launch after chow. Looking at that object just above the wing-tips of the Corsair, there is seen a large object (a covered searchlight). This, and its platform, were removed because the searchlight was never used, and it's not clear why it was there in the first place. (I like to examine all the details in these pictures to pick up things which might be of interest. Too often it's only the "big picture" that people find interesting, while in fact, many, many interesting things are to be found in the little things. They are there to be seen, if only we would make the effort to look for them. Curiosity, a God-given gift, is all too often overlooked, to our everlasting lose and missed delight. Observation is golden.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLIGHT DECK III

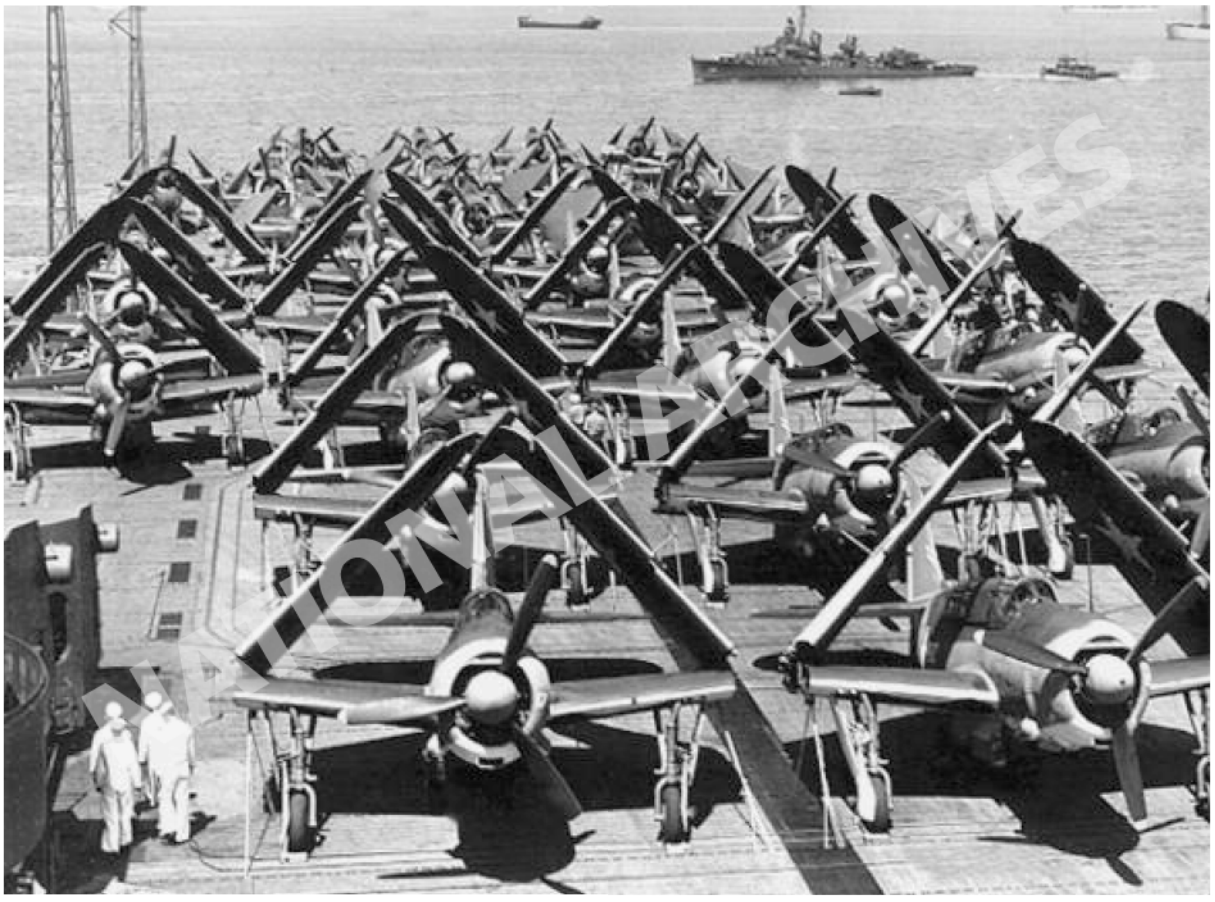
This scene depicts the aircraft as being spotted and prepared for the afternoon launch. The Hellcats are at the 400-foot mark from the front edge of the flight deck, sufficient to launch an aircraft into a 30-knot wind. This point shown here is little forward of the mid-section of the island superstructure (the flight deck is 900 feet long). There are about 75 aircraft back aft of this Hellcat, with the remaining 25 aircraft either up forward in the catapult area or down below on the hanger deck. It's doubtful that that person in the cockpit of the Hellcat is the pilot because, since there is no one at the Air Boss' station right above his head, the launch is not immanent. Another reason to say this is that the Airdale (lower border) has his cap on in the typical configuration when there is to be no air operation in the near term. (He has the straps of his cap buckled up on top.) When air operations begin, the Air Officer and his assistants will be at the Air Boss' station, the Airdale will pull his cap down and buckle the straps under his chin and the pilots will be on hand. Notice the searchlight platform mentioned on the previous page (right above the tail-section of the Hellcat). We had our's removed; perhaps this ship will do the same. Right above the wing of the Hellcat is the signal bridge, and right above that is the catwalk that leads to the left to the Air Boss' station, and beyond that, the navigation bridge/pilot house. If one looks up to the upper right corner, one will notice the MK 37 Director for the 5-inch guns back aft of the island. On top of the director is the MK 4 Radar Antenna both of which are pointed outward to the starboard side of the ship. To the right, along the catwalk and out of sight was the after bridge where I would spend many evenings (all alone in my solitude ("In My Solitude"), lost in my reveries ("My Reverie"), away from the "maddening crowd" and what I then thought was their vapid and vulgar banter. At least my banter here is not vulgar. For some reason, there are those who don't feel "manly" unless and until they can outdo the others in their coarseness and crudeness. Words do not a man make, but try telling that to those who measure their self-worth by how much they can feign their virility. Sad, but true, because they are not savvy enough to realize that "toughness" is but a mere shadow of real manliness. Strength, yes. Bravery, yes. But more important: honorableness, resoluteness, directness, dignified, honest, intrepid, industrious, and not excessively boisterous or pretentious. And again, "bigger is not better". Since this will be the last picture to show it, notice that just above the open hatch is a triangular platform. It was a solid steel structure reached by climbing a ladder on the side of that vertical post right above the hatch. During the short time between our respotting the deck for the next flight and flight quarters, I'd climb up to that platform for a very short catnap. Pushing aircraft from here to there during a respotting process after a landing operation was not all that physically demanding or tiring for a teenager. However, for a novice Airdale on the flight deck full of "angry" aircraft, for a neophyte Airdale who has to constantly deal with the horrendous noise of all those "fired up" engines, for a plebeian Airdale who has to face up to the hurricane-like winds generated by those slashing, thrashing, threatening propellers on all sides, that Airdale tends to accumulate an an emotional fatigue and drain that sometimes works its worst. Thus, the catnaps now and then to recoup and refurbish one's psychic reservoir that was sorely depleted by an exercise that was too frequently full of fear and trepidation for an ill-prepared, still-wet-behind-the-ears tyro. There were times when the Flight Quarters would sound, and though I was fully conscious, when I tried to get up, I had ABSOLUTELY no strength whatsoever (only enough to open my eyes and breath shallowly). To say that I was apprehensive is to put it mildly. I was after all a healthy teenager. What was the matter?! After a REAL struggle, I was able to make my way to the flight deck and a wheelchock.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLIGHT DECK IV

A very "busy" picture, this, but compelling. We are now at anchor, presumably not near a land airfield else these aircraft would be there. All the aircraft are tied down indicating that probably the ship had just passed through turbulent weather and water. This picture represents the normal configuration of the bombers back aft while the fighters are forward of them. There are apparently 18 TBMs here and 17 and counting SB2Cs, close to the (standard) complement of 20 for each type (through 1944). It's noontime as these four sailors in their whites head for liberty at the gangway at the hanger deck level on the starboard side back aft. Just in front of them to their right can be seen the outline of the aft elevator. (Who can find the two others in this picture?) Also notice the wide stance of the Helldiver which gave it its lateral stability on touching down that the others did not have. This stance was wide enough to provide ample room (10 feet between propeller-tips) for the Airdales to negotiate their way past the Helldivers when going to a wheelchock during launch operations. Consider that all these aircraft were moved, and placed, from up forward to back aft here by the manpower of the 45 Airdales. (True, we were aided and abetted somewhat by 5 tractors, but everyone of these aircraft had to be "placed" by the Airdales. This is a picture, docile though it is now, of awesome (potential) power when it is realized that EACH one of these aircraft could carry 2,000-lbs. of high explosive bombs. But more than that, much more than that to an Airdale, was the raw, overwhelming energy generated in such a small space when all 85 of these aircraft, powered by, on average, 2,000-hp unmuffled engines, began their warm-up period of about 10 minutes (as I recall it). The deck itself trembled, and it seemed a wonder that deck didn't rend itself asunder. Just one of these aircraft, revving up its engine with its exhaust-pipe unimpeded by a mechanical muffler, was an unmitigated source of damnable noise. But a whole flight deck of them? Now that was truly awesome (to use an overly worked word). Let us now proceed one step further and for those of you who covet the extravagant, envision if you will the following scenario: here we observe about 35 of the 75 to 80 aircraft that are on the flight deck prior to launch-time (true, not all launches from a ship of the line consisted of 90 aircraft). Each aircraft has a bomb-load of 2,000-lbs. (although not all the fighters were used as fighter-bombers that would also carry 2,000-lbs. of bombs). The aircraft are given the order to start engines, and so the crescendo of (damnable) noise begins. The Airdales, and that's you, warily (and wearily) make their way to a wheelchock. This you've done many times before so you're fairly confident in reaching you're your goal, a wheelchock, intact (though the underlying, incessant, unremitting fear is still in play). As you crouch there to lessen the effect of the prop-blast, you feel somewhat satisfied that things are as they should be. But as the minutes tick away, your fertile mind conjures the worst: a kamikaze is seen circling high overhead, taking your measure. Or is it only "toying" with you? But no, no kamikaze toys with anything. It means business, and this is serious business. So down it comes, ever bigger, ever noisier. Yes, now you're sure that it's you it wants to smash and crush. And so it does, right in the middle of this mass of aircraft all "loaded for bear". The explosion of the kamikaze is violent, and you are now gone. But the action is only beginning, as "your " aircraft, with its 2,000-lbs. of bombs, explode with the highly volatile gasoline feeding the resulting fires. And so it goes, from one air- craft to the next, with no reasonable chance of stopping this chain-reaction. Soon, very soon, the entire flight deck erupts into an horrendous conflagration. This shall be called a true holocaust and this picture that appears before us so benignly shall forever more be known as the breeding ground for mighty catastrophic events. We haven't actually suffered such an event, but we know what could be.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLIGHT DECK V

There "I" am, walking in awe in among all those then giants of the world of aeronautics. While there were certainly larger aircraft extant, to have so many of them packed together so closely was to augment one's appreciation of these machines and Man's ingenuity and productivity to create them. To be sure, my scrutinies were done while I was still in the Navigation Department (Division) and before I was part and parcel of the Air Department as their minion in the Airdales' V-1-F Division. In fact, until the Antietam, my only specific knowledge of aircraft were the occasional pictures seen in magazines and newsreels and a model WWI aircraft I put together. So these excursions were a real revelation. To me, this picture is a very pleasing one not only because of its composition, but also especially because of its rich range of the shades and values of grays, all the way from the bright highlights to those deep shadows. The subdued illumination is well nigh perfect, and even though the picture is "busy", the details give it a marvelous fascination. One of these details requires a few words: to the left of the Air Boss' station and the navigation bridge, recessed in the flight deck, can be seen three barrier-stanchions and three of the many arresting-wire receptacles (all of which are devoid of the wires that would normally be strung across the flight deck). These were installed in the older Essexes to allow aircraft to land over the bow of the ship as the ship made headway in the reverse direction due to a malfunctioning ship's engine that prevented forward motion. This faculty was never installed in the newer Essexes, and in fact never used in the older ones. Also note that just this side of those two working sailors is a rectangular area in the deck with dimensions of about 2.5' x 5.0'. This was the elevator that was used to raise bombs to the flight deck from below. Also note to the left some fresh skid-marks of aircraft that went through the barriers and had enough time to apply the brakes before real damage was done. (Periodically the flight deck was painted and so the skid-marks were covered). Aircraft were always parked together by type, launched by type, and landed by type. Here, the Hellcats and the Helldivers were taken below upon landing, but normally, the bombers were kept together and the fighters were kept together, and at launch, the bombers were the furthest back aft. This grouping by types brings to mind the saying, "Birds of a feather flock together" (for a sense of security and well-being). [Since space here is so limited, there follow only a few "one-liners".] While diversity, on balance, is GOOD (diversity promotes new outlooks, experiences, ideas, familiarity and thus acceptance), its implementations need not be at the expense of equal treatment, and hopefully it will not lead to the lowest-common-denominator. Social engineering by groups would seem to be ill-advised (because all groups have their "admirables" and their "disreputables"). Ultimately, everyone should be accounted for individually, and not because one happens to be a part of a particular group. Groupings can be useful, such as the Periodic Table, but they can also be detrimental, such as those "with green hair". Groups tend to be self-absorbed, which is leading in the wrong direction. Groups also tend to emphasize differences, which also lead in the wrong direction. Are there those who make groupings a "cottage industry"? Does this in turn serve to perpetuate the irritants and thus become counterproductive? Can't diversity occur naturally, without contrivances? What profit does forced diversity provide if it primarily breeds (excessive) antagonisms? Realize that discrimination is a coin with two sides, good and bad. Does promoting groups promote tribalism? Is tribalism good? Does favoritism ferment animosities? How far back is fairness in play? Who determines who is disadvantaged? Should we be very careful about opening this Pandora's box? This should serve merely as a start to what is considered a concern to many. The danger could be that it will become too much of a concern.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLIGHT DECK VI

OACH! Now you know why big is bad, and bigger is "badder" where an Airdale's well-being is concerned, A blade that is 6 feet 6 inches long, with a 2 inch yellow tip, is a blade to be reckoned with. [So there it stands, that object of dread, that scythe of death, now still, soon, too soon, to be energized, impressive in repose, but a monster in motion.] Before moving onward, we must give the Hellcat its due by saying that its propeller is every inch as large as that of the huge Corsair mentioned earlier. And the yellow tip of both propellers equally reached out menacingly to the extent of the wheel-struts, those stations to which an Airdale made his way during the launch operations. It can be said that the gracefully curved blade is an object of fascination while stationary, but give it "life", and all thoughts of admiration are duly obliterated. This damnable dichotomy makes for a disturbing set of emotions: admiration while still, or apprehension to the highest degree when in motion. Now to this "sea of aircraft" that we face in awe, and that faces us in calm "defiance". Every ship would have its own configuration of aircraft-placement on the flight deck, but that of the Antietam would by and large be standard: 20 TBM torpedo aircraft all the way back aft, then 20 SB2C dive-bombers , next 30 F6F fighters, and finally 30 F4U fighters (the Hellcats and the Corsairs could be reversed). Here, we find something different because of those 4 TBMs up among the Hellcats. In addition, one can detect a large group of SBD Dauntless dive-bombers back aft, their wings incapable of being folded. Thus the presence of the SBDs, the predecessors of the SB2Cs, says that this picture was taken early in the war, and perhaps before the later flight deck protocol was established. But that protocol wasn't needed later to require packing together the aircraft, cheek-to-jowl, to accommodate the larger complement of 100 aircraft on board. The Hellcat, in the foreground, and the Avenger behind it, were both designed by the Grumman Aircraft Co. which designed and built the F7F Tigercat and the F8T Bearcat. These two aircraft were too late to participate in the war, but they did join the fleet for a short time in 1946, making their first appearance on the Antietam. (The Antietam was also the first U.S. carrier to receive a canted flight deck in the early 1950's.) But as said, we had them aboard for a matter of only days. It was instead those stalwarts, the F6F Hellcat, the F4U Corsair, the SB2C Helldiver, and the TBM Avenger that carried the war to the enemy in 1945, and that stood shoulder-to-shoulder assembled on the 14 flight decks of the mighty WWII Essexes. From the large to the small, no one ever gives a thought to the fact that the landing gear of the Hellcat folds outward into the wings right adjacent to the wing-folding mechanism. The engineering ingenuity to do this was a "tour de force". These mechanisms were fabricated long before the availability of computers and the software that made possible the manipulations of objects in virtual space. Who among us appreciates such things, both then and now? Who among us would not marvel at such talent, then and now? Unfortunately, most of us do not marvel at such things; we take too much for granted. We don't give the slightest consideration to those "nerds" and "geeks" (using that now popular vernacular) who make possible all our marvelous facilities of modern day life. We don't appreciate all the industriousness of those who make the wherewithal to make our lives more enjoyable and thus allow us to find more meaning in our lives. We tend to give no consideration for anything except that which concerns our own self-centered interests. We don't appreciate those who serve. To ask the ridiculous in this day and age, who among us appreciates the wonder of a growing blade of grass, the marvel of an unfolding flower, the mysteries of the universe? Have we, has our society, lost its ability to appreciate the day-to-day productive efforts by others, the wonders of living, and the glories rendered by the Almighty in giving life its continuity? .



FLIGHT DECK VII

This is a most typical picture of a daily flight deck scene. And it's also the portrait of the title and cover of this book, "Flight Deck". Today happens to be bright and sunny; tomorrow it might be dull and gloomy. However, welcome to what can be euphemistically called the "Airdales' Field of Play" where stern activities are undertaken, not for glory, but for a much higher cause. For it was on these decks, these floating airfields, that these cadres of intrepid Airdales performed their feats of what were often of necessity the daring-do required to unleash (unchock) these multitudes of aircraft so that they could accomplish their missions to promote the cause freedom (sometimes the length of a sentence summons its desired breadth). Launching an aircraft every 20 seconds was not a trivial task, considering the crowded conditions only suggested here (on the Antietam, of necessity, we had to pack them cock-a-block). This flight deck then comprises the Airdales' domain, consisting of a deck 890 feet long, 108 feet wide, with two 48'x44' elevators (capacity 28,000-lbs.) and one 60'x34' elevator (capacity 18,000-lbs.), a deck supporting two hydraulic catapults, which deck had 12 arresting-wires and 5 barrier-cables, a deck having available tie-down rails across it every 6 feet, and with 8 aviation gasoline refueling stations around the deck, plus 3 bomb-elevators and one torpedo-elevator near the island superstructure, all surrounded by many, many guns (20-mm, 40-mm, and 5-inch). Everything about this ship existed only to support and transport this airfield, this "Field of Play", that was the Airdales' domain. Occupying this domain were 100 large, looming aircraft that always seemed to need to be moved (pushed) somewhere, to be parked somewhere, to be unshackled (unchocked), to be refueled often, to be rearmed frequently, to be restored sometimes after it crashed. Right now though, it's time for the next launch operation, made clear by the fact that some of the blue-shirts and yellow-shirts are reaching up to unbuckle the straps of their caps so as to rebuckle them under their chin in preparation for that monotone call to order over the P.A. system: "Stand clear of propellers. Prepare to start engines. Start engines". These preparations are also seen as the brown-shirt plane-captain on this side of the cockpit of the Hellcat in the foreground is ready to help the pilot, on the other side, to seat himself in the cockpit as he adjusts his straps, his phone-lines, his check-list, and receives his well-wishes.

The activity on the flight deck of course had its tense times, its difficult times, its weary times, but it also had its special times such as being topside all day where the air was fresh and the space was there to be had, not confining as were those compartments down below. There were anxieties topside, yes, but there were also many interesting things going on: rearming the aircraft, refueling the aircraft, repairing the aircraft, and being resupplied and refueled from other ships. A small thing, but one could gaze out over the vast ocean to let one's thoughts take flight from the worries that would not dissolve. One could feel a sense of freedom that those below could not. We tend not to appreciate those things we take for granted, and freedom in all of its forms tops the list. Prominent of those are the Four Freedoms as proclaimed by President Roosevelt in 1941: Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear. All of these freedoms are fairly straight forward except the last: one person's fear might be another person's means of obtaining one's objective. Bullying fits this concept, and even badgering, in an essential way, impedes one's freedom. While it's true that there are those who favor security over freedom, the levels of security and freedom must be weighed, for there probably is no such thing as complete security or complete freedom in our very complicated lives. Still, "Vive la Liberte"!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LAUNCH ACTIVITIES

Going topside, I step out onto the catwalk and into the early morning, brisk sea breeze. I notice an overcast sky with low gray clouds and a modicum of white-caps. The ship slowly rolls one way as it heaves deliberately upward, followed by a moderate pitching motion. So it goes, with all kinds of combinations and permutations of pitching and rolling and heaving, and all in a somewhat stately manner. Another day is starting, a day like every other day, give or take the weather. As we (the Airdales) mill about the island superstructure "shooting the breeze", the sound of the bugle comes over the bull-horn (loudspeaker), load and clear and insistent, announcing "Flight Quarters". Now the bosun's pipe shrilly wails forlornly "too-WHEE (1-4), too-WHEE (1-4), too-WHEE (1-4-4-3-3-2-2-1-1) followed by his intoning, "Now hear this. Now hear this. All hands man your flight quarters stations". . Putting my white cap into my back pocket and taking my blue cloth-helmet and goggles from the other pocket, I put them on as I make my way to the aircraft that will be my first of the day. At the same time, pilots appear on the catwalk and jog to their respective aircraft where there are brown-shit plane-captains (enlisted men mechanics who are the squires to the knights), who are assigned to a given aircraft. They climb up onto the cockpit canopy and straddle it as they help the pilots strap themselves in the cockpit. In short order the Air Boss (Air Operations Officer, a commander in rank, just below a rank of captain) matter-of-factly announces over the bull-horn "Stand by to start engines. Stand clear of propellers. Start engines". Throughout this large mass of aircraft that fill the flight deck you can hear the cracking sound of the explosive cartridges as they are ignited by the starter-circuit. This explosive charge is sufficient to "turn the engine over" a couple of revolutions. Immediately you hear a fairly high-pitched whine, followed by a bang and "coughing" for several seconds as the engine starts to "take hold". After another 10-15 seconds the roar of the engines become smoother and more confident.. All the while the plane-captain is standing by with a portable fire-extinguisher. The flame that shoots out of the exhaust-pipe is reason enough. The air is now filled with the clouds of acrid smoke of the burned engine oil and gasoline. This soon blows away, and in very short order the entire flight deck is awash in an persistent sea of angry sounds. And so begins about ten minutes of engine warmup, during which time the Airdales make their way to a wheelchock. The air all around you is being "shattered" by the ear-splitting, thunderous roar of the engines while it is also being whipped into a frenzy by the combined wind-blasts of all those fiercely spinning propellers that span up to thirteen feet in diameter. An engine that packs up to 2,800-hp is a force to reckon with. To a mechanic, these are the sounds of beautiful music. To a home-boy Airdale such as myself, these are the sounds from Hell itself, sounds of trouble and danger. The flashing blades become a blur as the engines accelerate to what seems like the breaking point. (The pilots want to bring the engine temperature to the operating point as soon as possible so as not to have a weak engine just as it lifts off from the end of the flight deck.) Now this great and mighty ship makes its turn so it can have a 30-knot wind over the front of the flight deck (ship speed plus ambient wind-speed), thus ensuring aircraft lift-off.

After about ten minutes of engine warmup, the Air Boss gives the order over the bull-horn "Launch aircraft". He then replaces the little red flag with a little white flag that is positioned right under his chest on the bulkhead that comes up to his chest. At the same time, the signalman on the signal bridge raises the FOX flag (Launch Operations) which is a

red diamond on a white rectangular flag. The yellow-shirt flight-deck officer then motions the Airdales to remove the wheelchocks from the lead aircraft, gives the full-brakes signal (up-raised arms, clenched fists), and then he tells the pilot to lower his wing-flaps (to increase lift at take-off) by making his hands open and close as if they were "a talking duck". Next, with upraised arms, he vigorously rotates his hand and forefinger to tell the pilot to turn up his engine to full power (3,000 rpm). The pilot does so for about twenty seconds, and when that rpm is reached, the pilot gives the thumb's-up signal. If the flight deck officer (yellow-shirt) then thinks the engine sounds alright (no skips, right pitch), he briskly takes a step toward the bow of the ship, leans far forward, and points his black-and-white checkered flag horizontally toward the bow. The pilot now releases his brakes and the aircraft slowly starts to roll forward, picking up speed quickly as the huge propeller pulls the aircraft forward. The pilot has about 400 feet with which to lift off the flight deck. What with the speed of the ship and the ambient wind-speed combining to allow for thirty knots over the front of the flight deck, the aircraft lifts off, gradually gaining altitude as it turns slightly to the right. It makes its way to about 1,500 feet and enters a holding pattern in the form of a very large race track over the ship. As each aircraft leaves the ship, it joins up with the aircraft already airborne.. Once all the aircraft are up, off they go, in echelon, to do who knows what. .

Backtracking to the beginning of the above process, let's take a look at what the Airdale has to confront on occasion. As the Airdale is crouching (or standing, if he's more "laid-back") next to the wheelchock, he sometimes encounters the following: if the ship's speed is fast and if the turn lasts long and is tight, then the ship's list (heeling over) is large. This is a sensation that is not easily forgotten when one is in among a group of aircraft that are all fired up. If the torque of the propeller is in the opposite direction of the turn of the ship (toward the list), then the aircraft actually bounce up and down (but not off of the deck). Crouching right next to the wheel that is on the outside of the turn, one feels like the aircraft is going to literally topple over right on top of you as you crouch there, helplessly. (My incantations work. No aircraft ever did topple over on me, and as you no doubt suspect, on anyone else either.) In addition, being next to the aircraft's wheel essentially puts one within the cylinder of air as defined by the thirteen-foot diameter propeller. Within that cylinder, and during the times that the engine is fired up, there is a wind of literally hurricane force. Woe be unto you who is in that cylinder and is not paying attention to your situation as concerns other aircraft in the vicinity that are all fired up, wheeling and pivoting about with bursts of power as they accelerate here now, and then over there. Never let your guard down. Always be alert, always be aware, because you could very easily be knocked flat or pushed backward into an oncoming aircraft with its thirteen-foot diameter propeller. (These are BIG machines.) Obviously, I never let my guard down, ever.

Now that I'm settled in next to an F4U Corsair, I keep looking at the yellow-shirt aircraft director nearest to me because it is he who will beckon "my" aircraft out into the middle of the flight deck so as to move up forward to the take-off point. He's starting to do this now, so I stand up and pull the wheelchock that straddles the wheel. The pilot moves the throttle forward even as he applies the brakes, ready to move forward. The wind in my face is now about 100-mph, but I can't turn away because I have to keep that yellow-shirt in my view The blast of the constant wind now requires that I hold onto the wheel-strut lest I be swept away by the force of the wind (well "swept away" might be a little overstated, but only by a very little). Now the yellow-shirt indicates with his arms, "come forward".

The F4U's pilot slowly releases his brakes, allowing the aircraft to tentatively move forward. As it alternately advances and slows, the situation is well in hand. But if he has to go some distance to get to the

take-off point, the pilot will gun the throttle. This is what he does. The Corsair lunges forward and I hang onto the wheel-strut with a firm grip lest I get forced backward by the propeller wind-blast as the Corsair proceeds forward. It is now a matter of my literally being dragged along by the aircraft as it accelerates down the flight deck. I have to stay next to the aircraft at all times until it reaches its take-off point, in case it needs to be chocked should the brakes fail. This never happened, but that didn't relieve us from the requirement of staying with the aircraft at all times. We, the aircraft and I, finally reach the take-off point and I can now move off to the side of the deck to get out of the way of other aircraft doing their thing. Thus we took a turn at bringing an aircraft from out of the pack and "delivering" it to the launch officer who in turn will send the aircraft on its way down the flight deck to become airborne. Now we have to go back and pick out another aircraft and repeat the process until all the aircraft are off the deck. This process takes about thirty minutes if all goes well, which it usually did. If the above doesn't seem very exciting or difficult, I can understand that. However, if some thought is given to what was just described, one might reevaluate that opinion and come to some other conclusion. If not, then so be it. It's not important.

To take a somewhat larger view, put yourself on the U.S.S. Antietam, a training ship during the years 1945-1946. As a training ship it had flight operations every day, twice a day. And as a training ship it always had a full complement of aircraft: 30 F4U Corsair fighters, 30 F6F Hellcat fighters, 20 SB2C Helldiver dive bombers, and 20 TBM Avenger torpedo planes. Now envision, if you will, the flight deck just before a flight operation begins. There they are, twenty rows of five aircraft across (4x5+4x5+6x5+6x5=100. Actually, there aren't twenty rows (4+4+6+6=20) because about thirty aircraft are on the hanger deck to make room up forward for the catapult-launch operation. This in turn is required because an aircraft needs about 400 feet of deck to safely become airborne when not catapulted. Therefore the thirty aircraft are brought up topside by the forward elevator to be catapulted. in the first instance. (For the technocrats, the F4U, the F6F, and the SB2C are all 33 feet long while the TBM is 40 feet long. Thus (6+6+4)x 33 feet equals 528 feet and 4x40 equals 160 feet. Now 528+160=688<890 feet, the length of the flight deck.) .This array of aircraft is somewhat awesome in anybody's book, as will be verified by looking at some of the pictures in Chapter 4. To be entirely accurate, the F4Us and the F6Fs could be stacked on the flight deck six to a row. This was the protocol usually used on the Antietam, making for eighteen rows instead of the previously mentioned twenty rows. Therefore, fewer aircraft had to be brought up from the hanger deck which in turn meant that the launch operation was shorter in duration (but still at least one-half hour). This six-aircraft per row configuration can be seen in the picture of the Antietam in Chapter 4 (note the "CV-36" and the "$15000" on the flight deck). We were, after all, a training ship, and as such the spotting of the flight deck was one of the things we had to master and improve upon.

What with this great mass of large machines closely packed together, and with all of them roaring their defiance and brandishing their blades, one could be excused for saying that each and every launch operation was a tour de force. If no one else will, then I will. At least I'll try to do so. The mechanics of this launch operation has been done fairly well in Volume I. Here, the "flavor" of the launch operation will be attempted, again as per Volume I. While the mechanics of a launch operation are quite straight forward, the "flavor of a launch operation is something of a very personal nature. It must first be said that, yes, there are those for whom the launch operation is a mere "walk in the park". You'll see this attitude in some of the pictures. Those Airdales, in my humble estimation, are not entirely "with it", to use the vernacular again. But sometimes this apparent paucity of concern is merely a little bravado rearing its foolish head. But then maybe yes, they do relish these situations. Each individual takes his own personal, subconscious history into the fray. Mine initially resided in the realm of heighten dread and slowly gravitated toward the area of somewhat subdued resignation. But the elevated apprehension

never did go away, fortunately. (Enough of these psycho-considerations; each must form their own for themselves.) Suffice it to say that the following narrative represents the imprint of events as experienced by a recent and still neophyte nineteen year old youth.

So there they are, all seventy or so of those gray, shiny behemoths, full of sound and fury and as precisely spotted as would allow for precious little space between wheel and adjacent wheel. After all, it is to be between those two wheels that will be decided the ultimate "truth". There will be no temporizing, for temporizing has no currency there, between those two markers of life or death. There can be only ONE mistake in transiting those markers. That the means of destruction are essentially invisible holds no satisfaction. To the contrary, that those furiously spinning blades are a blur are a cause for fearing the unknown. That imaginary line, the one that is drawn equidistant from both wheels and upon which you must walk to traverse the path between the two aircraft, must be precise so that at that moment of truth, life shall prevail. (Is the imagery too much? Is the imagination out of control? But how else to adequately express that which is reality? I don't know. Do you?) In any event, included in this equation of variables are the elements of fierce and divergent winds, horrendous and unsettling sounds, a pitching and rolling and heaving flight deck, the unsalutary closeness of the aircraft, and the blur of a PAIR of propellers. Now, as you approach that pair of aircraft that are "angrily" fired up, your mind becomes acutely concentrated about what is and what MIGHT be. Unfortunately, the latter often takes hold over the former. Such thoughts are no friend in this time of dire need to be self-possessed and clear-headed concerning the task at hand. (Before continuing, it must be said that being sometimes being somewhat fanciful is the only way to adequately describe a critical situation.)

Now let's strap on our cloth-helmet, adjust our goggles, and select an unaccompanied wheelchock. This could be in the first row of aircraft, or it could be the second row. If it's to be the second row, more is the peril. Keep in mind that the aircraft are being motioned out from the pack of aircraft by the yellow-shirt aircraft directors, which aircraft are in turn are being directed by other yellow-shirts to the take-off point further up forward. This means that as these aircraft are "pulled out" they wheel and pivot about in front of the front row of that phalanx of "angry" aircraft. This in turn causes tremendously strong cross-winds-winds to be generated between these aircraft and the front row, making that area very treacherous. This is the very area in which you and I find ourselves as we approach the front row on the way to a wheelchock in that front row (or beyond). The looming aircraft signify that we are in the "distress zone". I could reasonably say that one's mouth becomes dry, one's palms start to sweat, one's pulse begins to pound, and so on. But I won't, because this is certainly not my recollection. Anxiety has various physical manifestations, and those listed above were not mine. However, a certain physical tenseness does take over due to the mental apprehensions. My recollection of these events were my efforts to banish those apprehensions as best I could, thereby producing a sufficient amount of equanimity to make these encounters emotionally doable. But let's face it, you were NEVER able to completely dispel those metal apprehensions. Control them, yes. Dispel them, no. Let's proceed with the task at hand: reach a wheelchock. Feeling the force of the wind at your back as you approach the assembled aircraft, row on row, column on column, you instinctively lean backwards into that wind at your back. But use caution because as was mentioned, these winds are coming from any of several directions. It's necessary to "feel" the direction of the wind and lean in THAT direction. This is not as instinctual as it would seem. Carrying on, make sure your approach to that phalanx is straight on, aimed at the space between two adjacent propellers, from at least five yards away. This is not instinctive, but learned, and it is important. If you don't do this, you'll be directly in front of one of those propellers with who knows what kind of wind-force and wind-direction at your back. This means that should you get a blast of wind at your back, you'll be pushed between the propellers and not into a

propeller. (No great insight there.) But I have to say this now; there is no sensation quite like that of proceeding between two viciously spinning propellers only ten feet apart with a hurricane-force wind at your back from who knows which direction, all the while being engulfed in mind-numbing noise from Hell. And yes, this while on an unstable deck. These are the Moments of Truth that stoke the emotional juices of anxiety and fear. You can't easily imagine all that seemingly untamed kinetic energy as manifested by a 2,000 to 2,800 horsepower unmuffled engine that is revving up full power only feet away from you. (But you can try to do so.) In any case, we pass through that fearful "gauntlet" and reach a wheelchock unscathed, physically. This puts us about five feet away from the propeller-tip and directly within that cylinder of hurricane-force winds. At least now those winds are coming from one direction only and we are in a fixed position, ready to crouch down when the pilot "guns" the engine to warm it up. Should we reach this point and we only then realize that it's already occupied, we must find an unoccupied wheelchock. Thus we crawl further back between two other aircraft, or we crawl along a row in front of the aircraft. The former is preferable because it is never a good idea to move in front of an aircraft (Remember those pesky winds. But who could ever forget them, those winds from hades?) So we are extra careful when our path takes us in front of aircraft not feet away. Doing this puts a lot of wear and tear on our dungarees, to say nothing of our emotional well-being. It's during these times that we really appreciate those rails of cleats that run across the flight deck every six feet. These cleats are akin to life-lines when we are in duress among the pack of aircraft. As mountain-climbers have pitons to serve as life-preservers, so too do Airdales have cleats to maintain body and soul. We cling to them as if our life depended on it, as we negotiate our way between and among those "howling behemoths".

This then reflects the world of the Airdale as he works the launch process. It's far from being pretty, and certainly not glamourous but as was said previously, until and unless an Airdale pulls that wheelchock, that aircraft will go nowhere. So take some pride in your work, humble as it is.

THE ARENA

The Gods on high are looking down on us mere mortals here below as we churn the sea, going first this way, then that way, seemingly not knowing what to do. Are we searching out the enemy to engage him, or are we retreating so as to regroup and recharge ourselves for the next day's willful exertion? In any event, this pilot's-eye view of the arena below bespeaks a chessboard of naval warfare that belittles the fact that within and on both of those carriers are a crew of about 2900 officers and men and a complement of 100 large and lethal aircraft. The outcome of this gigantic chess game portends serious consequences of shattered life and limb, where warriors seek each others' destruction (Let's be honest, I never considered myself to be a "warrior", and in fact never was a "warrior". But that didn't deter my "acting the warrior' even while never having delivered shot or shell.) Actually, what is most likely happening here is the implementation of the order to turn the ship into the wind in preparation for a launch (or landing) of the ship's aircraft. (The OOD (Officer of the Deck) gave the command to the helmsman, "left full rudder, come to XXX degrees". As witness the carrier's wake, the helmsman then energetically and emphatically spun the helm ("steering wheel") three complete turns to the left, and after about 30 seconds he eased back on the rudder-angle to about 10 degrees left. After about another 10 seconds he slowly brought the rudder to 10 degrees right so as to gradually bring the ship's heading to XXX degrees without an overshoot of more than a few degrees. It was a matter of arriving at XXX degrees as quickly as possible with little or no overshoot of the prescribed XXX degrees. I enjoyed this exercise a great deal when I was in the Navigation Division. As said, the maneuver here either occurred after a flight operation or in preparation for a flight operation (either launch or land). (Recall that the wind over the front of the flight deck had to be 30 knots due to the combined actions of the ambient wind and the ship's speed.)

This aerial view gives a novel perspective of the "grand design" of naval warfare over large stretches of the ocean where two opposing forces look to engage and destroy the other. In a similar way, it's one's view, one's perspective, that characterizes one's impressions of any given situation (or imbroglio). Sometimes it's necessary to step back and take the long view, as here, to get a correct understanding, especially when exhausted by protracted confrontations that the close-in view engenders. In addition, it helps to know "from whence one comes" because a person's thoughts and behavior could be honestly derived from his precedencies (but to deliberately use one's previous experiences as a present excuse is a "foul" as well as an appropriate "non sequitur"). Unfortunately, there are those whose agenda leads primarily to "tunnel vision". Very often that old maxim "the means to achieve the end" often stumbles on the "means" portion. The "end" can be mutually agreed upon while the "means" can vary wildly, even while those divergent "means" could both have merit and legitimate claims on validity. Thus it resolves into which "means" is the most correct. But then, self-interest raises its ugly head. Some people become so wrapped up in their own conceits and dogmatism that they will never admit that there are other valid points of view. This of course is counterproductive and an impediment to reaching the truth of the matter. However, it's fitting that we accommodate those of whom we are skeptical, but this need not be boundless. In sum, the fault would seem to be a paucity of reliable facts and the abundance of specious facts. Then all opinions become problematical in the extreme. There is nothing new here, but changing one's position of view (not viewpoint) can be usefully used to arrive at a more agreeable meeting of minds.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIR BOSS I

This following chapter, "Launch Activities", and for that matter the rest of the chapters, will make frequent use of the present tense for the purpose of engendering the sense that "you are there" on the flight deck, that you too are an Airdale with your cloth-helmet's chin-straps tightly buckled under your chin and your large goggles adjusted over your nose. You too will hear the crushing sounds of an active flight deck chock-full of large aircraft warming up their engines. You too will feel the full force of the punishing wind-blasts sweeping down the deck among all those straining aircraft. Those two things, plus the spinning, slashing propellers are the key ingredients, the "persona" if you will, of the flight deck experience during the tense and trying period of a launch operation. As we undertake our duties, we never forget that though each excursion into that mass of aircraft is unique unto itself, we nevertheless will be obliged to repeat the process once again, and again, and again, over and over, day after day, week following week, month upon endless month, until we think that this is all we've ever done, or ever will do. Pulling a wheelchock during launch operations nine times a day doesn't seem like very much (90 aircraft per launch, twice a day, two wheels per aircraft, and 40 Airdales on duty results in 9 wheelchocks per Airdale (360/40=9)), but when each time is a significant event, nine events are a lot. (Apropos the previous page's comments about perspective and position of view, when the reader looks at an aircraft from a "healthy" distance away, all of the above discussion seems merely academic. But when moved up close and personal, and the abominable noise and wind-blasts are factored in, the academic quickly turns visceral.

Turning to this picture, we have a good view of the Air Boss, an officer with the rank of Commander. He is the head of the Air Department and part of the ship's company, while the aircraft squadrons are assigned to the ship on TDY (Temporary Duty). The squadrons of course have their commander and he works closely with the Air Boss. He can be seen here in the middle left of the picture, arms leaning on the top edge of the bulkhead (a rope runs right across his face). He's giving close attention to the activities below as the aircraft wheel about and line up in the process of the launch operation. He has various assistants with him at this Air Boss Station, as well as an enlisted man with sound-powered phones (the microphone rests on his chest). Beyond him can be seen others on the navigation bridge, with the pilot house (wheelhouse) to the right. Looking closely, one can notice two tractors, and just to the right of the forward tractor can be seen a small white flag. When the Air Boss gives the command to commence launching aircraft, he replaces a red flag with this white flag. It seemed superfluous to me, because the Air Boss had the availability of the flight deck P.A. system to bark his commands. He seldom did use the P.A. system though except when there was a crash (mishap) or an accident (and of course the intonation "Stand clear of propellers. Prepare to start engines. Start engines" at the start of every launch operation). Right below the Air Boss, on the flight deck, you'll notice the open hatch (door) to the bomb-elevator. This was normally closed during flight operations, and frankly, it's surprising that the Air Boss didn't have it closed before the launch operation (the bombs were long since already brought topside and loaded in the aircraft). The open hatch to the right goes to the chart-house (navigation compartment), and there is the usual row of spectators. Notice just below them the bundle of cables that are everywhere throughout the ship carrying radar signals, radio signals, fire-control signals, power, etc. They were similar to the nerve fibers throughout all of the human body.



AIR BOSS II

The previous picture precedes this one by about 10 seconds as an F6F Hellcat dashes down the deck to achieve lift off moments later. It's a little bit amusing to note that that officer on the navigation bridge of the previous picture who is covering his ears is no longer in view in this picture. One can chuckle somewhat smugly about this at the same time that one also becomes aware that not all of us are "sturdy" enough to withstand the imprecations of a LOUD racket other than stoically. The impact of this noise was akin to a physical, punishing pain that could not be shrugged off as was done by the many, and becoming accustomed was not an available option. The only option that was realistically available was to "grin and bear it" and realize that you were not alone in this malady (that was trivial to those many not so afflicted, but was troublesome in the extreme to those who were). In fact, this theme of the "terrifically terrible noise" syndrome during a launch operation will be a recurring one throughout this chapter because that was how I felt about it. Sad, but true. (To this day, I'm very partial to the "easy listening" type of music to the complete exclusion of loud, bombastic music. Not to criticize others' taste for loud music, but isn't it true that loudness fully obscures melody and musicality, the essence of "music"?)

Notice the flaps at the back portion of the wing, inboard, in a downward position. This configuration provides additional lift and is always used during a launch or landing when the aircraft speed is low. This is explained by referring to the Swiss mathematician Bernouilli who, in 1738, found that a fluid (air/water) flowing through a pipe with a constriction generates less fluid pressure at that constriction because the fluid speeds up at that constriction (assuming free flow). Thus a wing, with a "bulge" on the top of the wing, has the air molecules moving faster over the top of the wing than under the bottom of the wing.(the air-parcel striking the front of the wing must meet at the trailing edge of the wing, top and bottom, at the same time). The faster air molecules on top of the wing generates less pressure there, and so this pressure-differential is resolved into an upward motion, or lift. The downward flaps exaggerate this condition. An F4U Corsair was once inadvertently given the "Go" launch-signal without the pilot having been notified that he had not lowered his flaps. The Corsair left the ship at flight deck level and it was downhill from there: one lost Corsair, one wet and mad pilot.

The "Air Boss", looking down on his "domain", was the boss of all activities on the flight deck below. The word "boss" was a descriptive term, and in no way a pejorative. There are those, and probably too many of them, who look upon the "boss" as a demi-tyrant, someone to be contested at all times. Sometimes this could be a reflection of their hostility based on their certitude that they should properly be the boss. Sometimes it could be merely a matter of resentment at being told what to do (when actually it's instead a matter of their being given direction). Sometimes it could be plain orneriness. You name it. But in the military, we obey all lawful and lawfully given orders without comment (hoping that they're sensible). In civilian life, where the law is not a factor, we do and must take direction (orders) lest we fall into a form of anarchy where an enterprise (that cuts your paycheck) will fold up, with a loss not only to you, but also many, many others. (Libertarians, you mean well, but think it through well, beforehand). A well-ordered citizenry is essential to that citizenry, and a well-ordered enterprise is a very important subset of that citizenry. So though the boss is not a paragon of all that is wise and smart, on balance, a well disciplined citizenry is paramount to a properly functioning society. Obey the boss.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"GET THE CARRIERS"

This admonition appeared on an American blackboard. You can be sure that this same admonition also appeared on all the enemy blackboards. In the scheme of things in the Pacific sea-war, the aircraft carriers were THE prime targets for the simple reason that it was they who were the ones who could hurt you the most, even unto a horrible death. Both sides knew this and both sides went to great effort to destroy the source of pain, not to mention their serious impediment to final victory. Before considering the launching activities that occur on the flight deck of a carrier, a digression about another type of launch that is vastly more important to the reader than what happens on the flight deck because without it, one could well say that all else is moot. This is the "launch to learning", if you will. This will perhaps strike some as a sophomoric segue to the subject of learning, but it is so important that I will not be deterred. "Yes Virginia, there are good and important reasons for going to school". I extracted what follows a long time ago, when my children were much younger. I kept it because of its timelessness, for young and OLD alike. I have recast it to suit my thinking about this most important subject that's extremely appropriate to life and everything that happens in your life.

"Why Is Schooling Important"

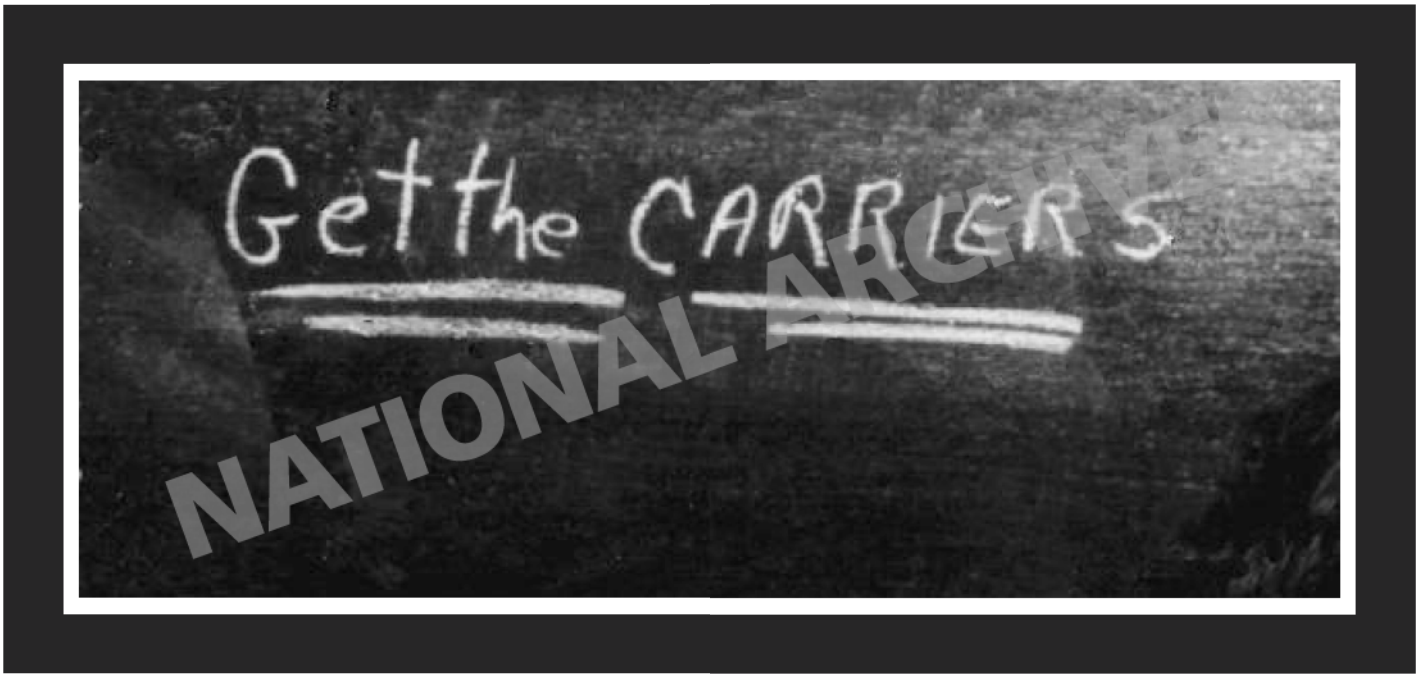
FIRST, in large measure, you go to school to learn how to learn. If you try to find a practical use for everything you learn, you'll bog down quickly. It is not so much the use for a particular fact, but the use for a trained mind that counts. It's a matter of learning a skill which is composed of many other skills: memory, logic, deduction, etc. So the more you know, the more you can know (the easier it is to learn more, while this knowledge learned also aids the development of one's self-confidence).

SECOND, we go to school in order to be introduced to "knowing". Fortunately, we have the world's prior knowledge to draw upon in forming our own concepts. We don't have to relearn everything. We can take that knowledge that's been handed on to us and apply it as we need it. "We stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us", and let's give almighty thanks for that gift of knowledge.

THIRD, you go to school to learn to express your knowledge and beliefs. A large part of your school years is given over to helping you learn how to say what you mean and explain what you know. In English class you learn how to express yourself verbally , and learn the precise usage of words and phrases, and through your readings you come into contact with people who know how to express themselves. It's no pleasure being misunderstood, and this can be greatly mitigated if you comprehend what it is that's appropriate.

FOURTH, you go to school in order to find yourself through differences of opinions. The variety of possible opinions on many topics is almost endless. During the coming years your horizons will expand considerably through student government and discussions of world affairs in class. Put to the best uses, this time can be a trial-run in open-mindedness, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

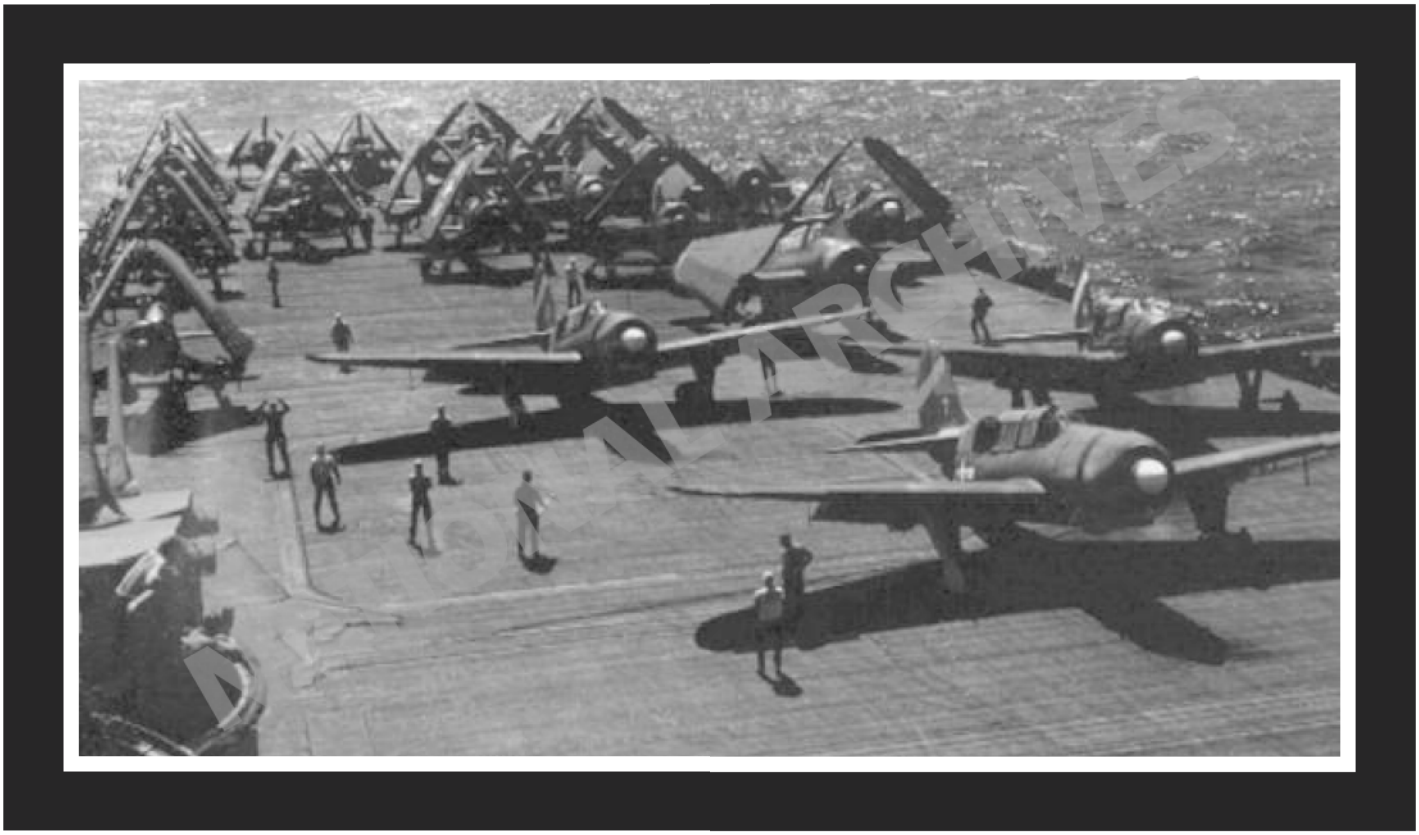
FIFTH, you go to school to prepare for your future, Your future will depend upon the extent to which you have understood and utilized the opportunities you have been given. Work hard at learning how to think. Let knowledge excite you and make you eager for more. Learn to express yourself well, for it reflects on you. Reach your own conclusions but combine them with an appreciation of other points of view. Then you'll be getting in shape mentally to face the future, no matter what that may be. You take charge.


Get the CARRIERS
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BRIGHT DAY, GLOOMY OUTLOOK

On this bright sunny day, the washed-out and dull resolution seen in this picture accurately portrays our washed-out and dull sense of "doom and gloom" that followed us wherever we went as we processed yet another installment of what the high command had deemed necessary to do: launch aircraft. So it's being done, with dispatch. Thus this day continues that day which had been endured as on all those other previous days what with the ever domineering triumvirate consisting of those maddeningly loud noises, the withering winds, and those flashing blades of steel that knew no mercy. The gloom rests not so much on what is being done now as it does on how much longer and how much more has yet to be done. To be sure, another day is underway where up to 100 aircraft are being carefully marshalled into an impressive armada in whose innards has been amassed tons of high explosives to be delivered to a target soon to be reduced to a condition beyond recognition. This floating airfield, this assemblage of powerful machines, is being worked by the blue-shirted Airdales crouching among and alongside these packed aircraft while in the foreground are seen the yellow-shirted aircraft-directors using hand-signals to direct each aircraft, in turn, to the take-off point adjacent to the island superstructure a mere 400 feet from the front of the flight deck. (Please try to accept the interchanging of tenses. Sometimes the present tense simply super- imposes itself onto my consciousness as I recall those days.) As they taxi forward, these SB2Cs unfold their wings while wheeling about in studied, deliberate motions. Only the strict adherence to the yellow-shirts' hand-signals prevents the business-end of one aircraft from "chewing up" the tail-section of the preceding aircraft which would result in the air being filled with flying debris. While this static scene static scene seems appears placid and subdued, it is in fact an arena where the "Triumvirate" reigned supreme in all its might and omnipotence while we "vassals" were held in its thrall.

Even though the feelings of gloom induced by having to deal with the stress and strain on the flight deck can be comprehended, one can also understand that such a state of mind is not useful to one's well being in these confines of this "playing field". To the point, such an environment cried out for an attitude that demanded a healthy dose of optimism, while the opposite of this would have bred only the mischief of increasing one's tendencies toward more tension. But how can optimism thrive where fear tries to usurp the mind? (To the extent that fear concentrates the mind, this is good.) But aren't optimism and fear poles apart? Actually the larger question is whether one can function satisfactorily at all without that underlying sense of optimism. Firstly, optimism can be considered the valued stepchild of faith. To be sure, optimism pervades those of faith, as witness a portion of the 23rd Psalm: "..... Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.....Surely goodness (and mercy) and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.....". The optimistic among us look to the favorable aspects and believe that good will ultimately prevail. The optimistic are hopeful, cheerful, enthusiastic, positive, and yes, confident. Optimism engenders strength (read "resolve") while pessimism only serves to sap one's sinew and punishes by preventing the application of a productive mind. William James said "....human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind". Are those huge thunder-heads an object of IMPENDING gloom, or are they PRESENTLY a thing of awesome beauty? The choice belongs to you (even while in preparation for the worst).



GLOOM ON DECK

When viewed from arm's length, this photograph puts one in mind of a nice black-and-white painting, the overall gloom notwithstanding. It can be noticed that there are four racks inboard of each wing providing carriage for four rockets, while outboard can be seen the slats on the forward part of the wing. These slats, extended about 1 ½", reconfigure the wing so as to provide for greater lift at the slower launch and landing speeds. Because the SB2C's wheels are positioned a substantial distance apart, a more stabilized "touch down" (landing) is possible. The Airdales at the wheels of the aircraft were not directed there by a yellow-shirt (chief petty officer or commissioned officer). Instead, each Airdale saw what had to be done, and then he did it. Even though these things were almost always simple-minded, such as pulling a wheelchock from a wheel, its accomplishment was anything but simple due to the "Triumvirate". This then was the normal, the standard operating procedure for almost everything that was done on the flight deck by the Airdales. We were individuals working as individuals who also happened to be part of a team working as a team whose goals were team-oriented. After flight operations, were over, we were now supervised in that we were told to move this aircraft to here and that aircraft to there, etc. The point to be made is that most of what an Airdale did on the flight deck was done under his own recognizance even while under the the general supervision of the yellow-shirts. Looking now at that destroyer racing to the rear, one can imagine that it is it is on its way to pick up a sailor who for whatever reason fell the 50 feet to the water below. The speed is required because if the water is cold, his survival-time is short. But beyond that, the destroyer must get to him before he's visually, and then literally, lost to the known world. (We were to have life-preservers (12" inflatable tubes folded to a flat 6") worn around our waists at all times.

This gloomy day requires a reprise of the previous page: optimism does NOT imply unrealistic expectations, and optimism does NOT present itself as a solution. Rather, an optimist sees as a challenge that which a pessimist in turn considers a problem. An optimist acknowledges multiple options. An optimist considers adaptability, within boundaries. William James said that "The essence of genius is knowing what to overlook". It can be equally said that worry is the misuse of one's imagination, while pessimism is mostly a cushion for possible future disappointment (not to belittle legitimate problems requiring thoughtful consideration. Yes, justify problems.) Is the glass half empty, or half full? The pessimist should realize that he who is not master of his thoughts is not master of his life. But why optimism? The larger question is "why not optimism?" (Optimism is "a disposition or tendency to look on the more favorable side of happenings and to anticipate the most favorable result") Using our powers of discrimination, shouldn't we differentiate between those situations over which we have no control and those over which we have varying degrees of control (even while realizing the realities of the situation)? (It would seem that this requires intellectual optimism instead of emotional optimism.) On the flight deck there are some things over which you have no control, such as the presence and movement of many large and dangerous machines, all in an environment resembling a hurricane. Yet, there are some other things over which you do have control, such as tour capacity to think and reason and move, These are the basis for optimism. It's YOUR choice, and paraphrasing Lincoln, "I've found that most people are as happy as they set their minds to be". Why punish yourself by groveling to the unknown? Liberate yourself!



NATIONAL ARCHIVE

YOU'RE NEXT

With hands in a "come on" position, the yellow-shirt is giving this signal to the pilot just out of sight to the left. At this point in time, the aircraft have completed their 10-minute engine warm-up period and are now in a semi-quiescent condition awaiting their signal to move out and forward. Next, consider the fact that there's a 30-knot wind at the back of this yellow-shirt as he stands but a few yards in front of that SB2C revving its engine. However, at the same time one should realize that this is part of his job-description and that by now he's acclimated himself to these situations. Also understand that he's at this distance of his own volition while those Airdales next to the wheels have no such freedom of choice: they MUST take a path which takes them in close proximity to those infernal propellers. But likewise, this too was in THEIR job-description. In any case, you can be sure that they "tightened their chin-straps" and they too became acclimated. It was true that some Airdales accustomed themselves more readily and fully than some others. For instance, notice that Airdale crouched down, his back to the wind, his hands to his ears while next to him is another Airdale standing up, facing the wind, and somewhat nonchalant. (Most of the rest of us fell somewhere in between those two extremes.) In any event, never was there any bravado of any kind at any time by anyone. One's personal demons were kept to oneself. In retrospect, it could have been that the more nonchalant the Airdale, the more he was trying to hide his fear while those of a reserved nature hid a will of steal. Life often goes thus and appearances are turned on their head where braggadocio is only a cry to cover feelings of inadequacies while reserve represents resiliency and strength (i.e., the "strong, silent type").

One wonders whether or not there's a corollary between an effusive braggadocio and the propensity to be course and crude in one's personal conduct ("rude, crude, and socially unacceptable".) Also, is there a close and direct relationship between self-indulgent rudeness and a woeful and willful superficiality of intellect? Does a well-honed sensibility represent an intelligence that is far beyond that of those who demean others? How can someone with well-developed set of upright ethics ride roughshod over others? Why is self-restraint so difficult for some people to learn? What can explain the tendencies of those who should know better to cater to the lowest common denominator? Some will answer to all the above with the presumptuous rubric, "freedom". Certainly "no one" objects to the concept of freedom. Yet "freedom" doesn't imply witlessness and lack of good judgment. Is it not true that freedom without responsibility is a blight on society? While self-expression and creativity definitely serve society well, one can also argue that self-imposed discipline serves society even better in many important ways. In fact, one could reasonably say that without this discipline, be it in the classroom (most importantly) or be it on the flight deck, bad things will surely happen. The former case should be just as obvious as the latter case. Self-discipline, earned self-esteem, and respect for all others this is another kind of "Triumvirate" that cannot be recommended too strongly. Consider this: this triumvirate is clearly seen even in this poorly defined picture. The self-discipline should be obvious (don't die). The self-esteem in turn allows the Airdale t have the confidence that he can maneuver among and reach a wheelchock, while respect is less evident in that each Airdale gives moral reinforcement to each other Airdale. Could not life now usefully follow the model that this triumvirate provided to those who worked in those special conditions on the flight deck?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

READY, SET, ...

This SB2C, being carefully and precisely positioned over the catapult-slot in the deck, is poised to be slung abruptly forward at about 50-knots relative to the deck (this figure results from my recollected estimate, and I leave it to the experts to verify this). With a wind-velocity of 30-knots over the front of the flight deck, aircraft have about 80-knots of wind available to become airborne (the ship's speed into the prevailing wind plus the speed of that wind combine to to produce 30-knots). Now the pilot throttles the engine to full rpm for about 8 to 10 seconds. If the engine sounds satisfactory to the launch officer seen here, he gives the "Go!" signal by lunging forward as he points his finger toward the front of the flight deck. At this signal and with the pilot's head pressed back against the head-rest, the releases the brakes. Simultaneously the green-shirt catapult-man pushes the button that both releases the hold-back bar attached to the tail of the aircraft as well as causes the shuttle-cock in the deck-slot to slam forward. The catapult wire seen attached to the under-side of the fuselage is violently pulled forward by the shuttle-cock. Upon leaving the front of the flight deck the propeller starts to "take hold", and gradually the the aircraft gains altitude. If the engine now starts to sputter due to the load, losing power, a "water-landing" results. Fortunately, the fuselage has sufficient water-tight integrity to float the long enough for the pilot and crew to vacate the aircraft, leaving it to find its own particular grave. A following destroyer quickly picks up the survivors. (It's instructive to note that a 16,000-lbs. gross weight aircraft can be accelerated to 50-knots in about 170 feet by that "thin" catapult-wire.

There's a somewhat trite, yet clear, analogy to be found here in that just as the catapult gives this aircraft a large initial boost, so also do teachers give sufficient aid to students to allow them "to take wing " on their own. On the flight deck, once given the initial boost, an aircraft must supply its own energy to fly higher. So too must students generate their own enthusiasm to reach higher. Unfortunately, there are those who are so inert, who are so devoid of self-respect that they shut down their efforts and "crash into the sea". Even worse are those who deem learning to be a fool's errand merely because a subject does not meet their fancy Too bad that they don't appreciate or understand the value of a "well-rounded education".Too bad that there are those who don't realize that the mores of "the street" will be their undoing due to false and faulty loyalties. Are they that afraid of failure? The easy response to that is to metamorphose that stultifying fear into an energizing challenge. While teaching has a strong calling on those who would help others, in a larger sense the paradigm should be the familiar "help others to help themselves". For instance, when my father would give to me only a suggestion as to how to solve a math word-problem, I couldn't deny that after a certain amount of exasperation, this was a stimulus to resolve the problem. I literally learned the enjoyment to be had in learning. Again, one confronts the concept of creating a challenge to light the spark of motivation. A corollary can be found in this, to wit, do not do for others that which they can and should do for themselves. To do so is to do a disservice to them. Rather, instill and encourage independence by providing the minimum of help, for to depend on others is an onerous burden. Isn't the essence of freedom based on the reality of independence? (While acknowledging that in a complex society some dependence is necessary and good). It would seem that the goal of an ideal society would be to have everyone who is able to be fully self-sufficient. Such independence would seem to be the very epitome of freedom.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLAPS DOWN

To be sure, this photograph is best viewed at arm's length, lessening the less than optimum detail and providing for the more interesting "big picture" which shows that the F4U Corsairs to the right are going to skip this launch operation. Meanwhile, the SB2C Helldivers to the left, with engines at idle, are lined up in preparation for their catapult-launch. We know that the forward SB2C is positioned directly over the catapult while we believe that the other two are perhaps too close behind. However, our angle of view tends to overemphasize the unnerving aspect of the propeller-to-tail proximity. In any event, the brakes are on and the engines are at idle. Nevertheless, notice that all eyes are directed at all times at the situation even though the anxiety-quotient is at a relatively low level as the pilots and we await the command to "Commence launch". It is then that the quotient rises, even if only imperceptibly. You learned that it was not useful or intelligent to expend your nervous energy during the quiescent times such as here now. Instead, you learned to husband your emotional, visceral energy even while expending your intellectual energy keeping tabs on the comings and goings of large, lethal and mobile machines. This can be seen in the alert assemblage of Airdales soon to take these SB2Cs under their tutelage as they maneuver them over the catapult, each in its turn. Though it's not all that clear, each aircraft here has its flaps deflect- ed downward to provide additional lift at the slower launch speeds. These flaps, inboard and at the trailing edge of the wing, make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful launch. Perhaps to a casual observer these SB2Cs appear to be particularly "eager" to take wing what with their close propeller-to-tail positioning. But in place of "eagerness", think instead of the constant constraints of space with which the yellow-shirts and the blue-shirts must continually contend. Too often one feels it to be too harrowing.

Whoa, would that we could be as enthusiastic as those SB2Cs appear to be as they line up for launch. And why? Well certainly, why not? What's enthusiasm but an overriding manifestation of some particular interest, intellectual or otherwise. And who can deny that being truly interested in (wholesome) things is the very essence of a pleasing life? One could even postulate that enthusiasm is a subset of optimism, and in turn, enjoyment is a subset of enthusiasm. Who has known someone who was both disenchanted and happy? And who would deny that that imbroglio called the student-teacher ratio would be moot in a classroom of enthusiasts? Who's to say that enthusiasm isn't the engine of good works? And isn't it true that chance favors those with an active and enthusiastic mind? (We don't speak of mindless enthusiasm here, and of course mindless effusiveness and impulsiveness are not a useful part of useful enthusiasm.) In fact there is much to recommend for the quiet, subdued form of enthusiasm that is based on those halcyon and blissful, even wistful, days of yore, such as that lyrical song, "These Are The Things I Love" (The glow of sunset in the summer skies, ..."). The real virtue of the stimulation of enthusiasm can be found in the start of new ideas. Enthusiasm tends to encourage diligence in the pursuit of useful achievements and often leads to excellence in work. Enthusiasm defies inertia while it is most successful and durable when it's intellectual rather than purely emotional. Enthusiasm should be fueled by earnestness so as to sustain its devotion to a cause. It is best when it's "warm" and it's useless when it's not sincere. Enthusiasm is not passion, though ardor and zeal embody its spirit. At the same time, no matter how subdued is one's enthusiasm, can not one call it one of the elixirs of life? Can society survive without it?



NATIONAL A

HODGEPODGE ON THE FLIGHT DECK

I leave it to the readers to use their own good judgment as to when to view a picture at arm's length (actually, almost always except when it's necessary to ferret out some detail that ought to be highlighted). As a case in point, it's useful here to focus on the middle of the picture, top, and recognize the F6F Hellcat behind which is a F4U Corsair. This is an anomaly of the usual procedure we had on the Antietam. To wit, the aircraft were "always" spotted for a launch operation in orderly groups of like aircraft: all the Hellcats were foremost, then all the Corsairs, followed by the Helldivers, and finally to the rear were the Avengers. I surmised that the reason for this arrangement was that the F6Fs and the F4Us had auxiliary fuel tanks strapped under their fuselages allowing them greater range as they circled the carrier until all the aircraft could form up into squadrons and proceed to the target. Moving on, it was unusual that that brown-shirt (the Helldiver's plane-captain) would be there giving the thumbs up to the pilot. This was the function of the yellow-shirt seen lunging forward giving the "Go" signal. It was he who would verify that the flaps were down before sending him off the flight deck. If the flaps were not down, he would hold his hands together, palms facing each other and in a horizontal position, and then open and close his hands as if they were hinged at the heal of his hands. The pilot would quickly respond by lowering his flaps and off he would go. Now observe the yellow-shirt in front of the F6F as he "takes control" of the Helldiver to the left while the other yellow-shirts out in the open position themselves to "take control" of the other aircraft preparatory to their taxiing forward. Once again, notice that Airdale who is crouching near to the F6F's wheel while a second Airdale at the F4U's wheel takes the nonchalant stance. Still again, a third Airdale to his right also feels obliged to take the crouching position. That's because right now the flight deck defines NOISY, denotes WINDY, and definitely is no place for the faint of heart who crave peace and quiet and especially solitude (like me).

Hodgepodge implies a lack of direction. The opposite of this requires a knowledge of what's relevant, what's important, what's significant in this journey of life (which isn't a trite concept). What's trivial and what's not? What follows below is a partial accounting of some of the things that require consideration in determining what's pertinent. It will be offered in a "freedom of consciousness" type of offering (in no particular order): the quality of character, the benefits of optimism, the purpose of humanitarianism, the usefulness of self-reliance, advisability of fairness, the awareness of conscience, the necessity of conscience, the aptness of a critically logical mind, the attitude of rectitude, the propriety of attitude, the advantage of self-motivation, the proper use of discrimination, the utility of determination, the enlightenment of appreciation, the insight of empathy, the gain from cooperation, the gain from self-control, the progress from open-mindedness, the advantages of reflection, the near need of helpfulness, the gift of challenges, the profit of strong-mindedness, the felicity of forgiveness, the concept of respect, the rewards of responsibility, the joy of accomplishment, the enthusiasm of interests, the requirement of sagacious goals, the pluralism of tolerance, the appropriateness of thoughtfulness, the gift of independence, the sanctity of integrity, the blessings of imagination, the gift of self-sacrifice, the utility of earned self-esteem (self-worth), the pleasures of dependability, the desire for quiet times, the sincere gratitude for songs such as "All The Things Yuo Are", the sober demeanor elicited by the melancholy song "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes". The above list will continue in like fashion anon.


95

LYING LOW

Here we observe the situation where we're allowed to lie down on the job, as long as it's done lying face down while looking ahead at what's happening there. It's clear that no one has seen fit to take the nonchalant pose that requires one to take on a direct counterpoise to those violent wind-blasts that can take you from here to there in spite of your fervent wishes otherwise. It should be apparent that when standing upright within about a yard and a half from the propeller-tip as it revs up at full throttle is to take a physical assault no less so for being invisible (a high-speed motorcycle ride gives a flavor of it, albeit at a lower profile). This picture was included be- cause it was thought to portray in a little more visceral manner the implication of being so close to a 13 ½ foot diameter propeller at its most energetic time. These Corsairs have probably been warming up this way, off and on, for about ten minutes. Soon they'll be beckoned out to take their place in the line of aircraft going to the take-off point 400 feet from the front of the flight deck. As they do so, the Airdale will walk, no, struggle alongside the wheel of the Corsair with wheelchock in hand as he accompanies the Corsair to the take-off point. He'll then deposit the wheelchock to the side and next he'll make his way back aft to another aircraft in the pack as best he can within the withering wind-zone. While not a proponent of things dramatic, I included this picture also because it so aptly represents the drama, the constant "battle" of the launch process: big mobile machines in full-throat vs. mere mortal man in extremity.

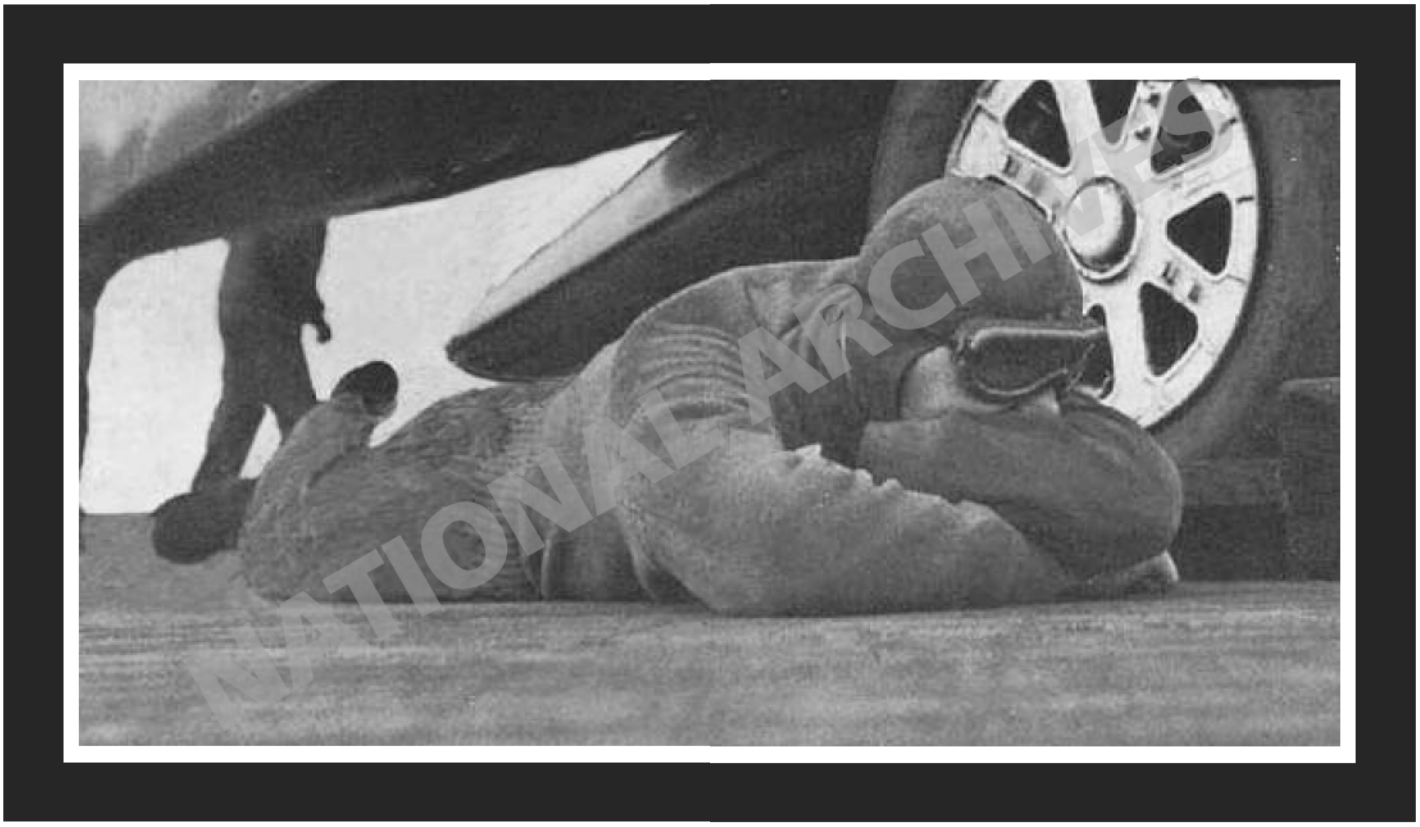
A drama represents a "vivid, emotional conflict" usually along with tension. The condition on the flight deck represented a very specific conflict with a very specific motif: do (correctly) or die. However, life presents us with more obtuse, and difficult, roads to travel, namely, those involving "conflict resolution". Many books have been written about this subject, and little wonder considering all the time and effort expended trying to resolve disputes, from the ridiculous to the sublime. The former probably is time misspent while the latter is usually beyond the keen of most of us since it requires the time and effort of high-level rational reasoning buttressed by a wealth of knowledge. So it's to the former that we address ourselves. Can it be correctly said that most of the "ridiculous" confrontations are simply an example of our being so wrapped up in our own wants and desires that we fail to give good faith acknowledgment to another point of view? Are we so completely self-centered that we can not see what is obvious to an outside impartial observer? Are we so near-sighted that what should stand out as appropriate is glossed over? Do we make a fool of ourselves by being petulant as are children? Does our conduct reflect a complete lack of the consequences of our actions? Have we no confidence in our ability to ignore the shallow in deference to the deep? Do we not know the self-satisfaction of the magnanimous act? Is it not manly to defer to the weaker? Don't we understand the value of moderation? What of the stability of objectiveness? Haven't we learned the art of mocking the bully? Don't we understand the strength we accumulate in defying the corrosion of succumbing to peer-pressure? What is the profit in dominating the weak? Can't we perceive that "winning" can be losing? How can we overlook the ratification of ill-advised actions? What does rashness gain one? Why not restraint instead of retaliation? Can't we rein in rumor? What happened to self-control? And tolerance? And truth? And trustworthiness? And understanding? Have we no shame when we try to take advantage of others? When young, I remember the concept of pure, unadulterated shame being the coin of the realm as concerns wrongdoing.



ANTIETAM AIRDALE

This photograph was taken on board the U.S.S. Antietam (CV-36) in 1945. While I could reasonably say that this was a picture of me, I won't because I was never in that position while I was working on the Antietam. Instead, if I was not standing upright next to the wheel, I was kneeling down on one knee beside the wheel. I'd stand so I could better observe what was happening on the flight deck during flight operations. Actually, I was usually on one knee to oppose the wind. (This was probably a hold over from the time I play- ed on the football team as a tackle or as an end when we would always kneel on one knee while on defense between plays. This helped because back then we played both defense and offense (and parenthetically, without face-masks and without mouth protection)). In fact, I kneeled so much on the flight deck during launch operations that eventually the fabric over my knees was worn down to bare threads. Here, this Airdale is avoiding the wind-blasts lashing at him as the pilot revs up the engine in earnest. As said, my preference was to know what was happening on all sides in spite of the wind. To each his own. Apparently the weather is cold as witness the Airdales wearing a heavy sweater, and yes it's not so cold as to require wearing foul-weather gear and jackets. Notice the auxiliary fuel-tank just above the Airdale's back. These tanks were an "integral" part of the Navy aircraft as opposed to the similar fuel-tanks the Mustang fighters in the European Theater had which were dropped when engaging the enemy. The presence of the Navy auxiliary fuel-tanks sometimes made for some violent fire-ball landings when the tanks were dislodged during a high hard touchdown on the deck. These fires (conflagrations actually) called upon the Airdales to put them out post haste even while having no protective gear of any kind. [Fire-fighting will be addressed in the chapter entitled "Mishaps". This chapter deserved a cursory mention of this activity.]

To carry on from the previous page, conflicts are often predicated on the notion that sits squarely on a self-centered mind-set. Too often these conflicts derive from the concept that one's "rights" are being imposed upon when in fact this idea could be stood on its head. While this country's history was preceded by its exemplary "Bill of Rights", it's equally as true that it has been made prosperous by its citizens submitting themselves willingly and diligently to their responsibilities ("get out of the wagon and help push it"). In the Navy, there was a more pungent phrase that nevertheless hit the mark: "shape up or ship out". If that didn't work, then to use the pointed vernacular, " read them the riot act" to those who were so self-obsessed that they were a burden to society. Certainly there are times when conflict is desirable and even honorable, such as in defense of one's liberty, one's country, or one's own self if attacked. As to interpersonal conflicts, one may measure someone's conduct by "walking in another's moccasins", for one man's passion is another man's poison. This will at least moderate the conflict. But then, how deal with those so consumed by greed and avarice that they are "tone deaf"? And to what end are those conflicts when claims are based on known deviations from the true facts? It's posed here that these, and most other conflicts, would not take root given those who have acquired that level of (earned) self-esteem that would render the conflict moot. (Bullies are probably cowards who need help.) Yes, it would seem that universal self-esteem would be society's one best path to mutual understanding in a sometimes too often irrational world. At the bottom, wouldn't it appear that most conflicts involve both party's having tunnel-vision based on competition rather than a cooperation that would benefit all of us?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

POWER FRONT AND CENTER

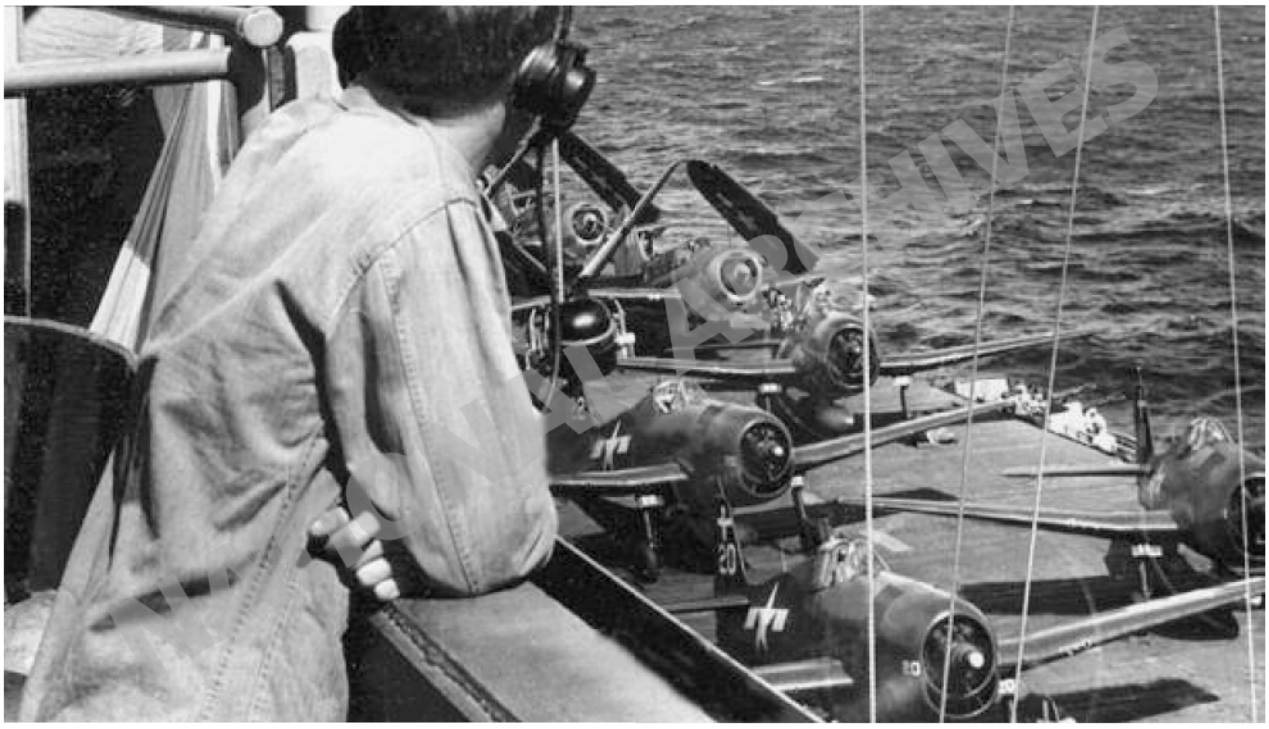
Notice that the arresting-wire (cable) in the foreground has been pulled toward us so as not to lie on top of the elevator. This males the elevator available to those aircraft on the hanger deck that need to be brought topside to participate in the launch operation. Looking now at the five yellow-shirts, we can observe that each one is in the process of either controlling an aircraft, or are about to do so, These aircraft, these "grim reapers", are being moved up forward to the take-off-point about 400 feet from the front of the flight deck. The yellow-shirt, top right, is controlling Corsair #101 while the four to the left are each passing in turn an aircraft to a yellow-shirt further up the flight deck. The pilots are under the total control of a yellow-shirt at a given time, one after another. The pilots eyes are riveted on the yellow-shirt controlling him, and when that control is passed on to the next yellow-shirt up forward, the pilot's head immediately swivels forward to that next yellow-shirt. The process of this procession of aircraft moving up the deck seems very smooth as they line-up one behind the other, periodically hesitating as the lead aircraft stops to rev up to full power preparatory to being given the "Launch" command. However, one senses the tension that the pilots are feeling. For whatever other reason this is so, a prime cause can be found in the fact that the pilot has no idea of what is in front of him as he moves forward. This is clear when one observes the backward tilt of the aircraft. Thus the pilot knows the anxiety of running into something forward of him, along with the ensuing destruction of man and machine that that means.. Such destruction can "ruin your day" and be a very unsightly mess indeed.

A beautiful bird this, this image of a gull-winged gift to the pantheon of flight. Is it not the quintessential illustration of power and swiftness? Physical power such as displayed here is fully comprehensible, unlike that power sought for and wielded by man. How- ever, we won't discuss that type of power, whether for good or for ill (the whole concept of which is ultimately, "what is 'good' and what is 'ill' or 'evil'? This would take its own volume.) However, it will only be repeated from elsewhere that there seems to be an inverse relationship between those whose self-esteem is sturdy and those who crave power for ill. Nor will we discuss the desire for power so as not to be controlled, nor the power of self-indulgence, nor the power to control, nor to impose, to lie, to abuse, to with- hold, to give a hard time, to disregard (and worse, to ignore and shun). No, the power to which we consider is that power which is within each and every one of us. It's a power that my wife has in abundance. It's that power of being able to engender an environment of pleasantness, of relaxation, of good cheer, and yes, of happiness. It's the power to affect an atmosphere of agreeableness wherever you are and with whomever you happen to be. As what some will consider to be trivial, a case in point deals with the "least of us": how do you treat your pet? Do you, yes, show it respect? I heard tell of a story of a lordly and powerful prince who had a favorite cat. Once upon a time, the prince had need to attend a grand meeting of other princes, and as he was arising, he noticed his cat asleep on his robe. Now this was a very important meeting which he was obliged to attend. But would he disturb his cat there asleep on his robe? No, he would not. He was .beseeched by his counselors to get up and attend the meeting. The others were becoming more and more restive, but it would not do to disturb his cat. Finally after he could delay no more, he summoned a pair of scissors and cut his exquisite robe so as to get up without disturbing his beloved cat. Very few will relate to this story, and yet, belittling it is mere folly.



This phone-talker, with mouth-piece at chest level, has a bird's-eye view of this "caldron of churning aircraft" as they deliberately and methodically wheel about in an orderly fashion in their quest to reach the take-off point. The deafening noise of the engines makes it appear as if each is snarling one at the other as they gravitate toward the front. These close-in maneuvers make life for those blue-shirts and yellow-shirts on the deck below a harrowing experience as they fight the furious wind, an almost irresistible force that powerfully contests the progress in the direction in which they want to go, and forcefully pushes them in the direction in which they don't want to go. Up until April of 1945 when I was in the Navigation Department and off duty, I would find a spot in the superstructure so that I too could watch this fascinating show. But this all came to an abrupt halt one day in April for as I was leaving my 4-hour watch on the bridge, I stepped into the adjacent compartment (the navigation chart-house) and was met by the Navigation Department junior officer, an ensign of modest height with very blonde hair and a face that in any other place would have put him in secondary school. He stopped and said, "Atkins, you've been transferred to the V-1-F Division (Airdales) effective immediately", and he then strode on without a further word, then or later. (Why this happened is surmised in Volume 1.) So there it was, from the most prestigious position on board ship to the least prestigious one in one fell swoop. Because I was in such a state of deep depression due to my being in the process of losing "my girl" back home, this turn of events was a mere "bump in the road" in comparison. I felt no particular emotion about this descent from the very top of the totem-pole to the very bottom of the totem-pole except that yes, it was true that my pride was assaulted for the rest of the day. Thereafter it was "water under the bridge". Now, instead of watching from up above as here, I would take my place down below in that "cauldron" where significant things were always happening that made the Antietam a vital bearer of our flag in this conflict that was crucial to our national well-being.

Looking down on the activities on the flight deck, as here, is surely interesting, and even exciting. On the other hand, to look down on someone on the flight deck (or ANYONE) is not only wrong, it's also reprehensible in the first degree. Who among us, for heaven's sake, is so exalted that there is none above him? And if there are those above him, who is he to belittle those below him? Ladies and gentlemen, there will ALWAYS be someone above (better than) you. I can guarantee it. However, this certainly is not the criterion or basis for showing people respect. (Is it possible to show someone respect and still look down on them. Yes, and it diminishes the quality of any respect that is shown.) Even if one is justified in regarding oneself to be superior (academically, professionally, etc.), there is no excuse not to give common respect to even the least of us. Sad to say, there are those whose self-esteem is grounded on some arbitrary personal gradation. To look down on someone is to do them ill and thus to do damage to the social environment. To look down on someone is to disrespect that person and is thus the talisman of a dysfunctional society (where "to disrespect" is the passive form of "to disregard). Considering how little effort is required to show respect, and considering how beneficial is the expression of respect, it's a wonder that the lack of respect abounds. Why? The answer always seems to converge on the "fact" that those who lack a sturdy, earned self-esteem are those who are the ones who "look down on others". So, HOW develop self-esteem??



ATTENTION ON DECK

From up above over the fray we view the two F6F Hellcat fighters in the foreground and the two TBM Avenger torpedo bombers in the background. We also notice that Airdale next to aircraft #15 seeking a little, a very little, relief by backing away from the wheel- chock while the Airdale next to aircraft #2 is right up snug next to his wheelchock. My modus operandi was to stay close in to the wheelchock once I reached it. That reduced having to contend with the ambient cross-winds but at the same time accentuated the head-on wind from the aircraft that I was serving. In any case, if one looks closely, one will notice that both Airdales are grasping the cleats that are recessed in the flight deck,. thus belying that this is a benign scene. Appearances to the contrary, this is in fact anything but benign. For one thing, the ambient noise-level is far off the scale and the very deck itself seems to be shuddering, what with the violent vibrations generated by the engines being transmitted through the wheels..But all is well, and yet all is not well (for the constantly besieged Airdales). Noise and wind, wind and noise. They continually conspire to rattle your very sense of self. And all the while these machines, these aircraft, are in their element and seem to perversely relish this state of affairs, for here are the wherefores of their existence. But the Airdales, we mere mortals, are far from OUR element as our very being seems to throb in this ordered pandemonium. We cling to the cleats to assure that this, our one solid "life-line", will secure our preservation. In essence, that's it: find a way to cheat the "Gods of the Giant Gales" that conspire to divert you to that place known as Eternity. Let it be said that those they were frustrated each and every time. (Until and unless it's experienced, the above is mere verbal melodrama. Nothing could be more natural than to so consider it, but this does not make it any less so.) At the same time, it's interesting to note that no mention at all has been made of the worst of all: those ever-present, damnable propellers that made the entire enterprise possible. This last sentence above brings to mind that human trait, that human frailty, of people frequently tending to disregard an important portion of a given idea or word. A case in point is the word "discriminate", a word that has been noticeably skewed over recent time. Now the word is usually used as a pejorative, a synonym for he who discriminates against a person or people by being unkindly disposed toward those others. This discrimination is usually based on ill perceived qualities attributed to those others. Such a person is supercilious toward others by being haughtily disdainful of them. He "looks down on" people. He is arrogant, scornful, exclusionary, and simply stated, he's socially unacceptable. All of the above are perfectly attuned to the meaning of "to discriminate". BUT, the word "discriminate, when used in its positive connotation, is absolutely essential for the proper functioning of me and thee and them. To discriminate in a positive way is to learn right from wrong, good from bad, beneficial from detrimental; success from failure, happiness from unhappiness, and so on and on. It's the developed capability to choose that which will promote your welfare as well as society's. There's not a segment of human endeavor that does not benefit from a well honed ability to properly discriminate. A discriminating person is a cultivated person, one who is able (and willing) to make intelligent distinctions concerning ideas and actions. It's true that to discriminate well requires the ability to carefully evaluate a given situation before coming to the best conclusion. This applies not only to social situations, but also to almost any other occupation or activity. Discrimination is the source of all good and useful values. Let's restore the good name of "discrimination" so that when we say "you discriminate", it's no longer only a pejorative, but also bountiful.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AND SO IT GOES

The Airdales have withdrawn to the side and aircraft #50, a Hellcat fighter/bomber, has made its way to the take-off point after having been directed there by the yellow-shirt seen walking away back toward the next Hellcat in line. The other person is probably a brown-shirt plane-captain of aircraft #50. The third person, a yellow-shirt officer and active pilot, has mis right arm raised with flag in hand as he twirls it to signal full rpm of the engine. When he hears the correct sound from the engine for about 10 seconds, he will bring his arm down vigorously as he points the flag toward the front of the flight deck. At that moment the pilot of the Hellcat releases his brakes and off he goes very slowly at first as the propeller thrashes the air. Within a few seconds the props "grab hold" of the air well enough so that the Hellcat starts to pick up speed. At the end of the available 400 feet of flight deck, the Hellcat perceptibly rises as it is now moving forward at about 20 mph This, plus the 30-knots wind over the front of the flight deck (due to the combined ship speed and ambient wind speed) along with the aid provided by the downwardly deflected wing-flaps (inboard), is sufficient to allow the prop to pull the 15,000 lbs. fully loaded F6F slowly higher and higher until fairly soon the Hellcat is more confidently gaining altitude and forward speed. The pilot now banks toward the left to take up his place in the "race-track course" at about 2,000 feet above the ship. As other aircraft enter this race-track, they form up into echelons until a full squadron has been assembled. They are now ready to "conduct their business", which was to place their bomb-load on target with precision for best effect.

While precision during a bomb-run was the raison d'etre for these aircraft, precision can likewise be said to be the the bedrock of discernment, that quality which is used to fine-tune the positive discrimination of the previous page, Positive discrimination generates those positive values such as, in no particular order, rectitude, benevolence, integrity, honor, compassion, chastity, gratitude, justice, fairness, respect, sincerity, tolerance, empathy, charity. (Is this list large enough? What's yours?) While these are solid values that make life worthwhile, what of the lesser values that also important in our lives? A well-developed sense of discernment allows us to better understand what it is that is important and what is not, (Does our favorite team's winning represent our merit? Naturally not. But that's too easy. However, to be caught up in the excitement of the game is valid enough.) One of the byproducts of a well-developed sense of discernment is that one is better able to find and enjoy things in our intellectual life These things are always present while things of a physical nature such as, say, skiing are not. It's (my) an axiom that the better the discernment, the better the enjoyment. Without discernment, the "lesser things" are lost to us. We can say that discernment is the acute ability to detect and/or discover subtle differences. A discerning person is observant and quests verity. That person thereupon acquires insight which in turn leads to acquisition of intuition, that quick application of insight. (Women probably have this trait of intuition in greater abundance than do men, and why this is so is a treatise in itself. However, the "macho-man"is not automatically excluded from this group of people. That is, the two (macho and intuition) are not necessarily mutually exclusive.) I've found that there is a caveat to having the power of discernment in excess: one can use it to justify and rationalize improper acts such as dissembling or taking unfair advantage of others, no matter how small the infraction. That caveat was self-induced and something for which even high-powered rationalization is not sufficient to wash away the stain. We can only try to make amends as best we can. Still, discernment will always remains a bulwark of society.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WIND UNABATED

When moving out there in the presence of these behemoths that were fully energized, as here, one was convinced that they were far larger than they actually were. However, in point of fact, they were the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII. That they also launched and landed on this minimal "airfield" that was simultaneously pitching and rolling and heaving was beside the point. Their very bulk made these TBM torpedo bombers a serious object with which one had to contend in such close quarters. Their expansive wing-span was not only impressive but also had an oppressive effect of being dominated, never a pleasant feeling. The TBM replaced the under-powered TBD Devastator that was so vulnerable to the enemy during the pivotal Battle of Midway in 1942. The first TBM here is being "held" by the yellow-shirt in the foreground as he clenches his fists. The same applies to the following TBM. Note here how the yellow-shirts are leaning to the right to oppose the wind-blasts coming from the right. While the wind is most severe in the cylinder behind an aircraft, the entire flight deck is always awash with winds that are not always reliably from the bow of the ship. In a way, all of this flat surface, this flight deck, is being scoured by these relentless winds. After a while, one is put in mind that this wind, that this scourge, is resentful of your presence, nay, your very existence, in its unrelenting lashing. There is no respite to be had from this pun-ishing 40 minute onslaught, invisible though it is.

Similar to the wind on the flight deck seeming to "resent" your presence, so too are there those who harbor resentments against you because you represent a threat to their purposes. Even if their purposes were multifaceted, this in no way justifies their resentments. It might be something as simple as being apprehensive of being bested. Who knows? If the resentment is based on a positive envy, then there is some marginal good to be found. However, if based on negative envy, everyone loses. If the envy seeks to suppress others, it now borders on the despicable. Deliberately denying someone of even a modicum of success ranks with the very lowest form of conduct. Taking an upbeat turn now to positive envy, they say that imitation is the sincerest form of compliment. Thus the challenge now is to determine and find the proper roll-model. But how? Obviously there is no one proper role-model. But certainly some are better than others. Your parents are ever present ones. In my case, in addition, I'm pleased to say that in retrospect my role-models were quite prosaic: the first and foremost ones were the comic strip characters Buck Rogers (1935) and Don Winslow of the Navy (1937) and even Tom Mix the cowboy (1936). I can also say, without blushing, that it was the Buck Rogers story that brought me to my first meaningful interest in the opposite gender: Buck Rogers, in all his adventures in the solar system with his constant companion Wilma Dering, was frequently and concernedly trying to rescue Wilma from the evil Killer Kane. He of course was always able to eventually do this and bring Wilma back home unharmed and "none the worse for wear". This was always the high point of a given episode and I always felt a real sense of relief. Actually, I was perplexed that a "mere" girl could affect me in such a solicitous manner because after all, girls didn't play football or baseball or basketball, and they didn't understand that cowboys had to do brave and "manly" things. It wasn't too long, though, that the more sophisticated Don Winslow of the Navy held sway over my imagination, and so I moved on. I look around now to heed the "heroes" of our new generations, and I mentally cross my fingers. Yes I need to believe.



POSITION OF PERIL

First, two quick points: normally a sleek destroyer (DD) took up station where there's seen a massive battleship (BB), The BB's presence provided extensive anti-aircraft fire (AA) protection while the DD's purpose was to be available to retrieve those pilots who crashed into the sea during a launch or landing operation. The second observation is the relatively open deck space seen here which contrasts markedly with the Antietam's crowded environment. It's instructive now to note the situations of three of the Airdales shown here. Two are just to the right of the tail-sections of the two closest TBMs, placing them in that cylinder of wind that's formed behind an energized aircraft. Also, they and a third Airdale just to the right of the engine of the center TBM are directly in front of a powered-up aircraft. This situation puts them in the "Position Of Peril" (the zone of danger): they have the hurricane-force wind at their backs while they're also only a handful of yards in front of those fiercely spinning blades of steel. I can personally and emphatically assure you that such a situation definitely defines what it means to concentrate one's mind. And I can of a certainty vouch for and attest to the fact that that situation generates a profound and intense sense of being absolutely alone (during a time of overwhelming apprehension as a powerful, invisible "hand" inexorably pushes you to your possible demise). (This picture doesn't begin to express these emotions.) You're aware of ONLY that blur in front of you; all else is shrouded, and for sure, your sense of control has all but completely vanished. (Fortunately these episodes lasted no more than 30 seconds, but they occurred over and over again.) When on the flight deck during flight operations, my emotions ran the gamut from valid concern to the shear dread that was elicited when facing the above situations which could have turned disastrous to deadly. However, here we'll stay with the concept of concern.

To be concerned is good. To be concerned is to be human, for what is man if he is not concerned? To be concerned is to specifically relate to a given subject or activity. To be concerned is to be interested in, involved with, engaged in something of importance to you. In addition, concern is the natural precursor to a developed sense of responsibility. It thus behooves us to have an adequate set of rational concerns. Without concerns about right and wrong, there can be no proper sense of responsibility, which is all about right and wrong. And what is responsibility if it's not about accountability and dependability? (Remember, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap"') The basic idea of responsibility, it would seem, is to know right from wrong, and behave accordingly. So to be responsible implies being capable of rational, discerning thought, and then making decisions accordingly. A responsible person is reliable and most notably, a trustworthy person. Is it not true that one's behavior, good or bad, is reflected in one's response to responsibilities? But if being responsible is to do the right thing, what is the right thing? First though, responsible people do the right thing even if it's difficult. As a general statement, it could be said that "the right thing" to do is that which maintains and/or promotes the welfare of an individual, a group, or the society that merits such activity. "What's right" refers to what's fair, what's just, what's compassionate, what's beneficial, what's appropriate, and even what's useful, as determined by a general consensus over time. In addition, do not do that which is deleterious ("Do no harm", as prescribed by the physicians.) Good judgment will go a long way toward assuring that the "right thing" will be done. Your attitude toward and interpretation of responsibility goes a long way to defining your character and who you are.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE"

As that "plane-guard" destroyer plows through the sea at-the-ready to pick up any wayward pilot who has the misfortune of not becoming airborne, we on the flight deck go about our daily business of making possible the pilots' release from "terra firms". The progress of doing so is caught in process as we notice that yellow-shirt (to the right center edge of the picture) with upraised arms beckoning the TBM to proceed forward slowly and out into the mainstream line of other aircraft making their way to the take-off point. (This action seems puzzling because normally all the F6F Hellcats and F4U Corsairs are brought out first. Thus, why those two F6Fs still stationary as they warm up their engines, as witness their propellers in motion? However, "'Ours' is not to reason why, 'ours' is but to do and — —".) To the TBM's right can be seen an Airdale on his way back aft to enter that cauldron of growling aircraft so as to locate and go to an unoccupied wheelchock. His path takes him somewhat close to that F6F's energized prop to his left while the Airdale in the foreground is a little too casual about that other F6F to his left: everyone on the flight deck conducts himself in a mode and manner of his own choosing whether it be casual as above or cautious as is that Airdale on his hands and knees holding onto the wheelchock with one hand and a deck-cleat with the other hand. In any event, all personnel keep close track of what's important, what's fit, what's significant such as which aircraft are doing what. All else becomes secondary on this "playing field" that's always in a state of flux, and where that which is significant is that which will keep you alive.

One of the important things in life is to be able to detect what is and what is not significant. One should also be able to differentiate the varying levels of nuances between the two. It will be seen that what seems to be significant now turns out not to be, and visa versa. While it's fairly easy to identify those things that are timeless such as love, friendship, loyalty, integrity and the like, what of the other things that are not quite so important? What is actually important to a well-adjusted, enjoyable life? Naturally there's no one right answer because everyone is unique. However, what you find important goes a long way toward defining you and revealing who you are. Part of our schooling should result in our learning how to recognize things of importance and merit and quality. (Why stop there? Why not produce those things?) By the same token, your sense of quality could be a reflection of your inherent intelligence even as you try to refine that sense of quality. But here again, it's necessary to confront what is meant by "quality" (and "merit"). As someone once said, "I can't define it, but I certainly know it when I see (or hear) it". However, we have to do better than that. In engineering, quality can be well defined numerically as in standards. But how to measure the quality of one's character? In practice, society tends to assign "figures of merit" to various conduct and attitudes (where sincerity is the sine qua non of the "measurement") Quality, by definition, is a gradient; it's graded good, better, best (for which we should all strive). As an aside to this "mini-dissertation", take the subject of music. There are all varieties of music, and what pleases one may not please another (fair enough). However, within a given type of music there are gross gradations of quality, some of which reach the level of non-music, i.e., noise. Unfortunately, the damn- able (and understandable) power of peer-pressure entraps many in that swill of "music" that is unpleasant noise (sorry, but sometimes one has to take a stand). [Caveat: our parents used to object to our listening to that "cheap" music that we liked so much: Big Bands.)


52

STAND-BY

Here we are once again on a fairly open flight deck with space to spare and the aircraft in a stand-by situation as is evident by the engines set at low power (seen by noting that the individual blades are distinguishable, and which thus disables those diabolic winds). It's not in my memory bank that the Antietam often had such open conditions during a flight operation, but that's neither here nor there. What is "here or there" is the fact that each of the wheelchocks are being attended by an Airdale (except for that TBM all the way back aft). This picture portrays one of the banes of an Airdale's existence: you want to go from this side of TBM #C5 to TBM #C9 on the right. In this case there's space aplenty to make the transit, and so you start on your path in front of and "beneath" that large and threatening machine #C5. Now that the props are in an idle mode and the wind is therefore at a diminished level of force, you feel somewhat confident as you proceed. Then all of a SUDDEN the pilot of the aircraft to the right out of sight throttles up his engine to "clear the throat" of his sputtering engine. What with that, there's an abrupt, violent burst of wind-energy hurled back at you, pushing you forcibly sideways to the left toward that #C5 prop. There are mere moments to react to this situation by leaning against the wind (certainly a normal reflex reaction). What should have been a fairly uneventful passage to the #C9 TBM had become a panic. And if you now had to go further, to the left wheelchock of #C9, you "hit the deck" post haste and crawled there using the deck-cleats as your literal salvation. Once there, viscerally shaken, you mentally trembled on contemplating your narrow "escape". How- ever thinking and reflecting on this harrowing, but remedial, experience was useful, for we all can benefit from critical thinking.

Just what can be said about critical thinking? Here, it does not refer to being critical of others for to do so is to tread on perilous ground (and it does indeed require critical thinking). Fundamentally, it's proposed, what is required is the ability to ACCURATELY extract and examine and understand (all) the essential elements of a subject, preferably in an unemotional manner. What profit accrues if the underlying facts used in an evaluation of a given subject are erroneous? There is not only no profit, but there is instead mischief to be had. (That's why it's difficult, if not impossible, to come to a valid conclusion concerning a political subject: the presented "facts" are so often nothing but "smoke and mirrors", to use the vernacular. The "golden coin" of politics is the unvarnished truth and the indispensable honesty of others, as well as the absence of hypocrisy. Lacking these, interest dwindles, then falters and finally vanishes). It's literally impossible, it's believed, to make appropriate judgments devoid of accurate and hopefully verifiable facts. As is said in the courts of law, "Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". Critical thinking requires that you first determine what are the pertinent facts, and then concentrate on these. Deductive reasoning helps by extracting a conclusion which necessarily follows from a set of verifiable premises. At the same time, one might induce the formulation of a proposition based on observed (and verifiable) occurrences This induction goes from the particular to a general principle while deduction goes from a general principle to the particular. (With all due apologies to the philosophers out there, I believe I'm on firm ground here.) The powers of deductive and inductive reasoning are primarily to use critical thinking on your behalf, and there may be times when one is obliged, under duress, to clutch at these methods to gain and retain one's very sanity. They can be a God's-send that could augment one's religious bent.


NATIONAL ARC

KOREA, 1950

Even though this picture was taken during the Korean War, it was included because it's such a typical scene. Here we observe the usual Corsairs, but also the large AD-4N Skyraiders that replaced the SB2Cs and the TBMs of WWII. The Corsairs are moving out to form a line that goes to the take-off point up forward, as guided by those four yellow-shirts. Notice the outline of the aft elevator which is now available to bring additional aircraft up topside from the hanger deck below. Also notice that the ambient wind is some- what light as indicated by the somewhat stirred up wake trailing the ship (since the ship must increase its speed to provide for the required 30-knot wind over the bow of the flight deck). That telephone-talker up in his perch overlooking the launch operations on the arena below is perhaps thinking about how exciting it would be to be down there amid the action. From afar, and uninvolved, this could well be a normal feeling. I myself was once such an observer when I was in the Navigation Division (Department) spending my free time such a manner. However, when I became a direct participant as an Airdale, the entire enterprise took on a sober sensation, not of excitement, but of trepidation (most especially when going to a wheelchock during these launch operations). This was the essence of a launch operation for an Airdale: how to survive and then arrive at that wheelchock with no ill after effects. Then excitement turned not to the thrill of the perilous going, but to the thrill of the safe arrival. The perception of someone up on high looking down on the participants is quite different from that agitation felt while struggling, deck-cleats in hand, through and to a place of overbearing, unadulterated sound and fury. A little fundamental thought makes it quite clear that what is happening below can only be faintly imagined, in comparison, by that intent phone-talker. This fundamental thought makes clear that which might be unclear.

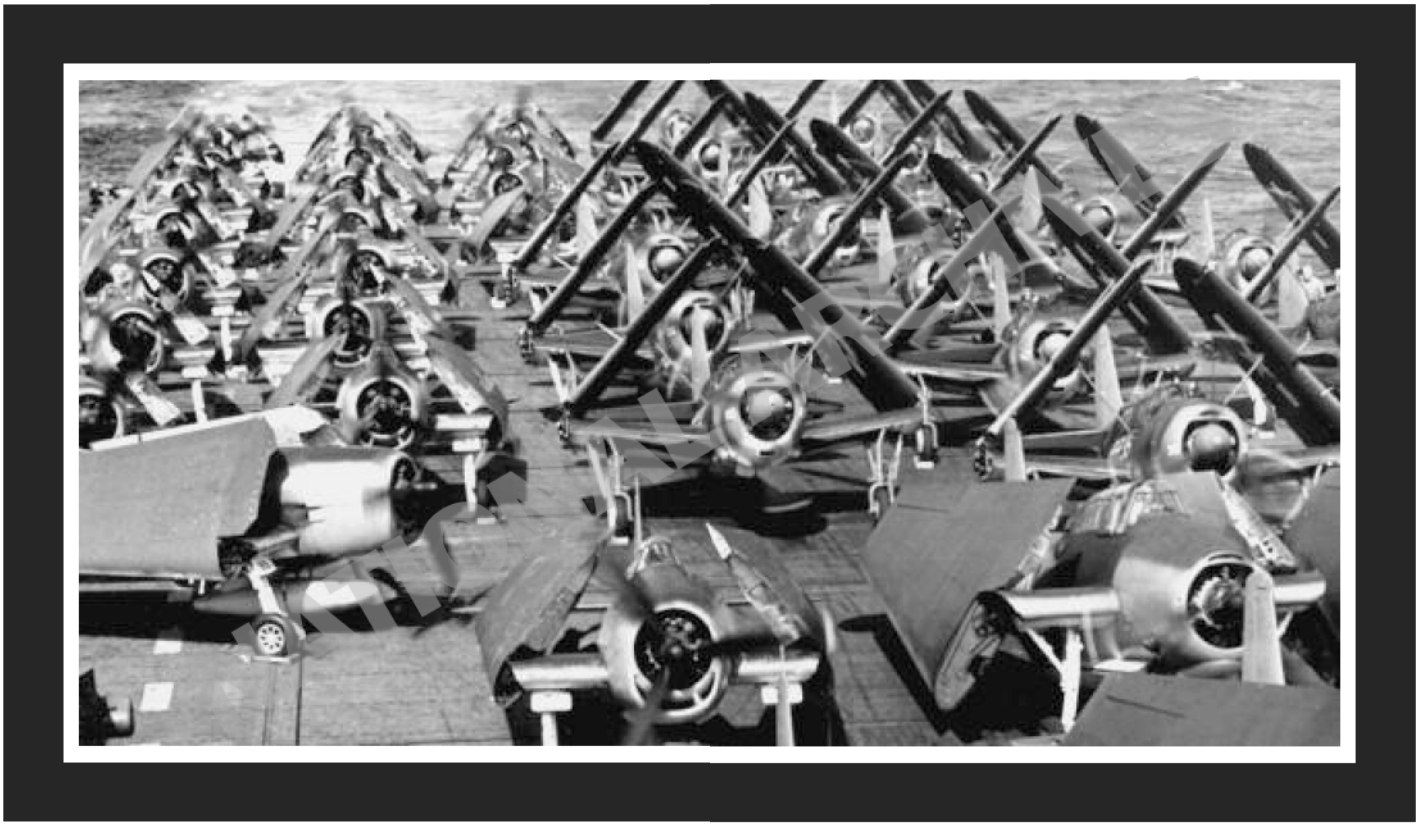
What can be said about "fundamental thought"? The following are some thoughts that might stimulate some thoughts on the concept of thought. Sometimes thought is the process of analysis in which a thought is "deconstructed" into its component parts, and some- times it's the process of synthesis in which component parts are constructed into an idea. But how does the former differ from deduction? In analysis the component parts are constrained while in deduction they are not. As to synthesis, the component parts are not constrained while in the corresponding function of induction they are. That is, the component parts are not constrained in deduction and synthesis and are constrained in induction and analysis. This is clear for the functions of analysis and synthesis, but less so for deduction and induction. It's been my experience that the former two functions are important in the external environment, while the latter two are of importance in one's internal life. Synthesis is more difficult because the component parts must be chosen, while analysis consists of given component parts. (Analysis and deduction from the whole to constituent parts; synthesis and induction from constituent parts to the whole.) In any event, it is posed that that fundamental thought requires the ability to determine something's essential features and relationships That is, "Keep your eye on the ball", exercise your powers of reasoning, and don't forget plain old vanilla common sense. (In my experience, I used to go for long solitary walks to try to sort out my personal problems. At the same time, I don't wish this on anyone.) Not to be overlooked in all of this is the usefulness of considering the ever present "cause and effect" that underlies everything. The cause might be trivial, but there it is. Finally, how can we not postulate the efficacy of restraint?



START ENGINES

There they are, row on row, column on column, rank on rank, this phalanx assembled awaiting our temerity, our very audacity to even consider approaching them, these "insolent brutes that contemptuously dare our advance: (Take my word for it: it's definitely more congested down there at ground level in among the aircraft than it appears from here.) Actually, this roster of individual aircraft is a thing of beauty, conceived and created as monuments to man's ingenuity and skill. Right now is heard the laconic order over the PA system to "Stand clear of propellers, prepare to start engines, start engines", at which time the pulse jumps up a few notches and the adrenaline surges as a crescendo of engine-noise roars out. It is now time to shore-up one's mettle. If you will, direct your gaze at the two columns of F6F Hellcats to the far left. It can be seen that the columns leave precious little space to spare between them. Since the propeller-tips reach out to the extent of the wheels, and since the adjacent wheels are mere feet apart, we Airdales have a problem: how to negotiate this space when we go back aft momentarily to one of those wheelchocks? (Now then, here is the ultimate of unbalanced confrontations extant.) It's in this space where one has a reckoning with oneself because it's in this space where one is allowed only one chance to do it correctly, and where one must do it entirely alone on your own. There'll be no moral support from mentors (for the simple reason that there were no mentors, and there never would be. It was "Don't bother me, just pull the *#%!*#! wheelchocks". That was the attitude. Though it was never verbalized; it was just simply understood, with no vulgarities necessary.

Perhaps the above expletive, the vulgarity "*#%!*!", would be justified at the time under the circumstances. HOWEVER, vulgarities, as someone said, "are rude, crude, and socially unacceptable". (Here, vulgarities refer to the spoken word, though they also surely apply to ideas and social conduct.) Unfortunately, there are those who believe that the use of vulgarities is a measure of being a "man's man" where the more the vulgarities, the more the man he is. In point of fact, it is most usually just the opposite: the vulgarities represent a clear cover for their feelings of inadequacies and even insecurities. It can be said that vulgarities and intelligence have an inverse proportionality. Simply put, vulgarities are simply disagreeable and unpleasant and in no way do they represent one's "manliness". In fact, good manners, courtesy, politeness, and refinement could be considered indicators of a certain type of intelligence and strength (of character). Vulgarity is to refinement as throwing a can of paint at a beautiful picture is to that picture. (Good taste is of the same cloth as is good manners). What is now called "reality" is in reality a gross pandering to the lowest common denominator: a "dumbing" down of society, as opposed to elevating society's standards. Lack of respect toward others is a close companion to vulgarism: coarseness, crudeness, callousness, shallowness, and throw in obsceneness, grossness, down to disgust and even repulsiveness. Intelligent people can express themselves without vulgarities, and so can you. A vulgarian is not smart enough to understand that one can be both refined and "a man" at the same time. Part of the problem is that a vulgarian often seeks the attention and approval and even acclaim of his immediate cohorts in support of his sagging self-esteem. It could also be a case of a vulgarian's child-like desire to do what he can to shock others. The shock might be there, but usually not the approbation of civilized society. But who knows? What is known is that it's truly sad to be in the company of an adult who acts as if he were still in that pubescent stage.



"PIECE OF CAKE"

Would that every launch could go so uncongested and uncontested. As seen here (but not seen on the Antietam). This launch operation can be categorized as a "piece of cake", at least as far as the Airdales are concerned. There's no problem whatsoever making your way to a wheelchock, although to be nonchalant about it would be folly because there's always that "rogue" burst of wind from any one of those TBM Avengers that would blow you back into a propeller. You can not trust those machines, nor should you. Here the Airdales had the luxury of going to a wheelchock before the order was given to start engines. There's even a surfeit of yellow-shirts standing about with not much more to do than staying alert. (Someone once said, "If you ain't nervous, you ain't paying attention".) However, in my experience the situation here is an anomaly: normally the TBMs are all back aft, packed in closely together with engines at full rpm. The spectators on the gun-mounts are typical, though the lack of activity id not. Actually, it looks like the Airdales have been in place for some time since they're all on their stomachs trying to avoid the wind-blasts from the propellers that are only feet in front of their faces. However, you can be sure that there are no verbal complaints (though no complaints would ever be entertained under any conditions). In situations such as these, one has an opportunity to be a slacker, to not do his part, to be a malingerer. To my know- ledge, malingering never posed a problem at all, ever, and to do so would put a big load on one's conscience (I believe).

In any event, I considered myself to be a conscientious Airdale. It never occurred to me not to be. It was, after all, my assigned job, menial though it was (where "conscience" is to know what is correct and proper while "conscientious" is to do what is correct and proper to the best of your ability). Generally speaking, one could define conscientiousness as an act of doing that which is beneficial to self and others and not doing that which is deleterious to self and others. It would be true, surely, that a conscientious person is one who has an active intellect which can accurately detect right from wrong which in turn is defined by one's conduct and considerations. To quote the dictionary, "conscience is that complex of ethical and moral principles that controls or inhibits one's thoughts and actions". It could also be considered a guide to one's path through the labyrinth of life. It's my contention that to be conscientious requires substantive self-knowledge ("know thyself"), one of life's most fundamental imperatives. This in turn demands scrupulous self-honesty ("to thy own self be true"). Tough prerequisites perhaps, but necessary for a fulsome grasp of life's verities and travails. The phrase "let your conscience be your guide" has (or at least had) a very powerful call on one's actions and attitudes. This could well be a marker for that "measure of a man" of the previous page. A conscience must be learned, it is suggested, because it is not often given to you wrapped with a bow-ribbon. This is a process wrought with starts and stops, stops and starts. It's genesis can be thought of as being fabricated from the "cloth of concern" for others and other things such as the welfare of society in general. But how do we embrace the right and shun the wrong when we don't have a clear picture of right and wrong, good and bad, my view and your view? How do we avoid the onerous baggage of guilt when these things have not been considered sufficiently in our quiet times? Yes, it's difficult to find the time and place for such ruminations, but at least some of this is essential to our being more than mere purveyors of sophistry, charlatans of understanding, a simpleton in the realm of of good judgment concerning what's tight and wrong.) .



"BIG BOYS"

We've reached the point in the launch operation where the rest of the "big boys" are stepping out of the ranks and moving forward to the launch point 400 feet from the front edge of the flight deck. We've already spent a good 40 emotionally-draining minutes of having to "sweat" the dispatch of all of the 20 TBM Avengers and all of the 60 Hellcats and Corsairs before that (allotting 30 seconds per aircraft). Now, to the right, can be seen an SB2C Helldiver spreading its ample wings, noticing that each wing functions independent of each other. There's something spellbinding about watching a large SB2C simultaneously pivoting abruptly about one wheel, then the other wheel as it moves forward all the while lowering its wings. In a peculiar way this action takes on an animation that gives it the appearance of having a mind of its own. This can't be duplicated by a car because it's constrained to the roadway, and it doesn't have those abrupt motions of pivoting about a point. (I experience the same sense of animation when watching the intriguing motions of machinery on an automatic production line.) The daily show below being watched by the gunners is not a fast-paced scurrying of aircraft (notice their steel helmets; they're at Battle Stations). No, instead all is very deliberate and well choreographed down there on the flight deck, albeit it in a very precise and measured manner. This prolongs the duty, but it makes more probable that the possibility for disaster is less. The yellow-shirts are all free and clear of direct contact with the aircraft, but they too are susceptible to the flying debris (shrapnel) generated that can occur when aircraft collide on deck. As to that Hellcat #37 to the left, engine at full rpm, it can only be surmised that its manifold pressure is down, its oil pressure is low, or some such thing. Why the engine is still energized, I don't know. (Usually they "cut" the engine, and after flight operations are over, we Airdales push the aircraft to an elevator.

I do know though that when the level of honesty extant is low, the "engine of society" is less stable.. Lacking honesty, the well-being of a society is certainly diminished, and even dysfunctional. A well-regulated society cannot be both robust and perfidious (false, disloyal, deceitful) at the same time. In turn, this need for honesty is a predicate for that substantial level of trust that a well-ordered society requires. (We're not referring to "I'm doing well, thank you", when in fact that's not true.) As we would not want to be lied to, so too should we not lie, for to give others that unspoken assurance of honesty is to give them a genuine gift. And although acknowledging this platitude may be facile, to embody it is not. To one degree or another we all are culpable (guilty) of dishonesty. and it's a continual effort to mitigate and eradicate this flaw. Is it not true that honesty increases the value of what it is that's being considered and helps us to better understand what it is that's important and appropriate (such as being loved, understood, sympathetic, understanding, grateful, appreciative, generous, intelligent, cheerful, confident, morally strong, diligent, discerning, disciplined, enthusiastic, imaginative, trustworthy, respectful, sincere, and on). Near the pinnacle of what's important is "to thy own self be true". (How else to determine what's important? It's a cornerstone of life.) Further, it facilitates external honesty and makes self-knowledge mush more accessible. To "know thyself" enables one to apply remedial attention to one's shortcomings (rest assured that EVERY-ONE has shortcomings). In addition, self-knowledge is a marvelous antidote to one's muddled thoughts and understandings. (And we ALL have these, do we not?). Besides, it's disturbing and distracting to be continually confounded about yourself, your ideas/goals.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AIRPORT ON THE MOVE

A placid place this, this airport on the move. And move it does, probably making close to 30 knots as witness the ship's wake (since the ambient wind is negligible). All is relatively calm and orderly now at this stage of the launch operation. Nevertheless, where are all of the TBM Avengers, where are many of the SB2C Helldivers? Even the Hellcats are placed in an open manner, suggesting a minimal launch. This scenario generates little in the way of anxiety accept, as always, for those Airdales at a wheelchock. A case in point can be observed if one's attention is directed to that Hellcat to the right, directly facing us. On looking closer, notice two Airdales to the Hellcat's right, one next to the wheelchock and one whose back is toward us. Now with closer examination one can detect a propeller-tip directly "over" that Airdale's head. As a matter of fact, that tip is only about 2 feet closer to us than we are to him. This should be no problem, you say, because the wind-blast is pushing him away from us. But hold on, danger lurks here: as the Airdale leans back toward us to oppose the wind-blast, he is in immediate jeopardy should the pilot, for whatever reason, ease up on the throttle. You know, and I know, that if you are leaning against something and that something diminishes in force, your lean becomes exaggerated, thus causing you to move in the direction of your lean. This direction decreases that 2 feet aforementioned. Again, danger is afoot, but for some completely unknown reason, there are those who enjoy living dangerously. Please! We aren't impressed, but we are perplexed by stupid conduct. (The white objects under the Hellcats are not bombs. They are auxiliary fuel-tanks.

An auxiliary fuel-tank allows an aircraft to expend extra effort in its assigned mission. How many of us do the same? How many of us perform "above and beyond the call of duty"? But let's not speak here of the special obligations of duty; let us here consider the more mundane realm of the self-involvement of our day-to-day activities. Let's speak of the quest for excellence, the desire to excel, the need to achieve. Most often this can he accomplished by the expenditure of extra effort as was provided by those auxiliary fuel-tanks. The children's nursery rhyme, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again" is not all that childish. In fact, it's the essence of some of the world's greatest inventions and discoveries and accomplishments. Perhaps the best known advocate of this philosophy is Thomas Edison. He was dogged in his efforts, and the world is a better place for it. However, it's we everyday people who need to embrace this willingness to "go the extra mile" if we are not succeeding. For myself, after floundering for 7 years with a degree in business administration, I returned to school to earn a degree in electrical engineering (recall having previously mentioned the requirement that self-esteem had to be earned). Things don't go our way, difficulties arise, progress is difficult: this is precisely that time when extra effort is required of us so as to ultimately dismiss discouragement ("When the going gets tough, the tough get going". A clever phraseology, but very true). Too often there are those who are reluctant to try as hard as they can so that if they don't succeed, they can say it's not a reflection on their merit because they didn't really try. The implication is that if they did try harder, they would have done well. It's a very bad excuse for a poor performance. Sometimes extra effort is all it takes after having failed at something. Don't give up, because the very essence of living and life is making the effort. (Do read Rudyard Kipling's poem "IF"; it's a jewel.)



AIRDALES AT THE READY

Here also are arrayed a smallish number of aircraft warming up for a launch, with the Hellcats in line, the Corsairs to the right, a Helldiver behind the last Corsair, and an Avenger inert behind the last Hellcat. The rest of them should be either Helldivers or Avengers. This picture provides an interesting portrait of the Airdales' fraternity. It's an exposition of the various approaches taken by individual Airdales. Next to that yellow-shirt, head bowed down, is an Airdale crouching as he holds onto the deck-cleat. His "approach" is to stay back until the Air Boss intones over the PA system, "Launch aircraft". This Airdale would rather not endure the deprecations of the close-in wind-blasts, while the Airdale with hands on knees seems to agree with this rationalization. On the other hand, some would prefer to stand back from the wheelchock and appreciate the slight protection provided by the Corsair's turned up wing. But then there are some stalwarts who are satisfied to stand tall next to the wheelchock and take the full brunt of the wind-blast head-on. My own personal method was to consistently kneel on one knee right next to the wheelchock with one hand holding onto it ready to pull it away from the wheel. This consistency made for no false moves when called upon to "pull chocks". (The constant pounding, oppressive and nerve-wracking uproar of the engines served to cause some debilitating disorientation for someone who craved the quiet and calm that I did (being distraught at losing "my girl".) Certainly this was a simpleminded charge, this pulling of wheelchocks, but carelessness (after much repetition) had serious consequences. Under the quiescent, but loud, conditions such as here, it was doable. It was when the order to "Launch aircraft" was given that we then took full measure of the unfolding situation.

Just as each Airdale had to determine his own mode of pulling wheelchocks, as here, so also is it incumbent upon each and every one of us to come to a clear understanding as to how we are to conduct ourselves in the social environment. One such social dynamic is the force of influence and the appropriateness of that influence. A good example of this is the force of peer-pressure. We all know that we want to be liked, that we like to liked, to be perceived as popular. But this at the EXPENSE of excessive drinking, of senseless speeding in a car, of any form of promiscuity (virginity is good), of shunning and disrespecting anyone, of draining your brain with drugs, in short, of acting the idiot, the fool? It's not enough to say that the above are counterproductive. Furthermore, remember that "To thy own self be true"is far more important than some sometime popularity. These admonitions have far greater impact than "being one of the boys". We understand the draw of the veneer of those who are popular and somehow "attractive" even while being bad influences. Be strong and beware the "siren's song" by rejecting the bad and embracing the good (being intelligent, you know good from bad, the substantial from the trivial, the proper from the improper). Invest in yourself the rectitude that will make you free (of peer-pressure). Gain the valuable self-respect that is to be had by holding firm that which you know to be right. Would you rather be popular, or intelligent and right? A truly rational person would do no wrong, do no harm. The glib "Better safe than sorry", where "safe" means "smart", is gold when on the flight deck during launch operations. Why isn't the same elsewhere? The above discourse reminds me of the inspiring song titled "My Way" where it is said in part, "For what is man, what has he got? If not himself, then he has naught. To say the words he truly feels and not the words of one who kneels. The record shows I took the blows and did it my way".


3
3

U.S.S. ANTIETAM (CV-36) IN ACTION

Here's the Antietam on its shakedown cruise after having been commissioned in 1945. We traveled on the east coast from Philadelphia to Trinidad, South America not bothered at all by the German U-boats that prowled that area. Being a shakedown cruise, that tested the ship, we had a minimal number of aircraft on board. (This book discusses a group, the Airdales, who put their lives on the line EVERY but received not a scintilla of recognition for their daily exploits.) This picture was in fact "posed" as will be elucidated. First, that yellow-shirt with his arms outstretched is signaling that the wheelchocks be pulled (but the wheelchocks have already been pulled). Next, the forward Hellcat should already have its wings spread while the Hellcat behind it should in the process of spreading its wings. (Hellcats required the assistance of the Airdales to accomplish this.) In addition, there should be an Airdale under the wing, inboard of the rockets, pulling a latch to lock the wing in place. (That wheelchock seen under the wing is probably being held by an Airdale who has just pulled the latch?). Finally, during a normal launch, all engines are at full rpm to assure their proper functioning. (To be able to detect the individual propeller-blades says that at this moment the launch is on hold. But then, it must be realized that this is a shakedown cruise where things proceed moderately apace (where the wind was a friend of the pilots but an enemy of the Airdales). We are, after all, in a rehearsal mode where caution reigns and "practice makes perfect" (it is sincerely and devoutly hoped).

Ships-of the line need rehearsals to prepare them for the rigors of performing under stress and duress. Should we individuals be any less prepared? "No", even though our endeavors are not life-threatening, but merely mundane. It's beneficial to learn to be focused, via rehearsal, on our efforts at hand (this also detracts us from our fear of failure). By the same token, by developing a sense of good judgment, also via rehearsal, we lessen the stress that might otherwise dominate our actions and thoughts. In any case, rehearsal, practice, preparation, they all build one's sense of self-reliance, the opposite of the drag of dependency. Sometimes circumstances demand responsibility, and what better than to be prepared in a generic sense? It's always helpful to resolve to dedicate yourself, to make a commitment, to "Be all you can be"as is put by the Army. Yes, rehearsal, learning to be prepared, is most important. However, having said that, I cannot deny that just after I left this ship, this Antietam, in may of 1945, I was nor prepared for a letter I received from "my girl". I was on a troopship headed east across the Pacific, homeward bound, when somehow mail found its way to this ship. It was, as was said back then during WWII, a "Dear John" letter in which the girl breaks the news that there has been a permanent split of their boy-girl pairing. In a one-page, succinct "letter, "my girl" said that she was now engaged to be married. I should have been prepared for just such a letter, but no, I was not, and my world was abruptly turned upside down. To say that I was stunned, distraught was to sat that the Niagara Falls was a babbling brook spilling over into a placid pond. I had a long 3-week trip trip ahead of me to ponder this news. At the same time, I was in a place where I was a captive audience to a record named "If I Loved You" being played over and over, again and again without letup. That song permeated my mind, and to this day that song mocks it (if only mildly) I cannot deny that it's a very nice song, but it's still a song that recalls that chilling sensation when I opened the letter in tremulous hope, and sheathed it in utter despair. I should have prepared myself for this possible eventuality; to wit: "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes".



NARA ARCHIVES

U.S.S INTREPID (CV-!!)

Both the Intrepid (CV-11) and the plane-guard destroyer were heading due "north" about 30 seconds ago and are now heading due "east", going into the prevailing wind. The plane-guard destroyer will retain that essential position during the coming launch operation so as to pick up any pilots whose recalcitrant aircraft make a water-landing during a take-off. The Corsair to the right is at idle ready to be catapulted while the Corsair to the left is taxiing toward the catapult on that side to be positioned by the Airdales grouped to one side. The wings have to be unfolded first to allow the Airdales to do the pushing required to precisely position the Corsair over the catapult-slot. This will take about 20 seconds. Meanwhile, the middle Corsair is in a stand-by condition should it need be launched (these two Corsairs are probably being launched to provide/relieve the CAP (Carrier Air Patrol)). When aircraft are to be launched, it's not just the carrier that turns into the wind; the whole Task Group (TG) or Task Force (TF) must also turn with the carrier. The Intrepid was the third Essex-class carrier of the 17 wartime Essexes. Since it started its tour of duty so early in the war, it had a long and illustrious career. It entered the Pacific Theater on 10 January 1944 and had its first taste of action during 29 Jan-3 Feb with TF 58 in support of landings on Kwajalein Atoll by attacking Japanese bases in the Marshall Islands. On 17 Feb it was struck by a torpedo during air strikes against Truk, the Japanese "Pearl Harbor". After repairs, it it joined TG 38.2, and carried out attacks on Palau and the Phillippines (6-14 Sep). The months of October and November was filled with raids and support operations during the reacquisition of the Phillippines. During this time it was hit by a kamikaze with minimal damage. On 25 Nov it was hit by two kamikazes and suffered serious damage. The middle of March 1945 it returned to action and on 16 Apr it received another kamikaze attack, putting it out of action until July 1945 when it joined up with TG 38.2 which included the Randolph (CV-15), the Antietam (CV-36), and the Cabot (CVL-28). This sketch of the Intrepid's activity only infers a storied career during those bleak years of 1944 to victory in 1945.

The Intrepid (CV-11) was well named, for what is it to be intrepid if not persevering under adversity? To me this is an apt account of "a day in the life of an Airdale". While to be intrepid is to imply bravery and courage in the heat of the battles of war in the face of danger, in a larger sense, to be intrepid is to maintain one's poise and strength of moral character intact during our day to day activities. This is not a joyless thing to do ; to the contrary, you ought to find enjoyment in knowing that you are doing that which is right (righteous). Hold fast to your principles : you'll be surprised at the satisfaction so derived. Further, to be intrepid is to be daunt- less when tempted by the blandishments of such things as those deleterious peer-pressures. Persistence in the name of a noble cause is itself noble. At the same time, being intrepid in no wise implies being resigned to the winds of woes as fate might have it. Kismet does not rule where resolve resides and flourishes. In a perverse way, to be beset by troubles that remain unnamed but that you oppose with your persistence, can become a badge of honor upon which you can personally thrive. During the war there was sung a song titled "Look For The Silver Lining" (of that dark cloud that passes over the sunshine that should be yours). Not a deep concept, this, but a reliable antidote to those times of melancholy that seem to beleaguer you uninvited. With this song taken to heart, think of how much more you'll be able to accomplish when so disposed. Yes, to be intrepid is to make possible a solid foundation for one's own welfare.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE U.S.S. ANTIETAM (CV-36)

This is a scene during a moment in time in the life of that carrier named "Antietam". And this I know, that here on this deck is heard (and felt) that mighty and thunderous roar cascading from the aggregation of engines not muffled that rise to an overbearing and oppressive crescendo as the warm-up period finally comes to a thankful end minutes from now. We are looking at the Antietam on its shakedown cruise testing whether men, large machines, and ship are suitably ready for duty. Notice that only two of the four rocket-rails are occupied, that the protective masking-tape on the gun-muzzles has been perforated by gun-fire, and most importantly, that that Hellcat (lower left) has been very closely approached by another aircraft. Should its propeller make contact with the tail-section of the forward Hellcat, ripping and shattering it, the entire area would be showered with shrapnel, leaving everyone in the region subject to injury, even mortally. This is something over which the Airdale has absolutely no control. If he's preoccupied with trying to maintain his own physical integrity, he'll have no forewarning to "take cover". However, and actually, to "take cover" during flight operations is an oxymoron; options are nonexistent: the intrinsic hazards abounding on the flight deck during launch operations require one to stay put because moving aircraft generate strong winds and crosswinds in a semi-random manner. These (arbitrary) winds will propel you where you should not, and do not, want to go. Now then, if an Airdale is aware of an impending collision, and being unable to "take cover", he can only stoically stand and repeat, "will it or wont it?", and then take the consequences as meted out by fate. Abruptly changing the subject, one could well say that the Airdales next to those Corsairs look for all the world as if they were "squires" attending their "knights in shining armor". Point well taken. Though menial by comparison, the Airdales do stand and serve.

Probably the most familiar definition of "To Serve" can be found in some expressions of one's participation in battle (combat) in service to one's country. More generally though, to serve usually means to be usefully helpful and productive in causes and concerns that promote the general welfare. That said, let me say unequivocally that there is another meaning to the phrase "to serve" (in spite of its less grand connotation): they also serve who "only" practice the virtues of probity (integrity, honesty, rectitude), of understanding others, of consideration for others, of generosity toward others, of respect for others, of sincerity in thought and deed, of helpfulness for the weak, of cheerfulness for all, of thoughtfulness about others, of friendliness toward all, of courtesy to all, of whatever promotes goodwill within the parameters of probity. In this we can all serve, from the lofty (the pilots) to the lowly (the Airdales). We have long had the notion of the lofty expending much of their energy toward service to the many (this having been initiated by the age-old concept of noblesse oblige). However, there should be a caveat here: is it beneficial to serve so much and so well that those served become dependent? No, because of course to serve should be to help others help themselves (without being intrusive). However, the lowest common denominator of serving is the one who commits oneself diligently to one's job, menial or not. Is it not an axiom that the more one puts into a job, the more one derives in valuable intangibles? (These are the intangibles that differentiate just living from LIVING.) And to be sure, one of the greatest benefits of serving is that it takes one out of oneself; and yet, serving oneself can be responsible for some of our greatest advances (how does one explain this dichotomy?) Ergo, how can life be trivial when one serves?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ANOTHER DAY

Another day, another launch, another panic-attack. Facetious or not, it was about a month before my anxiety gave way to a sullen resignation fortified with a modicum of "can do" spirit. (Having been a "loner", I never knew how much the original group of Airdales trained for this duty on the flight deck, but I can say that I did not receive one iota of advice from anyone concerning what it was that I was to do, not to do, what I should be aware of, what techniques to follow, what were the particular dangers I should avoid, what might happen during a launch or landing or parking event, what to do if it did happen, and so on. (I did, however, receive a one day exercise in fire-fighting when we first arrived at Pearl Harbor: dressed in "slickers", we followed an instructor into a compartment raging with fire which he put out with a water-applicator seen in another chapter. But back to the flight deck.) It would have been folly to have taken an attitude of accommodation to those elements consisting of that deleterious noise, the dangerous winds, and those deadly propellers because it was not in their nature to be accommodating. I still wonder at the chasm between what we are looking at here and the sense of gloom that permeated my mind then and there. A pretty picture, yes, but one fraught with the pernicious feelings of calamity while awaiting and anticipating the call to "Start engines". Sometimes, often even, the waiting to hear that call would whittle away one's sense that today would not be the day of retribution for the previous day's successful resolution of that day's activities. Such were the thoughts of a fledgling working the treacherous flight deck when and where all was tempestuous throughout.(In the beginning I resolved to write these books to address the intellect and to avoid the sensational; namely, the lurid "WOW!" factor.)

Resolving situations can often be difficult, whether it be your emotions that are at odds, or whether it be a conflict between two opposing sides (especially if one or both are adamant). The first consideration to be addressed is whether you're so self-centered and self-absorbed that resolution rests on the far side of improbable. This condition leads to that odious maxim, "My way or the highway" (or no way), as opposed to taking the high road as do all strata of society. It should not be expecting too much for the contenders to resort to a more critical reasoning process instead of messy emotionalism (male and female), or a "holier than thou" attitude. And it doesn't hurt at all to delve into as many options as can be derived, as one redirects instead of vents. Add empathy to the mix because "walking in someone's moccasins" can provide marvelous revelations. Be firm but open-minded and "let your conscience be your guide". (You have a conscience, do you not? Every intelligent person does.) Consensus and cooperation is far more productive than confrontation, while compromise and negotiation should lead to a "win-win" result. Is resilient firmness an oxymoron? It need not be because "resilient" refers to options while "firmness" applies to maintaining values within each of the options (don't forget critical reasoning). (Being objective instead of subjective results in a resolution more palatable while established social values, not personal ones, should for the most part be sacrosanct.) I would say that one should not necessarily be resistant to new ideas. Evaluate them critically. If the other side is motivated by malice (satisfaction in inflicting harm and/or pain on others) then your course is clear: if nothing else, they deserve naught but ridicule for even the malicious abhor isolation. Change that which you can change, and accept that which you cannot change while keeping in mind that although you can't build a better world, you can build a better self (anon).



"HOLD IT !"

"Hold it !" signals the yellow-shirt with upraised arms and clenched fists. On close examination it's seen that SB2C #15 has not lowered its flaps (wing trailing edge, inboard), unlike all the other SB2C Helldivers). As a consequence, the plane-captain (a brown-shirt) of that Helldiver has leaped onto the wing and is now leaning against the wind and into the cockpit to help the pilot remedy the situation. Before he did so, the lead yellow-shirt indicated to the pilot that his flaps were not down (by opening and closing his facing palms that were horizontal at waist height. If the flaps can't be lowered, the pilot will be directed to the deckedge elevator to be taken below for repairs. To the point, on the Antietam, a Hellcat was mistakenly given the "Go" signal when his flaps were up. His day was ruined because his aircraft never rose above the level of the flight deck and slowly descended to a water-landing about 200 yards in front of the ship: the launch-speed of the aircraft (30 mph wind + 30 mph aircraft) was not enough, less the flaps, to allow it to gain altitude. To the left are other brown-shirts awaiting "their" aircraft to reach the take-off point. It's also clear that each aircraft in line has a "controlling" yellow-shirt However, there's an anomaly here vis-a-vis the Antietam: we Airdales would attend the aircraft right to the spot where the SB2C is now. This was Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the Antietam. You would hold onto the wheel-strut as you walked, no, were pulled by, the aircraft. As you did so, you would viscerally feel the the vibrations of the aircraft as those vibrations moved from your hand to your arm and down to your toes, all the while the prop-wash was lashing at especially your face.

This is an example of the need to correct a defect lest damage be done (water-landing). It's also a clear and well-defined situation. Unfortunately, life is not all that helpful all the time. Often times our course is confronted with the proposition that "the end justifies the means", implying that the "end" is of utmost value, even irredeemable, while the "means" must be whatever it takes. Common know- ledge acknowledges that this concept can be tenuous in the extreme, for who is it to decree the "ends"and perhaps especially the "means"? It is here that those so faced revert to the last refuge of the self-obsessed : rationalization. At its most basic, as applied here, to rationalize is to do that which you know to be on the very edge of of the irresponsible by using a scant justifying explanation for one's actions. That is, one tries to make what is known to be wrong (improper) appear right (proper) by convoluted reasoning. The more sophisticated among us try to make marginal reasoning conformable to solid sense. Once upon a time I did something I KNEW to be wrong and yet I rationalized that what I did was for a good cause (mine, where the means justified the ends). Too often, we become too caught up in the propriety of what we're trying to accomplish that we lose all respect for what is right at the "front end" (the means). We should not become so caught up in the morass of trying to ascribe our acts and thoughts to causes (ends) that only superficially seem reasonable and valid but that are, upon examination and critical thought, unrelated to the true purpose of our acts. This kind of rationalization is irresponsible and unacceptable, is it not? Another form of rationalization is the proclivity of some to invent seemingly plausible explanations for those who want to overreach when in fact some fundamental reflection will expose the fallacies implicit in their overreaching. Additionally, even if unknown to others, we should be ethical enough to be bound by correcting our mistakes done in the haze (daze?) of rationalization. ("Daze" was included to point out that some consider only the "end".)



THE "SHOW OF SHOWS"

During launch operations personnel were allowed on the catwalk in order to watch the daily "show" there on the flight deck that was not only interesting to them but also apparently stimulating: they were intrigued to ascertain how the events on the flight deck would play out, up close and personal (would there be a collision, would there be personnel accidents, or just wanting to be close to the action). Most of the spectators were gunners on their terrain, the 20-mm gun-platform outboard of the catwalk which was in turn cantilevered 50 feet over the water below. However, during the landing operations the catwalks were off limits to everyone, leaving them to be available to the Airdales should a landing aircraft go awry (errant landings were of course always possible, and even in the offing). It's interesting to note those "stoic" officers to the left as compared to that Airdale to the right covering his ears. Guaranteed, those two officers are going to be grabbing their hats as is that third officer. As a matter of fact, these were not flight deck personnel and they were seldom seen here (they were above in the superstructure). As has been said before, unlike most all of the Airdales seen in this book, we Antietam Airdales always wore royal blue shirts, royal blue cloth helmets, goggles, and sand-colored non-skid shoes. We were distinctive only in the condition of our dungarees ("blue jeans"). Mine were worn at the knees because I was on them whenever I was at a wheelchock. The flight deck was our domain (our terrain) and though the job was simpleminded and bereft of intellect- al acumen, it definitely was not simple if you had any respect for self-preservation. The job-description of pulling wheel-chocks (launch), putting wheelchocks (park), cleaning up the crashes, and putting out fires would not embellish a job-resume. In any event, without the Airdales there would be no launches so that the pilots could not do their deadly deeds that unfortunately war required.

Certainly by now it's apparent that the second paragraphs of each page attempts to comment in a serious manner on some important matters of the human condition. These mini-essays do more, I hope, than present my understanding of things of substance, and presumably of usefulness. To wit, they are presented so as to perhaps promote challenges to the many and thus provoke the readers to delve into their own comprehension of such intangibles as "honesty", "thoughtfulness", "kindness", and the like, as well as defining for themselves the intrinsic meaning of such words that we often use in a somewhat offhand fashion. Sometimes these mini-essays are even argumentative so as to stir the intellectual juices that in large measure and in a large number of us, lie dormant either by choice or by apathy. In a way, in addition to my saying "here's where I stand", these mini-essays are formatted to challenge the reader to consider what words actually mean as they are used in a sentence (words do and should have specific meaning as used in precise sentences). Furthermore, it's not enough to merely make a declaration. After the declaration we should be able to explain why such a declaration is sound and valid and unambiguous and appropriate as used (again we fall back on the concept of critical and precise thinking). Nuances may be considered effete to the crass among us, but they are in fact the steel of viable societies (that's a direct challenge). Again, while I stand by my essays (not in a "holier than thou" manner), I hope and trust that they will engender useful notice.(Is it too much to say that with "universal" critical thinking there would be a large increment in the social amicability extant?)


8-B-22

THREE BEAUTIES

On this clean and uncluttered flight deck in this elegant and attractive picture we can appreciate the essence of what it is that these carriers do: carry matchless machines made by man's ingenuity. And in their way, beautiful "birds" they are in spite of being artifacts of war. In order, they are the F4U Corsair, a fighter, the TBM Avenger, a torpedo-bomber, and an SB2C Helldiver, a dive-bomber. Each was very distinctive in its own distinguishing form, fit and function. However, as the war progressed, their functions tended to merge. That is, the Corsair took on some of the functions of the Helldiver in that it carried bombs (which later on consisted of 6 250-lb. bombs attached under the wings, 1 500-lb. bomb and 1 1,000-lb. bomb both under the fuselage, for a total of 3,000-lb.) In addition, it replaced its 6 50-caliber machine-guns with 4 20-mm cannons. To accomplish its carrying this heavier load, it was installed with a 2-row, 18-cylinder P&W R-2800-32 W engine that generated 2,500-hp with a two-stage variable-speed supercharger. To handle this larger engine, a 4-bladed propeller was required (as can be seen here and more clearly in the pictures of the Antietam's Corsairs). Add- ed to the function of the Avenger (anti-ship torpedoes) was that of carrying bombs, bringing it into essentially the same role as the SC2B dive-bomber. Thus, the functions of all three aircraft merged into one function: deliver bombs, and more bombs.

One could say that a people also have form, fit, and function: they have different appearances (forms), different jobs (fits) but their goals, or missions (functions) merge just as did these three aircraft. But what possible goal (mission) could a people have in common? An obvious clue to this can be found in asking yourself what your goals in life might be. The larger question should imply that if someone else's goals are not met, you in turn will be affected adversely because all our lives are intermingled. We wish our neighbor well because we want to live in a well-adjusted neighborhood. This certainly (should) extrapolates to the larger society. The above simply stated a simple concept that should be considered sound (so it's posed). In one's less harried and more lucid periods, one could ponder, and then propose, that a peoples' mission (goal) is to make a more perfect society in which they and theirs can live a more happy life. Some could call this altruism. Others would more properly, I believe, call this common sense. Who, in their "right mind", would want to live in a dysfunctional society? There are many ways to contribute to "this more perfect union": even such "little" things as a pleasant demeanor helps (though this isn't so "little" when one's in pain, physically and/or emotionally). Agreeableness need not imply acquiescence to the things that require remediation, while unnecessary confrontations are a drag on a more felicitous society (who's so churlish that he wouldn't want this?). Thus, can't it be said that furthering the welfare of society is at the same time furthering one's own welfare? (That's a rhetorical question because the answer is a resounding "Yes!". Yes, a reasonable person would rather live in a society that is well-adjusted and well-functioning.) But how promote this? One thing everyone can do is to uphold our well-established, basic values such as honesty, and you know the drill. (It's a sorry situation when one sometimes has to lie to protect oneself – this is called intimidation; how to deal with these perfidious ones? There's a danger in all of this: one is discouraged and disappointed and even depressed so much and so often that rampant apathy takes hold. A very useful, and beneficial, antidote to this resides in immersing oneself in a challenging and interesting endeavor, even if it's not productive. (I opted for servomechanisms).



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SERIOUS BUSINESS AFOOT

We're in a "quasi-quiet" mode in preparation for a launch. However, there's sufficient noise and energy afoot on the flight deck to attract the attention of the daily spectators on the catwalk. The observant ones will notice that the closer Corsair does not have its flaps down, but everyone will notice those search-radar pods attached to the right wings. These pods identify the Corsairs to be Combat Air Patrol (CAP) aircraft that appeared later in the war and were used to detect any marauding "boggies" in the area of the task force/task group (especially at night). The CAPs were an important factor in that constant contest between ship and aircraft, those 2 antagonists that were mortal enemies always conspiring in the demise of the other. The really observant ones will notice that SBD Dauntless dive-bomber at the upper left. It was replaced by the SB2C Helldiver, but not before the SBDs sank 4 Japanese carriers in the Battle of Midway on 6 June 1942. Honestly now, looking at these Corsairs, aren't you prompted to say, "I sure am glad they were on my side"? As has been mentioned, my mode during launch operations was that of the Airdale at the left wheel of the forward Corsair. Even though there was a preponderance of wind and sound (energy and noise) at that position, I felt more secure holding onto something substantial such as the wheel rather than the deck-cleats as the others are doing. While all the energy generated by that engine, only yards from my discombobulated head, was a boon to the pilot, to me it was a source of pure anxiety in that with such energy present, it felt as if the propeller would fly apart from the engine and reap massive damage and harm to that and those nearby. Fanciful? Yes, but no less real for its fancifulness. Such are the ruminations, completely at variance with reality, of a neophyte plucked from an environ- ment totally alien to any understanding of that universe found on the flight deck during launch operations. In time, the neophyte grew.

Energy and noise. Noise and energy. That's the trademark of the flight deck. That also, unfortunately, is the trademark of what now passes as youthful entertainment. What follows certainly is not original and has been mentioned previously. Music is of course part of entertainment, and well it should be. And youthful exuberance is, well, youthful exuberance. But surely one should not confuse the two: music is not witless noise. That is, witless noise has no relationship or resemblance to musicality or melody, and if the lyrics to present-day "music" are heard at all, they usually come out as rude and crude and socially unacceptable. The young look to others, even if subconsciously, for validity of their thoughts and actions. Too often, unfortunately, this validity is sought in contemporary peer-pressure groups, and not from the tried and true. (I can't resist referring to the ballads of the big bands, circa the early 1940's, that were a bulwark for the GIs of the WWII. Then the music "told a story" both in melody and words which were emotionally meaningful, even sentimental or inspirational. And the youth then were certainly no less robust and vigorous.) We tend to judge people by what entertains them. We also tend to ascribe a given level of intelligence by what they enjoy. We are defined by things such as music, and if that music is crass, well then ..... A great many people consider the loud noise and the physical energy that represents today's music as nothing but a blatant, transparent cover for a serious lack of talent (not to mention taste which has been derived over many years). On the other hand, if it's merely youth's method of showing (childish) rebellion, then they should "shape up or ship out" (some Navy lingo there). Talent is earned by hard work: stop degrading and debasing our culture by pandering to the lowest common denominator.



"ALL REVVED UP"

"All revved up and rearing to go": the Airdales, having carefully and cautiously removed both themselves and the wheelchocks from the area, and the pilot, giving maximum throttle to the engine and applying full force to the brakes, causes the Helldiver to "strain at the leash". Meanwhile, those ever-present wind-blasts that everywhere exist serve to intensify and magnify your gathering apprehension that very possibly THIS is the time and THIS is place you'll meet your Maker: this time the forces are just a little too great to resist. At the same time the ever-maddening sound, that noise from Hades on all sides, makes your body involuntarily and increasingly tense as the decibels rise, signaling an impending and violent denouement that could occur at any indeterminate time. It eats at your sense of vulnerability. (Some thought not, but to me that ominous noise was flat-out debilitating and it required the summoning up of my nerve and sinew to the fullest. (Though it looks a "piece of cake", looks can and do deceive). Later versions of the Helldiver replaced its 50-caliber machine-guns with 2 20-mm cannons. It was also equipped to carry 5-inch rockets. But the Helldiver was unique in that it had trailing-edge perforated flaps that opened both upward and downward at the same time, acting as brakes during its nearly vertical dive. However, when landing, the upper flap was hydraulically held in place unopened so that only the lower flap was lowered to provide added lift. Also, during landings the Helldiver's leading-edge outboard slots were extended forward for about 2 inches to ensure that even at the lower landing speeds the controlling trailing-edge ailerons remained effective. (These slots were automatically extended when the landing gear was lowered, as was the upper dive-flap retracted.) The Helldiver earned its keep. "All revved up and rearing to go" is frequently found among us. On the face of it, it bodes well. However, in the heat of the passion of the exposition of one's thoughts, much might be lost in the "translation": you're so eager to be understood that in fact you're not properly understood; you're not understood as you would have it. While enthusiasm and earnestness are commendable, even salutary, enthusiasm and rational thought can often be at cross-purposes ("earnestness" is one of my favorite words). It's not always so easy to modulate one's thoughts and feelings when one is just now experiencing one's growing intellectual purposefulness. Yet what's so rare as one who genuinely savors and practices the contemplative life? On the other hand, when I was young I was so deeply immersed in my introspections as to be a detriment to such important things as my studies. This is not to be recommended except under the most stringent circumstances Yet that reflective life allowed me to "live to fight another day". (This refers to long ago when I had to contend with artificial obstacles not of my makings: apparent transcendental mind-games that prevailed constantly and continuously and where "to win" was never in the offing. Just as demoralizing was the inability to conjure a cause for these invidious mind-games. Seeking the truth was destined to be in vain. Insidious incidents resisted and defied remediation. These perceptions tracked me wherever I went and contained no solutions but were rife with imaginings. (Sorry, I can be no more explicit.)).The question to be asked and answered, after due and diligent thought is, "is it constructive?" (And just what IS constructive?) Sincere and useful reflection probably is the key (reflection is not necessarily reticence, but they do tend to go hand-in-hand, and this is not bad at all). On a much more positive note, enthusiasm is often the catalyst that makes the day seem bright, and is not enthusiasm an interest augment- ed by imagination? As long as enthusiasm is modulated by a pensive mind, useful and interesting and substantial things follow.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

OUR MISSION

Those with a predilection of being observant will notice that only the TBM Avengers are taxiing to the take-off point while the Hellcats and the Helldivers are quietly standing aside. Thus we are led to believe that this is a mission that's to be accomplished only by the TBMs. (Of course this conclusion could be completely misconstrued in that here it just happened that those F6Fs and SB2Cs were unable to meet muster. But so many?) Also note that the Avengers' wing-span of 55 feet prevented their being safely spread until having reached the take-off point at 400 feet from the front of the flight deck It's clearly seen that each of the Avengers has a controlling yellow-shirt who's always maintaining himself within the view of the pilot. By now it should also be apparent that none of the Avengers are being attended by an Airdale. This was never the case on the Antietam: as has been said, we would grab hold of the wheel-strut and, with wheelchock in hand and with the scathing wind-blast in our face, we would with difficulty accompany the aircraft right up to the take-off point. The aircrafts' missions were appropriate to their configurations: the heavy TBMs carried torpedoes for attacks against ships, the SB2Cs carried heavy bombs for smashing ships and any other target down below, and the smaller, faster F6Fs and F4Us were built to chase and shoot down other aircraft. But again, these roles would merge later on. Consider all the power represented by each of these aircraft, these machines meant to deal death and destruction. It's not just what they are carrying in terms of bombs and bullets and rockets, but it's also about all that power, all that sound and fury, that each one "packs under the hood". Put these machines into untethered motion so that then when up close and personal, one feels and experiences a truly belittling awe.

"Our mission". Just what IS one's mission? When we're young most of us tend to give that subject little if any attention: there are too many immediate interests and concerns and problems at hand. Normal, typical, but a mistake because things will not "just take care of themselves". "Things" require consideration. Of course these "things" are your goal(s) (mission, if you will). The young have no time for this, but the young would be well advised to make the time to carefully evaluate all the various areas of life in which they can find an interest. It doesn't have to be a burning interest, nor a specific area, but it should at least weed out those things that don't appeal. Capabilities at this time are not of great importance. Perhaps what's most important is to understand WHY one is interested in this or that. The lucky ones are those who can develop a strong desire in a fairly specific area (after considering many things). Fortunate is the one who can find something about which one is enthused and even excited. If one can find a job that one truly enjoys, one is truly blessed. On a personal note, when I was 25 I became so enthused about the general subject of servomechanisms that at the age of 31 I went back to school to earn my degree in electrical engineering. It required long and hard expenditure of energy, but it was well worth it in that it brought me closer to that which I truly desired: understanding and then creating the artifacts of automatic machine tools. There are those who no doubt will scoff at my saying that I feel a "subdued thrill of excitement" when I watch a room full of automatic machinery in operation. That's why, although meeting with undue resistance in my endeavors, I persisted and was able to know some satisfaction. Hold onto your aspirations, even if others abuse and mistreat you (spoken from experience). To achieve your goals (your mission) is one of the most therapeutic things you can do, as well as being your life-long life-line to an abiding contentment.

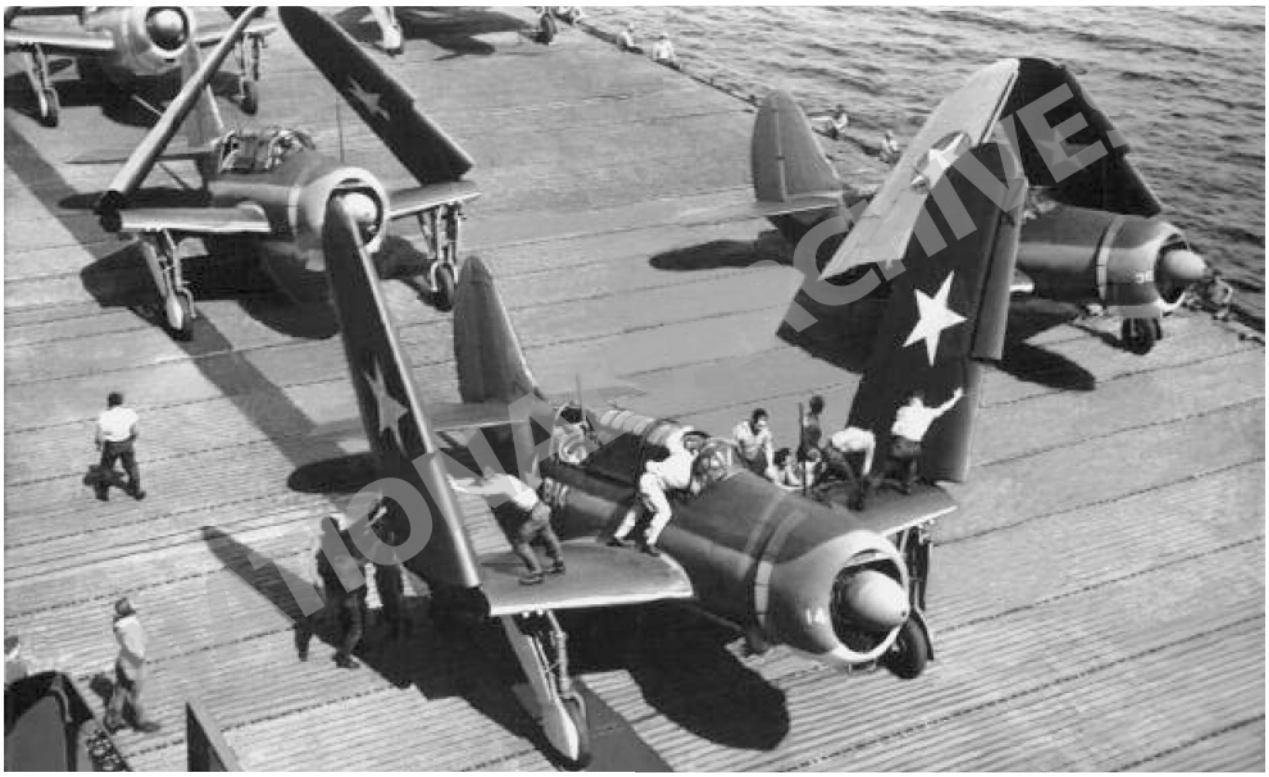


NATIONAL

WE HAVE A PROBLEM

Whereas several pages back a Helldiver had a problem with its flaps, here this Helldiver has a problem lowering its wings. This time it's an officer who's leaning into the cockpit providing help and this time some Airdales are aiding the Helldiver's hydraulics by pushing on the wings (which isn't all that easy considering that they're standing on metal with a wind-blast being generated only yards away). Note that since the landing-gear is extended in a down position, the slots in the leading-edge of the wing are also in an extend- ed position. The malfunction of the wing's hydraulics will not affect the mission of this Helldiver (once the wings are lowered) but it does adversely affect the smooth functioning of the entire launch operation in which it's desired to send aircraft off every 20 seconds. The Air Officer, 2 decks up in the superstructure, is probably becoming impatient with this situation and is about ready to use the PA system to order this Helldiver to the hanger deck below (via the deckedge elevator). And again, these aircraft lack the attending Airdales at the wheels. For an old Airdale, this state of affairs is in a way an affront to "how things should be done". You can believe it or not, but as an old Airdale, and although some will consider it a trivial thing about a seemingly trivial job, I take pride in having done this activity on the flight deck according to the proper operating procedure. It's not a bad thing at all to take pride in one's job, even one that's considered by many to be a simpleminded one. (On paper, it looks simple; on the flight deck, it was definitely difficult, especially when one considers that one's anxieties generated on the flight deck about future possible mishaps badly distracts one from the required attention to the present actual reality of a calamity. At the same time, one could hardly overlook the continuous visceral sensations felt as soon as "Start engines" was sounded: there was no stopping the flow of adrenaline (which was a darn good thing).

This Helldiver, this pilot, has a problem. Is it his problem? Yes, of course, but it's also a problem for the entire launch process. I can guarantee that immediately upon becoming aware that this Helldiver had a problem, that officer, without a moment's hesitation, was up onto the wing and leaning into the cockpit to do what he could to resolve the problem. The Airdales straightaway took his lead (leadership) and also jumped onto the wing to lend a hand. The simple explanation here is that those involved recognized a problem and responded at once. One could say that they were trained to do this, but trained or not, they took the initiative to do what had to be done. How many of us can make that claim? Again, I can guarantee that none of these individuals were told what to do Some people take responsibility by second nature, while others must learn it. In any event, what kind of society would it be devoid of those who fulfill responsibilities? Who should be so favored that he has no responsibilities? To most, responsibility implies a moral requirement, at minimum, but it should not be left at that. The responsibility to which we refer is that in which there is no call to duty: we do what has to be done because it's the right thing to do. And just what is "right"? Among other things, we could say that which promotes self-reliance, that which engenders cooperation, that which helps others help themselves. In life we have many opportunities for choices, and those choices, such as non-coerced responsibility, are what go a long way in making this a better environment in which to live. (Pray tell, who doesn't want that?) This is an area where self-imposed commitment can be acquired without all that mich effort. Besides, the above is an excellent way of augmenting and fortifying the core value of self-esteem (which will have been EARNED).

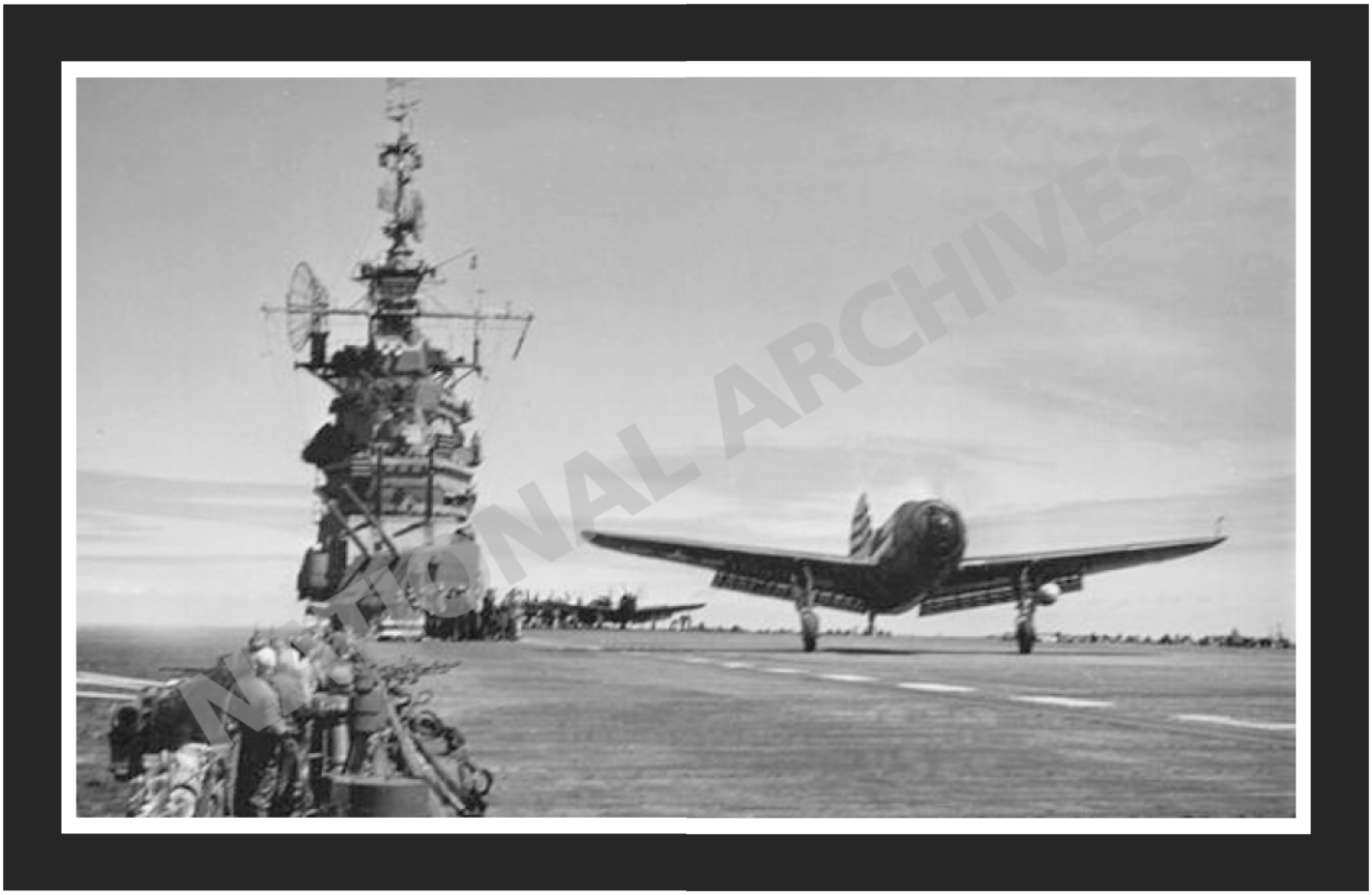


NARA ARCHIVE

LAUNCH

Another SB2C Helldiver, this one on its way to becoming airborne.(not a catapult). (We have a good look at the perforated flaps in the down position.) One time I took up the station right where the nearest person is standing on the catwalk. I was wearing a pair of sound-powered phones (all the phones topside were sound-powered). My job at that particular time was to report the numbers of each aircraft as it was launched from the starboard catapult. Not a "big deal" certainly. But what makes it memorable to me was that this was a particularly cold, damp, overcast and generally raw day. So far, so good. However, at the end of the launch operations when everyone else was dismissed, and retired below, I was not relieved (for some unknown reason). Periodically I asked, over the phone, when it was time to secure (be dismissed). Each time it was "not yet". But why? Nothing was happening topside. The signature memory was that in the compartment directly below me the song "Peg 'O My Heart" by the Harmonicats was being played over and over and over. Whenever I hear that song by the Harmonicats I'm right there on that catwalk, 50 feet above a roiling sea taking in the salt-air stirred up by the swirling wind. I spent my time, among other things, looking up at that massive superstructure and marveling at what a creation of which I was a part: those 5-inch guns that dared the enemy to approach, that large parabolic search radar antenna seeking out enemy ships, as well as all those other radars and communication antennas. In retrospect, it was odd that the Japanese carriers had essentially no superstructures; while ours somehow provided a certain sense of security as it looked down on us on the flight deck. I also recall, standing at that very spot, looking up at the pilot house (the top of the upper 5-inch guns) that it was there that not that long ago I was standing my watch at the annunciator right next to the helm ("steering wheel"). I was put down literally and figuratively.

Put down. Put upon. Shunned. Abused. Misused. If true, what to do? A facile response would be, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". True, but what does it mean to say that things are tough? Is it tough to be disliked? Maybe. Is it tough to be abused? Yes. (But that begs the question of what it is to be abused.) This line of thought could go on and on, but to what avail? True, it's useful to be able to define a problem before trying to solve it, but isn't a better approach to set aside the negative aspects of a situation so as to better take hold of the positive approach? This is where the subject of character is no longer an abstract concept but rather a useful tool to promote one's prospects through life. If nothing else, a stalwart character is a source of personal pride (read "earned self-esteem", that pearl). First, a stalwart character relies heavily on hard work. Everyone (almost) is capable of hard, honest work. The next thing in buttressing one's character is to find and acquire an interest in some activity or subject that "grabs hold" of you. Thirdly, once this interest is firmly established, work hard at becoming skillful in this activity or subject. Once one does this, one becomes almost oblivious to the "slings and arrows" of the troublesome milieux. Next, expend energy and thought to this developing endeavor so that that which bothered will now be that which is irrelevant. And in addition, for all you know you could well experience incredible enjoyment from your new-found (and substantive) interest. With this, one not only leaves the negative behind, but also one finds a new reason to revel in life. You benefit, and most assuredly, society benefits. (Even your pet will benefit by the good humor your good (non-monetary) fortune brings you. (One of the pleasures of a pet is the realization that it is you who is responsible for her care.)) .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A STALWART "STEED"

A stalwart "steed" this, with wings spread wide and engine warmed to a gathering guttural roar while ahead lies a clear deck that beckons. Yet why does it stand there alone with only a following Hellcat? And why does the Hellcat follow the Helldiver when we all know that it's the complement of smaller Hellcat and Corsair fighters that precede the larger Helldiver and Avenger bombers on a deck that's all commotion and congestion as aircraft swivel about, first on one wheel, and then on the other. We all know that at launch-time, all is disorder out of order, and order out of disorder where sign-language is the lingua franca on the flight deck and 4-point locomotion is the obligatory mode of getting from here to there in an effort to avoid the fear of being caught in an untenable situation. Nevertheless, sterile though this picture is, I like this picture that does not distract from the object of interest, this stalwart "steed" that the pilots, in their nomenclature, called "the beast" (it initially had problems, but after they were ironed out the SB2C became a valued item in the Navy's inventory). To its credit, a little human interest has been added by including the yellow-shirt to the right and the group of plane-captains to the left along with the usual spectators on the catwalk. (Technically, notice the air-speed pitot-tube at the end of the left wing (the differential between the static and dynamic air indicates the speed of the aircraft). That "stick" be- low the wing is a radio antenna, if I'm not mistaken.) In sum, it all looks benign here relatively speaking, but for a fact there's power aplenty emanating from this picture, and somehow it seems a shame that such a beautiful creation is merely a means of death and destruction. WWII was a war that had to be fought, but the devastation and resulting desolation is a permanent blot on our civilization.

Machines such as this one shown here are not the only stalwarts that attract our attention, nor should we look with undue approval on those who are firm of body (especially where steroids are concerned). No, they are but footnotes when compared to the stalwarts who deserve our unremitting admiration: those whom we can attest to their strength of character and to the strength of their commitment to such things as duty, honor, country, integrity, rectitude, empathy, respect for others, responsibility, concern for others, quiet courtesy, fairness, abstinence, school studies, and any other less obvious attributes that the sagacious among us, using their powers of discern- ment, can name. While the above require no effort to name, to fully embody these attributes does need the fortitude of a thoroughbred. But who is able to be a thoroughbred? Actually, most everyone, after the requisite practice, understanding that there are varying degrees of excellence. (The usefulness of the attributes listed here are essentially wasted if one believes that there are prizes to be won.) If nothing else, one's indomitable spirit is something to be cherished. While we all undergo the hardships of life to one degree or another, we should understand that there are ALWAYS those who have it worse, sometimes at orders of magnitude. To the resolute go the benefits of realizing that one is stalwart, one is intrepid, one is the pillar to one's own edifice (one is one's "own man"). This is why one should strive for that moral strength: to shed the shackles of dependence (understanding that a certain amount of voluntary dependence can be good and useful). However, in one's quest for independence all the above good works are for naught should one otherwise take (unfair) advantage of another. That road certainly is one step removed from the realm of the bully, the cover for the coward, that veritable bane of any properly functioning society. (Here we are not referring to any and all unlawful acts, certainly.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AERODYNAMICS 101

To fly: to leave the ground and move through a fluid called "air" To do this requires the interaction of at least four quantities: the WEIGHT of the aircraft and its load, the LIFT provided by the wings to overcome the weight, the DRAG due to the bulk of the aircraft, and the THRUST generated by the power-plant to overcome the drag. We understand the concepts of "weight", "drag", and "thrust", but the term "lift" in the context of flight is not intuitive. It's somewhat paradoxical that the moving air (aerodynamics) is responsible for both the drag and the lift where the air opposes forward motion while it also aids the lift. In brief, the lift experienced by an aircraft is created by the fact that a wing's profile is one that is curved upward on top and is flat on the bottom. This in turn requires that the air moves faster over the top of the wing than it does under the bottom of the wing. In 1738 Bernoulli discovered that the pressure of a fluid (air) decreases as the speed of that fluid increases. Thus, there is less pressure on the top of a moving wing than there is on the bottom of that wing and this pressure differential causes the wing to be lifted upward. Mathematically, this lift is represented by the following equation: $L = ½ kqvvSz$, where k is a proportionality constant, q is the air density, v is the speed of the aircraft, S is the area of the wing, and z is the angle of attack (angle between the horizontal and the direction of the aircraft). Now, according to Newton's First Law of Motion, a moving body tends to remain in that condition. Therefore, at level and constant "v", an aircraft only has to produce sufficient force to overcome the drag generated by that aircraft. The stability of an aircraft in flight results from the yaw being controlled by the upright tail-section; the pitch is controlled by the tail-section's horizontal stabilizer; and roll is counteracted by the wing's dihedral angle (the slight "V" when looking at the aircraft head-on). As the aircraft rolls to the right, the right wing becomes more horizontal, the left wing becomes less horizontal and thus the right wing provides more lift that in turn counteracts the undesired roll. Clearly, the tail-section's vertical rudder controls the right/left direction (yaw), and the tail-section's horizontal elevator controls the up/down (pitch) motion. Not so clear is the rolling motion created by the two ailerons at the trailing outside portion of the wing: the upward aileron pushes that wing down and the downward aileron pushes that wing upward. What started all of this was my observation of how large the Avenger's wings are (500 square feet) giving it a large lift. "Thrust" and "Drag", "Lift" and "Weight", one balances the other, and as a result we have equilibrium, we have stability. Excess, of anything, is the adversary of usefulness. Too much happiness or too much sadness retards our knowing that felicity of contentment, that "middle way" that leads to satisfaction unencumbered by intemperance. None other than that great Greek philosopher Socrates wrote that it is "temperance (self-control), courage (fortitude), wisdom (prudence), and justice (fairness)" that lead the way to the good life. (One could also say that "courage" applies to doing the right (correct, proper) thing when to do so is very difficult. As Mark Twain wrote, "courage is the mastery of fear, not its absence"). Sometimes, to change is fearful and requires courage. Sometimes, also, you change what you are able, and you accept that which you are unable to change. (A corollary to this is to enjoy what you do have and not dwell on what you do not or can not have——while acknowledging the enjoyment to be had in the (realistic) striving for those things that are feasible, as well as the true contentment to be had in doing something well.) At the same time is adversity (the "Drag") a problem or is it a vehicle for one's redemption? Recall that reasonable challenges can be the source of a great deal of satisfaction, for what is so satisfying as to accomplish something of merit?


82
82

CATAPULT

There are eight additional, following pictures that deal with the launch operation by means of a catapult. This page will cover the fundamentals of a catapult launch so that the following pages need not cover the same ground. In this picture, note the steel cable connected to the fuselage and wrapped around a shuttle embedded at one end of a 170-foot slot in the deck (the front end of which is 170 feet away at the front of the flight deck). Also note, just behind the tail-wheel, a hold-down bar attached to the deck. Upon a signal from the yellow-shirted launch officer, the pilot will stand on the brakes and rev the engine up to full rpm. When the engine noise sounds satisfactory to the yellow-shirt, he will lunge forward as he points down the deck toward the front of the ship at which time the pilot presses his head back against the headrest and releases his brakes. Meantime, the green-shirt catapult-man standing on the adjacent catwalk will press the button that releases the hold-down bar and simultaneously slams the shuttle down the slot toward the front of the ship. With all of this, the aircraft is pulled forward with a force that gives it a speed of about 50-mph at the end of the 170 foot slot (in about 2.5 seconds). Of course these numbers vary according to the weight of the aircraft (this Avenger weighs about 18,000-lbs. fully loaded). As the aircraft is slung forward off the ship, it has 50-mph plus 30-mph of wind over the bow, giving it about 80-mph. From this point, the aircraft's power-plant enables it to accelerate further. The shuttle that's embedded in the slot has been pulled (forced) forward by a ram. My understanding of the process is the following: the ram is driven by a piston which is energized by the release of pressurized air which in turn has been generated by an hydraulic system. At the end of the catapult-stroke, fluid is pumped to the other side of the piston, returning the shuttle to the starting position seen here. The Airdales' role is covered later on.

The process of catapulting an aircraft off the flight deck is one of giving aid to something (someone) which is already applying its own effort. This is that prime example of helping others help themselves. For example, how much learning is accomplished, how much is gained, if someone else does your homework? You have literally cheated yourself because we all know that knowledge is one of our most precious commodities. Without it we become dependent (who wants to be dependent?) [Breaking a cardinal rule, a political comment: though a complicated subject, a succinct thought is that capitalism promotes independence while socialism promotes dependence. Thus should the socialized underdeveloped countries evolve inexorably to capitalism. Now have at it.] Here's a thought: how about a partnership toward a common goal instead of dependent/independent? In addition to the actual helping-hand, a more efficacious act is that of giving moral (verbal) encouragement to those who are only marginally accomplished. Their achievement thus is more solid. What is encouragement but the act of instilling courage and confidence into one's make-up. It's this courage, this will to overcome, that sometimes is all that is needed to energize someone. As ridicule depresses, so approval lifts up. Reassurance revitalizes one's responses. While inspiration most usually must be derived from within, a little encouragement may be all the catalyst required. Often the best support one can provide is to express one's validation of another's thoughts and actions. It might turn the timid to "be the best they can be". Depression is easy to come by, and if it gains momentum, perhaps a cheerful word can restore optimism. An upbeat and encouraging and cheerful personality is vital to a useful society. I'm very fortunate indeed to have such a person, my wife


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ALMOST FINISHED

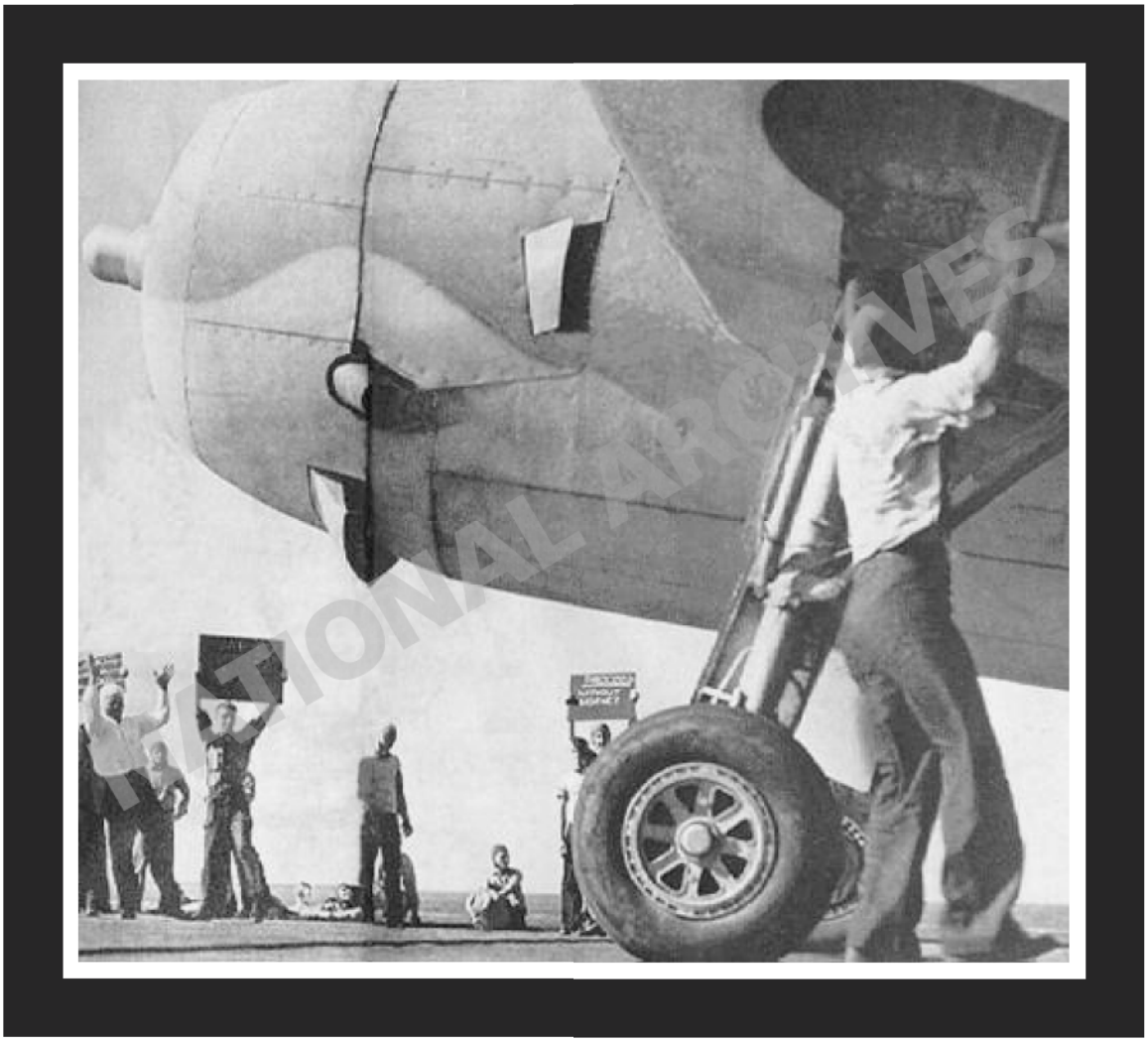
We're almost finished. We're almost through, and soon we'll no longer have to endure that numbing noise and everlasting wind, those fearfully flashing blades and that troublesome game of "now they're here, now they're there".These hulking Avengers, with wings spread athwart the deck, were always the final aircraft to meet the call, saving the largest for the last. The deck's become more sparse with each succeeding launch, but this is no cause for casualness or complacency even though almost all of the almost 100 aircraft have departed. This yellow-shirt officer (khaki trousers) "holds" the approaching Avenger at a very generous distance away now that the space is available. No need to tempt fate by drawing too near .when there's ample "real estate" on the flight deck. After a short time you learn the characteristics of the various yellow-shirts: some are cautious as here, some are "inventive", some are aggressive, some go "by the book", and so forth. Thus you have a better idea as to what will develop concerning the unfolding events of a launch operation. You knew what he considered to be "close", and you could somewhat anticipate his "management" of an aircraft once he obtained "control" of an aircraft. One of the yellow-shirts on the Antietam was fairly short and I wondered whether or not this affected his somewhat audacious handling of aircraft. (I should add that it was a careful audaciousness and that one's conduct certainly need not be attributed to one's stature.) However, one's conduct on the flight deck during flight operations was of real importance (and consequence). Of course the same applies to each and every Airdale with whom you worked. There were unwritten, if you will, rules of how to apply yourself to the job at hand and knowing that others knew these same rules certainly made for a safer flight deck.

Proper conduct on the flight deck during air operations can mean the difference between life and death. In a similar way proper con- duct, ethical conduct, on the "homefront" cam mean the difference between a well-run and a dysfunctional society: what's a society devoid of responsible standards of conduct? Here the rule of law is a given. However, are laws required in a truly ethical society? Is there an inverse relationship between ethical conduct and the number and severity of laws? These are hypothetical questions that are posed only to illuminate the subject of ethics. It doesn't hurt to set up an ideal to enable a somewhat clearer understanding of the problem. Does true ethical conduct prescribe that one person's gain does not deliberately beget another's loss? Just why are various, particular ethical and moral values and virtues good for society (where ethics = outward rules of proper conduct and morals = inward rules of conduct and virtues = a combination of both). As a footnote, a well-established (and earned) self-esteem augurs well for ethical conduct. A partial response to the above can be found in the following: an ethical person acts in such a manner that the quality of the social environment will prosper, thus enabling "everyone" to benefit according to their own efforts and interests. From this, one could advance the concept that all ethics follows from a non-egocentric personality (although there are no doubt those whose ego is so strong that "only they can provide for a better world"). While a person's own philosophy is essentially individualized, a person's ethics needs be fundamentally standardized by society as developed over many generations (thus our need for maintaining our history: "those who forget the past are destined to relive the past"). It is posited that to be ethical requires enough emotional development to feel guilty when we do wrong, enough social development to accept our responsibility for behavior toward our group in agreed upon ways, and enough cognitive development to be able to place ourselves in "another's moccasins" Ethics is the glue of a viable society.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LATE MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS

This Avenger, at the ready at the take-off point, is receiving last minute instructions concerning its mission. The message-boards could be informing the pilot about the latest weather conditions over the target or they could be providing new data about unfolding enemy intentions, or such. Meanwhile, the brown-shirt (plane-captain) in the foreground is reaching up into the wheel-well to make some adjustment to some mechanism there. (The wheel folds into the wheel-well once the Avenger is airborne.) Note the forward cant to the landing-gear that gave it added strength upon touching down hard on the flight deck during a landing operation. We also have a good view of the unmuffled exhaust-pipe that appears to be pointing directly at an Airdale who stands next to the wheel (only an Airdale would make such an observation). Also clearly seen are two of the vents opened to drain the heat built up by the engine. During the activity here, we know that the Airdales are active back aft in the vital task of pulling the wheelchocks so as to "set the aircraft free". It was when doing this that during certain moments I would feel an intense loneliness that reached down to the very depths of my tense psyche. There was a substantial difference between the normal 30-mph wind over the bow that always blanketed the flight deck during flight operations and the hurricane-like winds felt when making the sudden transition into that amassed cauldron of fired up aircraft.. Your body involuntarily tenses as you step in among those aircraft even as your mind quickly becomes sharply focused. The closely packed aircraft severely limits your movements: you are constrained to a given, narrow path that leads you between and perilously close to those flashing blades which, though invisible, you KNOW are there. This was doable, even if a source of a dormant fear. You still had a modicum of freedom of movement. However, when you arrive at that point where you must turn right or left to go down a row of aircraft, you are overwhelmed by a petrifying feeling of being trapped. You are now in a position of being "confronted" by the flashing blades all the while you are being violently urged toward those blades by a irresistible and insistent wind at your other side while literally mere feet from that "whirling maw". My dormant fear now turned to palpable fright. It was such an intense feeling of isolation that for some moments I "froze" on the spot, grasping a cleat for my very life. It is now that for all the world I felt completely and utterly alone even while on a well-populated flight deck. The grossly threatening noise of the engines only accentuated the seeming gravity of the situation and it rattled my mind when I needed it the most. The resolution of this situation was to be found in crawling on hands and knees along the tie-down railing (cleats) that extended across the breadth of the flight deck, holding onto the cleats for dear life as I passed in front of those 13-foot diameter blades of the Corsairs. But hold it! These rails are spread apart every 6 feet. If the propeller of one aircraft was only 2 feet from the tail-section of the aircraft in front of it (the usual case), and the rails were 6 feet apart.....? Obviously the solution was to take the rail that went under the forward aircraft's fuselage, and if it weren't there, then take it under the tail-section. In any event, the furthest you could be from that damnable propeller was 6 feet (when using my method of negotiating my way among that phalanx of aircraft assembled for a launch). It was an harrowing experience under the best of conditions, and even more so when the weather turned sour. A slippery deck was no friend of the Airdale, and while the pilots embraced the wind, the Airdales could only tolerate and endure it. Yes, I'll say it again, pulling wheelchocks was a simpleminded endeavor, but as sure as there's a God in Heaven, there were no simple days on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier when the flight operations flag flew.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TORPEDO DELIVERY SYSTEM

Enclosed within the fuselage of this TBM Avenger is a lethal 2-000-lbs. torpedo which is self-propelled by means of compressed air and is self-directed in both the lateral and depth directions. The 600-lbs. explosive payload detonates either on contact or by a proximity fuse, generating enough force to rip a hole in any armored capital ship of the line. In the Battle of Midway in June 1942 the carrier U.S.S. Yorktown was struck by two aerial torpedoes that made it terminally vulnerable to a submarine torpedo two days later. The aerial torpedo, upon splashing into the sea, had a range of 5,000 yards and a speed of 33 knots that made it as fast as the fastest capital ships of the line. By the end of the war the aerial torpedo could be successfully dropped from a height of 2,000 ft. at an aircraft speed of 380 mph (considerably faster than the top speed of 265 mph that the Avenger could reach). The Avenger was also used for high level-flight bomb-runs using 2,000-lbs, bombs that had a devastating effect on even the largest ships. This picture recalls two distinct and divergent emotions: one of dominance and one of reassurance. These large aircraft, especially when fired up and emitting a foot-long tongue of flames from its exhaust-pipe, tended to generate feelings of insignificance and intimidation, and even domination. It seemed to be, "I was there next to this imposing machine, but only at its sufferance". However, at the same time, just the presence of that towering superstructure was enough to project a feeling of assurance and reassurance because it was here that all kinds of sustaining capabilities existed: the bridge, the pilot house, the chart house (compartment), air plot, primary-fly bridge, after-bridge, flag plot, 5-inch guns, 40-mm guns, 20-mm guns, MK 37, 49, 51 fire-control gun directors, MK 11, SG, Sk, Sm radar antennas and dishes, IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) and TBS (Talk Between Ships) antennas, all kinds of communications and radar control rooms, ammunition ready-rooms, flight deck plot-room, and then some. Yes, to me that superstructure towering over the flight deck was surely a structure to hearten he who was perennially disheartened. I lamented the Navy's diminution of the island after the war.

I was fortunate to have had that island superstructure there, inanimate though it was , as support (and even my only support, having been purposely a "loner"). As an extension of this idea, it's to be admonished to allow others to diminish you and thus enervate you. It's even worse to diminish yourself. However, although we should expect to be treated equally well, at the same time we should understand that since there are unequal abilities throughout, there will be unequal outcomes. While there's no such thing as the word "meritocracy", it's a valid concept in which those with more capabilities should properly prosper more than those of lesser abilities (within bounds). The obvious response to this situation is to upgrade oneself by one's own exertions as best as one is able. Although it's true that opportunities are not everywhere available, it's also true that a great deal of pride accrues to those who generate their own opportunities (yes, yes, "easier said than done", but also "where's there's a will there's a way"). If this goal is reached, think of the self-worth that is created, a prize to be greatly valued. And as has been said, "one thing leads to another (good thing)". However, it's not enough to build a life on a set of cliches: discard everything that's irrelevant to your purposes and adhere to self-discipline, realizing that there may not be that many easy days. Equality is to be found in identifying the challenge and then through diligence and hard work, mastering those obstacles that impede your progress in seeking that in which you can revel. Joy is in overcoming the challenge!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"WHAT'S YOUR MISSION?"

While this book was put together to show "a day in the life of an Airdale", it was, after all, the aircraft and the pilots that had the much larger part in the mission of redressing the status of a very large portion of the globe: in the mid 1930's the Japanese government was hijacked by a group of military despots intent on gaining control of the Asiatic Pacific Basin that consisted of a large part of China and all of Manchuria and Korea, and most all of Indo-China (Vietnam). Between Pearl Harbor (Dec. 7, 1941) and June 1942, they took control of most of Burma, all of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaya, Sumatra, Borneo (Indonesia), Singapore, Hong Kong, New Caledonia, New Guinea and the Solomon Is. In other words, they controlled essentially all of the South Pacific region (South East Asia). Added to that, they also controlled all of the West Central Pacific islands, including Wake, Marshall, Marcus, Gilbert, Mariana, Caroline, Phillippine, Formosa (Taiwan), Okinawa, and Bonin islands. In a war of this size it was the aircraft carrier with its 200-mile range armament (aircraft) that was required to lead the way as the Navy island-hopped westward across the Central Pacific, with the final destination being the Japanese home islands. (MacArthur took the southern route through New Guinea up to the Phillippines). To do this job, the U.S. Navy called upon 3.8 million personnel while the Marine Corps was composed of 600,000. Of these, the Navy and Marine deaths were 57,000 killed in action, 30,000 died of other causes, while 105,000 were wounded, from a U.S. population of 135 million (Encyclopedia Americana). Here in this picture is just one of those servicemen and aircraft whose mission was to contribute, to the best of his ability, what he could toward the demise of that malevolent group of despots that were dedicated to conquest.

My purpose throughout has been to affirm and confirm that which I consider to be fit and proper and to eschew those ideas and concepts that are on the downside of criticism that use such words as "pernicious, deleterious, harmful, noxious, malicious, and destructive" while letting slip by such words as "detrimental and destructive". Yet there have been exceptions, such as here and now with the assertion made above that a malevolent group of despots sought dominion over those less strong than they. The same can be said of those reprehensible individuals (or groups) who deign to domineer others. We are speaking here of that perennial problem of the whys and wherefores of those we call bullies. So what's more repugnant than a bully? This is said in spite of the possible previous problems experienced by those who put others in pain, whether it be physical or emotional. (There are those who perversely feel sorry for such people, but make it be known that there are no excuses for giving grief to others because of grief likewise experienced) No, I believe that bullies predominately exist as a result of a baleful lack of self-confidence and self-worth due to whatever causes. (Has one ever, in all honesty, occasioned a bully who at the same time possessed a solid self-esteem? A self-confident bully is an oxymoron; he only appears self-confident.) Yes, bullies need help, but NOT at the expense of others who are vulnerable and unable to defend themselves. A flat-out statement says that bullies are cowards, and when imposing radically on others, they are in effect waving a flag admitting to being woefully lacking in self-confidence (and if so, to their credit if they feel thoroughly ashamed of themselves; unfortunately, shame seems to be out of vogue at this time. When growing up, I seem to remember that shame was a potent force for proper conduct). Parenthetically, malevolent and misleading gossip is a pernicious form of bullying because the lack of knowledge leaves no recourse.



SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

This pilot, this aircraft, they are both beginning a flight toward that which could well spell serious consequences not only for them but also for those others who are the object of this serious endeavor. (Note the early lift-off despite the relatively slow launch-speed. Recall that the lift is a function of wing-area, aircraft speed squared, and the "angle of attack" (that angle between the horizontal plane and the upward direction of the aircraft). This "angle of attack", up to 14 degrees, effectively tilts the lift force-vector that's perpen- dicular to the wing's surface toward a more "lifting" direction. Now, with flaps down, they effectively increase the wing area, they effectively increase the "angle of attack", and they effectively increase the speed of the air over the top of the wing which in turn increases the pressure differential between the top and the bottom of the wing (remember that the faster the air flow, the less pressure). What of the propeller? How does it work? Simply put, the end view of a propeller describes the same shape as as an aircraft wing, except that the propeller is twisted approximately 5 degrees from hub to tip. The forward part of the blade is convex (curved upward) while the back part is flat, As the blade turns through the air, the air pressure is less on the top (forward) part than on the bottom (back) part. The pressure differential thus is such that there is a forward thrust. The purpose of the 5 degree twist is to accommodate the fact that the tip of the propeller travels much faster than the part near the hub. To equalize the thrust from tip tp hub, the twist provides for a greater "angle of attack" near the hub. Thus the propeller is a twisted wing in the vertical plane providing forward lift. Propeller tech- ology involves intricacies not amenable to this text, including the automatic variation of the pitch of the propeller blades for efficiency.

The above serious consequences to be derived from the above serious endeavor has in a very oblique way its counterpart in the serious monetary investments in our schools and colleges and universities. In monetary parlance, what's the return on investments? What prompted this question was the thought of our progenitors of yesteryear, with candlelight and gaslight to illuminate their way, accomplishing such intellectual eminence and preeminence. How many resources were at their disposal? How much support did they have? What explains their accomplishments? High on the list is the word "Desire". It was their desire to learn that (should have) set the example for those of us that follow. True, today we have much more that is available to learn and needs to be learned (and there are a great many who are availing themselves of this knowledge by hard work and desire (and existing resources)). Yet there are many, too many, who flout the many advantages that they have (in terms of resources). Additionally,, it seems that those who shout the loudest about how great we are are those who do the least to make it so: try fidelity instead of volume. (Enthusiasm for one's country is an admirable, but is it only part of a mode of "fun and games"? "Fun and games" are fine up to a point, but too often that point is only observed in the breach.) One of the things that makes this country great is its tangible infrastructure that for the most part is taken for granted while at the same time it makes possible all our good and great intangibles. And who are the ones who make this possible? They are those who have the diligence, the desire to LEARN (how to build the bridges, the roads, the water and gas and electrical and communications systems. They re the ones who staff the hospitals and medical establishments. And so on and on.) Have your "fun and games", yes, but don't cheat yourself of that marvelous feeling of having learned something new and interesting, each and every day!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HOLD TIGHT(LY)

These two green-shirts are adjusting the hold-down bar during a catapult operation (the green-shirts were those flight deck personnel responsible for both the catapult operation (launch) and the arresting-gear operation (landing)). That long horizontal pipe is attached temporarily to the cleats in the flight deck at this particular position. As an aircraft approaches us at this starboard catapult from the background, the controlling yellow-shirt signals the pilot to apply his left brake when the left wheel is at an indicated precise point on the deck. This in turn causes the tail-wheel to swivel around toward us until it makes contact with and is stopped by the long pipe. The Airdales now push the aircraft either forward or backward so that the tail-wheel is at a precise spot marked on the deck. The green-shirts now attach the hold-down bar between the tail-wheel and a mechanism fitted into the deck. When the launch yellow-shirt gives the signal to "Launch!", the pilot releases his brakes and the green-shirt launch-operator on the catwalk pushes a button that releases the hold-down bar at the same time that the shuttle is violently pulled forward . (The cable attached to the fuselage of the aircraft is used for all aircraft; the pre-launch position of the shuttle is adjusted either forward or backward to allow compensation for the differences in the lengths of the aircraft.) The cylinder just to the right of the green-shirt to the right is used to pull the tail-wheel into the fuselage upon lift-off. Also notice that just over the back of the left green-shirt is the tail-hook in a retracted position. To the right middle is the outline of the door to both the lower and upper compartments. The former contains radio equipment and a 30-caliber machine-gun (note the gun-barrel pointing downward just to the right of the tail-wheel) while the latter contains a dual 50-caliber electrically rotated machine-gun. This aircraft is identified as belonging to air (V) squadron (S) 892, The green-shirts are properly attired.

While the hold-down bar above will properly release the aircraft, on the other hand it has to be said that it serves us all well to assiduously assert ourselves, to hold on to, our beneficial values as etched over time by the best minds of society. One of the values we all cherish is that of freedom. But how does one define freedom? Most of us subscribe to Franklin Roosevelt's Freedom From Want and the much improved (world) society so derived. Yet we just as adamantly would not tolerate the freedom to steal from others to fulfill our wants. (This most emphatically applies to the seriously deleterious and detrimental want of (for) drugs. Simple concept, difficult resolution.) Another freedom that we cherish is that of speech. This freedom was designed to protect us from the yoke of a rapacious tyrant. Yet free speech goes not allow us to shout "fire!" in a theater. Should we allow the freedom (to the avaricious) to purvey "adult fare" to those not yet old enough to understand the fundamental civilizing aspects of courtship? (This is a resounding "NO!") A "pet peeve" of mine is the freedom to those other avaricious people who pander to the darker side of reality by showing gratuitous violence which only serves to desensitize and acclimatize. (Perhaps the onlooker, and note the word "onlooker", believes he's developing/ showing his " ability to handle it". Maybe so, if he's anticipating mortal combat; but who's going into mortal combat?) Values are not just words; they have definite meanings. Values are both useful and desirable as guides to sustain us, and thus by definition they are "valuable" (trite but true). But some values are more valuable than other values, and we are obliged to determine this: is sympathy more important than helpfulness? Is resolve more important than ability? A value-system is a part of us, and it behooves us to order it.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FLAPS DOWN, AIRCRAFT UP

It's clearly seen in this picture that this Hellcat's flaps are down, in preparation for a catapult launch. To the left are three green-shirts in motion to prepare for the next launch There's a fourth green-shirt up forward on the catwalk ready to jump up onto the flight deck so as to retrieve the cable that has just flung that Hellcat that is now airborne. At the center of the picture are two yellow-shirt officers (khaki trousers) who are responsible for signaling when the green-shirt (on the catwalk) should push the launch-button after they have determined that conditions are suitable for launch: flaps down, engine pitch sounds right, shuttle properly engaged. Behind those yellow-shirts are about nine blue-shirt Airdales who had just pushed that now airborne Hellcat to the proper position over the catapult shuttle. Behind them are two more yellow-shirt officers to handle the starboard catapult operation. The green-shirts for this catapult are out of the way under the 5-inch gun-barrels. The closer Hellcat is clearly under the control of the yellow-shirt near to the right wing-tip of the near Hellcat. He's in the process of of bringing the Hellcat to the right catapult. This situation looks as if these aircraft are going to be used for CAP duty in which they confront any marauding boggies (enemy aircraft) that are picked up by the ship's air search radars (this info is radioed to the pilots. The tarpaulins covering the base of the 5-inch guns are usually there only during foul weather to protect the guns' elevation mechanisms. All is well, all is proceeding favorably, and yet all are constantly anticipatory. It's at times such as these, when activity is deliberate, that one must guard against complacency. Relatively speaking, there is no great danger here about which to be concerned, but most assuredly it would be folly not to be continuously vigilant. The watch-word is "Be Prepared!"

On the flight deck we often anticipate the worst because of the very nature of the activities there. Anticipation, the expectation of something, whether good or bad, is essentially a reactive exercise. While it's easier to be reactive, it's of course more productive to be proactive. The rub results in that one must decide that which is most salutary for a given set of circumstances. Your decision could have little effect, or it could have profound consequences. Thus it behooves us to prepare for the intangible exigencies of life (as we prepared for the tangible exigencies on the flight deck. An exigency can be defined as a need, a demand, a requirement intrinsic to a circumstance or condition.) But how does one prepare for what is usually the unknown? Less dramatic than on the flight deck, but not necessarily less important, is the eminently sensible idea of preparing oneself for the unknown demands of the future by learning this, learning that, by learning something of merit (including school subjects. Yes, that pernicious adage, "I'll never need it" is specious in the extreme if for no other reason than that no one is so clairvoyant as to be able to predict one's situation "x" years hence. Also if for no other reason, the process of the studying that's done in school can be considered invaluable intellectual training of the mind, just as physical exercise trains the body. (Parenthetically, how in the world can a country have a viable democracy when it's deficient in a well educated populace, as a bare minimum? Is it not true that democracy and an uneducated populace are a contradiction in terms?) I can remember, when at Newark Academy taking a couple of terms of Latin, "There's no way that these courses will be of any value when I finally enter the world of work". However, what it did do, retrospectively, was to demand a precision of thinking that was to my everlasting benefit in ways that were not evident to me at the time. It was even my unwitting "savior" in ways not easily explained.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NO. 29 NEXT

The deck's slick, the weather's foul, the noise confounding, and there stands the Hellcat No. 29 awaiting patiently the signal to launch (to attend to that activity that few want but many suffer). Consider all the resources in personnel and materiel that are converged and committed to sending Hellcats on those missions that contribute to promoting our vision of good which is the defeat of our version of the abominable. Try to imagine if you will all the wealth and resources, all the effort invested by thousands upon thousands of workers and professional people as this marvelous ship was constructed to make available this "airfield" able to travel the seven seas. This "airfield", this flight deck, dominates the concept of an aircraft carrier. However, this flight deck, in terms of personnel, was only a small part of this floating "city" of over 3,000 officers and men (yes, those of 18-19 years were "men", according to the Navy). It's been said before, but it's worth mentioning again: this ship, this "city", was domicile to radar operators and servicemen, communications operators and servicemen, fire-control operators and servicemen, "ship-drivers" (navigation quartermasters), engine-room technicians, gunners (5-inch, 40-mm, 20-mm), medical personnel, machinists and mechanics of all kinds, electricians, cooks, and on and on. All of the above existed to support the Air Department's (yellow-shirts (directors), green-shirts (catapult/arresting gear), blue-shirts (Airdales), red-shirts (fueling or armament), plus officers) efforts to launch and land up to 100 aircraft, day after day on the Antietam. It was dogged enterprise this, this daily serving of aircraft that allowed the pilots to do their duty daily without flagging. (Note the 3 rails under the wing that held rockets, while the 20-mm guns can be seen just above the "29". The white ball identified the squadron.

The entire concept of a carrier's function depended on cooperation (where each member of this ship's team contributed his unique abilities to the smooth accomplishment of a satisfactory launch). Likewise, there are essentially no activities in our complex society where we operate solely as individuals; everyone is dependent on others to one degree or another. It's pedestrian to say that the computer entrepreneur operates independent of others when we of course know that he relies on the vast electrical grid that is managed by a multitude of people, not to mention the tremendous effort expended to create that grid. The fact of the matter is that we all contribute because all our jobs contribute. That's what a complex society requires, and accomplishes. Whether it's contribution or cooperation, we thrive as others thrive. Who would have it otherwise? And yet, what of "rugged individualism"? The needs of a cooperating society in no way need mitigate against those who thrive on "going it alone", always understanding that that phrase is by definition a misnomer. Individualists often are the source of society's great strides but their original, unique thoughts and efforts. Many of society's most durable and useful inventions have been the product of these "rugged individuals" (who are nonetheless directly and indirectly supported by a "cooperating" society). Understand that one is not "born a rugged individualist", but rather one is blessed in being self-motivated. Not many can become famous for their contributions, but at the same time no one can plead disinterest as an excuse for not being self-motivated and self-reliant. The acquisition of self-motivation should be considered a prized possession, just as encourage- ment to the timid should be considered a marvelous gift. (The beauty here is that this costs not one "red cent".) A complex society can easily embrace an individualist, but being complex, a society requires that we all contribute and cooperate for our mutual benefit.


29
29
29
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

STAND BY ME

The person kneeling, with sound-powered phones, is talking to the plotting-room compartment in the island just off the flight deck. In this compartment is the flight deck officer's assistant who uses proportionately sized cut-outs of each numbered aircraft to keep track of the location of each aircraft on the flight deck. Once launched, the numbered aircraft is removed from the board as enumerated by this phone-talker. He's also connected to a phone-talker positioned at the Pri Fly just aft of the pilot-house bridge. From there, the Air Officer controls all activities down below on the flight deck, either by using the P.A. loudspeaker system or by contacting the flight officer seen here, with arm upraised, directly behind the "man-in-white". There are two enlisted men dressed in this fire-resistant material on hand for both launches and landings. Most fires occur during crashes during landings, but launches aren't immune: a 2,000-hp engine wrapped in a small package using high-octane aviation gasoline is more than susceptible to inadvertent fire. In this case these men jump onto the wing of the aircraft that's engulfed in leaping flames to help (launch) or drag (landing) the pilot to safety. These "men-in-white" don't fight fires, they "only" assist the pilot, while it's the ever-present Airdales who literally dash to the fray to put out the fire. Euphemistically, he "puts on his fireman's hat". In fact, he has no time to put on anything even if protective clothing were available, which it wasn't. Time is of the essence here on the flight deck when fires occur because of all the flammable material re- siding in the other aircraft in close proximity. Also of concern is the possible eventuality that if the fire does spread, the space avail- able to confront the fire is limited: in this case the Airdale is literally between the "devil and the deep blue sea". What now would one think to be the more preferable: be devoured by the "devil" or consumed by the sea? There would be no time for metaphysics here.

The "man-in-thee-white-suit" here has his protection, but do we have our protection against those ravages of secretive malignment? (To paraphrase another, "Steel my goods, steel little. Steel my good name, steel my most precious possession".) But being secretive, how does one know one's being harmed? One usually doesn't, so perhaps the best shield against such maliciousness, secret or not, is to render it irrelevant by having the courage to quietly be a good and true exemplar of rectitude. Keep the faith because the more this is done, the easier it becomes. Perhaps of even greater importance is to establish early on an honesty and that fundamental lack of contrivance of such proportions that everyone will know without reservation where you stand (not withstanding whether they agree with your stand or not). Again, fortify yourself by knowing yourself by being absolutely honest with yourself. After all, pernicious hearsay only thrives in the thickets of dishonesty by all concerned. Once confidence in one's honesty is moot, its restoration becomes moot. "Honesty is the best policy" is a time-honored maxim for good and sound reasons and so it won't be belabored here except to say that if one must honor it in the breech for an honorable reason, never, never dishonor it as it concerns your deepest thoughts. (You now have a self-regulator, that cousin of my favorite subject, servomechanisms.) If nothing else, self-honesty simplifies one's life by orders of magnitude which in turn "clears the deck" for one to apply one's mind to those things that are most beneficial to reaching one's goals. Following this, stress the positive, depress the negative, and the ensuing upbeat attitude so derived will serve you with the urge to strive even harder. And we all know and acknowledge the fact that it's the striving that supplies a large share of satisfaction.


NATIONAL ARCHIVE

START ENGINES

To be sure, to some this picture is merely a static representation devoid of anything special beyond, perhaps, that of being a somewhat interesting view of an aircraft often seen. Fair enough. However, from my perspective it is anything but static. It brings back, vividly, the sights and sounds that permeate the flight deck whenever the call for flight quarters is sounded. Here those considerable 6 ½ foot menacing blades are just beginning to flex themselves: I can hear now the voice over the loudspeaker boom, "Stand clear of propellers. Prepare to start engines. Start engines" in quick succession. At this there can be heard a multitude of cracking sounds of the starter-cartridges popping quickly followed by the high-pitched whine of the engines as they try to turn the 13-foot diameter propellers. The propellers soon started their tentative wind-milling motion, seen here, that becomes more deliberate and then more urgent and finally with a deep dull roar the engines take hold and the props twirl with a vengeance. The smoke and flames flare out of the exhaust-pipe not a few arm-lengths from your head. In the vernacular, "All Hell breaks loose" as the engines bellow and roar as only a 2,000-2,800 horsepower engine can. The flight deck now becomes engulfed in torrents of withering wind and the flashing, slashing blades only feet away from you seem to take personal exception to your presence. The noise blots out all thought except that of survival as these thoughts are held in a vice-like grip. You are now immersed in that involuntary zone of visceral reaction to which you never quite become accustomed. The flight deck is in an uproar. Situation normal. This assault on your senses allows you no alternatives. Options are not an option. You accede to the situation because you must. The only redeeming thing here is that you are needed.

In this instance, your perspective and mine are entirely at odds. You perceive a stable, almost benign, picture of no particular note, while my reaction is substantially different. The sights, the sounds, the smells brought to the fore by this picture concentrates the mind in finely felt feelings of fear and trepidation: with such dynamic and overpowering energy manifesting itself so close by, would there be an outcome that could only be disastrous to life and limb? Could a propeller fly off its hub, raking the area with death and destruction? Foolish thought by a foolish neophyte, you say. No doubt. But in such circumstances, such quirks by such fools thrive. Stand back, you say, as does that Airdale to the right. But no, being young, one conducts oneself "by the book" and so stays at his post, the wheelchock. To those who would scoff at others' seeming idiosyncracies of thought, they ought to ponder again the idea of "walking a mile in another's moccasins", for one person's past experiences may color the picture in vastly different hues than those of another who came from a far different place (circumstance). Perception is personality, personality is perception. To consider a condition with candor would be a ray of sunlight in a room of murk. This is a shining example of mistakes made derived from ill-formed perceptions that are wrought by those who seek to deceive. (Beware the derisive and scurrilous for they are those of dubious agendas.) But away with the negative, the purveyor of dejection, and up with the positive, the source of the worthwhile and enjoyable where the truth shall prevail (it is devoutly desired). Let it be presumed here that perception does not imply that life be seen through rose-colored glasses, but rather that reality and rationality prevail in all its soundness, and that the few do not represent the many. Unfortunately, the sometimes appalling capers of the few seem to attract undo attention in such a manner that those from without wrongly misjudge the many.


6
5
5
5
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

This is a pre-war built carrier as is evident by the island superstructure (which didn't allow for very many spectators as did the Essex-class carriers). The launch operations always had more spectators than did the landing operations (where the catwalks back aft were vulnerable to wayward and errant aircraft at any unknown time). Besides that, the catwalks had to be kept cleared for the Airdales should the need arise. The psychology of spectators is interesting in so far as there are about as many reasons for onlooking as there are onlookers. For instance, here some wanted to watch a spectacle, some wanted to observe something new and different, some liked to watch a large number of large machines "wheeling and dealing" about on a crowed deck, some just liked machines, some probably hoped to see an accident, and you name it. For myself, the spectators were essentially nonexistent: there was far too much about which to be concerned to be aware of anyone except those on the flight deck. We were a small band, we blue-shirts and yellow-shirts, a small collection of those having an implied feeling of fraternity toward the wearers of the Blue. Though we never talked during air ops (we couldn't, what with the noise) that feeling of fraternity was there, I felt, even though I was an avowed loner. It was unspoken sentiment of a shared jeopardy where the one understood the other's mental reservation, even anguish, about having to make that foray into those rows and columns of aircraft assembled to retrieve the wheelchocks. It was such a little thing, pulling a wheelchock, but such a huge, looming, daunting thing to arrive at that confounded wheelchock. We (I) never felt this way about the yellow-shirts because they were always out front, away from that phalanx of angry aircraft, away from that howling wind, from the terror felt when in their midst.

On board ship, after the tedium of standing watch (4 hours on, 8 off), there was available only the studying and restudying of technical manuals as a diversion. Thus, we have spectators. One can understand these spectators, but one is hard put to understand how those on terra firma can while away so much time merely watching others do whatever they do (TV, sports, etc.). One should, it seems, heed that ad- vice of not being a spectator of life, but of being a participant in life. A cliche, but one tried and true. Perhaps the "watchers" are afraid of not performing well, and so becoming discouraged and dismayed. It turns out that that trite saying that "practice makes perfect" is not so trite after all. (Try visualizing how the pros do it, and then emulate that visualization. Your tennis backhand will improve markedly.) On a less trivial note, as has been said, the journey, the striving, rather than the destination is where the enjoyment and satisfaction resides. And the better one becomes, the easier is the achievement. One could rightly say that spectators are vicarious dabblers instead of involved participants. While a spectator enjoys and learns, a participant enjoys and learns much more. In addition, a participant has the added enjoyment of contributing to the group of one's choice. Perhaps of greatest note is that without participation there can be no creativity, one of the joys of life. Some create minimally, some maximally. Never mind; one creates so one enjoys. The beauty here is that the more one creates and contributes, the more one becomes energized. Who could want for more? For example, what is so rare as the thrill of putting paint to canvas to generate an aesthetic "masterpiece"? Finally, does not participation engender, even encourage, nascent interest in that which was ill-considered only shortly before? The only "danger" here is that one might find too many things of interest and thus dilute the many. In any event, don't deny yourself the satisfaction of participating.



"TURN TO"

The Airdales "turn to" the job at hand, namely the positioning of this Hellcat over the catapult's slot. As has been said previously, after the Hellcat has taxied over the catapult-slot, its position must be adjusted either forward or backward (here) so as to allow for the hold-down bar to be connected to the fuselage under the tail-section. One thing evident from this picture is that an Airdale must be fairly tall to be able to push the Hellcat's wing. It's also clear that one does not provide much purchase for his efforts. However, every little bit helps when every available inch of the stabilizer is being occupied by an Airdale as here. The Airdale's height thus can be an advanttage. However, of much more significance is the fact that in being tall this Airdale is much more subject to the raging winds found within the congestion of aircraft during a launch operation. Having been 6' 2", I know this to be true, and this fact was the reason that most all of the Airdales tended to be short in stature (and sturdy in build to give them a lower center of gravity). Even with the low profile accomplished by crouching, the taller Airdale "caught" more wind than those shorter. (This constant crouching caused one's thighs to firm up after which the fatigue decreased). As far as I know there were no height restrictions for Airdales as there were for pilots. As to that Airdale running toward us, I don't know his purpose except to say that he's probably an individualist rather than a team-player as are the rest of the Airdales here. (To carry this flimsy thought further, the football adherents would clearly identify him as breaking out for a "naked reverse".) It appears that the yellow-shirt to the left with clenched fists is signaling "Hold brakes". If so, it's certainly not helping the straining Airdales (but at least the engine is throttled back all the way). Also not helping the Airdales is the apparently partially deflated right wheel. This is a defect that should not go unnoticed because it would limit the take-off speed.

While I was an avowed "loner" (for non-trivial reasons not of my making and too involved for easy explanation), I was also a dedicated team-player. (Is such a dichotomy possible? Yes.) That Airdale seen here running a "reverse " is probably going to help that Airdale pushing at the wing since all available space on the stabilizer is taken. His action demonstrates both teamwork and individualism (of taking independent action). Being an individualist is not always an easy thing to do, especially when one defies the prevailing and oppressive peer-pressure (First know yourself to be on the right path, then (quietly) "stand tall".) We know that sometimes individualism is voluntary, and sometimes it's "involuntary"such as occurs when the crowd takes the wrong fork in the road. (Of course one must be intelligent enough to know and UNDERSTAND why a certain path is the correct, and proper, one.) To take the proper fork and so go it alone takes courage that in a way requires more courage than facing up to enemy fire. This is because the enemy fire is intermittent and of a given duration (whether you know that duration or not) while to "walk alone" lacks the grace to have a time-table. Thus the soldier is brave for a given period of time while the exposed individualist is courageous over an extended and indefinite time-period. The soldier receives medals and the righteous individualist perhaps receives indignation and mockery and scorn. Who then should deserve our extra admiration? (Should the soldier be severely wounded or killed, then the comparison becomes null and void.) Yes, teamwork can be admirable, but individualism can be even more admirable because it could well require courage that seldom elicits the honor that it is due (peer-pressure can be good, but also very corrosive). [Let it be clearly said that "loner" is not "individualism".]



©NAE ARCHIVES

"GO!!"

This flight officer, that person on the deck who controls all activity during a launch operation (deferring of course to the Air Officer in PRI FLY just aft of the pilot-house bridge), has just given the "GO!!" signal to this F6F Hellcat. His determined look is exceeded only by the the vigor of his "go" motion. To begin the launch process, the flight deck officer here would hold up one finger of his upraised hand and slowly rotate the blank and white checkered flag in his other hand. In turn the pilot in the Hellcat responds by revving up the engine to half-power, checking his gauges, and making sure all of the control surfaces move freely. When satisfied, the pilot would give the flight deck officer a thumbs-up signal. The flight deck officer then holds up two fingers and twirls the flag vigorously. At this, the pilot applies full power while pressing the brakes firmly and holding the control stick to his stomach. The pilot then nods, presses his head against the head-rest, and when the flight deck officer hears the right sound from the engine, he lunges toward the bow of the ship as he points the flag forward (here he's so vigorous that the flag winds up across his chest). All of the above occurs optimally at such a pace that an aircraft is launched every 20 to 30 seconds. No sooner is this Hellcat sent on its way than the next aircraft taxies up to this point under the control of a yellow-shirt to repeat the process all over again. At 30 seconds per aircraft the launch can be accomplished in 45 minutes (30 x 90 = 2700 secs.). I didn't have that much occasion to witness this procedure that often because I'd be back aft among the aircraft pulling wheelchocks. But after most all of the aircraft were launched, I would remain up forward to watch what was going on. I was always very curious about all the happenings on the flight deck and though I didn't keep a diary, the long and constant repetition of air ops became engraved on my consciousness is that it's easy to recollect and "return" to the place of action.

The above described procedure was prescribed as useful and beneficial. There are some things that must be prescribed, especially in the military and then there are those other things that are not prescribed but are described as desirable such that society suffers when so deprived of them. One such thing is that of courtesy and a courteous manner (which is NOT a weakness). Some things we aren't able to do, but there are some things we able to do, and courtesy is one of them. Courtesy is that attribute that eases the misadventures of a striving society and without which we would all be even more discomforted. Courtesy breeds courtesy which breeds courtesy and thus we all benefit more than when there's that paucity of good-will that serves only to depress. (Who can deny that friendliness and cheerfulness are close cousins of courtesy?) Let's not tip-toe about this; let's just say four-square that no one but the dysfunctional want to live in a society that's not felicitous (easy-going and good-natured). This is definitely doable even in the most serious-minded environments extant. Unless in physical pain or under undue duress, there is no excuse for purveying a negative attitude; pleasantness is in the purview of us all. We should be the masters of our attitudes and scorn the scorners. Courtesy that's facile, yet genuine, will act as a multiplier for society as well as ourselves. Only the pure form of courtesy that's guileless is worthwhile, while the cynical will no doubt cling to the quid pro quo version, saying it's pandering. Such insincerity is corrosive, while a sincere courtesy implies, nay, requires that one and all be accorded a real respect. In fact, when one's respectful of others, courtesy follows as naturally as a waterfall falls. Show me a genuinely courteous person and I'll show you an honestly respectful person. With respect toward others, all can be possible.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A DATE WITH DESTINY

From a shimmering deck racing over still waters, with wings aglow and a sea shining, this indomitable Hellcat lifts off with all due deliberation bordering on timidity as its engine roars in defiance, to make its way to destinations known, destinies unknown. The brilliant sun's at 10 o'clock high, the visibility's unlimited. All's well; all's familiar and favorable as the Airdales back aft crawl and claw and clutch at cleats-in-deck forging ahead to wheelchocks where too might be found their destiny. At times like these among aircraft densely packed, each Airdale is left desperately alone along with his stratagems and anxieties alternately tumbling pell-mell through his vivid imagination. Each foray into this aggregation of aircraft is an adventure in itself. By its very nature, each move, each motion must be well thought out even as it is abrupt. And yet with this there is no room for error, there is no option for mistakes.. It begins to wear on the mind, this continual contest with the possible vagaries of wind and aircraft. Nevertheless, "there's no rest for the (mentally) weary" until the launch is history, even as it becomes more and more familiar.// What should also be familiar by now is that catapult-slot just beyond the 5-inch gun-barrel. Directly this side of the catapult-slot can be seen the location of the now recessed hold-down bar. Normally, aircraft are launched from the take-off spot 420 feet from the front of the flight deck (when space allows). When the aircraft were parked (packed) within this 420 foot space, the catapult took on the job of launching aircraft. The reason this was done was that the free-running launch process was faster than was the catapult process. To the right can be made out the catwalk where can be seen the platform for five 20-mm machine-guns. On either side of this platform are the radio-antenna towers that are always lowered to the horizontal position during a launch operation. Note the extra fuel-tanks, used by the fighters, in front of the 5-in guns.

Destiny (and predestination) are in the purview of the world of religion (Faith of Our Fathers), not to be found here per se (although predetermination does pique the mind now and then). As to destination, a few thoughts are in order. One thing that can be said straight off is that one would be grossly ill-advised to compromise one's well-founded principals and standards in that journey. On the other hand, compromising one's desires, one's wants, even one's needs certainly could be appropriate in life's "give and take". This is the corollary to the admonition that often times the easiest path turns out to be the most detrimental path (presuming one has in place a sound set of principles and standards). (It's not enough to merely compile a list of those qualities that meet the test of having the right ring to them, remembering that quality always precedes quantity.) Yes, most everyone would include in their list such attributes as honesty, rectitude (define), fairness, consideration, respect, compassion, helpfulness, and on. And we know and recognize that unless and until these attributes are firmly inculcated, they are little more than an outward window-dressing. This then, it's proposed, should be the first step on the road to one's destination. High on the list is the attribute of loyalty: deferring and suppressing one's welfare for the benefit of another in whom one "invests". (Loyalty begets loyalty.) Another attribute should be that of character which includes the ability to control one's impulses (self-discipline and self-control) and so defer egocentric gratification which excludes others. Equally a part of character is the fortitude to forebear and persevere under the exigencies of the moment (which are the needs, the demands, the requirements intrinsic to a circumstance or condition). Nobody said that achieving one's destination was going to be "a bed of roses".


ONAL ARCHIVES

"YOU'RE NEXT"

No sooner does one Hellcat take to the air than does the next one immediately approach the catapult. Looking closely, one can detect to the far left the silhouette of a wheelchock that's being held by an Airdale as he accompanies the Hellcat while next to its wheel. Right under the deflected flaps are two green-shirts walking to the right to make way for the approaching Hellcat. They had just be- fore set up the now airborne Hellcat for a catapult launch (note that the green-shirt to the right is wearing heavy gloves to protect his hands from the heavy catapult-cable that slings the aircraft forward. Directly behind the now airborne Hellcat, walking away, is the yellow-shirt air officer who gives the launch-signals. One person to the right is the yellow-shirt who's taking control of the approaching Hellcat which was delivered there by that yellow-shirt to the far right, The rest of the people are the blue-shirt Airdales (who must be new to the "game" +by the looks of their unfaded (new) dungarees because the ship is required to head into the wind so as to assure a 30-mph wind over the bow of the ship, it appears that this course will take them right in the proximity of a gathering storm. Perhaps after the launch operation the captain will change course to avoid the storm, and perhaps he won't. I say this because it so happened that, for whatever reason, the Antietam found its way into the howling fury of a full-fledged typhoon (the Pacific version of the Atlantic's hurricane). It was sufficiently strong that I looked directly at the top of the waves from my spot on the flight deck. This would make those waves 50 feet high, the height of the flight deck. While the smaller ships would tend to ride the tops of the waves, the bigger ships such as the battleships and carriers would occasion numerous "collisions" with the waves because the ships were so big and long, spanning the distance from crest to crest. Previous to this we had lashed the aircraft to the deck-cleats for security, and I remained so as to watch "the show". And what a show it was where the elements shook this ship as if it were but a mere interloper.

Secure the aircraft, yes, but also secure one's hold on the worthwhile things of life such as your principles. It seems that in this day and age, what with the means of mass communication now available, that the few can unduly flout the many who hold dear those values that sustain us. What are some of these values? One is he feeling of generosity over greed. Usually associated with money, it need not be. Is not a generous spirit of great value? While a monetary gift is a one time occurrence, a generous spirit is an ongoing gift that gives continuously. And just what is a generous spirit? It could be the sincere encouragement that boosts one's morale and that flows inconspicuously from one's words and deeds. It could be a genuine concern for another's well-being. It could be a consistent affability and agreeableness. It could be an outgoing enthusiasm of what enthuses others. It could be the ability to sincerely hear out others difficulties. It could be the will to defer to those who feel "marginalized". It could be the intelligence to know what to affirm. It could be the sense to acknowledge and validate those who need it. It could be the desire to reassure those who doubt. It could be a ratification of that which is appropriate. It could be to so conduct yourself that those around you are at ease. A generous spirit is friendly and cheerful and is appreciative of the same, and makes allowances for those who aren't. A generous spirit begets a generous spirit and is thus pleased. A generous spirit is secure in oneself such that one is not directly aware of it. A generous spirit permeates the environ- ment even while a generous spirit is not a "pollyanna". A generous spirit is hopefully a kindred spirit, and if so, we should all rejoice.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SDB ON CALL

Again, the shining sea and the glowing deck as another gray day with low-hanging stratocumulus clouds threatens rain squalls up ahead. With a battleship in the vanguard, the carrier has an SBD bomber/scout aircraft on call for a visual search mission. (The SBD-type was the precursor to the SB2C Helldiver, and was responsible for the sinking of four enemy carriers at the Battle of Midway in 1942.) The Airdales are about to push the SBD backwards to place it precisely over the catapult. To the left are an aggregation of yellow-shirts, green-shirts, blue-shirts, and officers (probably pilots), all of whom have assigned duties and responsibilities. Since it's an SBD on deck, we know that this is early in the war when the Navy was in the process of building itself up for the huge task ahead: rolling back a well-entrenched enemy whose domination ranged from Southeast Asia to the Central Pacific. The first six months of the war were likened to a Japanese version of a "blitzkrieg". It had been determined that the war in Europe was to be the first priority, requiring that for the first six months the U.S. had to take the blows and to an extent accede to the enemy's firming up their control of Southeast Asia and the Central Pacific. Then, at the Battle of Midway, one of the most fortuitous events of the Pacific War took place: the American pilots arrived over the Japanese carriers just when the carriers had their decks full of aircraft armed with bombs and loaded with high-octane gasoline. In this battle the obsolete torpedo-bombers were all shot down without making a single hit. Then the SBD dive-bombers arrived, and with great skill they dropped bombs on all four of the Japanese carriers. There were cataclysmic explosions creating a literal holocaust on each of the carriers, causing a rapid demise of men and ships. While not familiar with the casualties, presuming at a minimum 2,000 men per ship, there was a loss of at least 8,000 men that day The tide had finally turned and along with the efforts of the marines and soldiers and airmen, the carriers inexorably took the war to the enemy's homeland and peace.

Even though this scene appears somewhat haphazard what with people merely standing in place, each and everyone here has specific duties and responsibilities beyond that of the color of their shirts: one pair of green-shirts adjusts the catapult-cable to the aircraft while another pair of green-shirts connects the hold-down bar. One brown-shirt is responsible for one aircraft and another for another air- craft. And so it goes, with the blue-shirts having less specifically defined duties and responsibilities (which thus requires more initiaive: the yellow-shirts are primarily the overseers of the blue-shirts rather than the dispensers of orders). The point to be made is that we all, of whatever stripe or color, have our duties and responsibilities, spelled out or not, here on the flight deck or there in society in general. I can guarantee that there's not one sailor out there who is now thinking about impositions on his "rights" simply because there's a job to be done and "rights' are not even a consideration. While it's true that in society this somewhat draconian attitude is all but nonexistent, it does seem that there are far too many who dwell on their personal, perceived and arbitrary "rights"(almost) to the exclusion of recognizing their concomitant responsibilities. This certainly reflects the egocentric society, and if catered to, will tend to unravel society. While certainly some "rights" are dear, sometimes it becomes a question of which is more annoying: those who demand "rights" (legitimate or not) or those who deny legitimate "rights". The key issue is what is and what is not legitimate? (I'm partial to one's "right" to be free of others' deliberate harassments as well as the responsibility to be respectful of others, whatever age.)



TOUCH-AND-GO

While this picture will be puzzling to many (launching and landing aircraft in the same time-frame), it's apparently an occasion of training a small number of pilots by means of a modified "touch-and-go" process. That is, a pilot launches, as here, and once airborne he circles back to enter the landing pattern in preparation to land. Thus the pilots receive the practice of multiple launches and landing in a short period of time. (The term "touch-and-go" applies when a pilot touches down (lands) and then immediately gives his engine full power so as to launch himself. This process makes the landings more tenuous (?) because they don't cut the power of the engine before touchdown as in a normal wire-trapped landing.) In this case here, a pilot lands normally (having cut power before touching down on deck) and then, being chocked, he restarts the engine for a normal launch. Here the air officer "holds" the Hellcat as he looks up the deck to determine if it's clear. The landing portion of this operation is seen in the LSO (Landing Signal Officer, in a leather jacket) holding off an oncoming aircraft because the deck is not clear for him. This combination of launch/land requires close coordination and cooperation between the air officer and LSO to prevent accidents (such as an oncoming aircraft landing on this Hellcat). For this reason, the LSO was moved back from his normal location at the back end of the flight deck to the location seen here in the picture (note that they also moved his wind-screen up forward for him). Whenever both launch and land activities take place at the same time, bad things are perhaps more apt to occur. Accidents are ALWAYS an event waiting to happen and everyone involved in these activities must be on their toes, both figuratively and literally. Notice the camouflage color-scheme on this Hellcat: dark blue on top to blend with the dark blue ocean from above, light blue, and white on the bottom to merge with the light-colored sky from below.

At first glance this picture is puzzling to one's normal understanding of a launch operation: what in the world is that LSO doing there, and also, why during a launch? Life, as is well known, is full of perplexing questions devoid of seemingly reasonable answers. Yes, one can derive answers, but also one is hard put to put together logical explanations. Thus it behooves us to develop the powers of rationalization. And where's this to be found? The most apt answer should leap to mind: it's to be found from the training one acquires over a period of diligent study over a period of time. However, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". Equally, you can lead a person to a place of learning but you can't make him learn (effectively). (Parental support's THE KEY). Only the foolish and the misguided think they can achieve without the foundation of an acquired knowledge-base that has been learned "by the sweat of one's brow". Knowledge is good, but it lacks vitality if one doesn't know how to apply it. This requires experience, and diligence, applied to problem-solving.// A question that has perplexed the many is why there are those who bully others, either physically or emotionally (the strong over the weak)? Why is this absolutely reprehensible condition allowed to exist? The other question is why do some not accept (or reject) others on their intrinsic merits rather than their origins or differences? Perhaps it's because these two questions are too shameful to even acknowledge. But acknowledge we must. The facile answers are "insecurity" and "insecurity". The more difficult answer to be sought are the sources of their insecurities. Perhaps the answer lies in the area of too much ego chasing too much pride. While pride can be an essential ingredient in our make-up, what is needed is an exquisite balance of pride and humility.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DARK MOOD

At the end of the war some of the Corsairs packed a 2,800-hp engine in its radial housing. (All Navy aircraft had radial engines instead of the in-line engines found in most all of the fighters in the European Theater; the Army's Thunderbolt was the exception.) This dark and dreary picture of this "mean lean fighting machine" is appropriate to the mood I felt when mixing in within a cadre of machines like this one (the word "machines" represents a dual emotion concerning these aircraft: on the one hand I was in admiration, even awe, as I looked at its "beautiful" lines and the marvelous ingenuity required to create this machine that performed so well. On the other hand my emotions were clouded with thoughts of the pure and lethal power unleashed that was only partially under control (or so I thought). While the former emotions saw a beautiful construct, the latter emotion felt the presence of an oppressive aggressor bent on intimidating me and daring me to come close, ready in a moment to demolish me if I had the temerity, the audacity, to approach. It is thus that this dark and gloomy picture neatly mirrors the dark and gloomy spirit I felt upon stepping forward with the rest of the Airdales as we proceeded toward these "machines" then at that time. But this bright day (dark shadows) requires a more careful examination of this picture: clearly seen here is the shuttle in the catapult-slot as it is "grasping" the cable-sling that's attached to the Corsair's fuselage. Also seen here is the iron-pipe affixed to the flight deck against which the left wheel makes contact upon approaching it from the flight deck center-line. Also notice the faintly seen hold-down bar behind the tail-wheel. The Corsair to the left is all revved up while the one to the right is in the stand by mode until the one on the left is launched (aircraft were never launched at the same time because of possible interference one with the other). The yellow-shirt to the right awaits #61's launch to launch his. "Go Navy Go!" We're talking of fear here, often unadulterated fear. However, some types of fear serve simply to scare and frighten while other types of fear engender a strong feeling of humbleness that borders on the edge of humility (but not meekness). It's the latter we consider. (One might say that this fear is akin to the "fear of God" that results from the appreciation of the force of Mother Nature). A fearful force generates many feelings, but the one that stands out in this picture is the sobering realization and recognition of how puny we mortals can be when in the presence of and confronted by this Corsair. We are bereft of pride when face-to-face with an entity so powerful and when cheek-by-jowl with a machine so deafening. (Pride is good, but bad when it transmutes to arrogance.) The Corsair, when revved up as here, shows not an iota of mercy (and why should it? It was made for the sole purpose to wreak havoc). The humbleness elicited by being up close and personal with such a machine is in a way a life-preserver. The humble person, not the arrogant one, moves and thinks within himself in times of stress and does not allow his pretensions (false claims to capabilities not yet demonstrated) to monitor his actions. Humbleness breeds intelligent caution when it's needed while audacity does not: live to fight another day (boys fight, soldiers kill and maim). While "humble" usually is associated with modest, unassuming, polite, straight-forward and the like, it need not imply that the humble person is the ineffective person. To the contrary, being humble tends to concentrate all one's faculties on the important things in life, such as learning and contemplation and understanding and appreciation of the substantial things in life. And remember the saga of Sgt. York of WWI. He was not self-effacing when the need arose. "Still waters run deep".



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"GO NAVY GO"

The yellow-shirt says and shows, "Go Navy Go" (my allusion to a sports contest). That would be somewhat clever if this activity weren't so serious, serious for the pilot who's going who knows where to do who knows what and serious for all the flight deck personnel (yellow, red, blue, green) who have to seriously deal with a multitude of additional aircraft that are "purveying their anger throughout". What's interesting here is that the yellow-shirt is a non-commissioned petty officer as indicated by his dungarees (dark trousers). Usually (always) that person is the air officer, the senior operations officer on the flight deck during flight operations. He's the one who's responsible for everything that happens on deck. Of course it's the Air Officer, of the rank of commander, who resides up at PRI FLY just aft of the pilot house bridge who has ultimate control of all activity be it on the flight deck or in the air. He also has the responsibility for where the aircraft go and what they do when they arrive there. Although the captain of the ship has ultimate overall authority, in practice it is the Air Officer who determines what happens when. After all, the ship is but a floating military air- field whose commander is exercising his military acumen in the processing of his part of the war. An integral part of this process is the management of aircraft and pilots as in this picture. Does not this picture cry out the word "urgency" as represented by the yellow-shirt and by the lines of this "lean mean fighting machine"? To the right , half on and half off the catwalk, is a green-shirt who's about ready to jump onto the flight deck to prepare the next aircraft for its catapult launch. There is another green-shirt nearby who will help this one in applying the cable-sling to the underbelly of the aircraft, one green-shirt to each hook (the cable's of thick and heavy steel).

It's interesting that it's a petty officer who's performing the launch-procedure. At least it's interesting to me. This brings to mind the subject of what it is that determines what is interesting. This is a valid subject because what interests someone, what someone finds pleasing and satisfying, goes a long way toward defining that person. Clearly someone who prefers to go fishing is different in personality (and perhaps also character) than one who likes to attend a boxing bout. This differentiation can be cut even finer by saying that what we wear also defines and differentiates us in varying degrees. (Yet it's difficult to "read" someone thus. However, an interesting extension of this idea is the "reading" as done by the master sleuth Sherlock Holmes as he makes use of his powers of deduction. To me, this is interesting.) Does not one's taste (interest) in music tell a great deal about a person, his personality, even his character? Thus do we consider and reconsider just what it is that we like, what pleases us, what satisfies us, what interests us; that is, what defines us (again, that admonition, "Know thyself", but how and when do we find the place to have that therapeutic "quiet time"?) Do we even know what makes this or that interesting? Is there a universal, intrinsic basis for understanding what "interesting" is? I find this picture interesting while someone else finds it boring to distraction. Fine, but why? One could say that that which attracts our attention, that which concerns us, that which piques our curiosity and imagination, that which we find to be unique and important, ex- plains that which is interesting to us. But that only begs the question. Perhaps we could say that, ultimately, things are of interest (only) if they bolster our ego and enhance our feelings of self-worth, which thereby defines us. Thus the image of how you want to be seen imperceptibly forms the basis of your interests, and in turn your interests tend to define you. Quirkily, "You are what you eat".



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MARINE ON DECK

To be sure I'm interested in the F4U Corsair not only because I spent every day for one solid year among them, but also because they were such a marvelous flying machine. And yes, the Marines flew Corsairs from the decks of carriers to provide close-in air support for the troops on the ground, including the marines. (Since the Marines were (are) an integral part of the Navy, they saw no duty in the European Theater which was an Army campaign.) This aircraft here is one of the Squadron 312, as designated by VMF 312 (V = air, M = Marines, F = fighter). The "WR" identifies its home-base (here, a ship). The blue-and-white checkered cowling was a squadron identifier, but this type of adornment was not used in WWII (this is the Korean War). The Corsairs tended to be catapulted first before the Hellcats because they required initially up to 500 feet of flight deck to be able to launch as opposed to the 420 feet required by the Hellcats. The 500 feet was gradually reduced to about 460 feet. Thus the Hellcat was able to perform a deck-launch before the Corsair, and so the Corsairs were catapulted first (as said, this changed somewhat). At the end of the war, with the advent of the more powerful engines (P&W R-2800-18W (2,450-hp) and the P&W R-2800-42W (2.850-hp) with water-injection) and the 4-bladed propeller that was required to absorb the additional power, a Corsair needed less deck to be able to launch from the Hellcat's launch-point of 420 feet. The F4U-4 (in the latter stages of the war) was capable of a top speed of 450-mph, a cruise speed of 215-mph, had a rate of climb of 4,000 feet per minute and a service ceiling of 41,500 feet. With two external fuel-tanks, the F4U could carry 585 gallons of fuel which gave it a combat range of over 1,000 miles. The F4U-4 also was fitted to carry eight 5-inch rockets or two 11.75-inch rockets. It was also fitted to carry two 1,000-lb. bombs plus its four 20-mm machine guns that generated a great vibration when they were fired.

These Corsairs, these pilots, they had a 11 to 1 ratio against the enemy aircraft. This was not a ratio of underachievers. Be assured that there is no place in the military for underachievers, those who are able but unwilling to accomplish things of merit. This immediately brings to mind the antithesis of the underachiever as found in the Boy Scouts Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country (and to obey the Scout Law*, to help others at all times; to keep myself physically fit, mentally awake, and morally straight".) *(The Scout Law is, "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent". His motto's "Be Prepared", and his slogan's "Do A Good Turn (Deed) Daily. A scout would make a first-rate Airdale.) Continuing in the military mode, it's clear that an underachiever is grossly in dereliction of duty to himself if not society itself, for be assured that this country was not formed and then built by a band of underachievers. Is it not true that for a democracy to survive, and then thrive, it's imperative that a satisfactory infrastructure be in place? It's all well and good to talk of the theories of what makes for a viable democracy, but if the basic infrastructure such as a water system, a power-grid, means of transportation and communication, food production and distribution, heating facilities, the very basics of keeping "body and soul" together, if these are not present (in fair abundance), then democracy will be hard put to prosper and will be to our unremitting woe.. Thus do we need our achievers to make possible the basic infrastructure in the presence of the multitudes, and thus the underachievers "need not apply". Just as the Airdales push the aircraft, so too do we need those to jump off the wagon and help us push the wagon. Underachievers note.


WR
MARINES
VMF-212
2

LIFT OFF

The wheels are over the lip of the deck, the cable-sling (catapult-bridle) has just disengaged from the under-belly of the Corsair, and "we have lift off". Just perceptible under the wheel-well flaps can be seen the shuttle still engaged with the catapult-bridle. The green-shirt will quickly scramble forward to retrieve this bridle and drag it back to the next aircraft to position itself over the catapult. The wing-flaps are distended 50 degrees and all bodes well for a satisfactory launch. Momentarily the pilot will retract the wheels, the wheel-flaps will close over the retracted wheels, the tail-wheel will recess itself along with the tail-hook into the fuselage, and after attaining about 100 feet the pilot will return the wing-flaps to neutral because the forward speed through the air is sufficient to gain altitude. This earlier version of the Corsair has a "bird-cage" canopy instead of a later "bubble" canopy that provided better all-round visibility. The "stick" in front of the pilot is the post that connects the radio-aerial to the tail-section. The Corsair logged over 64,000 combat missions during WWII during which it (the pilots) was credited with the destruction of 2,140 enemy aircraft in air combat. The kill-ratio was 11:1 achieved with a loss of 189 Corsairs. At the same time, another 1,435 Corsairs were lost as a result of operational accidents (as in carrier landings) and enemy AA fire. The aircraft at this point are very close to the stall-speed when they are not catapulted, but with the catapult they have adequate speed to preclude a splash-landing (not so fortunate were the bigger bombers). That speed was essentially about 70-mph (here the experts will complain that the speeds when referring to the ship are given in knots instead of mph.(1 knot = 1.15 mph)). Again, with a 30-mph wind over the deck, the aircraft must reach a deck speed of over 40-mph.

The "kill-ratio" term above has a somewhat nasty ring to it, even if professionally speaking it's legitimate in military matters. However, its very voicing insinuates the iniquitous. Can a civilized people be expected to make use of such a term in their normal dis- course? But then, what is the fundamental meaning of the word "civilized"? Perhaps the following will stimulate a better under- standing of what it is to be civilized: polite, respectful, benevolent, deferential, affable, obliging, agreeable, even generous and gracious. My partiality favors ?thoughtful consideration". Can one be both civil and military? Yes and no. In any event, even the military has rules of conduct in wartime: when both sides are doing their best (worst) to break things and kill those who wear the wrong uniform, certain things are precluded such as barbarism, including cruelty (deliberately and/or knowingly causing unnecessary suffering and pain, even while enjoying doing so. In its more extreme form, the words "pitiless, ruthless, even brutal and savage tumble out. Bullies take note, you are defined somewhere there). Of more germane note is whether one can be both "civilized" and and "tough" at the same time. That should not be a problem. So what can be said of "toughness"? In the context of being civilized, to be tough is to have mental strength and endurance. It means being resistant to facile influences. It is exhibited in the firmness of one who's able to withstand the blows of adversity and of those who wish him ill. Physical strength and stamina could be prerequisites to stand up to the threats of the rough and rowdy and worse. Considering our history of the frontier West, that toughness was reflected in the lawmen who saw to it that law and order prevailed. They were the epitome of a lawful society without which no civilized society could long endure. They weren't as genteel as the fictional Lone Ranger who was both civilized and tough, and also modest without arrogance.

.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WAS THERE A LOSS?

The yellow-shirt, with upraised arms and clenched fists, holds the Corsair in place as he looks to his right to ascertain that all is clear up forward where the preceding aircraft made a water-landing shortly after lift-off (the ship veers away from the downed aircraft as the escorting destroyer (DD) rushes to retrieve the pilot). Once the ship is past the downed aircraft and is again heading into the wind, the launch will recommence. But this will not happen until the Air Boss (Air Officer) up at PRI FLY so affirms as relayed by a phone-talker (next to him) to the phone-talker directly behind the yellow-shirt (note the wire on the deck going to this phone-talker). The other yellow-shirt is looking back aft to make sure that in the meantime no aircraft will inadvertently encroach on this one. In the fore- ground are two Airdales, one of whom is observing the rescue mission by the DD The water-bound aircraft is a definite loss, but the loss of the pilot is problematic. Loss of life is difficult to accommodate, certainly, but losses of other kinds can also be very difficult. How one handles these losses can be a good indicator of one's character, where character is usually defined in terms of morals and ethics. However, it's also to be found in those who persevere under situations of severe adversity and the loss of one's dearest aspirations. The term "strength of character" does not use the word "strength" loosely. I've heard it said that gentleness is the strongest thing in the world. Be that as it may, the intangible "character" is very aptly rendered by Rudyard Kipling in his, I believe, beautiful poem:

—— *IF* ——

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph an Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on onr turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you , but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it.
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PRESSURE-POINT

At arm's-length: At this point this package of 2,450-hp causes you to feel your pounding pulse surges upward..You know full well that invisible line across which there is no return: straight ahead, bisecting the 9" wide tire to which point the 6 and 1/2 foot propeller reaches with such devastating effect. Here, now that the wings are spread, we need not be concerned with that line-of-no-return. But when the aircraft are packed together in that phalanx, row on row, column on column, rank on rank, as on the training ship Antietam, an entirely different situation presents itself: how to negotiate that narrow passage between adjacent aircraft whose wheels are but 5 feet apart? Since one's close to 2 feet wide shoulder to shoulder, the Airdale is left with essentially only 1 1/2 feet from a propeller-tip on either side of him as he passes between the aircraft. (With the tips being but a blur, they seemed much closer; I guarantee that) This assuredly isn't without significance as you tread that invisible line half-way between those two adjacent wheels because the wind, the noise, the unstable deck have not been factored into the situation. To the ambient wind of 30-mph always present on deck during flight operations must be added the hurricane-force winds generated whenever the 2,000 to 2,450-hp engines are revved up to full rpm. To the wind must be added the disorienting din of the multitude of aircraft always in close proximity to your throbbing head that provides a mix that generates dread. Now add those abhorrent, slashing blades all about you, and your mind is imprinted with the fear of fatal expectation. Finally, consider that we must contemplate this situation not once, not twice, not three times, but over and over and over and OVER again, where fear pervades all and trepidation dominates everything. So shake-out your tremulous hands as you once again forge into that "thicket" that is a flight deck about to launch. (A little bit of anger helps in a situation such as this. I know this well.

When confronted with what you consider to be a daunting task (such as the simple-minded but not simple pulling of wheelchocks), a little directed anger at the task at hand can enable you to face up to that task. It is in effect a motivator. Your (controlled) anger enhances your confidence to overcome that which impedes or is difficult. By the same token, to vent your anger against a person is definitely counterproductive if for no other reason than that you are allowing someone else to control your attention and your emotions. Besides, according to all the best medical advice, it's unhealthy for you. Why let someone dictate how you spend your thoughts? Again, anger against people is counterproductive. Unless it's egregious, walk away, AND forget. Of course this doesn't mean that certified wrong-doers should get a free pass, but to use the vernacular, "it's cool to remain cool". In any event, confront a difficult situation with equanimity; it will allow more to be accomplished. If fundamental values are not at stake, use compromise (why should one party get all the breaks? In the business world this is called negotiation.) Fairness proves much better than selfish mischievousness. It's inevitable that we become angry at one time or another, at one thing or another, to one extent or another, and it's not a bad thing to be angry at injustice and inequities outside the law. That is, constructive anger derives something useful, always keeping in mind that anger is also corrosive to one's disposition and the enjoyment of things offered by life. It would seem appropriate to say here that physical activities and/or a real interest in the intellectual pursuits are the proper way to cure the angers that ails you. But better yet, why ever let the disorder of anger take hold? (except when a daunting task such as pulling wheelchocks on the flight deck awaits you.)

.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRANQUILITY

Tranquility, ah sweet tranquility. At least it's comparatively so as we turn the page from the fierceness of the previous picture to the calm of this one. In point of fact, the engines are energized at this time at a low level as they stand by, chocked, ready to be catapulted at the beck and call of the Air Boss. The Airdales roam the deck bathed in the late afternoon sun. Perhaps these aircraft are awaiting a call to take flight at the first positive identification of boggy marauders in the area. If there are such, and they single out this carrier (a probability), then all this peace and tranquility will be explosively shattered by aircraft revving up in earnest and the ear-splitting cacophony of noise from the 44 20-mm machine-guns, the 56 30-mm machine-guns, and the 12 5-inch guns (not all at the same time). While we saw no enemy action, our gunnery department had a practice now and then, done in a sequence of the 20-mm, then the 40-mm, and then the 5-inch guns. Before I joined the Airdale Division, there was a 5-inch gunnery drill in which a shell burst soon after it left the gun-barrel. It being a time when the flight deck was being respotted, many personnel in the area were injured or killed. There were then no more such drills during respot-time. All of this contrasts vividly with the almost pastoral scene seen here where all is subdued. It puts me in mind of when, after evening chow (supper), everyone not on duty would retire to their respective compartments. For reasons unknown, no one would be topside, leaving the entire area above the gallery deck deserted. I took this opportunity to have my own private world topside at the lookout seat on the after bridge where I'd gaze out over the vast expanse of the ocean, sometimes with a bright moon lighting up everything similar to this. There I would sit reminiscing about the home-front and all that I left behind. It was definitely a time of much needed refreshment, but also a time of desperate longing for a world that I dreaded would never be.

I wanted to be alone, topside, alone to think my deep and desperate thoughts, away from the bright lights and constant commotion of the compartment filled with gab and gossip about things not of interest to me. The opportunity presented itself topside at the lookout's chair, "far from the maddening crowd". So I gladly seized this opportunity to have my desired quiet-time. In this case this opportunity was a gift dropped in my lap. But how many of us are astute enough to recognize these situations, these opportunities, which were obscure and yet would enable us to achieve our most cherished goals? (Naturally it would be beneficial, nay, necessary, to have first defined for ourselves a decent idea of our goal(s)). Opportunities don't just present themselves, as mine did above (unless of course one is part of the "old boys" network of which few of us are a part). Opportunities must usually be diligently sought. (Preferably opportunity also means seeking to do something meaningful, else an opportunity regresses to merely a chance.) Because good opportunities don't appear all that often, one would do well to closely examine each and everyone as it relates to one's goals. Unless there's a good match, naught but discontent will ensue. Coupled with the concept of opportunity is the reality of work and effort. One without the other makes no sense, and besides, we all enjoy legitimate work and effort (don't we?). Thus, since opportunities are hard to come by, why would we squander those that appear? This begs the question of why we don't exert ourselves to create our own opportunities (now we separate "the men from the boys"). Along with this, two apt cliches come to mind: "Opportunity comes but once" and "he who hesitates is lost". Once upon a time there was one to whom I felt very close. She wrote to me when in the Navy, "I pray you won't be lazy".I won't vouch for the results, but I will unequivocally vouch for the fact that her prayer was answered in full.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TAKING LEAVE OF THE MOTHER SHIP

The prevailing winds over the front of the flight deck, 50 feet above the water, are coming from that rain-squall directly ahead. Will all the aircraft be launched before becoming enveloped by those showers? What is known is that the atmosphere is moist, there's a feeling of freshness, and the salt air is invigorating. (Now if only the exhaust fumes could be banished.) It appears that this is either the first of a squadron(s) of aircraft, or that it's a solitary launch. If other aircraft preceded this one, there would be seen aircraft overhead circling the ship: once an aircraft cleared the deck, it angled off to the starboard (right), as here, as it gained altitude, thus mitigating the back- wash of its propeller against succeeding aircraft. Also, if it made a water-landing (crash), it would be out of the way of the oncoming ship. The launched aircraft fly the same course as the ship for approximately 30 seconds at 150 knots (mph) at about 1,000 feet, at which time it makes a wide 180 degree turn to port (left) to fly downstream in parallel with the ship. It continues flying this "race-course" pattern until the entire squadron forms up into echelons. The separate squadrons then join up to fly to their mission. During WWII the mission-radius was about 200 miles, with searches up to 250 miles. Before leaving the carrier, the pilot was given the location (Point Option) where the ship would be upon returning from the mission. Due to storms or enemy action, this location could well be very optional. With no landmarks to guide them, this was indeed a problem. Fortunately, when within about 30 miles of the ship, the pilots would make use of their YE/ZB radio-beacons that would receive from the ship a different letter of the alphabet, in Morse Code, every 30 degrees. These letters were changed daily and were provided to the pilots in the ready room before the launch.

One can well imagine the satisfaction and relief the pilots feel when they hear the call letters and/or see the carrier or its escorts down below. This situation is a fairly good example of the concept of loyalty: the pilots (mortally) depend on the presence of the carrier to recover them while the carrier is available to provide that haven in the middle of a hostile ocean. Loyalty is defined as faithfulness to commitments, obligations or devotion to country, creed, family or friends. This definition implies two levels of loyalty: commitment and obligation, or devotion and desire. Loyalty can be said to represent the support required by others in times of stress and need, even at the expense, mental or physical, of the one who is loyal. (Sports fan(antic)s' loyalty is a bird of a different feather, entirely.) Loyalty implies the fact that the one who is loyal is, or will be, susceptible to hard times as a result of that loyalty. In fact, loyalty can perhaps be measured by the amount of pain endured due to that loyalty. Most of us can be loyal to those close to us, but what of those not so close? Thus one could argue that loyalty only applies to those not close to us. (Can we measure how close we are to someone by how loyal we are to them?) Still further, perhaps we can measure how loyal we are by how much pain we're willing to endure on behalf of those supported (the more pain endured, the more loyal). What do we do when the one supported is at fault? Does loyalty supersede righteousness and rectitude? Is "My country, right or wrong" showing too much loyalty? (Some will think of a recalcitrant child here.) Is it proper to look at life through rose-colored glasses? Is it possible for one who is loyal to also be impartial? These are questions with no easy answer and they are only presented to make one sensitive to the meaning of not just the word "loyal" but also any number of other words. This will bring to a close the "Launch" chapter , a chapter in my life that, though not dominate, will "forever" reside.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LANDING ACTIVITY

If you look up, there they are, swarms of black dots moving slowly and silently across the big sky, echelon by echelon. But soon they'll make their presence known as they imperceptibly become larger and larger, nothing so much as a "flock of warbirds coming back home to roost". Now they wheel to the left in a giant circle, making the carrier essentially the epicenter. No obstacles here, only an enormous sky through which the squadrons sweep. That this panorama of aircraft is a pretty tableau is quite apparent, at least to those who are sufficiently fascinated with military orderliness. It is a tableau that repeats itself every day, twice a day. Now the bugle sounds "Flight Quarters" with the requisite verve and elan. We hear it from the overhead loudspeakers, load and clear. Time now to gather up our thoughts and fortify our concentration for the rigorous task at hand: the landing of ninety large machines winging their way onto the deck which might be pitching and rolling simultaneously. That the aircraft is preceded by the whirling propeller is a factor that must not be discounted.

While the just finished launch operation is fairly orderly and uneventful (from the Air Officer's point of view), bringing a flight of ninety aircraft back down on the flight deck is often something else (for the Air Officer). Is it chaotic? No, as it shouldn't be. Is it organized? Yes, as it was designed to be. Is it tense? No, but it might be. Do accidents happen? Yes, and in ways that are sometimes unexpected. As the aircraft squadrons circle the ship, the ship begins its turn into the wind (to assure a 30-knot wind-speed over the bow of the ship). The Corsairs and Hellcats are now forming a "race-track" around the ship as the Helldivers and Avengers remain in their echelons. The Corsairs and Hellcats brake off from their echelons one-by-one as they line-up in the slot just behind the carrier. And one-by-one, every twenty seconds, they touch down onto the flight deck , sometimes softly, and sometimes severely. And then at other times, peculiar and unexpected things happen to these charging aircraft. (These occurrences have their own chapter, being anomalies in the normally ordered state of affairs. These things may occur when an aircraft has incurred mechanical malfunctions. All other aircraft must defer to the aircraft in distress and this aircraft goes to the front of the line. When this situation is relayed to the ship (Air Officer), the ship takes on an emergency condition and all hands are at the ready. However, it might be just a matter of pilot error, and no precautions can be taken in such situations, because there's no warning of an incipient mishap.)

The same cast of characters are involved in the landings as in the launchings, except that the green-shirts are now concerned with the arresting-gear apparatus rather than the catapult apparatus. After an aircraft touches down onto the deck and is hooked by the arresting-wire, two green-shirts run out to disengage the aircraft's tailhook. The pilot now keeps close watch on whichever yellow-shirt director is in control of his aircraft. Then, by hand and arm signals, the pilot is directed up the flight deck by other yellow-shirts and into the parking area up forward. All of this must be done "smartly" so that each following aircraft, every twenty seconds, will have space to make his touch-down on the after part of the flight deck. Should there be a delay in this process, the aircraft that follow will be "waved off", and so they will have to get back into the landing pattern of the rest of the aircraft. If there are no wave-offs and no mishaps, the landing operation will take at least thirty minutes (20 seconds times 90 aircraft equals thirty minutes.) The F4U Corsairs and the F6F Hellcats fighters land first because they must be in the front of the ensemble of aircraft at launch time. Thus they will be in the front of the pack as they are respotted back aft in preparation for the next launch operation. This landing operation is ordinarily quite orderly, absent mishaps that will statistically occur. As is said, "Accidents will happen". Now, let's look more closely at the "Landing Activity".

ABOUT FACE

Here's a pilot's-eye view from on high as two carriers (CV) and a cruiser (CC) make a 180 degree about face to catch the prevailing wind head on so as to maximize the condition for the safe and proper aircraft landings. This is a view that probably brought joy and relief to the weary pilots after a long sojourn over the trackless ocean expanse. Can you imagine being a returning pilot and looking down below to see the ships turning into the wind, thereby acknowledging your presence and preparing to recover you? The ships look small but the relief is large. Ah, home sweet home! As they were when they were launched and then left the carrier in squadrons in echelons so too do they return in the same manner, hopefully with as many now as when they departed. In a routine recovery aboard ship, a flight arrayed in right echelon (step fashion to the right) passed about 1,000 yards abeam (opposite) the ship's starboard side at 1,000 feet altitude. At this time the tailhooks were lowered and the escort destroyers (DDs) take their position about 500 feet on either side of the carrier, 1,000 feet astern. Flight quarters has already sounded over the PA system, so all personnel (yellow-shirts, green-shirts, and blue-shirts (Airdales) are all prepared to receive the first aircraft. After 30 seconds past the abeam-point, the lead aircraft of the echelon breaks from the group to port (left), making a generous 180 degree turn to head downwind (parallel and opposite to the ship) at about 3,000 yards from the ship. Each aircraft in the echelon in turn takes the same maneuver as the first aircraft at 30 second intervals. The flaps are now lowered on the downward leg after which the pilot makes another 180 degree turn to port to bring himself about 1,000 feet astern the carrier and following the carrier. At about 200 feet from the ship the aircraft in "in the groove" and under the control of the LSO (Landing Signal Officer) standing on a platform extending over the catwalk and at the very end of the deck.

Just as these ships make a course correction to maximize a situation, so too can and should we do the same to amend unsatisfactory personal conduct and/or thoughts and attitudes. These changes are of course most effective if they're derived from within oneself, even if instigated by outside influences. It's not a bad thing to find and hold someone in admiration as a model for emulation. This person could be called "your hero" with everyone of course finding one's own unique personal idea of who fulfills this exalted status. The danger here is that those who are flighty tend to flit from one to another willy nilly without the mellowing influence of thought over time. Contrary to the opinion of some, as often as not snap judgments about others are just as likely to be incorrect as correct so being judicious is to be smart. This could also lead to being utterly dismissed by the one most admired (especially if you lead with your heart instead of your head). This I know, for even with patience, it can lead to one of life's most painful experiences. Changing gears somewhat, we should not ignore the positive good we might generate by addressing ourselves to changing situations in society. After all it's not valid to complain about conditions if one is not also willing to change those conditions. This admittedly usually re- quires a fair amount of exertion because by its very nature society tends to be saddled with inertia, often a great deal of inertia. In a way this is to the good because the emphasis should be on conserving those aspects of society that time has shown to be beneficial. Thus social change can be difficult, but look for sustenance in your quest in the words of anon: " God grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference." A very, very neat package.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CLEAR DECK

What's seen here isn't the normal landing pattern (as described on the previous page). That this SB2C Helldiver is preparing to land is evident by noting its extended tail-hook (painted red and white so as to make it more visible to the LSO's assistant as he verifies that the tail-hook is down). That this isn't a normal landing situation is also evident by the fact that there are few aircraft on the deck: the smaller F4Us and F6Fs fighters are "always" landed first before the larger SB2Cs and TBMs bombers. This is done partly because the F4Us and the F6Fs are spotted in front of the bombers for a launch, and partly because without the auxiliary fuel tanks the fighters have less fuel upon returning from a mission. The greatly agitated wake trailing the the carrier is an indication that it's "making tracks" at about 30-knots (30-mph) to generate 30-knots of wind over the front of the flight deck. When making this speed you can feel the deck vibrate under your feet. As has been said, no matter what the ship's speed, there's always a 30-knot wind sweeping the deck. That portion of the fuselage directly over the white star retracts into the fuselage, exposing dual 0.30-inch machine-guns that swivel as a pair. The rear radioman/gunner can turn his seat around so as to operate these guns. At this time below, the Airdales are congregated in the area of the island superstructure awaiting the next landing as other Airdales are involved with parking the landed aircraft. To a non-Airdale, the landing operation seems to be the most problematic, but to an (this) Airdale the launch activity was what produced the most anxiety and danger as we negotiate our way into and among the energized aircraft. However, it's the landing activity that 's the concern here in this chapter where unpleasant surprises could and would occur as large machines hurtle down "right AT YOU"

Clear deck, clean conscience, the one reflects the other. But just what is a conscience, clean or otherwise? Basically one could say it's one's sense of what is right and what is wrong as expressed by one's reasons for one's conduct. A conscience presumably steers one into right action. Again, how does one define what is right? Is what I think is right the same as what you think is right? There are those who believe "might makes right". What of their conscience? We could also say the conscience is that complex of ethical and moral principles that controls or inhibits the actions and thoughts of individuals. So how does one define "ethics" and "morals"? Another definition of conscience is one in which there's an inhibiting sense of what's proper and prudent: (which is cautious practical wisdom, good judgment, and careful forethought, including discrimination (of values). [What are "values" and "wisdom" and "good"?]. Con- science is prudence which is good sense and circumspection and sagacity (acute mental discernment and soundness of judgment). Can the foregoing be acquired by lessons learned? Or would a template help, such as "the greatest good for the greatest number" But then, how does the minority fare? Perhaps a lesser good for ALL would be salutary (it's always, what is "good? For whom?). Or how about an outcome which offends the least number of people? Better not to offend than to please? Should it be asking too much to expect some relatively few to sacrifice for the many? (Isn't that what we have here when a pilot rises up to strike the enemy?) Is it possible to determine whether or not the a given sacrifice was commensurate to the benefit gained? The only seemingly sure thing is that there is an inverse proportionality between the number of self-centered egoists and the amount of well-being of the group. Why is it a useful condition to have a society all of whom have a "clean conscience"? Today, is it too much to ask, and expect,. "One for all, all for one"?



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WELCOME ABOARD

Viewed from a following destroyer, we notice that there's an aircraft already on board, folding its wings as it taxis forward. About 20 seconds following him is another aircraft approaching touch-down. Normally the interval between landing aircraft is 30 seconds, to thus allow time for the green-shirts to disengage the tail-hook from the arresting-wire, and also to provide sufficient leeway for the landed aircraft to taxi forward and out of the way of the following aircraft. (This requires that the pilot applies full power to the engine so as to vacate the landing-area post-haste.) Though not seen in this picture, there are (or should be) two Airdales, each with a wheel-chock in hand, at both wheels as the aircraft taxis forward. This was standard practice on board the Antietam and which I did early on because the others did so. In my judgment the following aircraft appears to be somewhat too high for being at that distance from the deck. As a result, if the LSO gives the "cut engine" signal, the aircraft will bounce upon touch-down. The tail-hook might engage an arresting-wire, or it might not, depending upon where it touches down. If it isn't hooked, there will be a barrier-crash that might or might not be serious to the pilot, the aircraft, and the flight deck personnel. It's for this reason that (naturally) everyone on deck is alert for each and every touch-down (or should be). Now notice the attitude of the aircraft as it approaches the carrier. It's evident that in this attitude the pilot is unable to see where he'll touch down. Thus the LSO (notice the small square at the left rear part of the flight deck; this is the LSO's wind-screen). The LSO signals whether the pilot is going too fast, too slow, too high, too low, in or out of the "groove", or wing too high or too low. Thus the LSO takes complete control of what the pilot should and should not do. In a word, the pilot is completely dependent on the LSO. If the pilot is askew, he's waved off to return to the racetrack landing pattern to retry anew.

It's clear here that when landing an aircraft on the flight deck of a moving aircraft carrier, the pilot is almost completely dependent on the sagacity and skill of someone else, the LSO. Here the LSO is the prime determinant of whether there'll be a satisfactory outcome to what the pilots like to call a "controlled crash" (landing). (Another example, in another chapter, is even more stark in defining how someone, an Airdale, is absolutely dependent for his welfare on two other people—a pilot and a yellow-shirt—during a parking procedure.) We all, at one time or another, are dependent on others, including others who are strangers. A prime example is our constant dependency on the law enforcement authorities for our security. There are of course many, many other such dependencies, even such prosaic, but important, ones as the requirements for electricity, groceries, and ad infinitum. At the same time, to be specifically, systemically, indefinitely dependent on others is to be deplored. Thus we much prefer the invigorating condition of independence and self-determination which after all is a subset of personal freedom. However, we always depend on the reliability, the dependability, of other people and other things (such as, say, traffic lights). That is, are what we depend on dependable? Dependability takes us to a new level: for instance, what's the accuracy of what's said? To be dependable for others is to give them a gift: dependability and loyalty go hand in hand, for how can you be loyal if you're not also dependable? Is not friendship the personification of dependability? Some- times it's difficult, even very difficult, to be dependable, often requiring real sacrifice. But it's just this that makes dependability so high on the value-scale. The implied assurance of dependability in all things is a trait that has to be earned. But once had, it's gold.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"COMING IN ON A WING AND A PRAYER"

Once again it's the juxtaposition of the gloom of the day astride the shimmering of the sea as the sun breaks through the ominous clouds to momentarily light a path straight to the surging, heaving deck. We can imagine that the LSO's assistant, a non-commission- ed petty officer, saying in monotone, "hook down, wheels down" as this Hellcat finishes its turn upstream and into "the groove. Now the LSO brings his paddles up to take control of this next landing that has "all" eyes fixed on it. While not of a certainty, we'll assume for purposes of discussion that the stall-speed of this Hellcat is just below 70-knots as long as the flaps are in the downward position. Thus we'll also say that the Hellcat is traveling at 70-knots through the air. We know this because the aircraft has a device, a pitot-tube, protruding forward from the leading edge of the wing and we know that this measures the air-pressure differential between still air and the air through which the aircraft is traveling. This differential indicates the speed of the aircraft through the air and is directly related to the stall-speed. Presuming a head-on wind-speed of 10-knots, the aircraft has a ground\speed of 60-knots. Further, presuming the ship's speed at 20-knots (to generate the required 30-knots over the front of the flight deck: 10-knots ambient wind-speed plus 20-knots ship-speed), we can say that the speed of the aircraft over the deck at touch-down is 40-knots, the difference between the ground-speed (60) and the ship-speed (20). This speed of 40-knots over the flight deck does not impress most of us, but when the items of unreliable wind, heaving deck, fatigue of the pilot, and the impreciseness of aircraft-position at engine cut-off are factored into the equation, all might not go well. That is, a crash of some sort could be in the offing and all hands must be prepared for such.

As often as not it's a "non-busy" image such as this one that's the most effectively evocative, and to many this is the essence of good taste. So what can we say about "good taste"? It's identity of course varies from person to person and culture to culture. Yet is it possible to state a general standard for "good taste"? (from images (not "busy" or garish) to appearances (understated, no conspicuous) to music (melodious, harmonious, not discordant, not loud) to deportment (refinement of conduct which is not invasive of others' sensibilities). Good taste does not call attention to oneself; one does not seek one's own satisfaction above others; one does not overdo or make a fool of oneself; one does not make others uncomfortable; one does not look for notoriety; one does not act loudly or boastfully. One is restrained, one is subdued, one is discrete, one is polite and well-mannered and respectful, one is discerning, one is discriminating, one is refined, one is sensitive to distinctions. One could say that good taste is fundamentally always kind and considerate of others. One abhors the excessive, the rude, the crude, the sensational, the socially unacceptable. Yet good taste need not be demure. However, with all this, how can anything of substance be accomplished? ("Substance instead of style" they say, but style can certainly be substantive.) There is, there should be no conflict between appropriate conduct and useful accomplishments. Why should there be a conflict between good taste in deportment and appearance and a robust, energetic, "gung ho" personality? I defy the proposition that they are antagonistic toward each other. For instance, at the proper time and place, an enthusiastic, even flamboyant, conduct can be appropriate (at say, athletic contests, within reasonable and sensible bounds; and you know what reasonable and sensible bounds are. Right?) The key here, as in so many things is, "What is appropriate to the situation at hand? But mostly, it's consideration for others.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER (LSO) #1

The next three pictures portray the LSO as he provides guidance to the pilots in their efforts to land a large military aircraft onto a fairly inhospitable, unstable deck. First, notice the arresting-wires being elevated about 3 inches above the deck so as to catch the air- craft's tail-hook ("trap" it). There are 11 such wires strung across the flight deck from 550 feet to 850 feet from the front of the 890 foot long flight deck. Up forward can be seen aircraft already parked and others being parked. The following will describe the 12 different signals that the LSO, also a pilot, uses to guide the pilots on board. For the first of these signals, the LSO spreads his arms outward horizontally: "OK". The second signal has his right arm downward at 45 degrees and his left arm upward at 45 degrees: "Come left". Third, his right arm is upward at 45 degrees and his left arm is downward at 45 degrees: "Come right". Fourth, both arms upraised at 45 degrees: "You're high". Fifth, both arms downward at 45 degrees: "You're low". Sixth, right arm out horizontally, left arm fluctuating up and down between 45 degrees downward and straight down: "You're too fast". Seventh, right arm and left arm alternately pointing up and down: "Add power". Eighth, both arms outstretched horizontally while lifting and lowering left foot: "Apply right rudder". Ninth, same as above except use right foot: "Apply left rudder". Tenth, left arm straight down while right arm is raised as paddle is waved: "Good bye". Eleventh, both arms raised over head and swung across each other back and forth: "Wave off!". Twelfth, left arm downward, and right arm swung across chest: "Cut". The "cut" signal refers to the engine, and while the engine is not actually turned off, the throttle is reduced to its lowest point. The reason that the engine is not turned off is that power must be immediately available so that the aircraft can taxi forward after the arresting-wire has been disengaged from the tail-hook.

This picture shows the LSO providing guidance to a highly skilled pilot (would he have won his wings if he weren't highly skilled? No.) Even highly skilled pilots require guidance, so surely we all understand that we all also require guidance of some kind at some time from someone who's more knowledgeable than we. Seeking guidance is NOT a sign weakness, as some would have it, but rather a solid sign of our intelligence that recognizes that we need guidance. And we should all be very grateful that there are those teachers who want to help us in our march toward self-improvement (is there anyone who's not in favor of self-improvement?) The caveat here is that we should seek improvement and knowledge not just in those things that suits our fancy, but also of those things that make us more informed citizens. This is not always so clear-cut. Probably the ideal condition would be everyone everywhere being by some happy circumstance imbued with the "thirst for knowledge", and even the "love of knowledge". Lacking this knowledge could be likened to starting a 100-yard race at a point 140 yards from the finish-line. Knowledge builds self-assurance (which is not to be confused with conceit which in turn unfortunately engenders jealousy in others, which further is usually a reflection of an unwillingness to expend effort and energy toward our own improvement). Those who are accomplished are certainly to be admired, and not the subject of harassment by the supercilious others (while boastfulness should probably elicit sympathy). Learning is a 2-way street: we must stay alert and expend the energy and effort to ask the cogent questions. We the learners have the responsibility to SEEK know- ledge, not expect it to be served up on a silver platter. Work, that which creates the wealth of learning and assuages the soul. Honestly. . .



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WAVE-OFF

Since I wasn't in a position to clearly observe the LSO during a landing, and because his was such an important part of the landing process, I'll reproduce a description of the LSO's activity from the book "The Essex Aircraft Carriers" by Andrew Paltum: "The LSO, an aviator himself, passed instructions to the landing pilots using a pair of colorful paddles, correcting the speed and altitude of the approaching plane to hold it steady on course warning a pilot of some oversight, such as an undropped tail-hook. If the LSO held the paddles straight out to the side at arm's length and level with his shoulders, it meant the pilot was on glide-path, on speed, and centerline. If the paddles dropped slightly, it meant the pilot was a little low. As the pilot climbed back to the (proper) glide slope, the LSO would raise his arms slowly back to the horizontal. Similar signals were used for lateral corrections, such as dropping a wing-tip. Directive signals told the pilot to do something immediately; the three most important were the "add power" signal, the "cut", and the wave-off. The add power signal was made by holding the paddles in front of the LSO at arm's length; the paddles were then swung open at right angles to the LSO's body. The urgency of the signals could be conveyed by how rapidly and vigorously they were repeated. The cut signal was usually given from the on-glide-slope signal; the left hand dropped to the LSO's side while the right swept down and across his body to join the left hand in a sort of waving motion. At the last instant , when when the LSO gave the cut signal, the pilot cut power by pulling the throttle back to idle as the aircraft landed. If the deck was fouled or it was unsafe to land, the LSO gave the wave-off by waving both paddles back and forth over his head, in which case the pilot was absolutely required to apply full power and clear the area without landing". Here we have a wave-off by the LSO for reasons as indicated on the previous page.

The phone-talker looks somewhat concerned while "measuring" the oncoming aircraft as the LSO vigorously gives the pilot the wave-off signal. Where on the previous page was considered the subject of guidance, here we're concerned with an outright order: "You shall". Whether we like it or not, much of life is based on the "you shall" formulation, which is a good thing (the stop-light example). Learning obedience (learning to take orders) in civilian life is beneficial and necessary, for what is a society if the laws are not obeyed? (Let's not quibble about the soundness of a law here.) Should one person be allowed to disrupt a classroom to the detriment of the many? Presumably, laws are for useful purposes and not to harass people, even while some may seem to infringe on our liberties. While it's true that my liberties may be your restrictions, and visa versa, accommodations must be made for a hopefully harmonious society. Privileges imply restrictions just as rights imply responsibilities. One could posit that the "order" in the military is the "good judgment" in civilian life. (Is it an axiom that the more moral the people the fewer the laws required? And thus the more freedom we feel.) If our thinking has depth and our thoughts are not superficial an self-centered, then thus do we have a solid chance to have a felicitous society based on intelligent laws. But what are the chances of this happening if we turn our backs on diligent efforts to learn, not just in the classroom, but throughout life? Perhaps all of this devolves down to comparing my list of freedoms to your list of freedoms, realizing that our liberties are not unbounded in a complex society. (When young my hormones raced, but as God is my witness my thoughts and feelings toward "my girl" were in all respects strictly platonic. Even then, I "obeyed" propriety.)

.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRY AGAIN

This third picture of the sequence shows the results of the wave-off of the previous page. Right now the pilot is applying full throttle to generate full power in his effort to clear the deck and aircraft and personnel below. If the power is not sufficient, the aircraft will probably crash into that group of already landed aircraft, causing serious damage and very likely fatalities of the personnel in that area. As an Airdale or yellow-shirt, we were always attuned to that roar of the throttled up aircraft sounding off as it "clawed" its way, near stall-speed, over us down below. Sometimes the wave-off would occur early enough so that the aircraft wouldn't have to fly over the parked/parking aircraft below. However, if the wave-off was not given soon enough, the aircraft would have to take a course over us because at the near-stall speed at landing, abrupt turns during a wave-off would result in a crash. Naturally, the sooner the wave-off, the less likely there'd be a crash. Also it's a natural reflex to want to make that turn abruptly, so a wave-off was not a trivial maneuver trivially attempted. Not all, but some of the wave-offs generated anxious moments for all concerned. Since parking aircraft simultaneously was also not a trivial task, we were not all that aware of whether a wave-off was imminent or not. Usually it was only when we heard that sudden roar sound off as the pilot applied full power that we realized that a wave-off was in process. Not that it would have done us any good because there was no place to run for cover even if there was time for such a thing. The good news was that since the returning aircraft were low on fuel, there was little of it to fed a fire. It was only the violent crushing of bodies with which to contend, and this was unavoidable. The bad news was that there were only a minimal number of fire-hoses up forward..As a matter of fact, the concerns of parking aircraft were such that little thought was given to wave-offs, except when you heard that malevolent roaring.

There he goes to try again, this pilot who's endangering himself and others as he attempts to regain altitude after a wave-off. Why did this happen? Was it a sudden gust of crosswind or headwind that caused him to leave "the groove" (presuming he was there in the first place)? Or was it a matter of insufficient training? (That was the Antietam's job.) In any event, this pilot undoubtedly had practiced this landing maneuver many times before this and maybe the ship's stern dipped at the last moment, promising a landing with an excessive bounce. Who knows? // There are those who scorn athletes to one degree or another, and I'll not make a brief for either side except to say that an athlete, if having reached a level of excellence, has learned the lesson of applying himself/herself to many hours of diligent practice. By its very nature, to enjoy a sport one has to have a persistent attitude of practice, and what I'll call work. The good news is that this work can be in and of itself an enjoyable effort, especially if progress is made. As progress proceeds, it be- comes more enjoyable until it no longer seems to be work. But only the persistent reach this goal. The point to be made is that "work" can be enjoyable if there's interest in that work. It doesn't matter what the activity, be it learning to play the piano, playing ping pong, painting, etc. The more important point to be made is that this same feeling accrues to the efforts in the intellectual area. So just as an athlete enjoys the effort to gain skill in a sport, so too does someone enjoy the work of learning and acquiring knowledge. The distinct advantage that the latter group has is that this "work" of learning can carry on for a life-time. Besides that, this group can also feel the immense satisfaction of helping to create the wealth of a society: doctors, lawyers, engineers, cost accountants, you name it. Eureka!



"YOU'RE TOO HIGH"

Wheels down, tail-hook down, flaps down but all of no avail. He wanted to come aboard, but he was denied permission. The wave-off was given some seconds before and as he "guns" the engine to gain precious altitude, the LSO holds his arms upward to let the passing pilot know that he was too high. Notice the wheel-well in the wing. While in normal flight-configuration, the wheels are retracted and thus give the wing a smooth undersurface. However, now with the wheels down, there's a large indentation in the wing. This causes significant distortion of the air-flow at that point which in turn adversely affects the lift provided by the wing. Also it's clear that the extended wheels add an important. mount of drag which must be overcome by the forward thrust of the engine/propeller. This thrust is woefully weak right at this time because the throttle was set so low in preparation for a touch down. The aircraft's engine has just been abruptly increased in rpm to generate the power to gain altitude, but it's touch and go whether there's sufficient power at this critical time to do the job. From the position of this TBM (the largest single-engined aircraft of WWII), it's clearly heading straight down the centerline of the flight deck. This path will take it right over the already landed Hellcats, Corsairs, and Helldivers. Not a healthy or happy situation for the pilot or the flight deck personnel. I know the thoughts and feelings of those personnel as they look up, having been alerted by the suddenly aggravated noise of the suddenly revved up unmuffled 1,700-hp engine: is this their time? // After WWII the Navy converted the Antietam, the first one, to an angled-deck carrier. This conversion obviated the need for wave-offs be- cause an aircraft landed under full power. If a wire was missed , the pilot simply eased back on the control-stick and so made the landing into into a launch, there being no parked aircraft in front of him: wave-off problem solved. Would that such a system were in place sooner.

The angled-deck was a nice, neat solution to a difficult problem, and points up the fact that often "necessity is the mother of invention" as here. However, we are all beset with personal problems from time to time, and we wish we had a facile way of overcoming them. Let's consider some items that might be of help in this regard. It would seem perfectly obvious that before a problem can be solved it needs to be clearly perceived and defined and understood. Often this can be the hardest part of problem-solving. But first it's surely sensible to "eliminate the wheat from the chaff": that is, what is the real problem and what is a pseudo-problem? Is the problem worth the aggravation of worrying about it? Would there be any ramifications of note to ignore it? If not, then move on and direct your thoughts and emotions to things of substance. (But what's of substance? Be smart about this.) Learning what's important and what's not is called maturity. When I was young I made the mistake of trying to figure out the relationship between everything that happened in my life versus all the various accompanying events. After a while it became more than I could handle because before I could figure out one odd complexity, another and another would present themselves. Trying to determine and then remember all the many things that were and were not relevant and true concerning these complexities before the previous one was "resolved" was a burden too much to bear. So choose your problems well and don't deal in false, foolish ones. The motto, "In God we trust" should not be taken lightly, yet nor should we give in to resignation nor give up our perseverance. Again, words to live by: "God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I can not change, the Courage to change the things I can change, and the Wisdom to know the difference". (Not so simple.)



NO HOOK

It appears that this wave-off is probably due to the fact the pilot does not, or is not able to, lower the tail-hook. This was detected by the LSO's assistant using his binoculars, and it was seen early enough to wave-off this TBM well before the pilot was prepared to set down on the deck. Even with that it can be seen that the propeller appears to be motionless (it isn't), implying a very low setting of the throttle when he needs it the most. In any event, there will be no crash on the flight deck this time. (Note the pair of dashed lines with- in which it's safe to touch down.) From the appearance of the ship's wake and the sea-state, it would appear that both the ship's speed and the ambient wind were 15-knots. Recall that the faster the ship's speed the slower the relative speed of the aircraft over the deck just before touch down and thus the less damage from a possible crash: if the ship were going at 5-knots (25-knot ambient wind) and the stall-speed is 70-knots, the relative speed over the deck would be 65-knots. Striking something at 65-knots would of course cause much more damage than if it were going at say 30-knots. Also it's much easier to evade an object at 30-knots than 65. When flight quarters was sounded over the PA system (a bugle call followed by the boatswain mate's pipe (too WEE too WEEEEE) and his then toning, "Now all hands, man your flight quarter stations"), all the flight deck personnel (yellow-shirts and blue-shirts) would just appear beside the island superstructure. We had no muster, no "all present and accounted for". You were expected to be there without any further ado. Once there, each Airdale simply picked up a wheelchock and went out to meet an aircraft as it taxied up the deck to the parking area. No orders were given to anyone (there was too much noise anyway) and none were required. There was a job to be done, everyone knew what that was and acted accordingly. One could call it initiative or one could call it discipline. But it was done.

Whether it was initiative or whether it was discipline, it was done without being told to do so. Discipline in this context implies duress where what has to be done is an unwilling obligation that requires obedience to stringent orders to fulfill a mission. Discipline as used here demands one to do that which one wouldn't ordinarily do under one's choosing. Rules and regulations dominate, conformance is of the essence. Since no one gave us orders, since no one told us specifically what to do (simpleminded or not), it can be said that what was done was done due to initiative, that self-motivation to begin what had to be done, less the "overseer". One could even propose that initiative is a reflection of a perceived responsibility derived from a sense of accountability. Certainly self-discipline merits our admiration, but initiative, carried on by the feeling of responsibility, is preferable because the former implies duress while the latter is based on an interested desire. Thus should we try to frame our tasks in terms of interest and not duress for certainly the results will be far more reliable as well as prompt. If that interest is augmented by also being worthwhile, so much the better. Initiative of course need not depend on whether or not something is required, for some of the most felicitous results come from serendipity. Unfortunately that first step demanded by initiative is the hardest. It's similar to inertia, but once overcome and the process has commenced, you now have the ally of that dependable force, momentum. From initiative to inertia to momentum to eureka, that's the progression that's to be sought. The real problem for the concept of initiative is that of dread about the daunting task ahead. This in turn is probably the result of that enemy of all of us: negativism. "Easy for you to say that we should eschew the negative". Yes, but experience proves it valid.



CAP EXCHANGE

The situation presented here is as follows: one Hellcat (airborne) is returning from CAP duty while another Hellcat is preparing to take up CAP duty. (There are several other Hellcats in a single line in front of this one which are also in the process of launching to take up their CAP duties.) The Hellcats have already been warmed up and this one is now in the quiescent condition as the Airdale is ready to pull the wheelchock: he'll pull a short wire that's connected to a latch that in turn will allow the right-hand block to be moved laterally along the shaft away from the wheel (this is a posed picture because it's the right hand, not the left, that releases the latch. Sorry about the details, but accuracy is of the essence). This situation is not so much a wave-off as it is a recognition by the pilot that the deck is not clear. Notice the alertness of the Airdale that mirrors the imminent launch. Also notice the LSO's windbreak directly behind the Airdale: this screen protects the LSO from the wind-blasts that are constantly at his back as he looks only out away from the ship while in concentrating only on the incoming aircraft all of which are eager to "come aboard". While the wind normally is a steady 30-knots striking him, the winds do vary and especially do they when an aircraft applies full power on launching. These wind-blasts from the prop-wash occur at irregular times and with indeterminate forces and thus are more treacherous than the fairly steady 30-knots of wind always present during a launch. It's the LSO who has to be steady as he concentrates on the delicate and critical business of communicating with a landing pilot. Mistakes made here are irredeemable and inadmissible when lives are at stake. However, it would be misleading to infer that every third landing was a "near miss". Yes, potentially every landing was a joust with fate and a time of anxiety for most everyone on the flight deck, but in point of fact most all the landings were flawless. But "You never know".

It wasn't really necessary that I point out that this picture was probably posed as indicated by (the triviality of) the Airdale's appearing to use his left hand to release the wheelchock's latch. However, I consider it important that I do my utmost to be as accurate as I'm able, for to do less would be leave me feeling uncomfortable: once words are put to paper, they are there indefinitely, and to compromise the known truth is to do damage to oneself if not to others. Once that truth has been bent out of shape, to try to restore it often makes matters worse. Veracity is a characteristic that is at once both fragile and strong. If one tampers with the truth, one soils trust- worthiness, and without trust, social intercourse becomes a mockery. So yes, anything that casts doubt on one's veracity is something that can easily shatter a well functioning society or personal relationship. But veracity feeds on itself so that a strong edifice evolves by being "on the level", with fidelity. This includes avoiding the "slippery slope" of accidental deception, for one thing leads to another (deception). One acquires the incipient disposition to be less and less forthright.(and so the slippery slope). To mislead sows the seeds of future discontent of others, and this unnecessary friction creates invisible, but real, barriers between people(s). While there's a real difference between inadvertent inaccuracies and deliberate deceit, their effects can be devastatingly similar. Thus should we shore up our sloppy mode of thinking, even if, as here, it deals with the trivial. Be aware of wrong impressions and misconstrued meanings and flawed interpretations which can damage just as much as outright lies. Be smart, be alert, and be neat in your mode of thinking. Be aware that where deception lurks disaster works. Finally, is it not true that inaccuracies are a close cousin of dishonesty? Sad, but true.

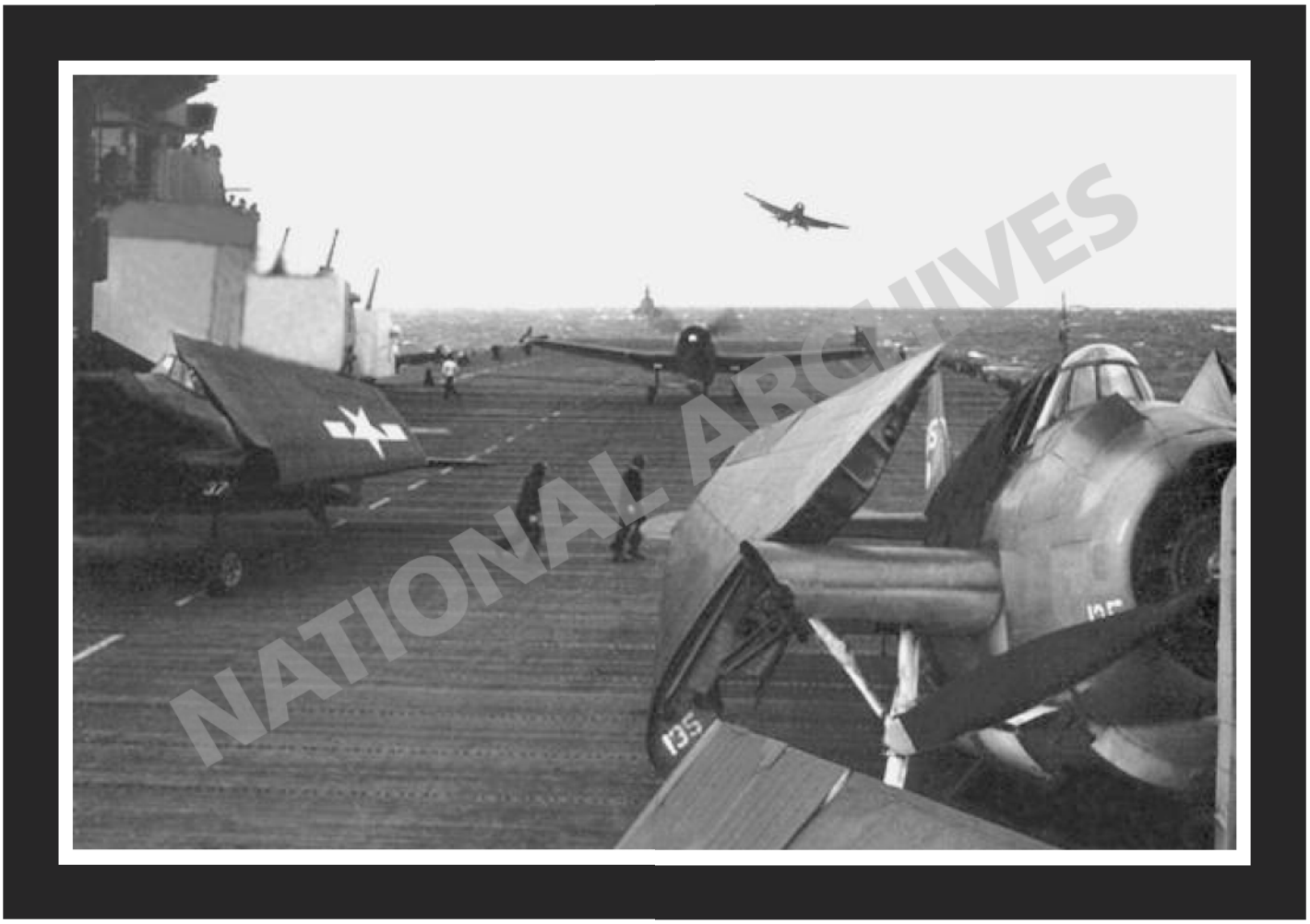


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE ESSENCE OF THE LANDING PROCESS

The essence of the landing process can be clearly seen in this picture even though a wave-off, as shown, was not that frequent. In this instance, as in perhaps half of all wave-offs, this Hellcat had to go around again not because of an unsatisfactory approach but rather for the simple reason that the deck was not clear as here. The usual cause for an unclear deck was either the green-shirts had trouble disengaging the arresting-wire from the tail-hook, or the following aircraft was trailing the landed aircraft by an interval less than the prescribed 30 seconds. This made for a difficult decision for the LSO: wave-off an approaching aircraft early because the interval between aircraft was too short and/or the problems experienced by the green-shirts, or bring the aircraft aboard. If the LSO made the decision to wave-off the aircraft too late, the aircraft would be too close to stall-speed and thus be in jeopardy of either crashing into the sea or crashing onto the flight deck. The landing process presented perilous times for the pilot fatigued from flight-time, and this peril could be easily transported to the flight deck. But again, wave-offs were not all that prevalent, fortunately. However, (again and again and again), "You never know" (what will happen when a large machine approaches you as it wavers close to stall-speed some 40 feet higher than you). This picture shows all the ingredients of the landing activity but two: the approaching aircraft, the landed aircraft, and the taxiing/parked aircraft. Missing is another aircraft 30 seconds behind the waved-off aircraft and a group of Airdales pushing the Hellcat's wings back into a folded position. This assistance required by the Hellcat was unique because neither the F4U nor the TBM nor the SB2C required this assistance. This slowed the landing process somewhat but the promptness exhibited by the Airdales mitigated this. While battleships followed carriers as here, they were certainly not used as plane-guards. So where are the destroyers?.

There's no relationship whatsoever between "wave-off" and "brush-off" (slang for "abrupt or final dismissal or rebuff" (or rejection)). We've all been brushed-off at one time or another for one reason or another and it's usually something we don't care to have done to us. If it's only our egos that are bruised, get over it. The repudiator certainly has the prerogative to do so. (Can we call it a "right"?) And let's be honest about it, aren't we better off for it? Why care about someone who doesn't care about you? Ergo, move on to better things. Easier said than done if one's emotions are involved. However, if the relationship were of short duration, it would seem best to allow rationality to supersede emotionality because there are just too many options "out there". But what if this were a long-time dependency? Certainly this features a real problem, but again, bereft of the emotions the solution is the same it would seem ("Why care about someone who doesn't care about you?"). Evidently it's the emotions that are the "oil in the ointment". Unfortunately, it hasn't been written anywhere that those whom you like must like you in return. Life would be too simple if that were so, so one can rationalize that we give up emotional security for a more interesting life that allows the rejecter to preempt the rejectee. In a way this preserves our claims to freedom (of choice). It's time now to "put the shoe on the other foot": to be blunt about it, as you would not want to be bothered, so too do others not want to be bothered. One man's bothering is another man's admiration. If to bother means to monopolize, then we rejectees tread on tenuous ground. Words have been used here, perhaps spurious words, but can they assuage the feelings of those who have been "brushed-off". Probably not, for each of us must provide our own resolutions to our own imbroglios.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY LANDING"

"Now all hands prepare for an emergency landing", intones the PA system over loudspeakers located in the superstructure. This Corsair apparently lost its hydraulics which prevents it from lowering its landing gear (wheels). Probably its tail-hook is also inoperative, assuring us of a barrier-crash. The pilot isn't even in "the groove" yet, which he should be when at this distance from the flight deck. His horizontal configuration is unbalanced, and he's probably "sweating bullets" right now, as the vernacular then would have it. Even the LSO is agitated as can be seen by his leaving his platform that's directly in front of the windscreen. At a time like this all hands are directing their attention back aft at this unhappy situation as it unfolds. If the aircraft had an auxiliary fuel-tank, it has since been jettisoned to prevent a likely conflagration upon the tank's rupturing when touch down was made. The problem is not just the fire but the explosive fire that would kill he pilot. Here, fortunately that problem doesn't exist and we'll "only" have a barrier-crash (where fire could likely occur (but not explosively). I was never a part of a belly-landing occurrence, so I can only surmise what the outcome of this landing will be, but it won't be pretty. Yet, perhaps all that will result is a smashed propeller, a scraped under-belly, and a chewed up deck (which is made out of teakwood planking 2 and 3/4 inches thick.). If the damage to the deck is of significant proportions, the entire landing process will have to be delayed as the deck is repaired (usually consisting of a temporary fix by placing a metal plate over the damaged area. There are many and varied outcomes possible when landing an aircraft on a fundamentally unstable deck (a quiet sea today) as is briefly considered in the next chapter. And as always, "You never know, you never can tell, what will and what will not happen when an aircraft has to contend with a short run-in landing towards and to a forward moving, heaving flight deck.

Do you believe that you understand, both intellectually and emotionally, what this pilot is now undergoing and feeling? That is, what's your empathy-quotient? (Empathy: "the intellectual identification with or vicarious (imagined) experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of others".) Can you learn "to walk in the moccasins of others"? Life poses many questions and we are the better for being the wiser about such things. Empathy can be said to be in close alliance with the quality of sympathy, that harmony of feelings between peoples without which we would be not that far removed from the automaton. (Don't misunderstand, I relish the world of robotics and automation.) Those of the warrior genre might believe that to be empathetic and sympathetic is to be less than "manly". But is not the hero motivated by just those feeling of which we are considering? (Here I define a hero as one who willfully and seriously jeopardizes one's own life in an effort and for the sake of preserving another's life. "No greater love hath man than that he give up his life for another's") Are not such heroic actions derived from feelings of empathy and sympathy? By the same token, while heroes are presumed to be "manly", one need not be "a man" to be heroic, for mother-love is as heroic as can be conceived. And can't the extent to which we exhibit empathy and sympathy in large measure be what usefully defines us? Surely everyone has feelings of empathy and sympathy; the question to be sought is to what extent? Certainly the hero is at the top of the list while the bully is at the bottom of the list. But this begs the question as to what determines who displays the qualities of empathy and sympathy? Why the variations? A good starting place of examination is to consider the quality and extent of one's egocentrism. Just how self-centered is one's nature?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH ARRIVES

Yes, we can say that the die is cast and the moment of truth has arrived, as is perceived and pictured by the crouching, encroaching LSO. We too will feel its impact as depicted in a similar landing shown in the next chapter titled, "Mishaps". The previous page showed an "unbalanced" Corsair approach where this one presents a satisfactory, if somewhat low, positioning. Understand that the pilot has a limited, constrained area on which to set his aircraft. If this were a land-based touch down with much more area at his disposal, the pilot could take his time as he very gradually and gently makes contact with the ground, thus obviating an abrupt touch down. The less crushing the touch down the less chance for a fire, or even an explosive fire. (To my knowledge, there was no way to drain the fuel-tank while in flight.) This lack of available area perhaps explains the pilot's low approach: the pilot wanted to touch down as soon as possible in order to have as much deck space as possible. Even the two green-shirts are not visible in this picture; they're probably on the catwalk to the left staying as far away as they are able to do so. (Usually there are two green-shirts on either side of the deck and about 60 feet from the end of the flight deck, ready to run out so as to disengage the arresting-wire from the tail-hook to allow the aircraft to taxi forward. There'll be no such requirement for this this time. If it weren't such a calamitous situation, this picture of a gull-winged aircraft settling down on the deck would be a very satisfying tableau. (My personal preference has no attraction towards those pictures of a tragic nature as is so often presented to the public to sensationalize a subject. To do so substantially distracts from the intrinsic substance of a situation. That said, for completeness, I too have included two such chapters.)

This is the moment of truth for this pilot. Does he let his emotions take control of his intellect, and so panic? In such circumstances what would YOU do? It can be usefully said that we all have our "moments of truth", our moments of anxiety, even fear, and we all react in different ways to given adverse situations. Some do so full of bravado while others tend to cower. Why such a diverse response to the same situation? One obvious reason is the exposure to, or lack of, experience ("practice"). There are those who seek out the dangerous to try to prove to others, and oneself, that one is brave and can "handle" the worst of situations. Some even say that there are those who are drawn to war (combat) as a testing-round, a proving-ground, of their "manliness" (where "manly" refers to their absorbing punishment and overcoming it). Some even make a fetish of their attempt to validate their "manliness". The young, and very young, attend the scary and frightening (movies) as a safe testing-ground for their insecurities. (Understandable, but unnecessary.) To the chase, by far the fearful is best dealt with using one's well developed, rational intellect. The subjective emotions detract measurably from one's objective reasoning capabilities. While emotion summons one's resolve, it's the intellect that determines the direction of that resolve. Do not allow the emotions to take control. Emotions certainly are not to be disparaged, but they certifiably impose on the intellect's job of resolving difficult situations in times of extremity or crisis. (In normal times, the emotions can be the motivation to stimulate the intellect; isn't it true that to study effectively one must be agreeably disposed toward a subject: "I LIKE chemistry, math, biology, geography, etc. because chemistry, etc. does good things for all of us, etc."). However, disagreeable situations require the stern discipline of a well-honed intellect that can reason clearly unfettered by the emotional overlay of the situation.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"WATCH OUT!!"

"Watch out!!" This refrain seems to menacingly circulate and recirculate through your mind as you look up directly at a "high bouncer" that's out of control and making its way over the barriers, directly toward the parked aircraft up ahead. Nothing good will come of this, with broken aircraft and broken bodies in the offing. Actually, the flight deck personnel are usually alert to these occurrences because as soon as a "bouncer" is apparent (and before leaping the barriers), the Air Boss presses the "crash button" that emits a loud high-pitched piercing tone. Therefore most everyone will probably be able to get out of the way of this wayward, out-of-control aircraft. (A "bouncer" results from either the LSO misjudging the aircraft's position and/or speed or the ship's hitting a swell in the waves just as the aircraft touches down. The latter "throws" the aircraft upward, but usually not so much that at least one of the five barriers is able to impede it. But by the same token, it takes at least two barriers to stop an aircraft.) This is truly a rogue aircraft, and there's not anything anyone can do about it until it makes crushing contact with something. Certainly this picture was taken by a telephoto lens that kept the photographer out of harm's way, but this was not necessarily the case for the flight deck personnel. The probability for injury/death was low, but the possibility was ever present. As has been said before and is a constant for each and every landing operation, "You never know". Out-of-control aircraft during landings were always a possible danger, but fortunately the Antietam was not so plagued. It appears that this aircraft is missing one of its propeller-blades. It is not: this is a three-bladed propeller as can be detected by observing the stems of the blades at the hub of the propeller. While the rpm of the engine is slowed, it's still fast enough to cause an apparent bend in each of these formidable, slashing 6 ½ foot blades that seem to have a life of their own.

This out-of-control "rogue aircraft" gives every indication of living up to its description of being of savage disposition punctuated with moments of rage. A outsized characterization this, but does it have its counterpart in the human condition? Such over-the top conduct as above should find no place whatsoever in a civilized society certainly. However, there are some guarded forms of anger that find a useful purpose such as when anger arouses a desire to accomplish things that are valuable and worthwhile and of merit, as for instance righting wrongs. If though, anger stirs up wrath and resentment that merely reflects only on one's ego, then one is a fool. In addition, anger is woefully counterproductive and senseless if for no other reason than that it's disconcerting and it's wasteful of one's energy which could be more usefully spent elsewhere. Anger even becomes simpleminded when you respond in kind to those who would have you so. (What justification can be found in being an accomplice to those repugnant people (bullies) who mean you ill by deliberately seeking to anger you?). Keep in mind that anger born of hostility to others is to relinquish the advantage to those who oppose you. This raises the larger question of the advisability of being hostile in the first place. (Politics and/or war are not topics in this book.) Most assuredly, hostility bodes an ill wind for you in that you become grossly distracted from the things that are important to you. Why cede control to those who confront you? It would seem better to gain that balance of opposing those who confront you and of dismissing out of hand that confrontation. Those who cannot control their anger are those who cannot control the outcome of their expectations and aspirations. There are too many useful and interesting and important things in life to waste time on mindless anger.



"T" FOR TRAUMATIC

We're placed on the port side aft catwalk, near the LSO, looking forward as we watch this Corsair take a wave-off during some traumatic moments as it struggles at 40 to 60 mph over the flight deck. Recall that the stall-speed was said to be about 70 mph, meaning that this wave-off operation is borderline-safe (for both the pilot and those on the flight deck below). We all figuratively hold our breath listening to the engine roar defiantly as it struggles to gain that precious altitude that makes the difference between a crash on the deck or into the water and another chance to go around again. I can only guess at how high this Corsair is at this time, but it can be said fairly reliably that the lower it is, the slower the speed (because the cut-off signal was given when the aircraft was closer in). Naturally, the slower the speed, the more chance for a crash. The Corsair made its initial flight before the war (June 1940) but did not join the fleet until April 1944 due to aerodynamic stability problems. These were particularly noticeable at the low landing speeds required of carrier landings. The marines made ample use of the Corsair, starting in September 1943 where the long land runways allowed faster touch down speeds. As an Airdale, we seldom saw this view of a landing aircraft. Our view was that of a straight-down-the-middle path by the aircraft, with our being to one side of the flight deck or the other about 400 feet from the fantail (end of the flight deck). This placed us in the area of the fourth or fifth barriers, right below the 40-mm guntubs in the island superstructure. Sometimes we were next to the first barrier right next to the aft elevator (opposite the aft 5-inch gun-mount). This spot allowed us to be closer to the landed aircraft and thus could we more quickly reach it, wheelchock in hand, before it accelerated up forward too fast after having been unhooked. from the arresting-wire. (At least on the Antietam, we would escort the aircraft as it taxied to be parked.)

Another wayward aircraft, another potential problem. When we ourselves are wayward but our waywardness adversely affects only ourselves, that's too bad for us. However, if our waywardness adversely affects others, we can no longer say "too bad". For instance, to misjudge yourself for yourself is too bad, but to misjudge others' character or motives or actions is not "too bad"; it's too close to personal malfeasance. Wilful wrong-doing (waywardness) often creates unintended consequences whose ramifications are not easily mended, to the detriment of all involved (not that wrong-doers are necessarily interested in mending the mess they made). Certainly this discussion doesn't refer to those inveterate wrong-doers who require stern handling (and handle them we must). The waywardness of which is discussed here is about those who are self-absorbed and supercilious to the point of being haughty and disdainful of others. If there's one word that addresses this affliction of waywardness, I believe that word is "consideration" In my opinion this word has more delineations regarding waywardness than any other: consideration is one of the most powerful forces for what can be called a viable society. It overlays many of the admired virtues we so highly prize: unabashedly holding to kindly regard, sincere respect, sensitivity of feelings for others, thoughtfulness toward others, carefully considered concern for those around you, sympathy for the plight of those who need it, awareness of the proprieties, and the like. Surely these attributes are not the domain of the effete. "Ladies and gentlemen" is not without precise meaning. They have the courage to forfend what's best at the risk of appearing weak. They are not. Decency toward others is what makes for an agreeable environment, and who would not want that? Could it be the wayward?



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"HOLD IT"

The one thing here for certain is that this Corsair is being held in place by the yellow-shirt to the far right with arms upraised. The Corsair has just landed and has had the arresting-wire disengaged from its tail-hook. Next, what's probably happening at this moment is that the green-shirt seen crouching beneath the tail-section is trying to make the tail-hook retract (which it didn't due to some mal- function) A mechanic stands close by facing the green-shirt ready to help. As to the rest of the personnel in the picture, the one just to the left of the yellow-shirt is a green-shirt whose duty is to help the other green-shirt disengage the arresting wire (why he's not there now, I don't know). In this particular situation the following aircraft will be waved off to go around again. The rest of the personnel are Airdales ready to lend a hand if needed (such as stooping under the tail-section and then standing upright to lift it up if the problem happens to be with the tail-wheel not swiveling). There are Airdales on either side of the Corsair with wheelchocks in hand ready to accompany the Corsair as it taxis up forward with a burst of speed to the parking area (remember the 30 second interval between landing aircraft). Notice on the right-hand side the unfurled fire-hose at the ready during landing operations. They had to be immediately available for possible use should there be a crash during a landing. There were several such hoses located on either side of the flight deck with outlets just below the deck and above the catwalk Also seen in the foreground is a retracted arresting-wire going into a capstan next to the hose. It is from here that the wire plays out when it is caught by a tail-hook. After an aircraft taxis over the last of the 12 arresting-wires, a green-shirt pulls a lever that raises brackets that in turn raises the 12 wires (4 brackets per wire). The raised wires are about 3" above the deck. Since there are still wires in front of the Corsair, (all) the wires are still in a flat (lowered) position.

In life, most of us take so much for granted. We expect all of the conveniences of modern life without nary a thought to what this implies. We are all almost completely unappreciative of our material surroundings and we are for the most part totally unaware of what's involved in the easy availability of all the material "wealth" we use. To telephone from here to the other side of the world is a "ho-hum" activity. Think of all the people involved to make this happen. Think of all the expertise and hard work that went into your facile chi-chat. If one stops to think about it, there are literally a minuscule number of people relatively speaking who make that call possible. This same idea struck me when I was put on the Antietam, that amazing construct that was the Essex-class carrier. I was captivated by this ship that in material terms represented an amazing amount of knowledge and effort by literally thousands and thousands of very energetic and smart people. First, think of all the brilliant engineers and designers who collectively spent hours and hours and hours conceiving and planning this ship. Then think of all of the thousands of people who had the abilities to construct this ship from the plans. Now the thousands of people from all over had to fabricate all of the multitudes of equipments that were to be on board the ship. These then had to be delivered to the ship. After that there were hundreds of proficient engineers and technicians and installation types who had to install, test, and check out the equipment. Finally we arrive at the crew of well trained operators and maintenance grades who had to make everything work At last the air department moved into this environment to operate this mini- airport, while it was the skilled pilots who flew the aircraft that was "the point of the spear". Lastly, there was my minuscule presence.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SAFELY ABOARD

This aircraft has just been released from the arresting-wire but still "held" by the yellow-shirt. The disengaged wire is being wound back into the capstan in preparation for the next landing. As said, there are 12 arresting-wires stretched across the deck about 25 feet apart, and before reaching the 5 barriers also stretched across the deck about 5 feet high when erected. The first wires had fairly soft arresters because they had longer run-outs before reaching the first barrier, The wires closer to the barriers had shorter run-outs and so provided a more abrupt stop (much to the chagrin of the pilots). We note the green-shirt having just unhooked the wire from the tail-hook. In a moment the yellow-shirt will hold out his left hand with palm down and jab into it with the thumb of his right hand to tell the pilot to now raise the tail-hook. The yellow-shirt will then signal the pilot to come forward rapidly, passing him on to the next yellow-shirt further up the deck. If the pilot accelerated too fast with congestion ahead, the yellow-shirt would hold his hands at waist height, palms down to signal "slow down".The pilot was thus passed down the deck to the parking area or to the deckedge or forward elevator to go to the hanger deck if the aircraft required maintenance. During this time the pilot worked the foot brakes as he also applied the throttle with his left hand. At the same time, using his right hand he would open all the cooling flaps to wide, raise both the landing flaps, unlock the wings, and set the wing control to "fold" (the control stick was of no use now). Notice that the pilot can only see to one side or the other, and not in front of him. Therefore he must pay strick attention to whichever yellow-shirt has control. All of the above description was done within a 20 second time-frame which required deft handling by both pilot and yellow-shirts. //We have a good view of the search-radar attached to the wing within that white bulbous radome. This was primarily for the night-fighters.

The radar carried by this aircraft was used to allow the pilot to search, find, and track enemy aircraft. This radar enabled the pilot to "pierce the darkness', an apt metaphor for all those doing their best to penetrate what they consider to be a labyrinth of that great storehouse of written material shimmering out there in the vast beyond. (Parenthetically, it's not possible to overlook those large letters "NA" that stand for, not the Naval Academy, but my alma mater of yesteryear, the Red and Black of Newark Academy where I doggedly acquired some knowledge that was provided in abundance and was mine for the taking.) Learning is the subject, doing it should be our goal. School learning of course is a given, for who would want to go through life semi-ignorant?? Presumably, the prime impediment to acquiring knowledge, of learning, is the crushing blow to one's ego of failing to do as well as "the next guy" We can't all be "the smartest guy on the block", but we sure as hades can be the best we can be (as is said by that Army slogan). Let's face it, there's always room for improvement; this is the essence of learning: the eternal striving for excellence that will do wonders for our self-esteem (which you will note is EARNED). A close cousin to the concept of striving is that of being challenged and which has been extolled often here as one of the legitimate joys of life (stupid challenges are stupid, and our learning allows us to identify stupidity). Isn't it true that one of the things that makes us human is our aspirations to achieve, and what could be more rewarding of achieve ment than doing well in school? Less that, we are but passengers on a ship that takes us we know not where. Again, it's our (useful) knowledge that in large measure defines us. Those who persist in their desire for knowing are those who have earned a badge of honor.

.



NATIONAL ARCHIVE

"GO THAT WAY"

In all probability this director is a green-shirt sans a green-shirt and sans a green cloth helmet. What no doubt happened here was that this out-of-uniform green-shirt first disengaged the arresting-wire from the tail-hook (note his gloves) and then, because the yellow-shirt was elsewhere for some unknown reason, he took it upon himself to direct this Corsair up forward so as to clear the landing area for the next aircraft 20 seconds behind (20 + 10 seconds to disengage = 30) If this aircraft did not taxi forward post haste, a wave-off of the following aircraft would be necessary, and we all know that such an event is not a trifle. Thus he made it his personal responsibility to do the right thing, although I would not want to guess what the yellow-shirt would have to say about this. It appears that the pilot isn't looking around for someone else to direct him, and perhaps this was a normal occurrence due to a lack of sufficient yellow-shirts on board ship. Who knows? I never saw a green-shirt direct an aircraft. However, all personnel on the flight deck knew what had to happen for a smooth operation and when something had to be done, it was done. The responsibility shown on the flight deck was endemic. This was most apparent when a crash occurred. In these events, the blue-shirts knew what had to be done and so did it, with a minimum of direction from the yellow-shirts. For instance, if the officer-in-charge (a yellow-shirt) thought a foam was the most appropriate remedy for a certain type of fire, he called for it from the blue-shirts. If all that was needed was a fire-extinguisher, he called for that. Nonetheless, the blue-shirts by in large did most of the fire-fighting on their own recognizance based on their critical thinking (which was in turn based on their previous training they received at fire-fighting school. I could claim only one day of such a school because originally I was assigned to the quartermasters division (Navigation) which had a minimum requirement for fire-fighting.

This somewhat unseemly ragtag of a sailor is in fact not an interloper. Instead, he's someone of credible stature who saw a situation that needed remedial action and he then took that action. He did what any substantial person would do under those unusual circumstances: he took personal responsibility. As demonstrated in this picture, to be solidly responsible is not to do just that which is required and expected of you, but also to do those proper things on one's own recognizance: an obligation on one's own initiative. Part and parcel of so doing is to have developed the ability to correctly evaluate situations as to their true content. In effect, one must learn to properly and correctly appraise circumstances (there's no getting away from that ubiquitous term "learn". It will surely follow us to our grave). Implied in all of this is the ability to manifest the capability of critical thinking. It requires practice, practice. Here, to be critical does not refer to the perilous or precarious nor does it relate to finding fault. Here, critical thinking means to have well-honed analytical skill and a person of good judgment as concerns the verities of life such as truth, honor, merit, manners, morals and the like. It means to be competently discriminating and precise in one's thinking. And it means to be intelligently responsible: knowing what your duties are and performing those duties, well. Responsibility requires one to be answerable for those things within one's purview (which presumes one is capable of rational thought). One has obligations for which one is accountable, and about which one must be reliable and dependable. One is truly responsible when one not only fulfills one's obligations but also does those things which are not in one's job-description. This ragtag sailor who took it upon himself to direct this Corsair showed just such responsibility beyond duty.


152
152
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"WELCOME ABOARD"

This appears to be a very good landing what with the tail-section of this SB2C over the aft end of the flight deck while the wheels are about 12 feet above the deck. This Helldiver probably will touch down about 200 feet further ahead at about the No.6 arresting-wire, depending on the relative speed of the SB2C over the deck. The LSO looks relatively satisfied and the radioman/gunner seems perfectly content. The Helldiver generally featured relatively "quiet" landings compared to the "hotter" fighters (F6F and F4U) because of the slower stall-speed allowed a more deliberate landing sequence. This was due in part to the extended slats clearly seen at the leading outside edge of the wing (just behind the radio aerial post over the engine). As has been said previously, when the slat is extended as here, the air flow has further to go over the top of the wing compared to the flow under the wing. This air-speed differential causes an inverse air-pressure differential: the faster the speed, the less the air-pressure. Thus the less the air-pressure on top of the wing the more the lift. The extended flap at the trailing edge of the wing, inboard, has the same effect. When events don't turn out optimally but instead when what is seen here transpires further up the deck, one is somewhat transfixed. It's one thing to have it pass by you while it's on the deck and quite another when it does so while still airborne. It's a strange sensation even though you know these LARGE machines are made to fly. But that they fly so close to you, out of control, is fairly disquieting, to put it mildly. However, things don't happen that fast and that abruptly that you can't step aside without too much difficulty. Well, as a matter of fact there were times when it wasn't all that easy considering that there were others around you who also wanted to make a hasty retreat. Alertness was the key.

Could it be said that contentment is the avoidance of an SB2C as it bears down on you from overhead? No, not hardly, for relief is not contentment. Then could it be that contentment is the absence of discontent? No again. Is it the opposite of disappointment? Of discouragement? Of depression? Of helplessness? Of hopelessness? Of melancholy? Of sadness? Of pessimism? Of loneliness? Of dejection? Of frustration? Of belittlement? Of angst? Of anxiety? Of hard times? Of dread? Of despair? Of pain? No, eighteen times. Contentment isn't the absence of anything, but rather the existence of something. For my part I can vouch for the existence of some of those things that bred contentment: after a long and full day of enervating, even debilitating, work on the raucous, sometimes calamitous flight deck, it was a balm to sit quietly topside in the lookout's chair up in the superstructure in the cool of the evening with gentle breezes wafting the fresh salt air my way. This was a contentment that was also a comfort (even though it admittedly was adjoined and admixed with the despair of thoughts about the "home-front"). The question arises whether we can find enough content-ment to banish the corrosive effects of the above enumerated negatives. One approach would be to just arbitrarily deny the existence of anything with a negative tinge to it (unless of course physical conditions make it impractical). Another is to find enjoyments such as those to be had by giving joy to those to whom you're close. Pleasures abound, especially physical ones, but they are for the most part transitory and pale into insignificance when compared to the pleasures of the mind (the young are not convinced of this, and it's a mark of maturity to realize that the mind is the greatest source of pleasure. Now how do we look upon happiness? Is not the greatest happiness one can know is to give happiness to the one loved? Yet, isn't sincere appreciation of the good things in life also a sound basis of happiness?



NATIONAL ARCHIVE

"STAND CLEAR"

This isn't what's supposed to happen, as demonstrated by this SB2C Helldiver. It's missed hooking all the12 arresting-wires and has just knocked down the first barrier shown here lying down on the deck (note the shadow of the nose well beyond the point where the barrier would be if it were upright). As has been said, an aircraft usually knocks down 2 of the 5 barriers before the next barrier stops it. Therefore, if in some way the aircraft first hits No. 4 barrier, it will be "unleashed" to proceed further to wreak havoc on those and that which is in its way. Remember, these are airborne machines, and so don't have the control of machines whose wheels are on the ground (deck). The next thing to note here is that the right wing-tip is just about to hit the 5-inch gun-mount which will spin the SB2C to its right and into any flight deck personnel who might still be in the area. The problem here is that those personnel probably aren't aware that this will happen and so are probably not scurrying to vacate the area. Casualties could easily occur because of this. It's not possible to determine whether this Helldiver arrived at this point without having yet touched down, or whether it touched down some distance back. If the latter, it was because it was too high at the "cut engine" signal and thus it bounced high enough to prevent the hook from catching one of the arresting-wires. If it was the former, this SB2C will have enough energy and momentum (mass x velocity, mv) to cause it to easily knock down at least 2 barriers and likely another 1 or 2 before stopping. This is so important that the next 6 pages will be devoted to the physics of the problem of stopping a large machine at a non-trivial speed. Here calculus is "the name of the game"and will be used in a very basic form to be understandable to anyone who wishes to delve a little deeper into this subject.

The Helldiver's momentum will cease soon, even abruptly. Stopping is good, stopping abruptly is not (momentum thumbs its nose at the indiscretion of youth's quick reflexes—behind the wheel). In the personal world, momentum can be your friend when things are going well. Yet when interest wavers, when enthusiasm flags, when the good momentum sputters and turns into inertia, what to do? When momentum's not self-sustaining and the reestablishment of the energy of the project requires help, the services of that some- times rare ingredient called initiative is needed. Initiative supplies that first step toward the refurbishment of one's will to accomplish that which should be done but for which one has no interest. Initiative is the motive force to start doing what needs to be done but which one finds distasteful. Not everything we should do is distasteful, but that begs the question of knowing those things that we should do. Here a certain amount of intelligence is required , and as we all know, intelligence is a direct derivative of LEARNING. Initiative can be demonstrated very easily by observing how quickly we initiate things to achieve that which we desire. This is a case of where pseudo-initiative is properly self-serving. However, the real test of initiative is when one knows what one should (must) do and then does it though it's considered to be odious (but proper). In many ways this would be a sterile world without those willing to exhibit initiative. Thus we're able to say that those who show initiative are those with character and reflect personal responsibility. It's useful to realize that it's usually that first step toward taking action that's the hardest (homework anyone?) It's also useful to remember that taking the initiative is a "character-builder"that will serve one well in the future. Finally, the good news is that initiative can be a counterpoise to dependency in that we do not have to be burdened by someone always telling us what we should do and when to do it.



HOOKED OR NOT HOOKED?

It's not clear whether this Helldiver caught an arresting-wire or not. What is clear is that it has knocked down the barrier in the foreground, and might on its way to doing the same thing to those up forward. (Why the barrier-stanchion under the Helldiver's nose is leaning forward is a puzzle. It should be upright so as to present maximum impedance to an oncoming aircraft.) After one of these encounters with a barrier, it is the aircraft that's the worse for wear and the barrier can be used again right away, once it's disentangled with the aircraft. After an aircraft is stopped, a green-shirt on the catwalk pulls a lever that will rotate the barrier-stanchion 90 degrees forward to lie flush with the deck. Another lever is pulled to lower the in-deck brackets to allow the arresting-wires to lie flat on the deck. Once these barriers and wires are down, the aircraft is free to taxi up forward and out of the landing area. After this, the same green-shirt will push the two levers to raise both the 5 barriers and the 12-16 wires in preparation for the next aircraft to land 20 seconds later. (It's not clear what those 2 projections are, one by the left wheel and one by the left hand of the green-shirt.) This green-shirt minus a green-shirt and gloves, is one of the 2 that race out after each landing to disengage the arresting-wire from the tail-hook.

The following six pages will devote the second paragraph of each page to the basis of all engineering physics that figure so prominently in the activities on the flight deck. The presentation here will be very basic and available to most all of those who care to be deliberate in their reading of the material. Hopefully it will generate at least a little interest in the marvels of the world of science further on.

Because it figures so importantly in all aspects of the construction and instrumentation of this ship, as well as its operation, the mathematical subject of calculus will be VERY briefly introduced. Calculus is not only the foundation of all the engineering professions, but it also finds "unlimited" applications in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, economics, business, traffic flow, and most anything that is concerned with change. The many ideas of many different subjects are equivalent when viewed at the appropriate level of abstraction. Everything in nature is subject to change, and if a changing situation between two or more interrelated variables can be put into terms of an equation, then calculus can extract the effects of those changes. For example, the "derivative" (one of the two pillars of calculus) refers to the growth of wheat per candle-power of the sunlight, while the "integral" (the other pillar of calculus and the reverse of the "derivative") corresponds to the height of the wheat grown. (It could be said that the creative part in this is to have the insight to derive the (differential) equation for the relationship of wheat (dependent variable) and sunlight (independent variable), while the use of the calculus is "merely" a mechanical undertaking——which can be quite an undertaking when done by hand.) Calculus can then be considered the engine to extract rates of change (derivative) and amounts (integral). These differential equations include rational functions (algebraic) and irrational functions (trigonometric, exponential, and logarithmic), all of which can contain higher order derivatives (squared, cubed, etc.). Since an aircraft carrier's purpose in life is to launch and land aircraft, we will address the subject of motion (as a very basic example of calculus). We begin with an equation of motion, x=5t^2 ("t squared").



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"GOTCHA"

No.107 barged right through No.1 barrier and caught a hook on it, not a common occurrence as far as carrier landings are concerned (to my knowledge). In this case damage was minimal to the aircraft. Like the arresting-wires, the first two barriers were more pliant than the 3rd, 4th, and 5th barriers further up forward because valuable aircraft must be spared at the expense of the one landing aircraft (to say nothing of the more valuable lives in the area), To the right is the 5-inch gun-mount, trained outboard, which impeded the wing-tip of the Helldiver of several pages previous. If you look closely you'll notice that the force of the "trap" (landing) was sufficient to dislodge the base-plate of the barrier-stanchion. Note the radioman/gunner in the rear cockpit. His view toward the front is very limited and he's simply accepting whatever comes his way (as if he had an option! Sometimes life is that way: you have no options and "you're merely along for the ride". This should be a repugnant condition for you and anyone else: certainly any self-respecting person should resist such a circumstance if at all possible. But what if this is not possible.? Personally I would say become heavily involved in those things that interest you so as to mitigate the fact that there's a certain undesirable area in which you don't have any control, thus limiting the effect of that undesirable.) Here we'll continue with the subject of what to many is an unpleasant chore: understanding that most interesting subject, calculus, the linchpin of all that is physical as concerns those activities on the flight deck. Here x, the distance and the dependent variable, is a function of (depends on) the variable time t, the independent variable (x=f(t)). This is our equation of motion. While the average speed is the total distance traveled divided by the total time for the trip, the instantaneous speed (rate of change) is determined from the slope of the tangent to the curve (graph) at a specific time (a specific point on the curve). This slope consists of the hypotenuse of a right triangle formed by a small increment of "time" as the base of a triangle (the abscissa) and a corresponding small increment of "distance" as the vertical of the triangle (the ordinate). The junction of the hypotenuse and the base of this triangle is located at the specific point on the curve that signifies the given specific time t at which the derivative is desired. As the small increments of distance and time approach the infinitesimal, the differential is formed, and the slope of the tangent to the curve represents the derivative (rate of change) at that specific time t.This is the instantaneous speed. For example, given the equation x=5t^2, we can add a differential (a very little bit) to each side of the equation x+dx=5[(t+dt)^2]=5[t^2+2t.dt+(dt)^2] (read, "t squared plus 2t times dt plus dt squared"). Since the very small dt is squared, it can be neglected, so x+dt=5[t^2+2t.dt]. Since x=5t^2, we can delete these two terms from the preceding equation, leaving dx= 5(2tdt). Rearranging, dx/dt=10t, which is the derivative dx/dt of the original equation (x=5t^2). Thus, at time t=3, the derivative dx/dt at time 3 secs. is 10t = 30 ft/sec. This analytical method has been used to derive the derivatives for all the various types of equations, and these derivatives make possible the solution of differential equations, with the help of computer programs (pre computers, the solutions were often times arduous—the above example is about as fundamental as is possible). The next page will briefly address the other pillar of calculus and the reverse of differentiation: integration. For the novices, to leaf through a calculus book is certainly an exceedingly imposing and daunting experience, so the above is a very basic first step to help alleviate their sojourn down the road that will lead to many, many interesting topics.



NAVAL ARCHIVES

THE DEED'S DONE

Another Helldiver has landed satisfactorily and the green-shirt, sans green-shirt, is running out to disengage the arresting-wire while another green-shirt is approaching the tail-hook from the other side of the aircraft. Within a few seconds the arresting-wire will stop paying out and will then start to actively pull back to the left for about 5 feet at which time it will stop. This will allow one of the green-shirts to hold up the tail-hook as the other green-shirt disengages the wire from the hook (note his gloves). Once disengaged, the aircraft will briskly accelerate up the deck toward the parking area. As it does this, an Airdale, with a wheelchock in hand, will rush out from either side of the deck to meet the aircraft that does not stop, or even slow down to accommodate the Airdale. In this way the Airdales accompany the aircraft to the parking area and stay with the aircraft until it stops, with the engine turned off. (What happens in the parking area is the subject of the Parking Chapter.) Then the deed is done. Why do the green-shirts stay to the side until the aircraft has actually touched down? The reason they do is because it's conceivable that the touch down might be such that a fire or explosion occurs at that time. If this were to happen, the green-shirt obviously would not want to be in the area. Conduct on the flight deck during air operations was not oriented such that personnel were exposed to unnecessary risk. Some of the things done on the flight deck were of course risky, such as pulling wheekchocks at launch time. But these were things that had to be done, and so were done with as much care as could be mustered. To expedite that tremulous triad of launch/land/park that every day had to be done, all personnel were mandated to exercise utmost care. There were no exhibitionist to be found on a flight deck, to be sure, and none were sought. There was never any joking or easy camaraderie that I ever saw on the flight deck during air ops and nobody wanted it. Period.

Before considering the second of the two pillars of calculus, integration, let's look at the form used to obtain the derivative of the function (t^n). The derivative of this function is d(t^n)/dt = n[t^(n-1)]. When n =2, d(t^2)/dt = 2[t^(2-1)] =2t, which is the derivative of (x=t^2), our function (distance x as a function of time t) of the previous page (less the preceding constant of "5", i.e., 5t^2). Many problems can be formulated in terms of derivatives. To wit, "let the motion of a particle on a straight line be defined by the condition that the acceleration of the particle at any instant exceeds its velocity at that instant by a quantity equal to the displacement". This can be expressed by the following equation: [d^2(x)/dt^2]- (dx/dt) = x, where t=time, x=displacement, the velocity equals the derivative of displacement with respect to time (dx/dt), and the acceleration equals the derivative of velocity with respect to time [d^2(x)/dt^2] (the acceleration is a second-order differential). The above equation is an example of what is called a "differential equation", those equations that are the "bread and butter" of the engineering professions, as well as those of physics, chemistry, biology, business, economics, traffic control, and on and on. By means of these equations, all kinds of problems are solved, all to the betterment and progress of mankind. There are dozens of such formulations as the one above that are used to obtain the derivative of most every function (both rational and irrational). For instance, d (uv)/dt = v(du/dt) + u(dv/dt), and d(u/v)/dt = [v(du/dt) + u(dv/dt)]/v^2 and d(ln u)/dt = (1/u)du/dt and d(sin u)/dt = (cos u)du/dt and d(e^u)/dt = (e^u)du/dt and d(u^v)/dt = vu^ (v-1)du/dt + u^v ln (u)dv/dt where "ln" is the natural logarithm. To solve these manually can be tedious and prone to errors, but the trusty computer comes to your aid.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

GOOD "TRAP"

Another "Beast on board" (remember, this is the moniker as applied by the pilots themselves. I presume it was a term of semi-endearment, though the Helldiver did have some problems with its flight characteristics: such as stability, especially at the slower speeds. The specifications called for a large bomb-load capability that would also allow 2 of these aircraft to fit on a 40 x 48 foot elevator at the same time. This in turn required a relatively wide fuselage compared to its length. To counteract the ensuing natural stability problems a large tail-section was then required. To delve further into the inherent design problems would be of interest only to aeronautical engineers.) The Helldiver had problems with high-bounce landings and also landing-gear failures. It also had problems at the low landing speeds as it approached touchdown on the deck. So the Helldiver contributed its share of flight deck crashes. However, this landing pictured here is picture-perfect as the yellow-shirt runs out to "take control " of the operation and the green-shirt dashes out from the other side. (Note the arresting wire to the left of the yellow-shirt's left hand.) All the in-deck brackets have already been lowered into the deck so that all the arresting-wires are now flat on the deck (except for that one bracket seen back aft that's still raised for some unknown reason). That "stick" pointing upward just in front of the tail-section is the 0.5 caliber machine-gun that is usually retracted when in the landing mode. Momentarily there will be the other green-shirt appearing from the left to help disengage the tail-hook. Actually, and usually, these green-shirts are already in motion before an aircraft touches down: it's better to be early than late. .

Integration is the reverse of differentiation. (This integration has nothing to do with the imperative of social integration, where diversity is a two-sided coin, both sides of which are useful and valid.) Given a function (distance x = 5t^2), differentiation finds the rate of change of that function (velocity v = 10t). Integration, in turn, finds the distance x from that known function for velocity (v = 10t). One could search for a function (5t^2) whose derivative is 10t, and then form a template that covers all functions of the form (t^n) (where n=2 for the function x = 5t^2). Such has been done for hundreds of functions, both rational and irrational, and is called The Table of Integrals. For our case, the integral of the velocity function v = 10t is [t^(n+1)]/(n+1) = 10[t^(1+1)]/(1+1)] = 10/2[t^2], which is the function for the distance x = 5t^2 (where the exponent n of t is "1"). This is the template for all functions of the form t^n. (The constant of integration must now be found from the initial conditions.) To visualize the process of integration (that is, the process of taking the sum), consider the graph of the of velocity, v = 10t. This "curve" is a straight, ascending line, with the velocity being the ordinate (vertical axis) and the time being the abscissa (horizontal axis). Now consider the area under the curve consisting of many very narrow rectangles, with the base of each rectangle being the time "dt" and the height the rectangle being the velocity at the various times as determined by the position of the rectangle under the curve. One could then say that each narrow rectangle represents a certain small distance: dx = vdt, since v = dx/dt, a small change of distance per a small change of time. Thus, the value of the integral of x, the distance, is the SUM of all of the many, very narrow rectangles whose base is "dt" and whose height is the value of velocity v at each point on the curve as defined by each unit of "dt" as it progresses along the abscissa, left to right. This progression of "dt", left to right, is in turn defined between specific points in time, t =a to t =b. [distance x = integral of dx = integral of vdt, from t =a to t =b].



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

OFF COURSE AND PERILOUSLY CLOSE

Off course and perilously close to the catwalk makes for a peculiar landing. It's not clear why, or if, the LSO gave the "cut-off signal". From the looks of it, it seems clear that this Helldiver was not in the "groove" at any time before this picture was taken. If the LSO did in fact wave-off the pilot, and if in fact the pilot did ignore this wave-off, then the pilot is now in serious trouble because ignoring a wave-off is not to be tolerated. While not ever having been a Navy pilot (or even a pilot of any kind), I'll nevertheless offer another possible explanation for this peculiar state of affairs: The pilot was indeed in the groove and the LSO did indeed give him the "cut"signal. However, the LSO misjudged the actual speed of the Helldiver because the ship was moving at a speed less than he thought it was. Thus the LSO miscalculated the speed of the Helldiver, believing it to be moving faster than in actuality, which actuality was perilously close to the Helldivers stall-speed. As a consequence the pilot felt the Helldiver shudder due to its marginal speed. Therefore the pilot thought that if he continued onward he would come up short of the "sweet spot" on the flight deck. Not only that, he would very likely crash into the ship's fantail if he continued at the speed at which he was moving. In a sudden reflexive moment he made the decision to veer to his left to avoid this imminent catastrophe (against all admonitions to "not ignore wave-offs"). The pilot was hoping for, indeed expecting, a water-landing beside the ship. Instead, what happened was that he too somewhat misjudged the Helldiver's speed, having more of it than supposed. The speed he did have was sufficient to take the Helldiver more forward than he anticipated and onto the deck, albeit perilously close to the catwalk. Thus we have the anomaly of a wave-off turning into a "safe" landing. It also appears that a wire was not caught, meaning that there will be unpleasantness up ahead for any personnel in the area. However, most personnel are on the starboard side of the ship and so the devastation will be limited to those few Airdales on that side.

I'll close this short interlude concerning what should be the fascinating subject of calculus with a very brief application of what was of course one of the fundamentals of an aircraft carrier's purposes in life: stopping, within a short distance, a hefty aircraft moving at about 60 mph relative to the deck, and so keeping people and things from becoming broken. As has been said, there was a set of 12 strong cables (wires) placed across the flight deck about 25 feet apart and starting at about 40 feet from the stern end of the flight deck. An aircraft's tail-hook was to catch hold of one of these cables which in turn would "play out" so as to bring the aircraft to a halt after having continued forward another 30 to 50 feet (depending on which wire was caught). So what is the relationship of the energy required to stop this aircraft and the aircraft's velocity? (velocity being directed speed). First, a few definitions are in order: mass "m" is a constant; force "F" equals mass "m" times acceleration "a" (Force = ma, Newton's Second Law); velocity "v" equals an increment of distance "x" per increment of time "t" (v = dx/dt); acceleration "a" equals an increment of velocity "v" per increment of time "t" (a = dv/dt); the integral of a function is denoted by the brackets "{}"; and the integral {dz} = z. Finally, the work "W" is a transitory form of kinetic energy (K.E.), the energy of motion, and K.E. equals an increment of work "W" which in turn equals the force "F" times an increment of distance "x" (dW = Fdx). With all of the above, dW = Fdx = F(dx/dt) dt =F(v)dt. So, W = {(Fv)dt} = m{(dv/dt)v(dt)} (Remember, F = ma). Then, m{(dv/dt)v(dt)} = m{v(dv)} which equals m/2[v^2] in the interval of time t1 to t2.



MINOR MISHAP

No, the "RR" doesn't stand for "Rest and Rehabilitation" though who knows, perhaps this is in order. This Helldiver made a satisfactory landing even though its tail-wheel didn't hold up. This does not come under the heading of an accident, and the aircraft won't be out of commission for long. The person walking toward us is the radioman/gunner of this SB2C. He's an enlisted man who is teamed with the pilot of this Helldiver. Wherever the pilot goes, so does this radioman/gunner (go with whatever aircraft this pilot mans). The head of the brown-shirt (plane-captain) of this aircraft (107) is seen just above the canopy as he talks to the pilot who's still in the cockpit. To the left is probably an officer from the Aircraft Engineering Department who's assessing the damage that has to be repaired. In short order a dolly will be rolled up, the Airdales will crouch under the forward part of the tail-section, the Airdales will stand up straight lifting the tail-section, the dolly will be rolled under the tail-section, and then the Airdales will push this Helldiver to an elevator to go down to the hanger deck for repair. Presuming there are other aircraft overhead, this needs to be done expeditiously. It appears this is not the case because usually there are many Airdales milling about in the area of any incapacitated aircraft that need immediate attention. Next to the engineering officer is probably an Airdale who's just curious about the situation (and why not? Intelligent curiosity is a wondrous thing to possess. Even if it does nothing else, it provides you with an irrepressible zest and zeal for life and what it has to offer us in terms of the wealth of things to know. Since there is an almost infinite amount of interesting things "out there", there should be no problem in our being occupied. Admittedly, most of this can be found in the realm of the intellect, but there's no dearth of experiencing those very same things (such as travel and etc.) However, there's the obvious caveat that we must be intelligent and critical enough to direct ourselves in non-destructive activities or even thoughts. This is what they call a "no brainer".

The "above" tells us a VERY important fact: the work, or energy of motion (K.E.), is expended in a time-interval as a function of the velocity SQUARED. Thus this energy must be absorbed by the wire in 30 to 50 feet. But of even more importance to us is the FACT that the kinetic energy of motion must be absorbed only by the friction of the locked tire skidding on the road (elsewhere, there is less friction available). This friction of the skid is precious little when it is realized that it is only that small portion of the tire on the road that has to control the hurtling momentum of a very large object. Forty miles per hour squared is 1600, while fifty miles per hour squared is 2500, and 60 mph squared is 3600. The energy, and thus the force required to stop a vehicle, increases exponentially, so even if one's reflexes are "instantaneous" (and they aren't), one is still at grave risk to collide with something before that energy is depleted by the friction. The Laws of Physics are in control, NOT you. You're merely a passenger "on for the ride", a speed-run that bodes ill not only for yourself, but for innocent others. You don't have to be smart about calculus to know that it's the idiot's delight to drive fast; most ANY fool can do that. Yes, this is a cautionary note about something that could be very deleterious to your health and that which could determine the outcome of a FOOL's future. And yes, I too have been the FOOL on a few occasions in this regard, and to this day, I mentally wince at the thought of those occasions. Drunken drivers will, and should, serve serious time; ditto a speeding driver.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PICTURE-PERFECT

This looks to be a picture-perfect landing in progress, what one might call a textbook touch down. This TBM Avenger is in the "groove" and of ideal height when over the end of the flight deck. Assuming the deck (the ship) is moving at 10 knots (notice the ship's wake) and that the stall-speed of the TBM is 70 knots, it will be moving 60 knots over the deck at touch down. Within about 2 seconds from now the pilot will pull back slightly on the control-stick to give the TBM a slight flare upward just before touch down to enable a gentle 3-point landing. The position and speed of the TBM now will probably place it, I believe, at that spot just to the right of the end of the right-hand 5-inch gun-barrel, catching wire No. 5 (looks as if it's going to shoot the TBM out of the sky!). Since we're presuming the TBM is moving at 60 knots, the arresting-wire run-out will be somewhat greater than if the speed over the deck were slower, such as 40 knots. There are two things in this picture that "mar" its appearance: there's no follow-on aircraft in view in the landing pattern 30 seconds behind, and the following plane-guard destroyer is not on the port side of the ship (besides being too close). Otherwise, all seems to be shipshape in all respects. The yellow-shirt can be seen to the right of the left-hand gun-barrel and the green-shirt can be seen further aft at the edge of the flight deck. As has been previously said, the green-shirt usually is half way out toward the landing aircraft at this time. Not so here, and that's probably because there are no other aircraft in the landing pattern and so no immediacy to clear the deck area for the next aircraft 30 seconds later. A further observation shows us the set of six 20-mm guns to the left of the left-hand gun-barrel and beyond that the horizontally reclining radio antenna tower put there to avoid possible crashes. For some things, such as this landing, one can define the specifications for perfection, for the ideal. For some other things, such as a vacation, each one of us has our own definition of what specifies perfection, the ideal. These two examples are to be found at the opposite poles of the spectrum of perfection, of the ideal. At the one pole is the "absolute", at the other is the "relative". The former could be said to be universal, the latter personal. How we interpret that spectrum is the source of much of what ails us as a society. So it's incumbent upon us to be able to differentiate between the two poles and that which is in between. Life and liberty are at one pole while a people's culture is at the other pole. The sanguine societies know what's absolute and what's relative. (I might add parenthetically that it would be most beneficial if cultures did not become overrun and homogenized: the Irish culture remains Irish, the Spanish culture remains Spanish, the French culture remains French, the English culture remains English, and ditto for ALL cultures (with of course the maintenance of "life and liberty". This naturally implies that each culture retain its own language which in turn means that that language of that culture is required (so as to negate the creation of isolated groups of people in that culture). The governance of that culture is of course unique to the conditions of that culture that prevail and define that culture. But that's a volume in its own right. Thus the centrality here is that we not only gratefully acknowledge the differences (of cultures) but also enjoy to the fullest those differences. As the French are said to say, "Vive la difference!", even though it's in a different context.) Admittedly there's no such thing as perfection (unless it's in nature), but the quest for it is ennobling for all those who truly strive to "reach the unreachable star" (Don Quixote and "The Man From La Mancha"). The pilot here made a near perfect landing. You be proud and "assault" perfection.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COMING HOME

A substantial aircraft this, this TBM Avenger which was, as has been said, the largest single-engine aircraft of WWII. It weighed 10,700 lb. with a take-off weight of 18,000 lb. It's wing-span was 55 feet and it was 40 feet long. It's wing-area was 490 sq. ft. and its height was 16 feet. It required a power-plant of 1,750-hp to reach up to 265 mph and an altitude of 15,000 feet. Its range was 1,130 miles with a load of 2,000 lb. of bombs. It had two 0.5-cal. machine-guns in the wings, a 0.5-cal machine-gun in the upper turret, and a 0.3-cal. machine-gun in the lower turret. It had provisions for rocket-projectiles and a search radar. Yes, it was a large aircraft that was well thought of by the Navy. Here's a nice view of a by-the-book landing that seems to satisfy the LSO and his assistant. (There was always an assistant LSO who was junior, comparable to a co-pilot. He was also probably in a training mode.) That "stick" pointing downward under the left wing is a radio altimeter, unique to the TBM. Also clearly seen is one of the brackets holding up one of the arresting -wires. These brackets were recessed into the deck to lower the wires so as to allow the aircraft to taxi up the deck. They are then raised again after the aircraft has passed all 12 wires. As was said, the Avenger has a range of 1,000 miles, allowing an outbound range of 500 miles. Missions were never that far, but if the average speed was 200 mph, the Avenger could well be in the air for 4 hours. In any event, this was a long period of time for the pilot and crew to be aloft. Not only were they airborne that long, but also they were always over a trackless, unforgiving ocean with no identifying landmarks. The one redeeming fact here was that they were not alone because they were with their squadron. Nevertheless, how can they be considered anything less than intrepid and valiant?

One might say that these pilots and airmen were doing what they wanted to do and chose to do, for after all they were all volunteers. One could also say that they flew these aircraft for vainglory, or the extra pay, or even the excitement (?). One could say these things , but one could also say that they left the security of the ship to venture high into that inhospitable sky where danger awaited them because they were above all intrepid and valiant. If so, why so? Could we, would we, be so intrepid and valiant? And how could we, the earthbound, even remotely emulate their dauntlessness and valorousness? One answer that could come to mind is to be courageous enough to do the right as we see it to be right regardless of the price. Is not that to be intrepid and valiant? Thus we again arrive at that age-old question, "What is right?" For instance, is it right to let wrongs go unpunished or even unfettered? How can one do what's right when one doesn't know what is and is not right (correct or proper)? Often the search for what's right is painfully difficult, but is that any reason to shirk one's duty? Intrepid and valiant, that's what's needed. There are many varieties of right (rectitude) and to thoughtfully enter this thicket reflects one's dauntlessness because what's right for one set of circumstances is wrong for another set of circumstances (the absolutists are now besides themselves for they abhor the relative, but such is life). Often it's as simple as not imposing on someone who's not imposing on someone (or who does not want to be imposed upon). It also might be as simple as seeing yourself as others see you. Again, doing right might be conforming your freedom of action to your known responsibilities. What's right might consist of standards of conduct which adhere to the well-established principles/rules in accord with a consensus of what is appropriate to a set of circumstances that makes good judgment possible (and probable). Whew! Defining "right" can be hard.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MY MISTAKE

My mistake. Two pages previous I made the assertion that the TBM would touch down at a spot as indicated by being just to the right of the end of the 5-inch gun-barrel. I was wrong, by a little. This is a good example of how unreliable one's judgment can be vis-a-vis the final touch down location of a large aircraft moving at 70 mph toward a relatively small platform that's moving both horizontally and vertically simultaneously. Sometime the results are just embarrassing and sometimes they're disastrous (and often they're smooth) The problem's knowing before touch down what it'll be. As has been said, "what will be will be": when you think everything is proceeding as it should, it suddenly doesn't, and unpleasantness prevails. On a carrier during landing operations, fatalism "goes with the territory". Here the TBM landed short; it could have landed long with a different set of circumstances of speed., relative speed, height, ship speed, ship motion, pilot reaction, LSO competence, and wind conditions at that time. This set of variables all go into both good and bad landings. You take what you get. // That object in the upper right-hand corner is the end of the inboard upper 5-inch gun- barrel. Directly below this fairly well defines where I stationed myself awaiting an aircraft to escort up the deck. Other Airdales stood in the island area while still others were on the other side of the deck. We had no assigned places to be; we only had to be quickly available to join up with an aircraft as it taxied forward. As in many other things, one tends to take a given spot for the simple reason that we feel more secure in a familiar place. However, as previously stated, the pilots and LSO most often did a good job leaving little room for an overt anxiety. And yet, and yet, the "you never can tell" syndrome of landings was ever present in the mind's recesses.

Yes, I made a miscalculation as to the destination of this TBM. Since it was made from my arm-chair, no harm was done. On the other hand, on the flight deck one could not be so cavalier about such things where there's actual danger afoot. To my knowledge there's nothing else said in this book that's inaccurate. Over the years I've made mistakes aplenty, no question, but fortunately I feel confident that they have only harmed myself. More importantly, mistakes that are morally deviant toward others is another matter. If these mistakes are inadvertent, they're amenable to rectification If, on the other hand, the mistakes are not inadvertent, repercussions are inevitable. For instance, one should not ascribe false traits, attributes and attitudes to others with the intent of doing them harm. It's just plain WRONG to deliberately and knowingly mischaracterize someone. (Actually, it's not only wrong, it's also demonstrably and damnably wrong.). When one learns the egregious harm done to a friend, one will have another lesson learned. Then that old bromide "learn from your mistakes" takes on a new, vivid meaning. However platitudinous one considers it, it's a seriously useful concept. Just as one learns from the mistakes of swinging a tennis racket, so too does one learn from one's morally-based mistakes. But it'll work for you only if you acknowledge your mistake (remember the admonition of being absolutely honest with yourself). Without being absolutely honest with yourself, you're seriously diminishing your chances of learning from your mistakes, and we ALL make. mis- takes. Unfortunately there are some who are so wrapped up with themselves that they will never admit to being wrong (being mis- taken). As has been said, "It takes a man to admit his mistake" (pardon the gender lapse; chivalry is not dead yet). If nothing else, this ability to admit one's wrong-doings is therapeutic to one's conscience, surely a seriously important consideration to oneself/society.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

YET ANOTHER GOOD TRAP

Unfortunately I didn't have the presence of mind to have been more carefully observant of all the details of the accouterments of launching and landing aircraft from and onto a carrier's flight deck. For the most part youth has a way of ignoring the more interesting things that go on about them. Of no particular concern to a young Airdale such as I was, I didn't take notice of the fact that there were 12 uncovered arresting-wires while wires 13-16 were covered by barriers 1-4 (of 5). This is of significance because even as a barrier is impeding an aircraft it could also be hooked to a wire. This cooperation of the wire and the barrier was often sufficient to prevent an excessive run-out of the wire and thus preventing further damage up forward. It's my considered opinion that this TBM was hooked by wire No. 11, considerably beyond the optimum Nos. 3-6. This picture clearly shows that the moment the hook catches a wire, the green-shirt lowers the barriers to preclude any damage to the aircraft. (Recall that the run-out is shortened for the higher numbered wires.) Directing our attention now up the deck, we can make out a fair number of Airdales next to and among the parking/parked aircraft. Besides attending an aircraft as it's taxiing, some others are pushing and working aircraft to properly spot them when the maneuvering-room became too close. Thus, during a landing operation there are of course Airdales around the parking/parked aircraft as succeeding aircraft continue to land and taxi forward. If in turn a landing aircraft does "wild and crazy" things, the Airdales could be, will be, in dire situations: there are very few places in which an Airdale can find which will offer him security. In point of fact, there are no such places because a careening aircraft pushes other aircraft and the Airdales have to absorb the hits. Again, momentum of the colliding aircraft is transmitted to everything and everybody in the area. Aircraft are tough, men are not, and there's no place to hide.

Hiding sometimes provides no surcease, and it certainly doesn't do so for those Airdales who might be in the jeopardy of an errant aircraft. As the inimitable Joe Louis once said. "You can run, but you can't hide". So it must be with our faults and our shortcomings that we ALL have to one extent or another. While it's not proposed that we obsess about these things, being counterproductive, it's suggested that we confront them foursquare. If we don't, who will? Yes, to do so can be unpleasant, but perhaps our faults and shortcomings are more unpleasant to a host of others. The rub here is to identify and acknowledge those faults and shortcomings. What one considers fine, another might find not only inappropriate but also unpleasant, to say nothing of being rude, crude and socially unacceptable. Thus do realize that what one person finds acceptable, another finds unacceptable. If we all lived as hermits there'd be no problem. So would you rather accommodate yourself, one individual, or would you rather accede to the many and thus contribute to the general welfare of the many? Again, what's acceptable, what's proper, what's beneficial? Sometimes the foregoing involves fine lines of distinction, and sometimes it simply means "getting out of line". This is why critical thinking is so important in a complex, multitudinous society. What pleases one offends another. The selfish, the self-centered, the self-absorbed will say, "So what?" Those of the opposite stripe will say, "Plenty". If it's not a matter of fundamental beliefs, why antagonize others and thus make for a difficult environment in which you and those you care about must reside? (Useful self-serving.) Obviously, there are no clear-cut answers here except to say critical, thoughtful thinking often tends to be in short supply where it's needed most. "United we stand, divided we fall".

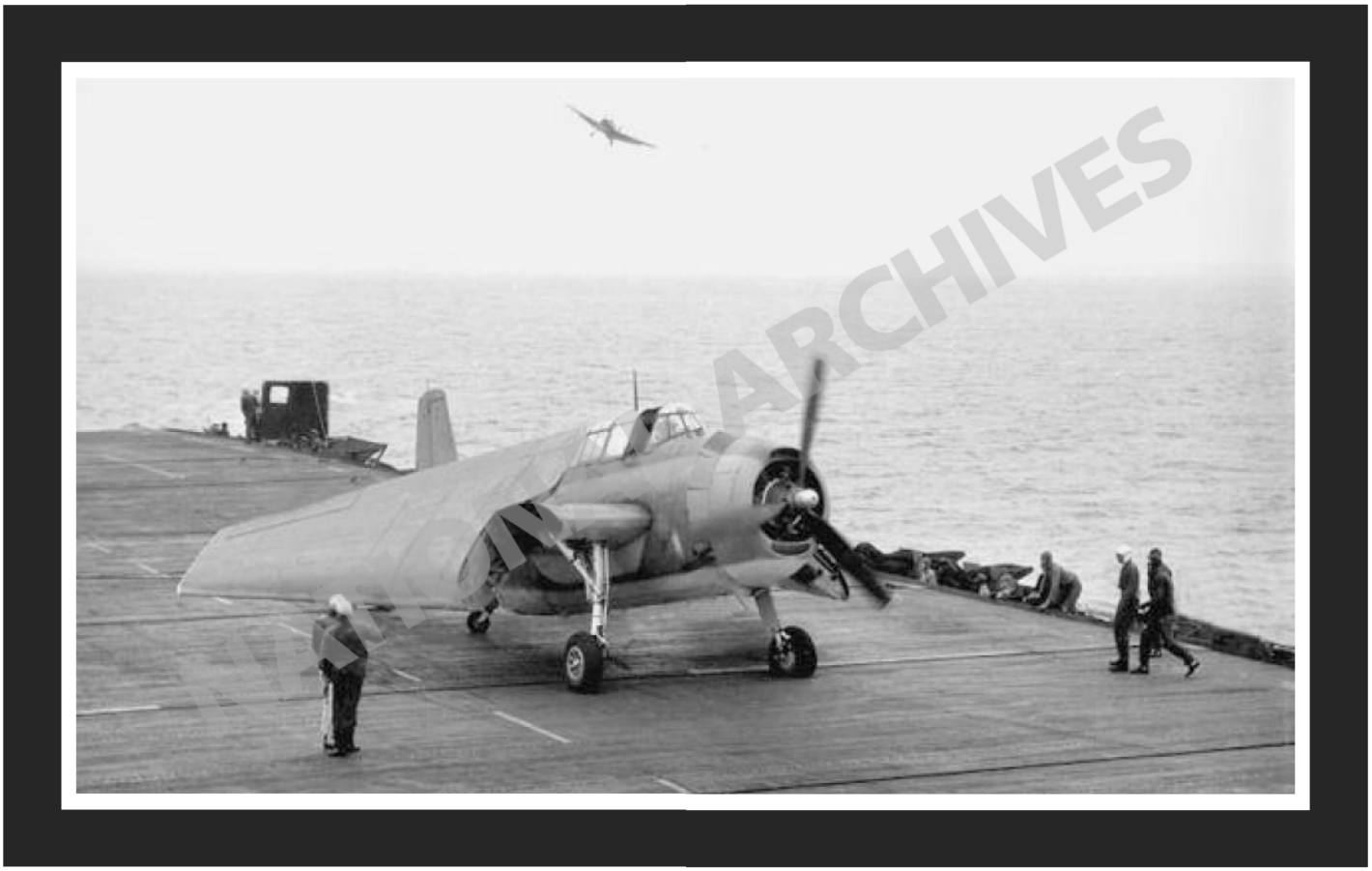

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DECK NOT CLEAR

There's been an interruption in the smooth flow of activity on the flight deck as seen by observing the follow-on airborne aircraft making an early pass-by and as indicated by the casual attitudes of the personnel. The cause? The cause can be seen in the semi-deflated condition of the Avenger's left tire (for whatever reason). However, it's not deflated to such an extent that the TBM can't "limp" along sufficiently well to reach the deckedge elevator to go down to the hanger deck. Usually the pilot folds his wings as he taxis forward, but by the look of the slow rpm of the propeller he's folding the wings while at a stand-still, further delaying the landing process. And again, where are the 2 Airdales, with wheelchocks in hand, accompanying the TBM? I would judge that the deck will be clear by the time the aircraft, out of sight, that's following the visible airborne aircraft, makes its appearance. Notice the LSO peering around the wind-screen to ascertain when the deck will be clear. The yellow-shirt controlling this TBM is "right below us" and those personnel on the catwalk are green-shirts (in harm's way). This picture provides a good idea as to how an aircraft approaches a carrier for a landing: displace the airborne aircraft to the left "by 3 inches" and it will be moments away from being in the "groove" 200 yards astern heading straight in. This indicates that the landing pattern follows a race-track pattern with gently curved corners. Such a course allows the pilot to have an easy view of the deck for all but the last 200 yards of the pattern. This then raises the com-fort-level of the pilot, and I dare say that of those on deck below. The LSO literally takes control of the aircraft, through the pilot, for the last 200 yards of the approach while the deck personnel watch, figuratively holding their breathe: "We're in this all together".

"We're in this all together". In this picture "this" refers to the ever recurring possibility of being physically smashed by a large wayward aircraft that's moving airborne at 40 to 60 mph over a small patch of deck space. But in the general sense, "this" becomes being together in close proximity to one another in our normal day-to-day sojourns. In such situations of the many closely interfacing the many, we should all be willing to undergo what can only be considered trivial sacrifices (such as being accepting of incompatibilities of personalities). Generosity of spirit can go a long way toward smoothing the frictions of 'unlikes' to 'unlikes'. Are we to deny that we're not generous? Are we going to let narrow self-interest color our outlook? Isn't it true that "getting along with others" tends to generate a chain-reaction? (We're of course presuming that there are no fundamental problems with our basic precepts of decency. Here absolutism must hold sway over relativism.) Is it really so difficult to adapt oneself to the general preferences of others, if only for the nonce? It would be presumptuous in the extreme to consider that one's own fancies are all that matters. Is it all that difficult to conform one's behavior to that of the group? (Even while adamantly professing that proper individualism has an honored place in the general scheme of things—— to say nothing of the importance of a stolid resistance to all deleterious peer-pressure that assault youth.)

A self-imposed self-discipline is an attribute that will serve one well in one's pursuit of one's goals; it also does so in forming a compatibility with others where "we're in this all together". It would seem that our attitudes toward others be accommodating enough to accept the differences that will inevitably occur, and beyond that, to find interest in those differences. For what can be said of life if we don't find interest in the differences that abound about us? No, it's not sanctimonious to turn to "the better angels of our nature".



"A OK"

The yellow-shirt to the left is giving the "A OK" signal to the chief maintenance officer. Presumably the pilot radioed ahead to the ship that he thought he had a mechanical problem of some sort. Upon landing, either the yellow-shirt or the pilot determined that there was no problem, and so the TBM is going to be sent forward instead of being sent to the deckedge elevator and the hanger deck for repairs. Right now the TBM is under the control of the yellow-shirt to the right who's holding the TBM's left wheel as he gives the "come ahead" signal with his left hand. This is to straighten out the TBM along the deck's centerline for a more orderly progression forward. (Again, where are the 2 Airdales at each wheel?) At this moment the pilot is revving the engine to generate the power to fold the wings and to accelerate so as to clear the deck area for the following aircraft. You can be sure that there's excessive noise in the power being generated right now, and when standing next to the wheel-strut, ones feels very much dominated by the 16 foot machine towering over you (at least I did as the TBM made its presence emphatically known). I suppose the noise doesn't bother some people such as that yellow-shirt whose cap is unbuckled as is not the other yellow-shirt. // When considering the aircraft that's approaching, it must be remembered that the ship is moving forward. Thus as the aircraft comes closer and closer, it will more closely move toward the "groove" directly behind the ship. However, in my humble opinion, right now the aircraft is about "½ inch" too low. I believe it's problematical that this aircraft will land this time around, but then I certainly never professed to second-guess an LSO, himself a qualified pilot and well trained. So it must be with the pilots: the authority here is the LSO and he must be trusted implicitly. In return, the LSO must fully augment his ability with the utmost integrity. There can be no lapses, for by definition, integrity must be constant.

Integrity, that most elusive trait of all. First, integrity implies, no, demands, dependability and reliability. Next, we move on to that area where integrity exhibits a soundness and adherence to moral values and principles. Integrity represents a sterling character (a repository of ethical values). Integrity shines as a paragon of rectitude.[The reader's left with properly defining "moral values, principles, ethical virtues, and rectitude".] Then, the most elusive of all the ingredients of integrity: honesty, that value, that virtue, that ethic that unfortunately has many shades of gray. As has been said before, and will probably be again because it's so important, integrity is the indispensable ingredient of a rational society. Rationality is not the same as rationalizing, and one's on very thin ice if one tries to rationalize dishonesty. We can itemize at least two specific reasons for lying: one, an unabashed meanness and two, an attempt to implement an agenda. (To unmask the latter, does the lie promote the liar's cause?) The latter also has no place in a well functioning society but nevertheless is practiced by all strata of society. It's not enough to say that eventually it'll be counterproductive. We can't afford to await eventuality. There are those who say that lying, if not in court, is not illegal. Wrong. Fraud, that unlawful breach of confidence used to gain an unfair or dishonest advantage is all too prevalent. Liars try to sway you to their agenda by having you do or say something you wouldn't ordinarily. They lie to manipulate, control, and/or intimidate. Deliberate deceit and deceptions are the engines of instability that break friendships (those pearls). Lying as a 'means' to a noble 'end' dishonors that 'end'. Don't do damage to the truth lest you tear the fabric of society. (Translation: don't lie else bad things will happen.) Yes, there's true honor in integrity.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"OVER HERE"

While I definitely appreciate the soft edges of this picture, I also take exception with two items: first, it's clear that this picture was not taken on board the Antietam because again there are no Airdales at each wheel-strut with wheelchocks in hand. It's my firm recollection that well before this moment in time we would go to the aircraft to be next to it as it proceeded forward. While each ship had its own protocol about how it conducted its flight operations, on the Antietam it was my understanding that should the aircraft stop at any time for more than about 20 seconds we were to chock the aircraft so that it wouldn't inadvertently move forward (to do possible damage). But again, I only speak for the Antietam (or at the very least, for myself). Actually, I would position myself adjacent to the after 5-inch gun-mounts so as to "intercept" the aircraft soon after it was disengaged from the arresting-wire. This was my modus operandi and I won't vouch for any other Airdale. I did it my way, and no one objected. The other anomaly, if it can be called that, is that the airborne aircraft is at least 10 seconds tardy. ("Big deal" one might say. Yes, it was when close to 100 aircraft had to be brought aboard.) // All the personnel in the picture are yellow-shirts. The one with upraised arms is identifying himself as the one now in charge. Note that its wings are already folded back and that it's lined up with the center-line. The airborne aircraft is not yet in the "groove" as indicated by the slight dip to its left. It should be pointed out that there are at least 2 other yellow-shirts out of sight to the left awaiting the touch down of this aircraft. They of course are giving the aircraft wide berth until touch down because as we all know those aircraft sometimes do the unexpected at the last moment, going any which way. As the pilots themselves say, a landing is but a controlled crash. They of course say it in jest, at least outwardly, but who knows how much real truth there is in that off-hand remark?

Another "bird" has come home to roost, closely followed by one of its compatriots. And so it goes, day after day, aircraft after aircraft, they keep coming at you seemingly without end, ever encroaching on your attempts to maintain the semblance of equanimity of your sensibilities. (One must seriously consider that with a complement of 100 aircraft launching/landing twice a day, one can be forgiven the somewhat overblown account above.) Thus must one learn to persist in one's striving to do that which one must. To persistently strive intelligently is good for one's psyche, for what is the use of the result if not attained by diligent effort? Is it not true that it's the effort more than the result that merits approbation? To wit, even though the result of my first volume was a failure (a picture-book whose subject-matter found no interest in the readers' world and an ill-conceived format that elicited only disparagement), I nevertheless gained the satisfaction of creating a thing that never before existed. Also, as the song says, "I Did It My Way". The striving starts you while the persistence sustains you. The one without the other leaves the one ineffective. Before all else though is the need to be motivated, preferably self-motivated and as mentioned before, this is to be derived from one's array of interests. My experiences on the Antietam as an Airdale was motivation enough to initiate these two volumes. However, it was further required to augment this with persistence to sustain my original intention to overcome the difficulties of creating these two books. This was especially so since this is entirely a one-man job. Therefore, this pair of striving and persistence are prerequisites for a world of creativity that hopefully benefits the general society. I'd be remise if I didn't add that stated another way, fortitude will always trump discouragement. It's true, entirely.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A FAMILIAR SCENE

This is a scene so familiar to me as to resonate with a "poignancy" that even 59 years cannot erase. For 12 months this was my do- main, this was my space from whence lurked the sharp pangs of anxiety, this was the place where I felt alone in a crowd. However, even though I was essentially a loner, I can remember well the comfortable feeling of not being physically isolated. There was comfort in numbers. This is a typical scene of the flight deck during a landing operation with most of those seen in this picture being brown-shirts (plane-captains who were assigned to a particular aircraft; the aircraft was their responsibility, and though other aviation mechanics worked on an aircraft, the brown-shirt was also an aviation mechanic who kept track of the status of the aircraft and kept the pilot appraised of this.) As each aircraft taxied up to the parking area ahead, the corresponding brown-shirt met it and inquired of the pilot as to whether there were any problems. One of those next to the TBM is no doubt its plane-captain. Those personnel to the left are also brown-shirts awaiting their aircraft. The yellow-shirt with his arms upraised is in control of this TBM as he directs it to its parking spot "right where we are now". The airborne aircraft in the distance is, I would say, about "1 1/4 inch" too far to the right to be at the 30 second interval. Meanwhile, the Airdales are either up forward where we are parking the aircraft, or else back aft beside the superstructure or 5-inch guns (my preference) awaiting the newly landed aircraft. And yes, the near TBM does not have an Airdale at each wheel as we were wont to do on the Antietam. And no, I don't know why they aren't there. One could reasonably say that there was s dearth of Airdales at this particular time, but then again, it's not as if the Navy wasn't able to scrape up some seamen to do this rather unpleasant job. (I must say here that yes, it was a dicey job, but no, it wasn't something that any red-blooded youth couldn't do.)

To me, this wide-angle view of what was once "my world" is pleasing: the deck, the aircraft, the superstructure, the personnel, the motion, the commotion, the probabilities, the possibilities, the anxieties, the noise, the sky, the sea, the wind, the air, and last but not least, those damnable propellers. These things were all part of the overall view as separate from my own personal 'contest' with individual aircraft. Just so do we often only acknowledge the trees for the forest: our penchant to be concerned only with our personal problems to the exclusion of the wider world. But beyond that (and hopefully eschewing the pontifical) we all allow ourselves to become so involved in our own conceits that we're unwilling or unable to understand viewpoints different from our own. Some call this tunnel-vision. It seems that most problems worth the effort are many-faceted: reasonably based, valid and different conclusions from a given set of postulates. Thus one could say that a given conclusion depends on which set of (true) postulates are chosen and how much emphasis each postulate is given. As go the postulates so goes the conclusion. The point to be made is that reasonable people can arrive at different conclusions depending upon how they select and evaluate the postulates. I like 'quiet' and you like 'loud', so therefore our conclusions based on those postulates will lead us down different paths. Thus should we concentrate on the postulates, not on a desired outcome. Unfortunately there are those who are so desirous of a given outcome that they will denigrate others based solely on unrelated attitudes. Earnestness is good while dogmatism is bad, especially the kind that rants and rails, so preventing others an opportunity to express themselves. (Are they so afraid of having their conclusions exposed? It certainly seems so.)
.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TWO VERSIONS

Things are amiss here. But first, things as they should be: this TBM Avenger is accelerating up the deck at about 10 to15 mph as the pilot is folding the wings. The Airdale, wheelchock in hand, is fast-stepping toward the wheel-strut to then grab ahold of it with a firm grip. Another Airdale is doing the same at the other wheel-strut. The yellow-shirt has just passed control of this TBM to the next yellow-shirt up the deck. He then directs his attention back aft for the next aircraft that will be approaching in a matter of 20 seconds. Meanwhile, the Airdales at the struts are literally being dragged along as they struggle against the wind-blast of the prop-wash, trying valiantly to to stay with the TBM (moving at 10 to 15 mph). Even while holding onto the strut, this is no mean task, but hold on you do until it slows down to almost a stop as it reaches the parking area. Now as it actually is: the TBM is revving up its engine as the pilot folds the wings. But the TBM isn't moving forward as the Airdale only strolls out to the TBM (since it isn't going anywhere). The yellow-shirt looks to the senior air officer on the deck to determine what to do next. AND the Airdales, upper left, are running back aft to attend to an aircraft in distress. Note that there's no one around to order them to do this: they know that it is they who are the ones who are responsible for rendering aid. It is only they who must apply the manpower to move an incapacitated aircraft. It is only they who must race to the area to put out the fire (if there's a fire). It is only they who are responsible for cleaning up the mess of a crash (under the supervision of the yellow-shirts). As has been said many times, strange things sometimes happen on the flight deck during landing operations, and it is the Airdale who is the expediter of assuring as smooth a landing operation as is possible. This is no mean responsibility for young people of 18 or 19 who only months before were back home doing those things that teenagers might do.

Presuming that there's in fact a conflagration back aft, would you say that these 18-19 year old Airdales running to the fire are in fact responsible? Note that the word used here is "responsible", and not heroic" (for as has been said previously, a hero is one who plainly jeopardies his life to save the life of another, while if done unknown to others, it is true heroism). Whether or not the job at hand is to put out a fire or only to physically remove a damaged aircraft, their very manner of running to the scene bespeaks the fact that they take this job seriously, and thus responsibly. It's not so much a question of duty as it is of doing that which is required and expected of them even without the self-driving force of commitment and duty. If one's committed, there's no particular need for responsibility, but if desire is lacking, it is then that responsibility is put to the test. If sacrifice is added to the mix, responsibility then shows its true colors. The existence of commitment makes the twin virtues of responsibility and sacrifice much more available. The fact that these 18-19 year old youths had little training and experience speaks volumes about the excellence of their concept of responsibility. The pilots had several years of intensive training and the leavening of age, but the Airdales were still "wet behind the ears". So what can be said of responsibility? First, it means to discharge one's obligations, whatever they might be. Being answerable, being accountable, for one's actions is one thing, but being proactive concerning those things for which you're chargeable is a step up. Implicit in this is to KNOW what your responsibilities are; then comes dependability. I believe one can honestly ascribe to those Airdales responsibility under duress, and grace (moral strength) under pressure. This then shall be my tribute to those forgotten, but indomitable, Airdales.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DAVID AND GOLIATH

To be sure, this large TBM Avenger just landed on a "jeep carrier", also called an escort carrier (CVE). Nevertheless, this picture was included in this collection to show in a graphic manner the comparative size of the TBM Avenger. Landing this sizeable aircraft on a limited size deck won't be considered here because I had no experience with such a feat. Perhaps only the most accomplished TBM pilots were given this task, for it must have been a "tour de force". Once landed and taxied forward to the parking space, these TBMs had to be respotted back aft. This in turn required that the Airdales had to push them within close quarters (after the tractors had delivered them from fore to aft). As seen here, there wasn't all that much area available on which to push: only the wheel-struts and the horizontal part of the tail-section and the small part of the wing next to the fuselage. Dull stuff, this, but important nonetheless because there were time-constraints: activities on the flight deck had to be done in a workman-like fashion, expeditiously. // While the CVE was small-decked and the CV was large-decked, both were "battlefields". Yes, the flight deck, during flight ops, constituted a battlefield for the Airdales, no less so for not being dirty and grimy as was that of the "dogface" (infantry), and no less so for having, in absolutes, fewer casualties: (enemy bomb(s) on loaded flight deck, kamikaze on loaded flight deck, strafing of flight deck, fighting fires after enemy attack(s), accident loading aircraft with bombs and/or high octane gasoline, crash into parked aircraft being served by Airdales, crash causing fires that must be fought, taxiing aircraft colliding with other aircraft which generates flying shrapnel, being blown into a fired up propeller covers most of the casualties. The main difference was that an Airdale had medical attention close at hand while a soldier did not. This was certainly big.) This flight deck was the Airdales' field of strife with nothing with which to strike back at the "enemy". His antagonist was up close, very close, and excessively personal. The Airdales' antagonist was in alliance with those two other protagonists, that vicious wind and the deadening noise. The flight deck was a battlefield for "all time", not just from day one to day five. The "enemy" was relentless, offering no respite over that endless day after day regimen. It was cumulative, it was dispiriting, it was "endless". What conceit that mere flesh and blood could contend with, could contest, such powerful and imposing entities. Allegorical yes, but real. There were times, multiple times, when the Airdale was on the margin from whence there was no return. Overstated? Yes, probably, but well within the parameters of the conditions as they were perceived (but then, I was prejudiced.) David and Goliath. Airdale and Avenger. "Nerd" and "the big man on campus". For those not current with the expressions, the "nerds" are the academics while "the big man on campus" is the athlete and/or the most popular, for reasons that are usually murky to those of us who are not on campus. What's puzzling to those of us off campus is that those on-campus types who belittle and taunt "nerds", and who are the most vociferous in flaunting how auspicious and outstanding "our" condition is, don't seem to understand that it's those very same "nerds" who are for the most part directly responsible for how great "our" condition is. The telephone system, the cars, the roads, the bridges, the buildings, the entire infrastructure of our society is thanks largely to those very "nerds" of times past that are so made fun of. by the laughingly dismissive crowd of "on-campus" types. Thank the "nerds" we must, for how bleak would our lives be without them? Why is it that so many are so ungrateful for so much that is directly due to the enterprise and efforts of those "nerds"?



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CARRIER AIR PATROL

A good landing at a good location with a satisfied LSO looking back at his "handiwork". There's a green-shirt to the right, there's a green-shirt to the left, and there's a yellow-shirt in control beckoning the pilot to come ahead. The propeller-blades are just barely moving so that the green-shirts could disengage the arresting-wire even as all the other wires are depressed and the barriers flattened to the deck thus allowing this Hellcat to now accelerate up the deck to the parking area. On it's way it'll be joined by 2 blue-shirt Airdales to proceed to the parking area. Note that the flaps are still depressed, and further note the short distance between the propeller-tip and the deck: an aircraft flares up slightly just before touch down not only to slow the forward speed but also to mitigate the possibility that the tip will strike the deck. Since the deck consists of teakwood, any contact will only gouge the wood somewhat and not do that much (?) damage to the crankshaft (the British carriers had a steel flight deck). Since the LSO isn't concerned with what's aft of the ship, this appears to be the last of 4 returning CAP (Carrier Air Patrol) aircraft.(The replacement patrol has probably already been launched.) The CAP circles the Task Group so as to intercept any "boggies" (enemy) in the area. This is possible due to the large 17-foot dish SK-2 search antenna that has a range of 100 miles. This antenna, along with the SM height-finding antenna and radar system allows the ship's CIC (Combat Information Center) to vector the CAP to intercept the boggies. If the enemy raid was large, the rest of the ship's aircraft would be "scrambled", but if those aircraft were out on a mission, the Task Group's 5-inch, 40-mm and 20-mm guns would have to be brought to bear in their defense. Of course this and the other 3 Hellcats would be launched post haste to defend and protect their "home". This situation was always a problem when sending aircraft on an offensive mission: who's to defend the ship?

When the ship, when the Task Group, is in enemy waters, the CAP was sent up to protect those compatriots below from those predators above. Most all of us are in no position to perform such demanding and potentially heroic deeds (such as the Police Dept., the Fire Dept. and the like). On the other hand we can, we should, protect that which is good and shed that which is bad. Naturally this raises the question of "which is which"? Are some things 'good' while other things are 'very good'? Of course, but how so? And which are universal, which are absolute, which are relative, and by how much? Which values are worthwhile, which are nonnegotiable? For starters, it would seem to be an irrefutable truth that we all should shun the contrivance of things known not to be so (stop lying). Why? One good reason is that democracy is in large measure rendered asunder when it's based on deception. Lying destroys trust and confidence without which a free and democratic society is eroded, and everything then becomes moot. How's one able to make appropriate decisions when the facts are falsified? One doesn't, and so one opts out of the process thus undermining the people's will. In addition, deliberate deceit engenders animosities and antagonisms. This has all been said before, and it should be said again, periodically, because liars are self-servers, always trying to make their universe revolve around them. While it's all well and good to conserve that which time has shown to be useful and beneficial, life evolves, opening the way for new ideas. However, returning to the concept of the CAP, we should periodically affirm and reaffirm our willingness to "preserve, protect and defend" the values that we hold dear. Should we be the keepers of the "faith of our fathers", or will we let slip all that has been so dearly gained? It's our choice.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE LAST OF THE LANDINGS

This is the last of the landings of this book. While it would be meet if ti were on a positive note, as has been said, you never know how things will go until an aircraft has been slowed to an indisputable stop. And you learn to take things as they're served to you. Here, the smoke looks ominous as it will every time it's seen, especially when the man in the white (fire-resistant) suit becomes animated. How- ever, it can be said with a fair amount of certainty that this is the smoke derived from locked brakes which were applied due to a mal- functioning tail-hook. (The LSO's assistant detected with binoculars the lack of an extended tail-hook which in turn was relayed to the pilot and passed over the ship's PA system.) Various of the pictures in this book show flight deck skid-marks because of this very scenario. The Hellcat's now full-stopped and the arresting-wires and barriers have been returned to their immobilized position. All is well and there's no agitation among the Airdales as would be if an actual fire were present: there are no hoses being run out by the Airdales. This type of landing is not all that frequent, and not all that "fortunate" as this one: if the touch down were in the area of the No. 10 arresting-wire, a barrier-entanglement would ensue, interrupting a smooth-running recovery operation. During landings, time is especially of the essence: there are others up there circling the ship, and at the end of a mission the pilots are tired and cramped, neither of which is conducive to a salutary landing. // While most landings on a carrier were accomplished without incident, there was al- ways that question whether this next landing was going to be the one that would have serious consequences. There are many variables attendant to a landing that could singly, or in unison, make for a disastrous conclusion. In addition, a real danger was an Airdale becoming complacent for then when alertness was demanded, it would be lacking to the everlasting detriment of he who demurred.

On the flight deck during flight operations, carelessness and complacency can prove to be disastrous, always. While this does not apply in life in general, carelessness and complacency can cause a real diminution of one's potential to accomplish anything of sub- stance. Such people are called under-achievers, those who could but would not. (Is there anything more exasperating than to watch the acknowledged "star" of the team not put forth the effort it's known he possesses? That's right, you know he's capable but for whatever reason he will not perform up to his capabilities. This makes people (the fans) angry, and well it should. So why shouldn't a parent /teacher feel the same way about the students in the family? Who can condone the squandering of talent? And we all have talent to one degree or another.) Part of this laziness represents a sullenness toward life overall (most usually without adequate cause if considered rationally). No doubt such people don't realize that with a happy persona more than likely there will follow the desire to become more involved in the tantalizing smorgasbord of life which often leads to and facilitates useful, worthwhile pursuits (and which in turn banishes the sullenness). (Translation: get out there and get your feet wet.) It seems that a great deal of life is frittered away on frivolous activities that are merely "place-holders". What a waste! Of course everyone will have to define for themselves what is meant by the term "substance", but it's not all that difficult as long as one isn't afraid of extended serious thought. Unfortunately there are too many who believe such an activity is burdensome when in fact it's the trivialities that are burdensome. Find your proper interests and then throw yourself into them, giving them a chance to "work their magic" If they don't work, try something else, but don't vegetate.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MISHAPS

When, in the course of bringing on board ninety high-powered military aircraft, something untoward happens, there you have a mishap. A mishap was that accident that was waiting to happen that actually did happen. Mishaps are most often apparently due to some inexplicable mechanical or aerodynamic happenstance. Or, a mishap could have been due to something as straightforward as an auxiliary external fuel tank being physically detached by the force of the landing, which in turn was ruptured by the propeller, causing a conflagration. A mishap on an aircraft carrier during landing operations could vary from relatively minor damage to pilot, aircraft, and environs, to catastrophic harm to pilot, aircraft, and environs. The former could happen when the landing aircraft had a malfunctioning tailhook and it was caught by one of the barriers erected across the flight deck. The latter calamity was such a thing as the previously mentioned aircraft losing a fuel tank. Those occasions required the Airdales to "put on their fireman's hats", post haste. The more quickly the fire was extinguished, the less the nearby damage that occurs. Furthermore, there were other aircraft circling the ship, waiting to land. If the fire was not too serious, those aircraft could be accommodated fairly soon. If not, they would have to land on the other aircraft carrier that was always in accompaniment (there were always at least two carriers together). If that carrier was having its own problems, there were PROBLEMS. Naval aviation didn't have the "luxury" of having any number of alternate landing fields here and there. The big wide-open ocean was very unforgiving in this respect (among others. And how could one not admire the dauntlessness of those naval aviators!)

There are those who have called a carrier landing a "controlled crash". If those who said this are (were) pilots, then I bow to this characterization. (Since about the 1970's the Navy has had automatic carrier landing systems which in turn make landings much less hazardous.) However, it was my observation that most of the landings turned out to be very manageable, and from the Airdale's point of view, even routinely smooth. That said, it was also true that any given landing ALWAYS had the potential for a mishap of some kind, and sometimes of a worse or a very worst kind, with the worst of consequences. This applies of course to the involved aircraft, but also to those and them (aircraft and Airdales) in the area. High octane gasoline flows, fires spread, and perhaps explosions follow. A nasty business, this. And it didn't help that , to my knowledge, the Airdales' training as firemen was little to none. (However, I say this as it applied to me. Having started my sojourn on the Antietam as a Quartermaster Striker (Navigation Division), my only training fighting fires was one day's worth participation at a fire-fighting school at Pearl Harbor. It did include entering a compartment which had trays of full of gasoline burning furiously. We followed a trainer into the compartment, he who had a hose with a spray applicator attached to the nozzle of the hose. As he sprayed to the right and left, we proceeded forth. I was impressed with how well the spray "held down" the flames. That was the high point of my day's training, my only training fighting fires. It was hardly adequate to confront a conflagration of seething fires which in turn could ignite bombs and rockets (aircraft sometimes did not, or could not, expend all their bombs and rockets before returning to the ship. Explosions were a real possibility because of this.) Fortunately, I had no occasion to be involved in such a deadly conflagration. In any event, it was the Airdale who was responsible for subduing the fires and then cleaning up the debris.

Another happening that produced mishaps was the occurrence of a landing aircraft touching down on the flight deck with such force that it in turn bounced over the barriers that were raised across the deck. If the bounce was of sufficient severity, the aircraft would clear all the three barriers and crash into the aircraft parked (and parking) up forward. Needless to say, Airdales were also in this area and were thus subject to careening aircraft gone amuck. The unfortunate aspect of this scenario was that for the most part the Airdales were not aware of what was unfolding, and so were not disposed to "run for your life". The above examples of possible mishaps are certainly not a complete catalog, but it does put one in mind that the flight deck during landing operations is no place for those of a casual demeanor. Again, a mishap was an accident that was waiting to happen that did happen, And one never did know whether that aircraft that was in the "landing slot" approaching the fantail was the one that was earmarked "Mishap".

"AU SECOURS !"

No, this isn't the navy version of a marathon run. Instead, it's an Airdale crew responding to a mishap, that euphemism that covers everything from a simple barrier-trap to a bona fide crash with an ensuing deadly fire. These occurrences happen at the terminus of a landing operation when aircraft return from long, tiring missions that might have included damage to the structural integrity of the air-craft's airframe or controls. Or it might have happened due to the diminished capability of a pilot who was wounded while engaging the enemy. But all kinds of mishaps could also occur even with sound aircraft and healthy pilots because fatigue must be factored into the equation of landing an aircraft on an unstable platform (flight deck) where wind-currents are anything but consistent. Thus, while mishaps were not the norm, their eventuality was always a potentiality for each and every landing. For an individual pilot, this was a possibility that had to be faced each and every time he approached the fantail as he "got into the groove" just before touch down. For the crew on the deck, while the results were not nearly as significant, possible mishaps presented themselves for each and every of the up to 90 landings per landing operation. We can only surmise from this picture that some terrible event occurred to bring the entire crew of Airdales at full stride. By the length of their shadows, this appears to be late afternoon (or early morning?), implying that perhaps the mishap was due to pilot fatigue. This is an apt picture to start this chapter on "Mishaps" because though each mishap was different, the response usually was as indicated here.:"au secours!", all Airdales, "turn to" post haste. While most everyone on the aft part of the flight deck would watch each aircraft land and so know if a mishap occurred, nevertheless whenever a mishap did occur the Air Boss would turn on the high-pitched, piercing single-frequency alarm over the P.A. system to alert one and all. The sound was like a squeal, a cry of pain. Everyone would turn to the mishap, and others such as these Airdales who were parking aircraft up forward, would converge on the scene of the accident.

Each person appearing in this picture is equally animated, and this raises the question as to whether they are all equally motivated to render aid ("au secours"), or whether only one or a few initiated the action. This has application in everyday life, and it often comes under the heading of "leadership". A person who is well respected has the template of leadership. The usual mode of exhibiting this leadership is to lead by example, while those who admire the leader will in turn follow his/her lead. (We are of course talking about beneficial, useful, proper, even moral leadership. There are those who lead by force or intimidation or ill-gotten gains, but that is not the true meaning of the word "leadership". Not by a long shot.) True leadership certainly implies a well-spring of trust and even affection toward the leader. It is this trust, this affection, this admiration that draws people to a leader and that is so important in forming the bond between leader and followers. Sometimes the goal requires a difficult path, but a leader will nevertheless be able to bring his followers with him. An obvious case in point is, we can all agree, that of the "Father Of Our Country", George Washington. He had these attributes in full measure. Is it not true that a bedraggled, ill-equipped, physically exhausted group of men called the Continental Army followed and fought for not only their new land of freedom, but also followed a man who raised and roused their spirits to fight on despite overwhelming odds and deprivations of all kinds? Yes, it certainly is true. So to return to this picture, perhaps all these intrepid Airdales were leaders in and of themselves, and did not require any outside motivation to do their assigned duty.



HELP ON THE WAY

This picture differs from the previous one in that the Airdales are running from back aft to up forward, implying that an aircraft coming in for a landing either bounced over the barriers that are there to restrain aircraft that didn't catch their tailhook on an arresting wire, or else the aircraft cleared the barrier cleanly. In the latter case, it smashed into the aircraft parked and being parked up forward, causing all kinds of havoc (this will be considered in the next chapter, "Parking"). In both this picture and the previous one, a group of Airdales had to go to the mishap, from here to there. This does not mean, however, that mishaps only occurred where you were not. A mishap could and did occur on any part of the expanse of the flight deck; no part was immune to an unfortunate fortuity, from minor to frightful to fearsome. It must be said that the terms "fright" and "fearsome" were both equally directed at the plight of the pilot as well as to oneself. The "mad dash", as shown here, reflects this attitude. Once one realizes that one is not in direct jeopardy from the crash, one's interest is immediately transferred to the pilot's condition. This caring about another person is not predicated on knowing the pilot, because we never knew any of them. To an Airdale, a pilot was just a person, no more, no less. But, solicitude toward the pilot, or anyone, is a natural condition of all normal people, even deep within the hardened and crusty, mean old codgers. This concept of caring cuts across all cultures and societies with few exceptions. Thus it's reflected in this picture of the Airdales spontaneously responding to a mishap, regardless of the level of severity. There are of course those who would say that the above doesn't wash when one considers the malicious and malevolent individuals and groups doing their utmost in being hurtful and harmful. But, the operative word here is "normal". One could make the argument that no one is "normal" without also being solicitous of others' welfare. While it's true that one could also contend that the word "solicitous" can be defined and shaded in many ways, how one expresses one's concern for others' is probably as varied as there are people. Although the idea that "it's the thought that counts" does not have the force of commitment, it is useful and it is, for many, their only way of expressing their thoughtfulness. Not many of us can devote much of our time and energy to the well-being of others, nor should they do so. If everyone were "doing for others", no one would be "doing for society" as a whole by going to work. This in no way implies a lack of concern for others and it does not in any way imply a diminution of one's level of concern for others. After all, one's primary concern is for one's family, and the work done for that purpose. Besides, as has been commented upon previously, to do for others what they can do for themselves is not only deleterious to one's self-esteem, but it's also mischievous to swerve these people into a mind-set of dependency and unnecessary need.. To cater to a person who's capable of serving himself is to do him a grave injustice by sapping his initiative, the well-spring of one's well-being.

How did this all start from a picture of a group of Airdales rushing to help someone in distress and need (not to mention the possible ensuing fires that required attention——a fire on a ship is critically serious)? We can say it's an act of duty, or we can say it's an act of humanitarianism, or we can more properly say that it's both duty and caring at the same time. To be caring is to be a mighty bulwark.

(P.S. As an aside, how explain receiving a lifetime of undeserved and undisguised hostility from a once former friend? It defies understanding and sometimes it tries one's soul, even as one defers to it and lives with it without complaint or malice.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WOODEN SHRAPNEL

This is in fact an F4F Wildcat, the smaller version of the more powerful, following F6F Hellcat. Though it was essentially replaced by the Hellcat starting in mid-1942, it's included here because of its good representation of a propeller shredding a wooden flight deck. (The British carriers had steel flight decks and so would never have had such a shredding.) The wooden deck was not made of hard- wood, possibly for the reason shown here: there is less strain being placed on the crankshaft and connected parts through the disturbed propeller. This in turn made repair of the engine easier and more feasible, important factors when at sea. (This is only my conjecture about the related strain on the engine, and I bow to the experts here.) It will be noted that the wind-screen used by the LSO (Landing Signal Officer) is in the down position for some unknown reason, thus exposing the LSO to these fragments, not a pleasant situation. I guess we can assume that the LSO is now crouched down on the catwalk. (Speaking of the catwalk, notice that one level lower are two covered 5-inch guns to the left and two covered 40-mm quad gun-tubs to the right.). As is evident here, no one except the LSO and his assistant are in jeopardy. However, usually there are two green-shirts in the area who dash out to the aircraft so as to disengage the tailhook from the arresting wire. Where they are now is unknown, unless they too are on the catwalks. Now that "ghost" to the left is a trained fire-fighter dressed up in his asbestos suit, ready to dash to a stricken aircraft to drag the injured pilot out of the cockpit and to safety. There is another such dressed firefighter somewhere "off stage" (Yes, the flight deck could have been considered a stage where spectators in the island superstructure lined the rails to watch the "show" down below. Could it have been that they were looking for some kind of "action" in the form of an accident as present day auto-race spectators apparently now do? I think not, not in that environment where nothing there was "entertainment". To the contrary, everything was serious business down there, although I don't know about those enlisted men up there. I would guess that they had a different perspective, but I could be way off base on that.) The result of this accident is the disruption of the orderly progression of bringing one aircraft after another down to the ship. The fuel of the aircraft is carefully metered before launch, and though there is enough for a margin of error for just such occurrences, that margin is not excessive. Thus the Airdales have to clean up the debris post haste so as not to require any water-landings. Steel plates can be placed over the gouges in the deck, but all of the wood-splinters had to be cleared away before resumption of the landing operation. Note the close spacing of the Wildcat's landing gear (wheels). This caused less stability upon touch down than that of the Hellcat with its wider stance, but it had no effect on what happened here. While our attention is in the area of the landing-gear, also notice the white streak coming from the open vent on the cowling. This is the result of the hot exhaust gases staining the paint, which was dark blue on top to blend with the dark ocean below and off-white to blend with the shy when seen from below. (All Navy aircraft were painted while many, if not most, Army Air Corps (not Air Force) aircraft were not painted (bare aluminum)). This shower of wood-shrapnel, while not normally a threat, was nonetheless a wake-up call to always remain alert whenever aircraft were landing (as if that were a necessary call). Vigilance (NOT to be mistaken for, or confused with, vigilantism) is always a requirement on the flight deck, and a certain amount of it is also useful in everyday life. Perhaps a better word would be "awareness" of things and events, even though one is inundated with these things and events. Part of the process is determining what is important enough to demand our awareness. We should not spread ourselves too thin, and if nothing else, this will be a learning process. This is good because proper learning is good..



DAMAGE AND REPAIR I

The steel plates that covered the damaged deck of the previous page have been removed, most of the aircraft are on the beach, and now the repair to the deck begins. Restoring the deck to its pre-accident condition is not a trivial matter, and it will take a solid day for these specialists to do so. It can be seen here what damage an uncontrolled propeller can do. Notice for instance the puncture of the 0.2-inch steel plating that supports the 3-inch wooden planking. (Having been an original crew member of the Antietam, I was given a 6-inch long piece of the Antietam's plank before its was put to the torch (scrapped). It's not particularly attractive, but since i spent many a many day treading these planks, I'm pleased to have a part of what was an integral episode in my life. This was, after all, part of that "playing field" where periodically high tension and gnawing nervousness was the norm and where one's wits were one's salvation. This will have a way of imprinting itself on your psyche forever. (It must also be said that this "playing field" was, in my view, far superior to being continually cooped up in the maze of compartments on a battleship or a cruiser or even a destroyer, and was far, far better than being confined within a submarine. After all, we were fortunate enough to have had the fresh sea air, the big bright sky festooned with many kinds of clouds, long vistas, and a freedom of movement that could only be dreamed of on the other ships. (Of course there was also the cold rain, the colder wind, and the hot sun with which to contend, but these were mild compared to the advantages.) No, although I had no say about what my duty-station would be, in retrospect I found myself in the best of circumstances, all things considered. However, the caveat is the word "retrospect". And yes, if I was going to meet my demise at the hands of the enemy (and I didn't anticipate such an occurrence), I was certainly best situated for such an eventuality. All it takes is a little thought about what transpires when an explosion/fire occurs below decks in those confined and closed off compartments and passageways. Explosions /fires topside are bad enough, but down below? Neither are pretty, but those below are nothing less than ghastly (contrary to public opinion, this isn't an effete word, no matter what you say, unless you prefer "hideous", "grisly", "grim", or "gruesome"). These sailors are trained for just such occasions because every mishap usually causes some sort of damage to the deck.. These specialists were always on hand to redress the mess of a mishap. Many times, without them this "airfield" would have been inoperative. One could even make an analogy that this repair job is an example of the intent of an action being required to define the merit, the worth, of that action. For example, is the disjunction of these damaged planks a further diminution of the planks, or a prelude to making them whole again? This implies that the intent of that action, when doubted by others, must be defined by the doer of the deed. Is the deck being helped or harmed by all that cutting and chipping? So too, as an another example of the requirement for defining the intent of the action, consider the act of impersonation. There are those deliberately deceptive people who seek to surreptitiously and maliciously impersonate another person to his detriment and so become the model of malevolence and destructiveness, while there are those others who are comedic impersonators who do so out in the open and full of good-naturedness. The two groups of people both impersonate others, but the former are noxious while the latter (professionals) amuse by being adept and not being harmful. (The amusement generated by the latter is in direct proportion to his skill in replicating a person's mannerisms. No harm meant, no harm done.) In the case of the former, direct harm is the only motive, the only desired result. How do such people properly rationalize their destructive actions?



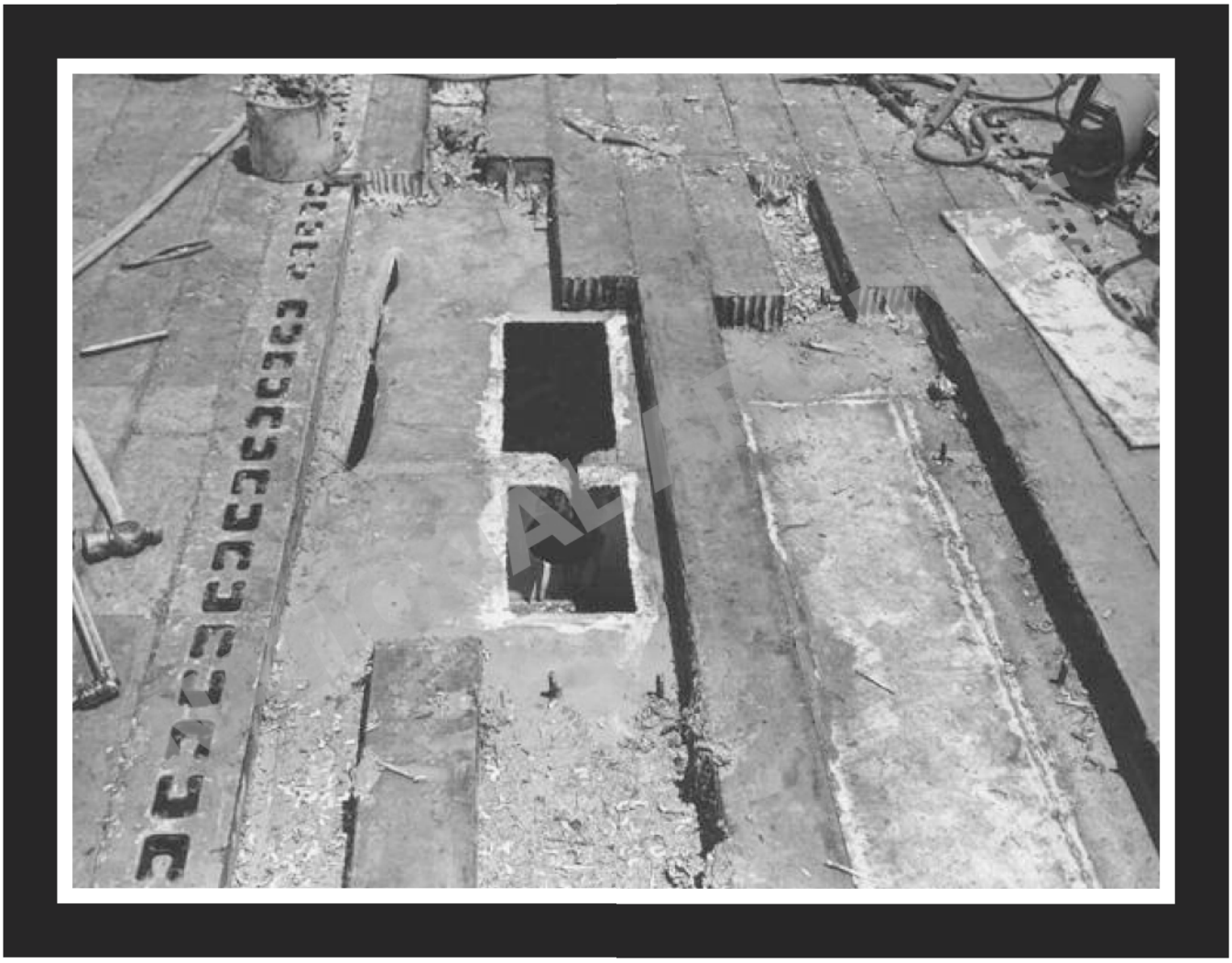
NARA ARCHIVES

DAMAGE AND REPAIR II

Now we're down to the nitty-gritty of the damage, the essential particulars of repairing the flight deck of the previous page. Every mishap of course has its own unique aftermath, that disruptive result that follows a preceding unfortunate event. Here this mishap was not all that serious except for the fact that it's now necessary to place the flight deck out of commission. Military commanders are disturbed when their operations are upset, but that's why they're commanders: to handle such eventualities and interruptions. It's ironic, somewhat, that now the sailors have taken the mantel of "commander" until they have completed this job of repairing the deck.

Here one clearly can see the gash in the steel underplating of the planking. Here is also seen the dressing done to the planks so as to have a neat abutment, plank to plank. Also clearly seen are the spikes rising from the steel plating that are used to anchor the planking. Those rectangular open spaces in the steel plating will be filled with pieces of steel that are welded in place so as to make an even surface over which the planking will go. Before the new planking is laid down, the sides of the planking will be covered with a tar-like substance such that no water will seep between the planks (which would rot the planks). (Notice on the right a steel section already welded to the steel plating making it ready to support the planking.) This picture also gives a very good view of the steel railing, to the left, that runs across the width of the flight deck, at every 6 foot interval. These rails, or cleats, are of course used to tie down the aircraft when there is rough weather (high winds). In fact, we seldom did that because we were launching and landing aircraft twice a day, every day. However, these railings, as mentioned in the chapter "Launch Operations", were often a useful and necessary accessory to have when maneuvering and crawling among the aircraft during launch operations. (Actually, those railings were a God-send.

Just as people repair damage to tangible things such as flight decks, so too do people repair damage to friendships and relationships. The analogy isn't a particularly good one because the former are relatively easy to do compared to the latter. But this certainly need not be so. Unless the splits were caused by or caused actual egregious harm, the reunion (repair) should not take on the aspects of a "federal case". While many books have been written about this subject, a few comments from this corner are nevertheless presented. Of all the solutions and resolutions to this conundrum, by far the easiest and least demanding one is to simply let bygones-be-bygones, and join arms. To get wrapped up in all the rationalizing and intricacies of resolving a fall-out is too debilitating of one's energies and efforts move along with other important things in one's life, such as learning a new skill (for example, the enjoyment one receives from knowing how to play the piano), or learning more of an interesting topic (for example, what transpires on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier), or learning new and useful knowledge (how to wire a house), or you name it. Why let a broken friendship be used to distract and detract from that enjoyment one feels when, for instance, one takes a leisurely stroll on the beach on a balmy evening? Certainly rejection isn't the worst thing that can happen to us, and by the same token, reconciliation is not necessarily the best thing, while acceptance of rejection could be. Perhaps we should reconsider if there had been damage done in the first place, and if there was none, we should feel contentment in that. This should not be understated. But if reconciliation is not to be, then to show equanimity is to be sensible and can only be to your benefit. Rancor is the hallmark of, the province of, a dolt, while a sunny personality is pure gold.



TO UPEND (TO UPSET)

This large aircraft, a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber, found itself in this position after having gone through several barriers and finally having been stopped by the last barrier which was able to provide enough restraint so as not to have been flattened down onto the flight deck (notice the upright barrier to the right just to the left of that porthole). The smaller aircraft (Hellcat and Corsair) didn't usually knock down all of the barriers before being stopped. With the Avenger though, it is so high up on its long-legged landing-gear that the momentum of its heavy engine was not restrained by the barrier-wires. Instead, it was upended (upset) as a result of the landing-gear being stopped by the barrier while the engine kept going. It's now time for all those Airdales to restore the "air field" into a useable condition, post haste. There was always the derrick available to lower the tail-section while others disengage the barrier-wires from the aircraft. Can you figure out how this could be done? For instance, the tail-section had to be lowered gently, and not with a bang (this is a good simile for many things in life, and one should try to enumerate some of the more important ones) because it could be damaged by that action. In the first place, maybe natural forces would take place and the aircraft, of its own volition, would fall back down onto its tail-wheel, causing some ancillary damage. However, in this event, the Airdales' job of cleaning up the mess would be simplified. But what if the aircraft remained in this position? How does one affix a cable to the tail-section so as to allow the derrick to lower it to the deck? The answer might be, "with difficulty". That's the amusing and/or smart-aleck answer. The real answer is that there are multiple ways of restoring the aircraft to its normal posture, and we will not go through them here because of space-. limitations. But you can be sure that the Airdales are going to be very busy for the next, 5 minutes? 10 minutes? Who knows? While they're busy doing that, we'll consider an obvious segue from the dilemma posed by this picture to perhaps equally perplexing upsets in our own, more prosaic lives. Everyone no doubt has their own list of things that are upsetting, from the trivial to the traumatic, and things in between. Gamesmanship could be one of the things that upset you because it puts an unnecessary drain on one's energies and a needless diversion of one's desired direction of action, and no one can deny that it deleteriously complicates one's life. Or what could be the source of upset is being "forever" deliberately and arbitrarily denied something of importance to you. Another fount of upset might be never knowing the resolution of a situation that is extremely important to you while there are those who control that situation (while also knowing of your anxiety concerning the situation. At least in the movies, while being titillated by the drama as it unfolds, one knows that in a short, finite period of time one will be presented with the anticipated denouement. There is no such assurance in real life.) So what to do in these and other upsetting and aggravating situations? For one thing, if something is VERY upsetting and one can do nothing to resolve the situation, one could "change the venue" so that one in effect takes oneself out of the disturbing milieu. One could even make this known to the perpetuator. Sometimes there are more favorable climes available that will take one out of the troubling venue (not geographically). Even with the above, it's foolish beyond the telling to care about something over which one has absolutely no control or influence. Probably the best that can be done is to become so wrapped up in activities that interest you that for all intents and purposes, you become oblivious to that which riles and rankles. This is probably not the most desirable solution, but let's face it, at the "bottom line", life is a series of wise and well thought out compromises. Cheers!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ANOTHER UPSET

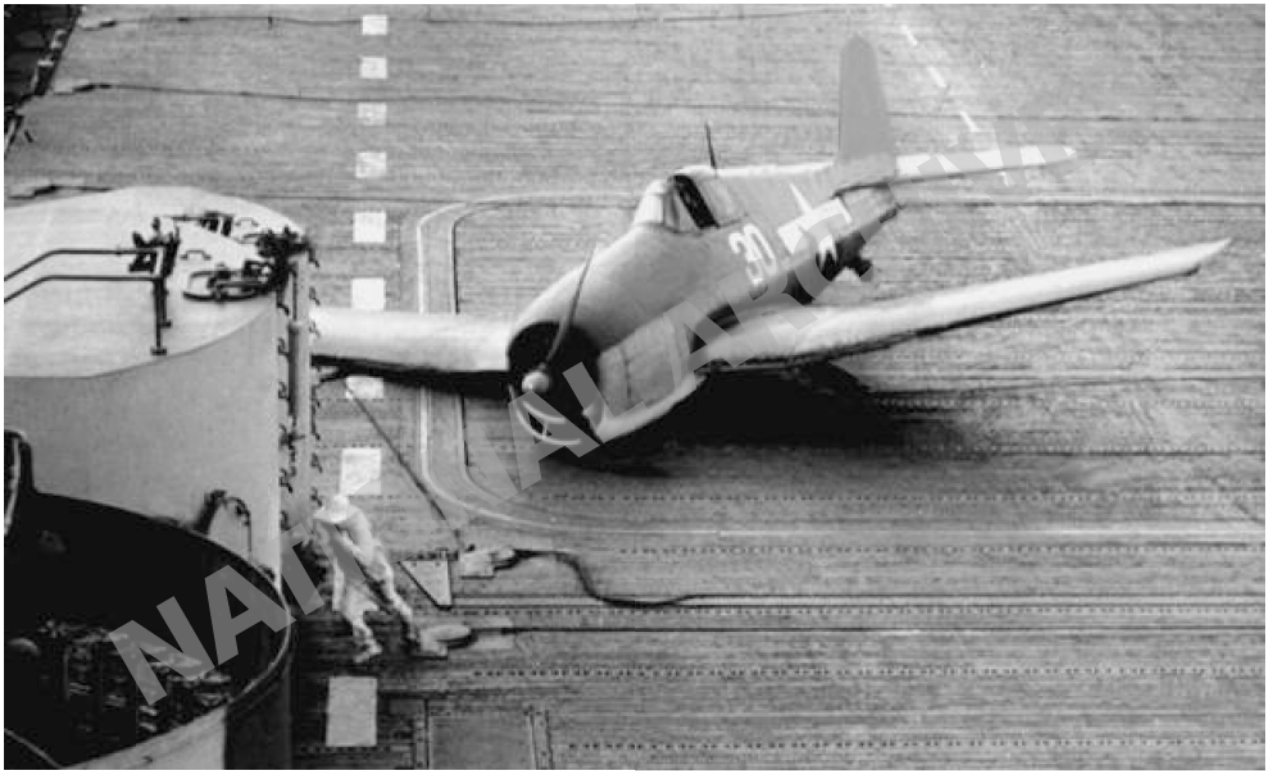
Another upset, though it's not clear as to what happened to bring about this displacement of the normal state of affairs. The puzzle- ment here is how, is why, this Hellcat came to rest facing to its right when it was its left wing-tip that was smashed (which in the normal scheme of things would cause the nose to point toward the left). It's surmised that this accident was caused by a short burst of crosswind hitting the Hellcat just before it touched down on the deck, thus tipping it to its left side and causing damage to its left wing. The pilot then probably jammed on his brakes thereby precipitating this nose-over (upset). But again, why is the nose pointing to the right? The short answer is that when aircraft land on a carrier's deck, all kinds of unforeseen things can, and often do, happen. All it takes is a strong gust of crosswind, a heave, a pitch, or a roll of the ship, a quirky malfunction of the aircraft, a slight but critical error made by the pilot, or merely the "Gods of Flight Operations" taking a hand in their province, by their providence. But actually, in terms of of percentages, there were not that many mishaps to be reported and recorded. Notice the spray-applicator in the right foreground. These usually provided a very effective suppressant to such fires. (The sailor holding this device is not an Airedale because he has a steel helmet on and a life-jacket which implies that the ship is at "General Quarters" (enemy in the area). There are two fire-extinguishers in the area and a hose being brought up (under the tail but unfilled with water). A brown-shirt has scrambled up to give the pilot a hand and there are a few spectators on the far catwalk (a no-no during landing operations). Also note the snarled arresting-wire under the right wing. More Airdales will show up quickly at this benign situation to lend a hand.

Another upset, another opportunity to comment on some upsets that find their way into the lives of many. Suppose, for instance, that the person about whom you care deeply finds you unattractive, for whatever reason? And lacking that, suppose that that person in whom you invested so much of yourself, turns out not to be the person you thought he/she was? That is, the lifestyle of this person that you admired so much was found to be in (stark) contradiction to that which you had presumed to be true. How to handle the disillusionment so engendered? These are not easily handled and are hard on one's psyche. In any event, it would be inadvisable to consider these things in a superficial manner, and guessing is fraught with pitfalls. "Pop psychology" isn't much better in finding the answer and it usually causes one to not "see the forest for the trees" (the "forest" being the long-term view). At least these questions don't encompass one of the most corrosive of all emotions, that of jealousy concerning personal physical contact. Where there resides mutual commitment and caring, so also resides mutual, reliable exclusivity. Usually, the situations are exacerbated by jealousy. While the first question is essentially healed by time ("c'est la guerre"), what to do in the interim? It was previously suggested that one can't be rejected if one doesn't care, and one will care less if one energetically immerses oneself into other activities and interests elsewhere. The second question involves less well-defined answers. One tends to care about some specific person based on that person's basic makeup, primarily one's character, secondarily one's personality and mode of conduct, while one's physical appearance merely puts the "seal of approval on the package". Since the basis of an attraction is the desire to imbue oneself into the attributes and qualities of the one who is admired and cared about, it becomes upsetting if these attributes and qualities are tarnished. The more they're tarnished, the more upsetting. There is really no recourse here, only a possible reevaluation of one's values. Tread carefully here, it's slippery.



STEP LIVELY NOW

Now how would you like to be "chased by this big, bad malevolent machine whose very purpose and intent was to run YOU down in particular"? One could read more here than meets the eye. I can vouch for that. The man-in-the-white-suit is not a ghost with substance but rather a sailor dressed in an asbestos covering to protect himself from the fire that he must enter so as to retrieve the pilot who has been injured in the crash and not able to remove himself from the flaming wreckage in time to save himself. But there probably will be no fire in this instance. Regardless, this sailor has to be front and center at each and every landing because each and every landing is a potential accident (mishap). The most likely happenstance to have caused the result shown here was the fact that this Hellcat's left landing-gear (wheel) was undescended while in the landing process. (The LSO's assistant, with his binoculars, knew of this condition but nevertheless was obliged to bring the Hellcat on board because the lack of fuel made it mandatory.) Thus, with only the right landing-gear descended, when it touched down on the deck it collapsed from the weight of the Hellcat. In the process of buckling, this right landing gear twisted and dragged over the deck, generating a friction that caused the right side of the hellcat to slow down and thus swerve toward the right. But how explain no fire? Remember, the Hellcat was out of fuel. However, things were not always so easily explained and one often had a hard-time finding a rational explanation for many of the things that happened on the flight deck during flight operations (and elsewhere). But in a way this was good because that in turn forced one to be alert at all times during flight operations, and never, NEVER take anything for granted. Fortunately this Hellcat was not carrying an external, auxiliary fuel tank below its fuselage. If it had been doing so, and if the tank still contained fuel, that fuel would have been been splattered from the crushed tank, causing an immediate fire. This possible eventuality was always a cause of concern and apprehension, raising the level of anxiety a couple of notches during landings. (Why the barrier-wires stanchion, just behind the-man-in-white, is down is not clear. The man-in-the-white-suit here of course does not want to have anything to do with this Hellcat from which he's running. So too, even while lauding the beneficial aspects of friendships, each and everyone of us should be able to, should be allowed to, eschew those of our choosing (without being mean-spirited about it). And equally important, no, even more importantly, each and everyone of us should have the right itself to freely pick and choose those with whom we want to be associated. In a real sense, this is an expression of who we are. To interfere with this freedom to choose is to deny one his/her most basic rights, the right of free affiliation. To interfere with this desire to be associated with someone or something is to grossly forbid one of our most basic rights (while at the same time not wanting to overreach, or to overshadow one's responsibilities by one's rights.) Carrying this concept of rights to another venue, you have a fundamental and implicit right to know that which you don't know that others do know about you that importantly affects you in the beneficial scheme of things. "Insiders" and "outsiders" is odious and corrosive. To round out these necessarily esoteric thoughts, it's opportune to make a derogatory remark about the phrase "you better believe it". This is meant to imply a ring of truth , but in fact it really signifies the opposite and has the pall of a threat. If nothing else here, one should take away with him the notion that words are intended to provide specific meanings, and that how they're used, and in what sequence they're used, and in what combination they're used, all together express a unique thought, while a simple rearrangement can definitely alter that meaning.



THE BIG BOUNCE

In my opinion, this is a choice picture because of the view provided of this Corsair, flaps down, overflying the arresting-wires on its way to either a barrier-crash, or what is far, far worse, a collision with men and machines up forward in the parking area. This state of affairs should not be mistaken for a wave-off by the LSO back aft because if it were such, the Corsair would be much to the left and climbing with a blurred propeller. (Before proceeding, take the time to scan this interesting angle of the Corsair and its gull-wings, the only aircraft extant, now or then, with such.) At this time the engine is cut-off and the Corsair is gliding, albeit much more than a few feet above the deck. What probably happened here is that when the LSO gave the "cut the engine" signal, this F4U was too high, and so it bounced excessively upon touching down onto the deck. Perhaps also the deck heaved upward just as the Corsair was touching down.. In any case, the Corsair made a hard landing, so hard in fact that it bounced high and over all the arresting-wires. Being an inline flight deck, the pilot landed with the power turned off and so had no chance to gain altitude at the top of the bounce as is done on present-day carriers. The pilot here is at the mercy of the Law of Physics which will specify how far he'll go and how high he'll go, and if that will be the parking area ahead. This is a mishap in the making with the result yet to be determined. For sure, it was surpassingly tense to be in the parking area as you watched this "leap" unfold. But you weren't necessarily watching. (Here, the old adage that "what you don't know won't hurt you" is transparent trash.) It should be said that there were usually five barriers, instead of the three here, that were upright during a landing (the five were between the after elevator and the deck-edge elevator).

In a peculiar way, this picture evokes a song (words and music by Larry Henley and Jeff Silbar) that beautifully symbolizes a condition that is rife in this world of ours and whose sentiments beg to be said. There follows the song "You Are The Wind Beneath My Wings":

It must have been cold there in my shadow,
To never have sunlight on your face.
You were content to let me shine, that's your way,
You always walked a step behind.

So I was the one with all the glory,
While you were the one with all the strain.
A beautiful face without a name for so long,
A beautiful smile to hide the pain.

Did you ever know that you're my hero,
And everything I would like to be?
I can fly higher than an eagle,
For you are the wind beneath my wings.

It might have appeared to go unnoticed,
But I've got it all here in my heart.
I want you to know I know the truth, of course I know it,
I would be nothing without you.

Did you ever know that you're my hero?
You're everything I wish I could be.
I could fly higher than an eagle,
For you are the wind beneath my wings.

Fly, fly, fly high against the sky,
So high I almost touch the sky.
Thank you, thank you,
Thank God for you, the wind beneath my wings".

[NOTE: The fifth verse, second line of this song clearly supports that which is delineated in the Epilogue of this book (next to last page).]


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AND IN CONCLUSION

Here's the conclusion of the previous picture, and our worst fears are playing out. This Corsair did in fact clear the last barrier and is now beyond it. Now we spectators in the superstructure are only able to hold our breathes, and we Airdales down below in the parking area can only scramble to whatever safety we can find, if it's available. You'll notice some Airdales to the left, beyond the barrier, heading for the safety of the catwalk. And just to the left of the superstructure you can detect at least a few of the Airdales alert enough to be "making tracks" to the right, while other Airdales seem to not yet be aware of the oncoming catastrophe. (When propellers are spinning during the parking process, an Airdale is fully intent on that situation to the exclusion of anything else. After all, it's only natural to be aware of, and concerned with, a clear and present danger as opposed to something that might be in the offing (even though it could be just as threatening and serious, albeit less predictable). Here there are no spinning propellers NOW in the parking area so that the Airdales should be keeping themselves apprised of the landing aircraft back aft.) Inattention was the primary cause of injuries. However, at times all the attention in the world couldn't have prevented injuries, and this "marauding" Corsair is a clear example of that. What should be done while in the parking area is to periodically look back aft to stay aware of what is happening when the landing aircraft is "in the slot" (closely approaching the fantail). If the aircraft seems to be at a normal height and in a normal attitude, you don't pay particular attention to it thereafter. However, if you are back aft with a wheelchock in hand next to the touch- down-point awaiting an aircraft to land, you give the landing aircraft your undivided attention, evaluating its approach (After all, after a while you too become an "expert" by acquiring the sagacity of an LSO ——yes, yes, I know, the LSOs will really scoff.) Moving on, to avoid any argument, I consider this picture to be just right: not too much detail, and not too little detail. Even the radar-screen, top right, is detailed enough to know what it is, and yet not so detailed as to distract from the points of interest: the landing Corsair, and secondarily the the scrambling Airdales. One other observation: that aircraft up forward to the left, with its wings outstretched, implies a defective hydraulic system. Also, that Airdale just in front of the 5-inch dual gun-mounts probably was awaiting that Corsair with wheelchock in hand so as to escort it up forward to the parking area to be parked (had the landing been good).

Sometimes the conclusions to certain events, as here, and for which we strive mightily, do not turn out as planned or desired, as here, to a more or less extent. And sometimes these desired events never come to fruition, no matter how much effort you applied. On the one hand, you could bemoan this outcome, especially if it were to go unresolved for "a lifetime". On the other hand, you could "go back to the drawing-board" and do your best at redirecting and resolving the situation in another manner. The phrase "never give up" is an admirable one but sometimes one becomes very, very weary with the struggle. To this, Rudyard Kipling, in his poem "IF", put it this way: "..... If you can make one heap of all your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, and lose, and start again at your beginnings and never breathe a word about your loss; if you can force your heart and nerve and sinew to serve your turn long after they are gone, and so hold on when there is nothing in you except the Will which says 'Hold on!'.....".Those who strive and fail, strive and fail again, and then strive and prevail, they are the real stalwarts of the world. Hard work alone, brilliance alone, hard work and brilliance together will not tip the hat of honorableness quite so much as a dogged perseverance in the face of intractable obstacles.


NATIONAL ARCHIVE

"THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM" (THE SONG)

To dream the impossible dream,
to fight the unbeatable foe,
to bear with unbearable sorrow,
to run where the brave dare not go...

To right the unrightable wrong,
to love pure and chaste from afar,
to try when your arms are too weary
To reach the unreachable star!

This is my quest–
to follow that star
no matter how hopeless,
no matter how far—.
To fight for the right
without question or pause,
to be willing to march into hell
for a heavenly cause!

And I know
If I'll only be true
to this glorious quest
that my heart
will be peaceful and calm
when I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this
that one man, scorned and covered with scars,
still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable stars!

Though the illumination is lacking and the day is dull, this follow-on to the previous page provides a shining example of the "ultimate" indomitable spirit in the words of this song from the show "The Man From La Mancha". That there are such people as represented by this poem is problematical, but the very concept and strength as voiced by these words is nothing if not uplifting. The entire poem (song) is an ode to the strength of character of this man who visualizes a goal and is relentless in its accomplishment. How many of us could show even a fraction of the unremitting dedication to what is right and good in this world? Too many of us believe that it is the physical strength of the body that represents power, but they delude themselves. (Parenthetically, I once read a treatise that assured the reader that gentleness was the strongest thing in the world. No doubt there are those who think that such a thing is absurd, but before they dismiss this idea out of hand, they should think twice about it for more than a couple of minutes. They might surprise themselves and learn something useful.) If one always quests further than one can reach, one will do oneself a service. Perhaps that star will never be attained, but the journey will make the attempt and the result worthwhile.

While this pictured accident was for the most part fairly mundane, the making of it was nevertheless unique because no two accidents were ever just the same. The Airdales never knew whether something that never happened before would happen this time, or would it be the next time? Or the next time? It was almost as if you went to the same movie over and over, but the ending was never the same. Sometimes it was benign as here, but some times it was pull out the hoses and hopefully douse the fire before it got out of hand. A fire that got out of hand was a fire that put the entire ship at risk. But fortunately, this was not the norm. In the background is the waved-off aircraft that was following the one seen here in the foreground. He will have to reinsert himself into the race-track landing-pattern that is overhead awaiting their turn to land. As he does so, he no doubt is pondering what it was that caused the mishap below. All of the Airdales are wearing their foul-weather gear because it is foul weather with which they must contend. (That yellow-shirt who scram up onto the wing has a very heavy sweater on.) The Airdales are milling about until another yellow-shirt shows up to organize the clean-up of this mishap. Why that barrier stanchion in the background is still standing, I don't know. AGAIN, strange things happen.


2
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MARINES 22

The only thing that can be said for certain here is that this is a marine aircraft operating from a carrier. The marines had their own squadrons which they used primarily for the support of the marine landings and the subsequent ground operations carried out by the marines. They were performing these functions with Corsairs even before the Corsair was approved for carrier operations. Once an airfield on land was secured, most (all?) of the marine squadrons were transferred to those land airfields, thus making room for the navy pilots whose squadrons concentrated on enemy ships. However, there was no sharp demarcation between the two operations. Since this aircraft has a 4-bladed propeller (because of the more powerful engine), the time-period of this picture is the latter part of 1945. Notice how the upper left blade is encircled by a barrier-wire. Since this isn't a serious entanglement, it implies that the Corsair did in fact catch one of the last arresting-wires (now disengaged). However, that wire was not far enough away to prevent the barrier-wire from being wound once around the blade. This represents the least consequential mishap in the "inventory of mishaps". The Airdale behind the Corsair has a dual-pronged tow-bar for attachment to the two landing-gears. Apparently this Corsair lost some of its tail-fin to enemy ground-fire. As to the left wing, perhaps the hard landing initiated the hydraulics to start, but not finish, the folding of that wing. You'll also note the two Airdales, lower left, holding a non-inflated fire-hose. It has no water because this was a low-grade mishap. There aren't even any Airdales in view with fire-extinguishers, the mode of suppressing engine-fires. (Of course a gasoline-fire would call for multiple fire-hoses loaded full with water.) The yellow-shirt, just to the left of the propeller, seems to be the man-in-charge of the clean-up. However, it must be said that there is little urgency being shown here, even while there are other aircraft overhead circling the carrier awaiting their opportunity to land. Who knows how much this delay tries the pilot's patience? (It was the Airdales' job to make this wait a minimum.)

So what can be said about patience? First off, there is a full range of patience, from little to lots. The dictionary lists some synonyms as "composure, stability, self-possession, submissiveness, and sufferance". The first three of the five are useful and palatable, but the last two are unacceptable. The prime definition of patience is "the bearing of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, pain, etc .without com- complaint, loss of temper, irritation or the like; quiet perseverance, even-tempered". The question arises as to how much, and how long, one should tolerate provocation and/or annoyance? "Very little" might be the best answer. But for the rest, patience is a noble stance. While patience refers to calmness and self-possession under the impact of pain, misfortune, annoyance , or delay, equanimity refers to mental and emotional stability or composure under stress and strain and tension. While the Airdale might be patient, he must be equanimous, for sure. Also, it doesn't hurt for him to have endurance, fortitude, and even stoicism which imply qualities of calmness, stability and persistent courage when under duress. ("Endurance"means the bearing of exertion, hardship, or suffering while "fortitude" denotes not only patience but also courage and strength of character in the midst of pain, affliction, or hardship. "Stoicism" is calm fortitude while appearing indifferent or emotionless to a painful situation.) So going back to the concept of patience, how long should one remain patient? If it's merely to accommodate ARBITRARY delay, patience ceases to be an automatic virtue. Unfortunately, it's just too easy for those who control a situation to say, sanctimoniously, that someone else should show a little patience. Hooey!



HEAVE–HO

It's time to apply a little concerted muscle to this recalcitrant Corsair that had but a minor run-in with barrier-wires (notice the two wires just above the Corsair's right wheel). The barrier-wire also jammed the bracket that's attached to the external auxiliary fuel tank, pushing it askew (the white "bomb" under the fuselage). This minor mishap could have become a significant event, it could have turned ugly, if the tank had been sheared off the fuselage and broke apart under the force of the impact, spewing gasoline on the deck. This gasoline in turn would likely have been ignited by those ubiquitous sparks that seem to accompany most of the mishaps. But here, good fortune spared them this possible catastrophe. While one group of Airdales is pulling the tail-section downward, another group of Airdales is pulling on a pole to which is tied a rope whose large knot is adjusted behind the propeller-blade. It is postulated that this pulling-force is applied in such a direction that the engine will be compelled to move upward. If this explanation is correct, it begs the question of the more direct approach of tying the rope around the end of the propeller-blade. However, if this were done, the rope would slide up the blade and then the direction of the pulling-force would be horizontal instead of upward as with the method shown here. The method that we used was to tie a rope to the tail-wheel, loop it over and around the fuselage as here, and then pull downward on the tail-section. If that wasn't enough, we'd apply a second rope. To be honest (and honesty surely is the best policy), perhaps we sometimes did do it the way it's portrayed here and I just fail to have that clear in my memory-bank. It was awhile ago. In the mean- time, since the red-shirts are now down below, a yellow-shirt is checking out the three 0.5-inch machine-guns in the wing. Perhaps the pilot radioed that the guns were jammed in an active condition, and were thus a present danger (again, a supposition). The wheels are chocked so that the aircraft will not move horizontally as the Airdales try to move it vertically. This run-in with the barrier-wires, then, was vexing, but not at all serious (unless you considered the machine-guns a potential danger, which they always are). But what should be considered serious are run-ins, those arguments that generate primarily heat but shed little light. While arguments imply passion, yes, if they do not also impart intelligence, they are a blight. Passion undertaken intelligently does have a place in the scheme of things, but if that passion is used only to brow-beat, it's akin to bullying, that scourge that diminishes us all. While earnestness carries the mantel of sincerity and honesty, becoming over-exercised and over-talking others signifies a fundamental lack of conviction, appearances notwithstanding. (Talk-shows have the excuse of time-constraints, but over-talking is still boorish. Try the debate method.) When two people try to over-talk each other, nothing registers. It's a complete waste of time. (Is a soft-spoken argument an oxymoron ? If nothing else, over-talking is annoying and irritating.) After all, a disagreement (a civilized argument) is a prime opportunity to learn (unless one's highly arrogant). The superior approach of the give-and-take method of discourse concerning opposing ideas is a marvelous way of learning from those of differing backgrounds, differing experiences, differing locales, differing standards, differing you-name-it. While some people are argumentative and strident by nature, others are reticent and noncontentious, also by nature. Neither type are beneficial for the useful purpose of learning new things. The former only wants "to win" by aggressiveness to assuage their self-image, and the latter merely bestows "carte blanche" to the former. That disagreements could enhance the learning process is of course only academic if the discourse is (deliberately) based on false facts. It's then an exercise in futility to subscribe to the thesis that arguments can be a learning device. That is an honest-to-goodness shame because differing opinions teach us many things of use.



A MODEST MISHAP

If ever one were to have a mishap, the one pictured here is the type to be recommended. (In fact, this mishap is in concert with, even conformance with, the "soft velvety touch" presented by this picture, in contradiction to the harsh distraction of too much detail.) Even though this Corsair's tail-hook didn't catch a wire, this impact with the barrier was mild, even docile. The reason for this was that most probably the ambient wind over the front of the flight deck was at least 30 knots. With the ship traveling at a modest 10-15 knots, the relative speed of this Corsair over the flight deck was thus less than normal. Therefore, the impact with the barrier was also less than nor-mal. In addition, the tension of this first barrier was normally adjusted to be less than that of succeeding barriers (because the first barrier was further away from the parking/parked aircraft up forward). So the first barrier had a longer runout (was less abrupt) than the succeeding barriers would have. If the green-shirts, who operated the arresting-wires and the barrier-wires, determine that a landing will be a "soft" first-barrier landing, they will lower the following barriers, as here, so as not to entangle the aircraft any more than necessary. We again notice the Airdales manually folding a wing because engine-power is not available. Not being a trivial job, additional Airdales will be required to finish the job. A couple of Airdales are evaluating the situation under the engine, and to their right is that ever-present fire-extinguisher ready for an engine-fire. Other Airdales are examining the tail-hook situation: it will have to be tied up to the fuselage before the Corsair is moved. Note how long the nose of the Corsair is. This is due to the fact that the fuel-tanks were moved from the wings to directly behind the engine. This improved the fuel-flow to the engine but it also reduced the pilot's visibility as he wheeled about during the parking process. This made a hazardous situation even more hazardous. Finally, also note the Pitot tube at the end of the left wing. It measured the aircraft's air-speed. All in all, a modest mishap, but one that nevertheless is "holding up the parade" and so requires prompt attention and removal.

Just as mishaps vary from modest, as here, to flamboyant, as later, so too do peoples' styles vary from modest to flamboyant. Who's to say which is preferable? Is it better to be easygoing and "laid-back" or to be spirited and enthusiastic? While there's no "right" answer (even though circumstances enter into it), there certainly are preferences through the entire range. Also, in the main, different ages tend to favor one mode over another mode. While the above might seem to be of little consequence and is neither here nor there, it is very relevant vis-a-vis the comments about disagreements of the previous page. We don't often run across passive, phlegmatic young people or old bombastic fire-brands. But young, old, or in between, an easygoing conversation, discussion, discourse, disagreement, salted with a little enthusiasm and passion, would seem to be much more suitable and useful, productive and agreeable, than agitation and stridency, intemperance and lack of restraint. Besides, it's just more civilized, and who doesn't want to be more civilized? When will the "tough guys" realize that it's definitely possible, and preferable, to be both tough AND civilized? Anyway, it would certainly seem that this easygoing demeanor trumps high-intensity excitability in any situation concerning critical circumstances (such as on the flight deck during flight operations). While mental and emotional stimulation are one of the gems of life, these need not be diminished by being moderate and easygoing. To the contrary, one could argue that the stimulation is burnished, is enhanced, is appreciated more. The problem at hand is whether one actually knows what one would enjoy the most if one took the time to consider it.


17-F-27

"NO EASY DAYS"

This picture, and the next following picture, were taken from an excellent book entitled "No Easy Days". The entire book is devoted to the subject of mishaps that sometimes seemed to have a certain inevitability about them. (A video derived from this book, also entitled "No Easy Days", is also available.) To quote from the the video jacket, "Nothing is easy about flying from an aircraft carrier. Just why that statement is true is amply illustrated in this remarkable video. Based on our popular book by the same name, "No Easy Days" captures some of the most dramatic mishaps in naval aviation. Catch your breathe and see first hand the bewildering ways a flight can go wrong. Then reflect on the good people that brave this hazardous environment so we can live our much quieter lives in the comfort of peace." (L. Douglas Keeney, Aviation Author and Television Producer). These pictures are included because they show so well the phenomenon of the "bouncer", that aircraft that bounces so high that it clears all the arresting-wires and also perhaps all the barrier-wires to bring about mischief and misfortune and then grief among the Airdales who happen to be up forward. It so happens that this aircraft is the Grumman F8F Bearcat, an aircraft that didn't join the fleet until after the war. (Actually, we the Antietam had a squadron of them land on board for a day or two only, so perhaps it wasn't in the fleet.) The barriers were about five feet high and 5 of them extended about 105 feet from the aft elevator to the deckedge elevator. To refer to a weak Olympic analogy, this aircraft had to make a combined 5 foot high-jump while also accomplishing a 105 foot long-jump. Notice the upward angle of this Bearcat. This indicates a fairly hard touchdown back aft, and an all but inevitable smash-up up forward. The propeller blades can be seen winding down, so gravity is in control here. Only the physics of momentum will determine his point of impact. The pilot no longer has control of his aircraft. (Actually, when he cut his engine off (before touching down) he lost all control of the situation.) It's clear that all personnel in the area have found a more secure place as this incident unfolds, but a complete lack of anyone is an anomaly. There were normally just too many people around for such a vacant scene as this. There were Airdales, there were yellow-shirts, there were brown-shirts (plane captains), there were a few red-shirts, there were a few unauthorized spectators, there were asbestos-clad fire-fighters (two), and there were a few white-shirts (medics). Where are they all? There just was not nearly enough space in the island superstructure.

This is a classic example of a person in a situation over which he has absolutely no control. Sometimes the lack of control concerns that which is about to happen, as here. The result of the situation will be resolved immediately, and the problem of the lack of control is no longer pertinent. But what of those situations where the lack of control is ongoing? And ongoing, indefinitely? What does one do? What if one must contend with the unknown and unknowable? The matter of control is then not even a consideration. There are those (many) who subscribe to the use of prayer as a means of confronting the unresolvable. (We are of course dealing with things of significant importance to you, and you, and you.) Some turn to the Bible while others turn to prose and verse. Some turn to images that soothe, while others immerse themselves in the songs of longing, such as "A Time For Us". These all make sense, but perhaps what is most useful is to apprehend the meaning of, the concept of, what was called on a previous page "the mantel of equanimity". But finally, perhaps the most appropriate and even the most comforting is the saying as paraphrased: "Oh God, give me the strength to change the things that I can (and should) change, and the courage to live with those things which I can't change". This prayer glows. .


100
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NO EASY DAYS II

This interesting, partial "etching", somber though it appears, clearly shows the denouement of what was happening on the previous page. (But first, the lack of personnel, ANYWHERE except those few spectators high up in the superstructure, casts an eerie, a bizarre and almost surreal aspect to this scene. The only explanation to be found is that this ship, the U.S.S. Tarawa (CV-40), was commissioned well after the war in December 1945 and it is using a skeleton crew to qualify these new F8F Bearcats. That EVERYONE found refuge in the island superstructure as the mishap progressed would seem to be too much of a stretch. Yes, it looks like a ghost ship, at least to an Airdale. In any event, to the situation at hand where lives are in jeopardy and in the balance as a large and lethal hurtling object makes its way to do its worst. (The lives that are in jeopardy are of course the pilot, and also the Airdales/yellow-shirt on the deck, lower left.)) As we knew he would, the Bearcat cleared all five barriers and is now "poised" to crash into the aircraft up forward. Notice that his propeller has stopped spinning because he shut down his power just prior to touchdown. Therefore his attempt to veer to the left will come to naught (or so it is believed). It appears that he will crash into the aircraft to the left where those Airdales are standing, apparently oblivious to what is happening (they should have been "high-tailing it" out of harm's way several moments ago). This result could well be their demise and a collision with the stationary aircraft, most likely causing a large explosion and ensuing fire. At the very least, the collision will cause aircraft parts to fly in all directions as if they were pieces of shrapnel. The only "good" part of this scenario is that there are so few people in the area. Nevertheless, it does appear that those personnel are not aware of the situation, to their serious detriment, and it doesn't help that the aircraft are blocking their way to a sprint to safety. The airborne pilot hopes to avoid everything and thus bounce off the deck and toward the water 50 feet below. This would be a better outcome than a direct collision with stationary aircraft. If one looks closely, one can notice an aircraft almost directly below the airborne one. The aircraft on the deck is taxiing toward a parking spot while the other two have just finished their parking operation as their propellers are "winding down". (Again, where are the Airdales and yellow-shirts??) In any event, the fact remains that the pilot of the airborne Bearcat had precious little control of the situation once bounced upward, while the Airdales on the deck had a modicum of control (if they were paying attention.) I'm afraid there were casualties at the end of this episode, and quite possibly a death or two. Accidents (mishaps) WILL happen on a flight deck during flight operations, regardless of precautions or capabilities. Continuing from the previous page, control, or lack of it, is the bane of many. In the case of the pilot here, he had essentially no control whatsoever. He had to be resigned to his intractable fate and make the best of it. Sometimes there's no "best of it". This is where strength of character needs to come to the fore, resisting the possible blandishments of Hamlet's Soliloquy which says in part: "To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep: No more; and by a sleep to say we end the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep; To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub; ... That makes calamity of so long life: For who bear the whips and scorn of time, The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, The pang of despised love, the law's delay, The insolence of office, and the spurns ....." Shakespeare's words ring true to those many who feel a complete lack of any control over their destiny: where is liberty where control is metered out in dribbles? .


40
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LOSING YOUR HEAD

This SB2C Helldiver, in a photograph that resembles a combination of a lithograph and a painting, starkly shows a mishap in which its engine was sheared off by the force of a collision into the aft 5-inch gun-mount. Although most landings were uneventful, ALL land- ings, without exception, were potential mishaps, of one degree or another. Some were mild, and some were exceptionally destructive. If the landing turned out to be a minor mishap with no casualties, it was merely an inconvenience that meant some work for the me- chanics, some effort for the Airdales, and a lot of internalized relief for everyone on the flight deck. But if the mishap turned out to be significant, with significant consequences, it altered one's entire outlook for a fair amount of time thereafter. Not only were others injured or worse, but also perhaps the next time you wouldn't be so fortunate as to avoid the effects of the mishap. (It's a matter of "So there but for the Grace of God go I".) Youth does NOT believe it is immortal, at least not for those who think and who understand that what is transpiring on the flight deck is not unlike a dice-table. (Is it better to be happy-go-lucky and have no concerns about possible eventualities that might happen on the flight deck, or is it better to be more sober-minded and realize that bad things can and do happen on the flight deck even when one is careful and diligent and alert?

One could facetiously say that this Helldiver "lost its head", but I doubt that that would sit well with those involved here. Having made the simile, it can be thrown back to the humorist with "do you lose YOUR head when things go wrong" ? Do you lose all or most of your self-control in circumstances that require just the opposite? Returning to the poem "IF" by Rudyard Kipling which says in part, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you....", we have a powerful concept packed in a single statement. Can you maintain your self-control in trying times when others can't, and while in their discomposure they look for someone on which to put the onus for the problems? "Losing your head" implies that you are so overwrought by something that's not going your way that you act in ways that are detrimental to you and those around you. Using the popular vernacular, you "lose your cool", you become so "hot-headed" that you do and say things that are inappropriate and divisive and counterproductive. (It's interest- ing that "in my day", when we thought something was very good, we'd say "that's hot" implying enthusiasm and that the subject at hand sizzles with good ideas or results. Nowadays, the phrase has been reversed to "that's cool", implying the very same things. In retrospection, perhaps the present-day saying is a little better conceived in that it obliquely admonishes one that to have a "cool head" is good. Thus, "cool" is "good". And that's good.) All of this refers back to the comment made that civil discourse "is the way to go", and that shouting and over-talking is "for the birds" (Is it true that the language is being overrun by the vernacular? It has its place, yes, but it would be sad if proper English were abandoned. If it were, we would lose a great deal in the depth and breadth of our being able to express ourselves with precision and polish. One could rightly say that the vernacular is a simple-minded short-hand for those of the lazy genre. (Just the opinion of an engineering-oriented old-timer.)) Back to Kipling's poem "IF" and his powerful statement "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs.....". To me, such a person is not only admirable for his/her strength of character, but such a person is also much more usefully intelligent because one's thought-processes are by definition markedly superior to those who "lose their heads" to become addled and confused and deleterious to the well-being of the general welfare. "Stay cool!"



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT .....DISTRESSFUL NEWS

This dramatic play of dark on light initiates a set of 12 pictures that portrays both men and machines in the strait called "extremis". These occasions are an integral part of what it means to bring a high-powered aircraft down onto a limited, moving, unstable platform where skill often times is not an assurance that "all is well". What is well in the present instance is not necessarily a harbinger of what is to be satisfactory in the following instances. Here, it was not necessary to crash into a 5-inch gun-mount to lose an engine. It's presumed that somehow, due to structural damage to the fuselage and the brackets holding the engine, the engine is now somewhere up forward among the possibly unprepared. All that one is able to know here is that there is no engine to be seen. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the cantilevered brackets attached to the body of the aircraft were not able to withstand the shock of a hard landing, and the massive, heavy, 16-cylinder engine broke free of the fuselage and skipped forward even as the aircraft was being restrained by the tail-hook. If one stops to think about it, it's remarkable that a set of four or so brackets attached to the main body of the aircraft are able to even hold the engine, cantilevered as it is. Then when the engine is cranked up and the propeller is spinning furiously, how is the vibration of the engine able to be absorbed by those "fragile" brackets, much less doing so upon a (hard) landing? I don't know about you, but to me that is a little less than extremely remarkable. It takes a structural and strength of materials engineer to feel comfortable about it. And so this poor benighted machine exceeded its limits and burst into flames now just beginning to "bloom" into ugliness, but too soon for the Airdales to converge on it with fire-fighting equipment in hand. It appears that the pilot made his way to the wing and is about to slide down to the deck and safety. At this stage the fire is limited sufficiently to allow the Airdales to approach closely to the fire and thus to have a better chance of quickly quenching the fire. This is, of course, the method of preventing a big fire from becoming really big. It a matter of "nipping the fire in the bud". In the fraternity of pilots, they say that any landing that you're able to walk away from is a good landing. I won't contest that concept except to say that in the fraternity of the Airdales this does not necessarily ring true since they have to clear up and clean up the results of those landings even when the pilot can walk away from it.

Given a threatening situation, such as giving aid to this pilot here, how many of us would have the physical courage to do the right thing despite our natural fears? (Actually, the man-in-white would be the designated rescuer here.) As a particularly prosaic example that I nonetheless rue to this very day, I go back to when I was a mere youngster. The occasion was when, in one case, a bigger boy was choking a smaller boy (bigger than me), and in the other case, a bigger boy was forcefully pushing a smaller boy's face into the ground. This was about some altercation about which I was not privy, and which I thought would only be a quick demonstration of dominance, which it was. However, the force seemed excessive for the purpose ("putting someone in his place"), and I only stood there, without one word of remonstration. My impulse was to physically come to the aid of the younger one, but I didn't, and as I write this I still feel the pang of having only stood by and watched. I felt badly for the younger person, and for myself, I felt a real twinge of remorse, the more so since the latter case involved my older brother being pushed down. Call it chagrin, or even call it remorse, for not at least having made the effort. I had an opportunity to do what would have been a courageous thing to have done, but I didn't measure up to the occasion. I talk about courage, but I wasn't able to put action to the words. I'm no doubt not alone in this, but still, I cringe.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

These "lithograph/paintings" are most appealing in that they present only the essence of what's happening in an image. The observers are thus better able to give free rein to their thoughts of empathy for what is occurring in the picture, even while the palpable is beyond them. That's reserved only for those who have actually experienced such episodes and where even then the unfolding action becomes such that the perilous becomes faintly perceived. Here again the engine's cantilevered brackets were unable to hold fast as this Hell- diver came to an abrupt stop. In the process of breaking downward, fuel-lines were broken and hot metal ignited the gasoline vapors. Evidently the pilot was injured, either before or after this crash, and so two men-in-white are seen lowering him down to safety. At the same time, some Airdales are dousing the area with the water-applicator that generates a strong spray that's very effective in quenching a fire. Not only does this applicator do that, but it also enables the application of water right onto hard-to-reach places. For instance in a few moments, after the pilot is carried to safety, the Airdales will move to the front of the Helldiver and place the applicator right over the fire for the most effective results. In addition, the applicator is more than adequate in providing a shield of water that protects the forward Airdale from close-in fires. The "trick-of-the-trade" was to continuously move the applicator in front of you in a 60 degree arc, right to left, and left to right, taking about 2 seconds to cover the arc and thus limiting and hopefully squelching the fire. In the upper right-hand corner can be seen another Airdale crew with their applicator. And once again, there is that ubiquitous fire-extinguisher which "always" appears in the vicinity of the engine. These extinguishers are used primarily to "nip in the bud" that fire that originates in the engine, before it can develop into a larger fire as here. Once out of control, there's "hell to pay" trying to subdue a fire.

This picture provides a good example of people working together to accomplish a common goal. A fire-hose full of water and under full pressure is a difficult thing to handle alone. Uncontrolled, it goes pretty much where it wants to go and so multiple sets of hands are required to direct it to where it should go. One person would be hard put to direct the hose effectively. So informal teams are form- ed spontaneously to accomplish this requirement of controlling the hose. While not many things in everyday life depend so critically on just such teamwork, many, many things are accomplished most expeditiously by co-workers who work together. One could even say the same about such a mundane task as washing the dishes. When I was young, my father would not let my mother in the kitchen after supper. Instead, he washed the dishes while my two brothers and I dried them (being before the era of mechanical dishwashers). A trivial thing, no doubt, but a sound way to establish early-on the concept of working together. One thus internalizes the concept of cooperation toward a common purpose. Warfare, where lives are at stake, requires the utmost of cooperation. This is an imperative. In the middle ground, that of a normal workaday, the world is rife with the use and necessity of working together. But even with more mundane activities, who can not say that things proceed more smoothly when people are working in concert with a common goal? It's certainly better than the constant bickering of those always at odds with each other. Concurrence is not a prerequisite to cooperation, but collusion, conspiracy, connivance and cahoots are definitely the dark side of cooperation. Compromise need not be considered a pejorative as it seems to be to those of a dogmatic nature. While it's true that it's not necessary, trustworthiness is a very useful adjunct to this mode we call cooperation. In fact, if space were available, one could make a very cogent case for the dire necessity of trust.



IT'S ABOUT.....ONEROUS NEWS

Another "lithograph/painting", another somber day, and another fire engulfing the underside of a Hellcat. Evidently, this eruption of fire was due to a gasoline tank splitting open upon the Hellcat's touching down, in spite of the fact that from all appearances it was a good landing (not a "bouncer", as witness the tail-hook's having caught an early arresting-wire). While the auxiliary tank under the fuselage appears to be intact, the force of the landing could have caused that tank to have sprung a leak of sufficient magnitude to have originated this significant fire. Who knows? As has been said, each and every landing is theoretically susceptible to just such a fire. This is understood. What is not understood is why there is that lone Airdale confronting that fire with no water in the hose? And where are all the rest of the Airdales? And why wasn't that man-in-white by now next to the Hellcat ready to provide aid to the pilot who is fleeing for his life? Having just expounded on the previous page the necessity of having multiple pairs of hands on a hose, this picture leaves one perplexed, to say the least (even pulling an empty fire-hose that distance is no easy matter). Again, where are they, those Airdales? (All Airdales were designated fire-fighters.) This was a somber day made even more somber by the threatening weather. In addition, this is a disturbing picture, not just because the pilot is running for his life, not just because the man-in-the white-suit is standing back, but most especially because there is that Airdale, all alone by himself with no support in either numbers or the existence of water-pressure, facing a daunting fire that is inevitably going to become even more daunting. This is not a pretty picture, really.

This picture provides nearly perfect symbolism in two important regards: first, in spite of doing what's right and correct, still suffering adverse consequences, and second, standing all alone with absolutely no support while also trying to do what is right and correct. In the first instance, it's certainly disconcerting to do everything correctly and yet nevertheless finding the results going badly through no fault of your own. It's definitely depressing. How does such a thing happen? Was it in fact your fault? In the case of the pilot here, he had no reason to think that anything he did was the cause of the accident. However, in life things are not usually so well defined as here in this instance. We can only study the facts as best we can and so try to understand them. From these "facts" we can attempt a plausible answer. However, often we are reduced to the implausible, which might be worse than no answer at all. Who wants to con-front the implausible? As to the second instance, that of being all alone against the intractable with no evidence whatsoever of even moral support, what can be said? A wag could say that that single Airdale thinks that there is a full crew directly behind him providing full support. But then that wag wouldn't realize that that Airdale is smart enough to know that if he has no water-pressure, he has no support. So what to do if you are standing out there all alone, against severe odds, with no support at hand, as is this Airdale? You do, I believe, the only thing that you reasonably can do: knowing that you're doing what's right, you fight the good fight and stick with it. But then, what is the good fight? Here, one must fall back on one's well established set of standards and principles of right and wrong, and realize that whatever one does, one will have to live with that for a lifetime. That's why it's so important to early-on determine one's set of basic, no nonsense, values. Let it now begin: take the time to sort it out to arrive at that set of values that are hewn from the bedrock of the teachings of the sages and the wisdom of Solomon (without becoming ensnared in the intricacies of religious dogmas and the sway of the rigid doctrinaires because the truths should be universal across all religions and cultures and philosophies).



NATIONAL ARC

IT'S ABOUT.....DREADFUL NEWS

Though similar, this scene is not the continuation of the previous picture. Whereas in the previous picture the fire didn't start until after the run-out of the arresting-wire, in this picture the aircraft is probably still in motion with the fire having erupted moments after the Hellcat made hard contact with the deck, causing an abrupt breach of the fuel-lines/fuel-tank(s) and an immediate conflagration. The fire precedes the aircraft because of the forward motion of the aircraft, throwing the gasoline in front of it. (This chapter, Mishaps, unfortunately has some truly ugly scenes.) Presumably the pilot still has time and a clear path of egress to save himself., but the man-in-white seems to be too far away to provide any help if needed. (Most of the crashes were further forward , within the area of the barriers.) However, this explosive fire occurred at almost the moment of impact with the deck, and that's why there are no fire-fighters in view. (But they'll be there.) There are two green-shirts stationed at the after end of the flight deck, one on each side, during the launch operations. After each landing, they run out to the aircraft to disengage the arresting-wire from the tail-hook. One of those green-shirts can be seen to the right looking to jump onto the catwalk. The other one, on the other side of the flight deck, is not in view, but probably is already on the catwalk to the left. That man just in front of the man-in-white is the yellow-shirt who takes control of the aircraft after it has been disengaged from the arresting-wire. ("Take control" means that he gives the "hold" signal to the pilot until the arresting-wire is disengaged, and then he "passes the pilot forward" to the next yellow-shirt up the flight deck.) In the upper right corner can be seen the following aircraft in the landing pattern around the carrier. He of course is already veering off to reenter the landing pattern. (I would say that he's about 30 seconds following the aircraft on the deck, instead of the standard 20 seconds.

How to make useful comments about such a catastrophe, such a dreadful scene as this? One way would be to ask how one would act, or react, to such a situation as the one here. How would one comport himself if he were the pilot of that aircraft? (Beat a hasty retreat is an inadequate answer.) The more general, better question is what is one's state of mind when in a situation of "extremis" as here? "Talking a good game" is not a valid indication of one's true self, of one's true mettle. And belittling others, verbally slaying them, in an effort to puff oneself up to imply self-worth by comparison is taking the low road, and is not worthy of a person of character or intellect. So how does one accurately plumb the depth of one's intrepidity and dauntlessness? Trying to assume the traits and characteristics of those who have gone before in the glow of unadulterated courage is only a step in the right direction. But what are those traits and characteristics? One of them would seem to be the ability to establish and maintain a clear head in concert with, or in spite of, the unavoidable (and necessary) pumping of adrenaline. Mother Nature takes care of the latter, but you, and you, and you have to acquire the ability of achieving the former. Of all the traits, perhaps this one is the most important, for all else follows from this, such as intelligent evaluation of what has to be done, what it is that is feasible (and important) to do both personally and externally, and when to do what. This clear (cool) head should not be docile or phlegmatic, for time is of the essence (a clear head and a quick mind are not mutually exclusive). Even though extremely threatening situations often cause one "to freeze", this is fine for the moment so that precipitous action doesn't occur. But then a clear, functioning mind must take hold so that fear does not. It is unallayed fear that robs the mind of clarity, and thus the ability of one to adequately confront the situations that are in the realm of threatening "extremis".


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....HORRIBLE NEWS

One might say that this picture is the follow-on to the previous picture, but that would be incorrect because most of the fire is to the left, and not to the right as in the previous picture. And yet, what if the ship rolled to the starboard in those few intervening moments from that picture to this picture, thus causing the gasoline to flow to the starboard side? If the flight deck was a steel one (such as the British), then there is merit to that contention. But all the Essexes had wooden decks, and so such a radical change in the location of the fire in such a short time is improbable, especially with an apparently calm sea. (But Airdales, beware of sloshing gasoline). However, the immediate and paramount concern here is the safety and disposition of the pilot in this, for him, true holocaust (presuming he wasn't able to flee for his life as in the previous picture). This picture apparently "makes a liar out of me" after having digressed about teamwork and multiple pairs of hands on a fire-hose. I will stand by that assertion and only add that these dedicated Airdales will soon be joined by other equally dedicated Airdales . Actually, what happened was that at every landing there were several Airdales stationed at a fire-hose, at the ready for just such an occasion. At a mishap, they immediately rush out to the fire, less the water-pressure. The other Airdales, busy with the escorting and the parking of just-landed aircraft, will quickly converge on the mishap and the water-pressure will be turned on once the hoses are in position as here. If there's no water in the hose, the Airdale can get to the fire that much more quickly. Obviously, time is of the essence, especially with shipboard fires. But assuredly, water will be forthcoming in short order. After the safety of the pilot, the Airdales must be concerned about possible incipient, ensuing explosions and the resultant flying shrapnel. The Airdale must be sufficiently aware of the inherent dangers lurking in situations such as in this picture.

Yes, it certainly was their job to "step into the breach" by rushing out to beat down this or any, threatening fire. And yes, it was also their duty to vigorously "throw themselves" against this, or any, overwhelming inferno. But beyond that, going to the basics, it was just simply their responsibility, it was their moral imperative, if you will, when there was a life in the balance, to charge into the fray (even though by this time the pilot was either saved or lost. But not all the fires developed so rapidly.) Responsibility implies doing your job, doing you duty, to the best of your ability. However, here that responsibility has an even higher purpose. Here, one could safely read into the job-description that at times one act "above and beyond the call of duty". But how define that duty? Since there are two men-in-white, an Airdale's first duty is to subdue the fire. But what if a fellow Airdale is entrapped in the moving fire? Now we tread in the territory of the brave. This territory calls for the type of leadership that encourages courage, encourages the best from those who follow. The very act of those Airdales rushing out to that huge fire exhibits well the kind of leadership that should elicit admiration and respect. Just because the venture in confronting an adversity does not go well, that's no reason to diminish one's determination in fighting that adversity (that fire). The problem at hand here happens to be a fire. But that problem could be anything where persistence is a prerequisite. Everyone can make their own list. Everyone should make their own list as an exercise in understanding what it means when one sees the Navy's motto fluttering in the breeze on the flag: DUTY, HONOR, COMMITMENT. This motto, in the highest tradition of the Navy, can be found in any discussion about what it is that an Airdale does on the deck of an aircraft carrier when that Airdale is fighting a fire to spare not only the life of a pilot, but also that of a fellow Airdale. WWII had a wealth of such.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....DISASTROUS NEWS

This Hellcat was properly brought to a stop by an arresting-wire, but a mishap nevertheless resulted because that stop was too abrupt. This was probably due to the fact that its landing speed was excessive, plus the happenstance that the wire that the aircraft caught was further up the deck where the wire was less compliant. (Arresting-wires further from the aft-end of the deck were made less compliant than those that were further back (further from the barriers) so that there would be less chance of an entanglement by the aircraft with those barriers. These entanglements of course could damage the aircraft and they would interrupt the smooth flow of the 20-second landing intervals (by tens of minutes maybe), further disrupting the expeditious recovery of the entire flight (of up to 90 aircraft).) With the abrupt stop it can be seen that the auxiliary gasoline tank that was slung under the fuselage of the Hellcat became dislodged and thrown forward (lower right corner). As is clearly seen, the fuel-tank was thoroughly thrashed by the still-spinning propeller as it scooted forward, spilling the gasoline in the process. The fumes are seen almost enshrouding the tank. This occurred only moments ago as witness the pilot still ensconced in the cockpit and "at the controls". (Also note the straps below the fuselage that had held the fuel tank.) The softness of the features of this picture belie the true situation, and the portent of the fumes gives one a chilling sensation (this is not a foggy day with a surfeit of mist). What are the chances of this type of incident occurring on the next landing? The answer is "slight". And yet the theory of probability, though essentially the domain of the mathematician, is not his domain exclusively. The run-of-the-mill Airdale, far from the competence of a trained mathematician, figures that each landing has a 50-50 chance of resulting in some kind of mishap IN SPITE OF having been proved wrong most of the time. He definitely lacks the confidence in the Laws of Probability. Part of this is because of his plain ignorance, but part of it is due to his actually being there as these big machines course through the air toward him and his small "piece of real estate". Time tends to lessen these anxieties, and all is well (hopefully). For sure, the propeller here showed absolutely no respect whatsoever for that auxiliary fuel tank, and sometimes it seems that some people show not much more respect for others than what is shown here (we're speaking about everyday, common, garden-variety type of respect). While not so calamitous as the fuel-tank's treatment, lack of respect can be injurious to the overall social psyche in that disrespect directed at A causes A to disrespect B who in turn disrespects C, and so on in a chain-reaction. This inevitably puts disagreeableness in play over a wide-ranging landscape of society. Who needs this? Who wants this? Who can stop this? The answer should be: It's those who bestow, AUTOMATICALLY, to EVERYONE, without a shred of metering or calculation and regardless of rank or standing, age or condition, a simple pleasantness and acceptance devoid of being judgmental. Consideration and thoughtfulness are a step beyond, accorded to those better known, while concern and kindness is just respect for those closest to us. While it's true that there are those who deserve our disrespect, be circumspect, for it's better to show misplaced respect than misplaced disrespect (the correction is easier). For Heaven's sake, it doesn't cost a single solitary thing to show respect to the least of us, across the board, starting with simple common courtesy, even going all the way to concerned consideration. We're talking about simple respect, not a caring that requires genuine, deep concerns for strangers that are cultivated by the relatively few (?). There's probably nothing in this world that has a higher cost-benefit ratio than the practice of common respect and courtesy. Respect, an IMPORTANT life-quality!


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....ABYSMAL NEWS

Yes, that misting gasoline vapor of the previous page did indeed ignite to cause this flaming inferno, this abysmal scene. Only moments ago the pilot was motionless in the cockpit. Now, he's feverishly clambering out onto the wing and to safety. Fortunately all those flames are on only one side of the Hellcat, and therefore he's home-free. Not all scenarios were so accommodating to the pilot as here. The auxiliary gasoline-tank of the previous picture has continued its way up toward the front of the flight deck, who knows how far? Although it could not be likened to a missile, and depending on the amount of gasoline remaining in the tank, it could presumably be building up enough heat within the tank to explode, causing serious injuries to the flight deck personnel, the severities depending on their proximity to the tank. As was said on the previous page, the amount of "real estate"on the flight deck was not all that great, especially after a large number of aircraft had landed to fill up the available space. However, the main area of concern to the Airdales at this time is the fire burning out of control. The island superstructure, where the bulk of the Airdales were stationed during a landing operation, is at a point to the right from which this picture was taken. The Airdales have yet to arrive on the scene, but be assured that they will be there in mere moments. Usually these fires erupted almost immediately upon touchdown, often with no apparent reason for doing so except for the fact that the aviation gasoline used to fire up these high-powered engines were not only of high-octane, but also of high volatility. This made the aircraft better performers, but it also made the Airdales" job harder in situations such as this. But then those recruiting posters "never promised a rose garden", and the Navy never specified what per cent of the landings would result in situations as here. The unknown can be, and was, a very debilitating condition, both physically and mentally for the flight deck personnel. This condition went with the territory that was the flight deck, where from moment to moment the unknown reigned supreme..

Fear. How does one manage the fear of the unknown? It could vary from the prosaic to something of extreme importance and over which one has absolutely no control (the flight deck). This is not the fear of a known physical circumstance, but rather the fear of forces beyond the ken, no matter how far one reaches. What is worse: the fear of the known? or the unknown? The former is visceral and intellectually manageable, while the latter is visceral and intellectually "unmanageable". The former can come and go, the latter comes and "never" goes. It would seem that the solution would be to learn what it is that is unknown. Sometimes it's doable, while other times the secrets of the unknown are completely intractable. (This implies that the unknown is known by others, which makes that unknown doubly worse. But we stray.) The problem at hand is the fear of the unknown whose outcome is in the hands of the "Gods of the Flight Deck". The last landing was fine but what do the odds say about the next landing? Or, are the odds even in play here? Who's to say that one crash will not be followed by another crash the very next landing? (This never happened to my knowledge but who could, who would, say that it couldn't happen? Stranger things than that have.) One could well say that the only reasonable remedy is to be fatalistic about the unknown and unknowable, and do not try to know the unknowable. That sounds good, and in fact was the approach that was adopted by those faced with the unknown on the flight deck. Actually, most everyone faces the unknown every time they step out of the house. They do not contest the gods of kismet, nor should they. Besides, life is too short to be tied in knots over those things over which one has no control, or even knowledge. It would seem best to lighten up and enjoy as one is able.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....NOXIOUS NEWS

There it stands, still smoldering, that Hellcat of the previous page. There now follows the sequel to the previous two pictures in the next four pictures, making this a six-picture sequence of a noxious episode. As it turned out, that apparent conflagration was in fact restricted to the outer portion of the left wing and thus did not pose a particular threat to the pilot (but as it is wont to say, "You never know"). We are now able to view the entire scene from overhead, probably several minutes after the initial burst of fire. This picture clearly shows the variations in the handling of the fire-hoses. Some hoses, on the side of the fire, are fully manned, while those on the quiet side are at the ready. The one exception is that "lone eagle", that solitary Airdale who is front and center, manning a hose by himself. He probably has muscles to spare because a fire-hose under full water-pressure is difficult to control. The hose to the right is in the spray-mode to suppress the fire while the hose to the left has its nozzle adjusted to as to provide a stream of water in an effort to quench the fire in the auxiliary fuel-tank. It's surprising that there are no hoses there that have the 90-degree applicator of previous pictures. These would allow the Airdales to extend the spray further into the fire without exposing themselves to the heat of the fire. The overall impression here is one of teamwork, knowing your job, and doing it. Not all the Airdales have the demonstrated resolve (and probably the biceps) of that lone sailor with the hose at the forefront. He personifies what it means to be a leader: always ready to insert oneself into the fray without first having a "committee-meeting" before doing what clearly needs to be done. It doesn't hurt to also be dedicated to what it is that is your duty. Duty calls, and the leader answers, pronto. There's no indication here that there is anyone not contributing to the task at hand, and while some do more than others, it would be a real disservice to say that anyone is not doing his share or is shirking his duty. (To go even further, to adversely and dishonestly misrepresent someone, deliberately and maliciously, as to who he is, and what he does or does not do, is close to being despicable.) But again, that lone sailor in this picture admirably fulfills the Duty portion of the Navy's motto "Duty-Honor-Commitment".

Is duty only that which is prescribed and well-defined? What does this picture show in terms of that indispensable quality called duty? We all have duties, such as adhering to proscribed rules and obeying the laws. But other duties are not nearly so well-defined (in spite of the legal jargon that's imposed on us). These other duties could be considered the unspoken duties that are not itemized, but that in a way set some apart from others. It could be said that the citation "above and beyond the call of duty" is one of them, and this is true except for those heroic deeds that place one's life in jeopardy, and to which that citation normally applies. Are we obligated to certain duties that are not spelled out in one's job-description? Probably yes. Was that Airdale, that lone sailor, expected to man that hose by himself? No. But he did, to his credit. Is he going to be rewarded for this? No, because it certainly is in the domain of his duties and what he could do. Duties usually imply initiative as was demonstrated by that lone sailor. While duty does imply doing what you're expected to do, in the best of worlds it additionally and tacitly requires one to go above and beyond (without putting your life at risk). An obligation suggests a specific task or the like to be accomplished, while a duty covers more terrain and its implementation is often simply a reflection of the merits of an individual. Duty-Honor-Commitment, which of these deserves the most recognition? The best answer is that they each one complements the other in such a way as to burnish the others. One alone is good; together, they shine.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....GRIEVOUS NEWS

Before continuing with this series, something should be said about the sheer attractiveness of this set of pictures, in spite of the subject's being substantially disagreeable. Who would not be stimulated by the play of dark on light and light on dark as it defines the continuing action? And again, that softness of definition of the elements of this picture contrasts vividly with the "hardness" that is explicit in these unfolding scenes. (And once again, kudos to the photographer.) Now that the fire is all but subdued, the probable culprit can be clearly seen to the right, that still smoldering fuel-tank. Because the propeller is in a changed position from that of the previous picture, it is surmised that the pilot, in his haste to save himself, only shut down the throttle but didn't turn off the ignition, thus allowing the propeller to slowly windmill. For this reason an Airdale climbed onto the wing so as to reach into the cockpit to turn off the ignition, with the support of the man-in-white. A few other hot-spots still exist that require dousing. That small fire to the left was probably due to a flying piece of hot metal which ignited a grease spot on the wooden deck. The confusing tangle of fire-hoses can all be accounted for if one realizes that the closer of those two hoses that are in parallel, to the left, belongs to that yellow-shirt who is leaning over and is to the left of the man-in-white. The Airdales here are all undertaking their duty and they are doing it well. None, I'm sure, had to be told what to do. Instead, they were presented with a problem and they responded quickly and with verve, fulfilling that duty with honor. Duty. Honor. Commitment.

It would be instructive if we were to make the effort to consider the concept of "honor" as it pertains to "duty", and then some. A sound definition, it is submitted, is that "honor", at its most basic and in essence, is doing the right thing regardless of the difficulties incurred and in spite of what suffering might have to be endured. One might say this is just a definition of what duty is in the military. Well taken. But as was said, this was only the basic, the essence, of what it is to be honorable. Before proceeding, the above begs the question, what is "right"? In the military, it is a lawful order, pure and simple. Outside the military, it becomes somewhat mirky. We all have our own definition of what is "right", but it could be argued that what is "right" is based on a general consensus as evolved over time. In the strictest sense, vis-a-vis "honor", how to define "right" is not as important as having a well prescribed concept of what "right" is. Once this concept is spelled out, this then becomes the compass against which "honor" is measured. With this basic frame- work, one can flesh out the meaning of "honor" as it applies to one's conduct. Of the many nuances of this powerful word that certainly demands other than physical strength, as in duty, probably the most significant quality is that of trustworthiness. There can be no honor where there is no trustworthiness, for sure. This also implies an integrity in one's beliefs and actions, and the acceptance of one's responsibilities and obligations. Furthermore, one must have developed a finely-tuned sense of strict conformity to what is morally upright. But then, what is moral? Most likely, it is that group of rules and standards accepted by the upstanding citizens of a community. But what if honor conflicts with loyalty? This is when it hurts. Many words can be applied to the concept of "honor": trustworthiness, rectitude, righteous, upright, just, honesty, integrity, probity, virtuous, moral, dependable, reliable, correctness, faithful, responsible, loyal, and you name it. Perhaps the Marines have said it as well as can be in two words: "Semper Fidelis", Always Faithful (to those who depend on you and your honor). Here again it's a case of character, in the form of "honor", carrying the day.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....WRETCHED NEWS

I must confess that I'm puzzled by this picture, but I included it nevertheless because of, again, its interesting dark on bright and bright on dark, plus the overall quality of the elements in this scene. What is clear here is that the fire on and around the Hellcat is spent except for some smoldering to the right. Everything to the right is under control, but to the left we are all of a sudden presented with fires that appear to have nothing whatsoever to do with that of the Hellcat. So what goes on here? What caused these fires? The only clue as to the source of these fires is that there appear to be two separate fires: the closer one in flames only, and that other more developed one beyond it, both of which are in the catwalk. The nearer one seems to have just started while the further one appears to have been burning for several minutes. What's puzzling is what started these fires and why isn't there more apparent urgency? One thing that is clear is that both of the fires are at the precise points of gasoline-station outlets (beside the catwalk, one of which is just this side of that radio-tower which is in the horizontal position and the other being just about in the middle of that black cloud of smoke, and just below the flight deck level). What is also puzzling is that group of officers (bottom, center) surrounding that sailor. Are they friendly? Or unfriendly? If unfriendly, why? Perhaps he's not an Airdale (no cloth-helmet) and so is off-limits on a dangerous flight deck. As a matter of fact, a story could be written about each and everyone out there on the "battlefield" that is the flight deck during an episode such as this. Not the least of those stories would be the amount of commitment each one applied to the job of not only confronting, but also subduing what are often vicious fires that "take no prisoners". (Is it unrealistic to personify a fire? Perhaps not, if you were the one in the fight.) So what's your appraisal? Did these Airdales show commitment? In fact, what is commitment?

Very basically, one could say that commitment is the determination to see a job through to completion despite difficulties. Just as it was honorable to commit oneself to duty, so too should that commitment be done to its full completion, as in a pledge, a promise, an obligation, even an assurance. It's the sure knowledge that you can be depended upon to do what you say you will do that defines your adherence to commitment. Can your word be taken as your bond? Does commitment allow you to change your word in mid-stream? Most assuredly not, at least not without a very compelling reason to change course, and then that reason must almost always be outward-directed. Notice that the above does not deal in absolutes, the lazy man's way. But darn it, that just causes one's decisions to be that much harder to make. Life is complex that way, though sometimes (many times?) we wish that it were not so because there is much to be said for consistency. In fact, commitment without consistency would seem to be an oxymoron. To the case at hand: this series of pictures certainly seem to verify the fact that most all of these Airdales exhibited a firm commitment to the task at hand in that they fought the fires with diligence and did not in any way flag in the process. The fire did not daunt them or drive them away. They finished the job with aplomb and efficiency , and as they say in the sporting world, they "stayed with it" until the deed was done. In fact, the sporting world provides ample opportunities to display this thing called "commitment". To expend one's utmost in the face of probable defeat in an athletic contest even though the opposition is thoroughly in domination is one of the fine attributes of a true sportsman. All the world admires an athlete who "gives his all", who never gives up, though "all is lost". It is the near perfect example of dedication and COMMITMENT. We definitely need it in the military, and we could certainly use it in our everyday lives. Right?!



NAVAL ARCHIVES

IT'S ABOUT.....BETTER NEWS

As they say, now "it's all over but the shouting". While the Airdales push this forlorn and bruised Hellcat up forward to clear the way for the still circling aircraft overhead, others flock out onto the deck to be a part of the occasion. Many more than half of those who are milling about are plane-captains or yellow-shirts or officers or just plain unauthorized spectators rehashing the preceding action. There are still two groups of Airdales manning hoses to wash down the residual gasoline on the deck. Now that it's over and a modicum, a semblance, of order has been restored, how many of those Airdales showed courage under fire? Can you tell if someone is courageous just by looking at that person? Why are some courageous and some not? What is it in one's experience that makes one courageous? Who determines who is and who is not courageous? Does courage pertain only to those under fire? What fuels the "fire" of courage?

First off, let's establish that courage can be not only episodic and physical, as here, but it can certainly also be continuous and mental as well as unremitting and visceral in being able to bear a persistent malady. According to the dictionary, courage is "that quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. with firmness and without fear". It might also be said that courage is the ability to withstand the vicissitudes (the changing conditions of life and fortune) with equanimity (the mental or emotional stability or composure when under stress and strain and tension). There are all kinds of courage, but they all, it would seem, imply the existence of some kind of fear. It might be an intangible such as the unknown, or it might be the tangible such as that spinning propeller staring you in the face. In any event, for courage to apply, the fear must be of substance, and probably not of one's imagination. Thus, most everyone can be considered courageous, to one degree or another because they stand tall and carry on despite their difficulties and opposition. This might be due to the fact that pride can be the engine of courage. (Who's to say that it's not courageous to ask for a raise? But surely, those who bear up under a malady are at the forefront of what it is to be courageous.) Synonyms for courage are "fearlessness, dauntlessness, intrepidity, fortitude, pluck, spirit, heroism, daring, audacity, hardihood, gallantry". One could well say that these are only the embellishments of what courage is, and not true definitions of courage (they were included because the diction- ary listed them). The dictionary also said that "bravery is courage with boldness of action and daring, while valor implies continuous bravery in the face of personal danger and a noble and lofty quality of courage. (Bravado is boastful and ostentatious pretense of courage or bravery)". Courage seems to build on itself and feed off of others (a good example of leadership by example). These Airdales are essentially neophytes when it comes to fighting fires, and they "learn the trade" by being immersed in the rigors of beating down the hot, probing flames as they throw as much water on the inferno as possible. One of the real fears in fighting a fire on the flight deck is being entrapped by the flames. This is so because gasoline, besides being so volatile, is also a liquid that has a propensity of finding its way to the places that put you in jeopardy: the "real estate" is limited and restricted in that the fire could be in front of you while a fifty-foot drop to the water below is directly behind you. You are really "between the devil and the deep blue sea (the catwalk behind you is only about three feet wide and the 20-mm gun-platform along the side of the flight deck does not drain the gasoline (so it will pool there and thus fuel a bigger fire, as witness the previous picture). In the "heat of the battle" of fighting the fires, one tends to concentrate so much on the fire that one does not tend to dwell on the hazardousness of the situation. That is good.



IT'S ABOUT.....A TRUE HERO

Here is, truly, a picture of a true hero. A person who puts his life in jeopardy in the process of trying to save someone else's life is the definition of a true hero. Nothing less justifies such an appellation, and to do so merely dilutes the nobleness of the true hero. But first, notice the remarkable juxtaposition of heroism and the apparent indifference to a life-and-death situation directly adjacent. That sailor, with his back to the flight deck, is a "green-shirt" (without his green shirt) at the controls of the mechanism that raises and lowers the brackets that raise and lower the arresting-wires that are supposed to catch the tail-hook of the landing aircraft. He, or another green-shirt, was also responsible for reeling in the wire that was caught by the tailhook and disengaged by another green-shirt after an aircraft landed and caught an arresting-wire. Thus, one could say that his "job-description" did not include rushing to the aid of someone in peril. (Or is he thinking, "Ho hum, so there's another mishap"? I devoutly hope not.) So, what are we to think of this green-shirt? What if, heaven forbid, you were that green-shirt? Would you just stand there, seemingly nonchalant, or would you jump to the fray? Would you conduct your life as if it were controlled by some "job-description", unperturbed by what's happening around you? It's for sure that the Airdales, now about 50 yards away next to the superstructure, are running to this mishap at double-time because this situation is definitely in their "job-description".

Although it's not specifically in the job-description of this yellow-shirt (or officer yellow-shirt), he is not letting that deter him. His job during normal landing procedures was to wave the aircraft forward once he saw that the arresting wire was disengaged by the green-shirts. This would place him just about where he is right now, so he didn't need to go far to reach this point. In fact, he probably had to step lively to avoid being overrun by this errant Hellcat. This situation here is definitely perilous because, if one looks closely, one will see flames almost engulfing the auxiliary fuel-tank. If there's still gasoline in the tank, it won't be long before the heat of the fire will cause it to explode. You could say that he's stepping on a ticking time-bomb, and who knows how many more ticks remain? Even when he's able to extract the pilot, they could by then be encircled by fire. What is needed, NOW, is the forceful spray of water (or foam), and also the presence of those two men-in-white. The most extreme example of heroism is that person who jeopardizes his/her life in the process of trying to save another person's life when this is known to God alone. To paraphrase the Bible, "Verily, there is no greater love than he who gives up his life for another". Further paraphrasing, "Verily, there is no greater quality of nature than love". Moving on, if someone aggressively fights a raging fire, even at the expense of his life, that person shall be called courageous and brave. However, should a person be unfortunate enough to find himself amongst a group of aircraft when a bomb finds that mark, then he will have paid the ultimate price only because he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Yes, he served his country well, but no, he should not be called courageous or brave, and certainly not heroic. To be called that would be to demean and diminish those who have been courageous or brave or heroic. We would do well to use words correctly and carefully so as not to blemish their meaning, because words should have specific meanings in their context. To blur those meanings does not serve the truth, and it is the truth that ultimately serves the welfare of society the most. True heroism is scarce, and so it is precious. Do not defame it by referencing it in a careless manner. Again, and again, you are looking at a true hero whose fate we do not, and will never, know. But do him honor, now.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PARKING

Firstly, let me say that I will be using the verb-tenses, throughout this book, in a manner that suits my mode at the moment, and not in a consistently correct manner. This is said for the benefit of the purists among us, because purity is good. It is also said for the benefit of my father, were he here. .

As a preface to this chapter, it should be said that the Antietam was a training ship. That is, it served as a training platform for those new aircraft squadrons as they arrived from the States and before they went into the war zone. For this reason, the Antietam always had a full complement of 100 aircraft on board. (See the top picture on page 756 of the first volume, keeping in mind that there were additional aircraft on the hanger deck.) As a training ship, we would have flight operations, twice a day, every day. My very distinct recollection is that whenever we were at sea, we were having flight operations, be it morning or afternoon. And we were out to sea twelve of the thirteen months that I was an Airdale. I remember very clearly that the only way I kept track of the passage of time was that every Sunday evening we'd have the same meal: the makings of a sandwich. Otherwise, every day was just like every other day. From this, one can extract how many wheelchocks an Airdale "pulled" (launching) and "placed" (parking). Since each flight was made up of essentially ninety aircraft, the following computations result: 90 times 2 equals 180 flights per day, and given seven operational days per week, we had approximately 365 days of flight operations during the time I was an Airdale. So it follows that the Airdales had to "service" 365 x 180 = 65700 aircraft launchings and 65700 landings. Since there are two wheels per aircraft, there are 2 x 65700 = 131400 wheels that have to be serviced by the 40 Airdales. Thus, each Airdale pulled and put 131400/40 = 3285 wheelchocks over a twelve month period. These are very big numbers, to be sure, and would seem to be extremely excessive.. Well, it certainly was, and I can vouch for that. But understand that 3285/365 = "only" nine wheelchocks per day (nine pulling and nine putting. To reiterate, "pulling" refers to pulling a wheelchock during launch operations, and "putting" refers to placing a wheelchock around the wheel when the aircraft is parked.) I did, and didn't, get used to it as does anyone doing an unpleasant job. But that was precisely it: it was a job; it was a job that had to be done; it was your job to do; and so you just did it and moved on to the next job. I don't remember any Airdale ever shirking his job, and I don't remember any Airdale ever being told to do his job. It was, if you will, just "another day at the office", no more, no less. I anticipate that there will be those who will question the number of flights per day (180) and the number of days of flight operations (365). I can only say that after much soul-searching, I honestly and truly believe these figures to be the correct ones. I have thought about this long and hard, and all I envision is a flight deck chock-full of aircraft at the start of flight operations. I also do NOT remember a day when we were at sea that we did not have morning and afternoon flight operations. And I can not remember even as much as a month being in port during those thirteen months. We were replenished at sea with fuel and munitions (why the munitions I don't know). And as was said at the beginning, we were the designated training ship for the fleet (as was told to me by others). That in turn meant that we had to "supply" the 10-12 other Essexes that periodically went in harms way, with their squadrons. So, although I don't remember pulling and putting a wheelchock 3285 times, I do remember doing it every day, morning and afternoon, for a period of a year. It had become a "lifestyle" every bit as much as commuting to one's job every day, where one day merged into the next day, seamlessly.

While the above was not necessary to the purpose of this chapter, it was felt that it needed to be said for those readers who want straight facts, honestly presented. This I have tried to do, in a manner that is strictly in the mode of "tell it like it was". Apropos of that, I have read books in which, for instance, it was said that the Antietam was in Bremerton, WA in January 1946. Or, there is another book that said that the Antietam was in San Francisco in December 1945. Even though these are reputable books by reputable authors, those two statements are flat out wrong. (We, the Antietam, were in Tokyo Bay on Christmas Day 1945. And the only ports of call we made while I was on the Antietam were Pearl Harbor, Guam/Saipan, Tokyo, Tsingtao, China, Manila, and Hong Kong. All the rest of the time we were at sea.) I did not want this book to be careless in any way, as are perhaps others. But let's move on: So what was it that made parking an aircraft such a big deal? Well, let's briefly go through the process of parking an aircraft just after it has landed. First though, it should be kept in mind that aircraft are landed on board an aircraft carrier, optimally, every twenty seconds. This of course requires precision in the spacing of the aircraft overhead, and most especially prompt discipline on deck. Parking an aircraft, in the first instance, would appear to be wholly benign. Having experienced many such parking operations, I can assure the reader that this is definitely not the case. In fact, in my humble opinion, parking an aircraft was one of the most harrowing of experiences. The parking process started right after the aircraft's tailhook was disengaged from the arresting wire by the green-shirts. As this was being done, an Airdale took a wheelchock with him as he went to one of the aircraft's wheels. Since this aircraft had to clear the landing area as quickly as possible, the pilot gunned the engine as soon as the yellow-shirt aircraft director motioned the aircraft forward (and after the barrier wires were folded down onto the deck so as to allow the aircraft to move forward unimpeded). With a violent blast of air from the propeller (prop-wash) the aircraft surged forward, with the pilot looking forward to the next yellow-shirt up the deck. In this way, the aircraft taxied briskly toward the parking area up forward, from one yellow-shirt to the next one further up forward. Since aircraft landed every twenty seconds (if the process proceeded properly), this required taxiing with almost full power from the engine. With the attendant gale/hurricane force winds on deck, everyone was obliged to be "heads up" at all times. Since the engine was powered up, the Airdale had a real problem staying up alongside the aircraft (which was obligatory in case of brake failure). In fact, the Airdale was in effect trying to run into a gale/hurricane, a hopeless task. The solution of course was to grab hold of the wheel-strut. In this situation, you are literally being dragged along by the aircraft with the gale/hurricane force wind trying to push you backwards. This required a strong arm and a resolute attitude. Not all the Airdales did this, but I was darn if I was going to let the aircraft get the better of me. And as it turned out, it was certainly doable, but definitely not a cakewalk. If I'm not mistaken, there were times when the aircraft would taxi at speeds up to 10-15 mph. The only way one could run at a speed of 10-15 mph into a gale/hurricane was to hang onto something that was going 10-15 mph. This blast of the prop-wash of a revved up engine could definitely move someone, relentlessly, back, back, back if there was nothing available to grab, especially for a tall (6'2") thin (170 lb) specimen such as myself. (That's what made going to a wheelchock during launch operations so treacherous, even when crouching and clutching at the tie-down cleats in the flight deck. Those cleats were quite literally life-savers.

Having now reached the parking area, the pilot "shifts gears" and moves much more slowly. The yellow-shirt gives hand/arm signals to the pilot, causing the aircraft to wheel first this way, then that way, pivoting on first this wheel, then that wheel. Everyone in the area must be aware of this maneuvering so as not to back into (or BE backed into) the oncoming propeller. At this time the pilot, at the direction of the yellow-shirt, first guns the engine to pull the aircraft forward, then applies the brakes to slow or stop the aircraft. The pilot has his eyes fastened onto the controlling yellow-shirt every second. This is "tense-time" for everyone in the area, including the pilot. (Keep in mind that the pilot has been cramped up in a confining, vibrating cockpit for several hours. His legs are probably aching

and stiff and he is not in the best of physical condition to do "micro" anything. A very light foot on the brake is required while only a very heavy leg is available. These are definitely large and bulky machines with which we dealing, considering the tight spaces with which we are dealing. And these are very loud and cantankerous "beasts" that must be favored. And these are very LETHAL machines that we must accompany, with all due trepidation and respect. But enough of the lurid, true though it is.) Everything that's done now is done with great deliberation, no matter how many times they have done it. All the while, of course, the Airdale is walking beside the wheel, at the ready to throw the wheelchock around the wheel whenever so directed. The yellow-shirt is facing the pilot but also always swivelling his head around back of him to get the "lay of the land", i.e., keep track of the obstacles while bringing this loud, noisy behemoth to rest in its parking spot. And he doesn't forget that every twenty seconds another aircraft has landed and is on its way up the deck to look for its parking spot So the yellow-shirt continues to use hand/arm signals to tell the pilot to "come forward", "slow down", "brake your right wheel", "brake your left wheel", now this, now that. Thus the aircraft now surges forward, now brakes abruptly, now pivots to the right, now pivots to the left, all with concomitant engines noises ranging from a low "purr" to an thunderous "growl". Keep in mind that the yellow-shirt's above adagio of coaxing the aircraft forward and to the right and the left must always be predicated by the fact that there is another aircraft close behind. Care is mandatory, but speed is required at the same time. These two countervailing imperatives make this parking process a thing to behold, and bemoan. As the aircraft lurches forward (to speed up), and brakes down (to slow down), the Airdale anticipates the coming "moments of truth" with dread. Those are the moments that the propeller starts to imperceptibly, incrementally inch forward toward that tail-section not a foot away. (Remember, since we had 100 aircraft on board, space was at a high premium. This in turn required that the aircraft be packed (parked) together as closely as possible.) Inexorably it approaches, twelve inches now, now ten inches, now——– (HOW MUCH CLOSER!). Does one curse? Does one resign oneself? Does one pray? What one usually does is fixate on that ever slowly closing gap between propeller and tail-section. It'll be over in a few more seconds now ("WON'T IT?) Sometimes one just looks away, listening for that beautiful sound of an engine "winding down". I must admit, I was usually fixated on the tail-section, mentally measuring the distance to it, and hoping that that yellow-shirt was taking into consideration that slant-angle of the propeller (which caused the propeller-hub to be further back than the propeller-tip at its 180 degree position). So finally, those two strangers (the pilot and the yellow-shirt who didn't know you from Adam) brought the parking process to a halt and all was well. I must say that those two strangers were always very professional in this operation, and almost always did it well. But one could never get rid of the notion that one's possible demise depended on just inches, And there were many more such occasions in the offing. (The saying that "an inch is as good as a mile" just did not apply here. An inch was an inch!) We had a couple of parking fatalities and some casualties, but that was it, thank goodness. Of all the hazards on the flight deck, to me this parking-process was the most critical and dicey one. And it was even more unnerving because you, the Airdale, had absolutely NO control over the outcome (remembering that the Airdale was obliged to remain next to the wheel during the entire parking process). I honestly felt, and it was NOT theatrics, that at those times my life was in the balance. One does tend to hold one's breath at the "moment of truth". You might suppose that this feeling would diminish over time. No, it never did. One merely learned to live with it, that thought of that possible shower of shrapnel as the propeller ripped the metal tail-section of the aircraft in front of it If this sounds melodramatic, well pardon me, but that's because that's the way I saw it and felt it. If you find this unsatisfactory, you'll have to find another Airdale who has his own perspective. They're probably out there. With this introduction, let's move on to the pictures.

BY THE BOOK

Here's the picture-perfect view of the overall process of this most harrowing procedure of placing a very large, very noisy, very violent machine very, VERY close to another equally large machine. With one sentence a fairly vapid attempt was made to engage the reader in that most esoteric world of parking a multitude of aircraft on a most crowded flight deck. In this one picture we observe the main elements of the "Parking Activity", one of the triumvirate that rules the life of the Airdale: Launching, Landing and Parking (not to be confused with that other triumvirate of the wind, the noise and those abhorrent propellers. The three parking elements are all seen in this picture: taxiing aircraft, pushing aircraft and the actual parking of aircraft. Back aft can be seen an aircraft just before touch down. Amidships the Airdales are pushing an aircraft onto the deckedge elevator to go to the hanger deck. At the same time the forward elevator is being used to transfer an aircraft to the busy hanger deck personnel. This operation must be done quickly so as to make the flight deck quickly serviceable. But it's up forward that we notice the "tip of the spear" of the parking process. Here the aircraft are not pushed; they move under their own power, lurching forward as the pilot, his eyes glued to the yellow-shirt's hand-signals and body-language, alternately applies power to the engine and then applies pressure to the brakes, proceeding in "fits and starts" as the aircraft literally inches its way toward the aircraft in front of it. The usual final distance of the propeller from the tail-section of the aircraft in front of it was about 6 to 10 inches, and yes, that's not a misprint. At the same time, time was of the essence because others were approaching (remember the 20 to 30 second interval). All this time we Airdales had to stand next to the wheel, with wheelchock in hand, for what seemed to be an exceedingly long time as these two strangers, the pilot and the yellow-shirt, played out their precision-duet to my emotional crescendo. While zeroing in on that closing distance between the propeller and the tail-section, I either said a little prayer, or alternatively, I would try to take the resigned approach: "Relax, this is just another day at the office" (Sarcasm eased the pain.)

The disposition to say a little prayer during a time of emotional need such as when next to a violently raucous machine that's at the same time "animated" is not without substance. To my knowledge no one has said that it's necessary to be a member of a formal religious order with all its formalism to elicit prayer (no offense to those so inclined to formal religion). The deeper question should be, "are we amenable to submitting of ourselves to a higher authority than to the temporal ones that abound? Can we not understand this by only observing nature that flourishes on all sides? There are many religions, and many denominations, and they all have "the same God". But religiously oriented or not, we all are in need of that source of succor that we call "God". As a pertinent aside that follows directly from the above, at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, at the hour of twelve high-noon, the chapel carillon gives forth with the majestically sonorous sounds of the hymn "Eternal Father" which calls upon that Higher Being to provide us with the sustenance that we ALL require during our time of desperate need, but also it can be a source of calm in our various times of emotional turmoil and distress during our proverbial journey through life. The young perhaps thinks that these sentiments are only for the older of us, and the older of us perhaps think that the young believe that they're immortal. Neither concept is true in my opinion; I can recall very vividly that in no way did I feel at all indestructible. A war will surely and quickly disabuse one of that, but certainly it shouldn't take a war.



DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

In point of fact, this picture precedes the previous picture. Note that here the landing aircraft isn't in view yet and that the Hellcat next to the deckedge elevator has yet to fold its wings (as is being done in the previous picture). Meanwhile, consider the fact that the Hell- cat at the forward port portion of the flight deck is in the process of taxiing to its final destination about 7 yards further forward. It's clear here that there's no excess maneuvering room there as the yellow-shirt stands on the catwalk during the final placement of this Hellcat. The noise in those close quarters, as the pilot throttles up the engine, reverberates with a resounding noise that's near maddening while it lasts. At the same time, the feelings of being trapped are palpable. The yellow-shirt will continue to bring the Hellcat for- ward, inches by inches, until the wheels are about 4 feet from the front edge of the flight deck. Realize that this is not an automobile whose advancement is precisely controlled by the tire in direct contact with the pavement. No, the forward movement of the aircraft is generated by the questionable precision of a propeller "clawing" at that amorphous quality that is the air. That is, the control of the motion of the aircraft is tenuous at best. This very real lack of precise control is what makes the "parking activity" so damnably critical and is the cause of one's petitions to the saints above. No amount of entreaties will alter the fact that space for parking is at a premium, so there shall be no excess distance whatsoever from one aircraft to the next. This picture proves that point where 6 to 10 inches is a way of life that one learns quickly. Now consider that when these activities are complete, well over half the flight deck will be filled with aircraft packed cheek-by-jowl. Then we'll do the same thing this afternoon, day in, day out There are surely many, many in the world who have nasty jobs, and I nominate this one as a candidate. Some will disagree, and that's fine, yet "somebody has to do it".

Every sensible person knows that there are times when we must do those necessary things that we really don't want to do. What a world this would be if we did only that which pleases us: from the simple "I'd rather play ball with the guys than rake the leaves" to the difficult "I'd rather sit in the look-out's chair and gaze at the ocean than go onto the flight deck and pull wheelchocks". How about "I'd rather go to the movies than stay home and do my homework"? Let's face it, the easy way is no way to build character, that all-time attribute of those who succeed: having the ability to control one's impulses (self-discipline) and deferring gratification by having the gumption of doing those difficult things that must rightly be done. This in turn and in large measure will account for one's achieve- ments, correct performance and proper conduct. Doing the disagreeable, but necessary and proper things perhaps is difficult, but it's "money in the bank" that will support self-realization (the fulfillment of one's potential capabilities) concerning those things that sustain and matter to you. The easy way is beneficial only if it promotes efficiency, a laudable pursuit, everything else being appropriate. But the easy way might also quickly lead to the dissipation of something that's substantial (such as that degree you always wanted (if only secretly)). A realistic perspective is useful in helping you to realign your thinking (a true understanding of what transpires down on the flight deck is greatly distorted by this perspective from here on high). Thus to achieve your goals, you might have to read- just your perspective. This usually requires substantial intellectual effort, but now that we know we must often do things we might not ordinarily, this should present no problem for the goal-oriented person. (And all of this makes us more appreciative of others' views.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THAT TERRIBLE SPACE

This picture was included simply because it emphatically illustrates the close proximity of the propeller-blade to the tail-section, and therefore the implied hail of shrapnel that would result if the former encroached on the latter. Granted, we're looking at that separation at a slight angle that exaggerates the closeness of this final 6 to 10 inch distance from propeller-blades to tail-section that exists at the "cut engine" signal given by the yellow-shirt to the pilot. In point of fact, the angle of view is increased for the Airdale who's a couple of paces to our right as he stands next to the wheel-strut, with wheelchock in hand, fixating on the closing distance as the propeller inexorably advances in fits and starts. At this greater angle, the blades appear to be even closer than they look to be in this view. I would too often have that sinking feeling that contact was imminent, as if at any moment that awful blow that would shatter the tail-section was about to land. This impression was persistent over time even while rational thought told me that the yellow-shirt was making his calculations by the location of the tip of the hub of the propeller (and not that blur that was the propeller). And yet, and yet because of the 10 degree slant of the fuselage due to the 3-point stance of the aircraft, the tip of the hub was no further advanced in position than the 6 o'clock position of the propeller. Added to this is the unfortunate fact that the yellow-shirt is standing in front of and to the side of the aircraft so that his view of the closing-distance is not directly opposite the blades-tail pair. Thus does the yellow-shirt have to make a "judgment-call", not a pleasant realization to the Airdale standing behind the "business-end" of a powerful aircraft. "When will this consternation ever end?!" (Note that now it's 'consternation', but then it was either 'sheer resignation' or 'severe palpitations'.) As I anxiously and intently (and intensely) watched this unfolding progression of fits and starts as that terrible distance became smaller and smaller, I thought, "Are these two strangers , the yellow-shirt and the pilot, going to be the final arbiters of my possible demise?" Well no, not this time. But like everything else on the flight deck, there was always tomorrow and tomorrow. Today happens to be that day that the U.S. World War II Memorial is to be dedicated in Washington, D.C. (May 29, 2004). One wonders why it took this long to pay homage to the memory of the honored dead (and wounded), or even why it took so long to pay respects to those who served this country so well. It is here that I would like to restate a comment I made in the first volume and which applies ONLY to me. Others will certainly have opinions at variance with mine, even strongly held, and that is well. I will in no way contest their sentiments. At the same time I'll stand by mine simply because it's how I feel.. To the point: I do not consider myself to be a veteran even though I was a Navy seaman from August 1944 to an honorable discharge in May 1946. This is because my criterion for MYSELF is that I saw no enemy action. A veteran, in my humble opinion, was a person who had at a minimum directly confronted the enemy and taken its fire, for at least a full day. If he becomes wounded, he is even more of a veteran. In turn, I considered myself to be what I'll call "an auxiliary", one who served and did his duty (as did millions of others, including the home-front). British historian Martin Gilbert said, "Although the Second World War is now far distant, its shadows are long, its echoes loud. How else could it be with an event, lasting six years, in which courage and cruelty, hope and horror, violence and virtue, massacre and survival, were so closely intertwined.....The greatest unfinished business of the Second World War is human pain." This memorial consecrates in a fine way the memory 'of those who gave their last full measure' in service to our country and the enduring values for which it stands. Amen.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE ROUNDUP

A pretty picture this, with great, heavy cumulus clouds harbingering the onset of torrents of rain already in progress up ahead. "Can we bring all the aircraft aboard before reaching the deluge?" (Our course must be steady, our speed unremitting.) But such does concern us what with there being more demanding things afoot here among the packed and packing aircraft. The thing that stands out is the depressing recollection that until the engine has been silenced, it was necessary to to remain stoically beside the wheel-strut prepared to quickly place the wheel-chock around the wheel. This was so so that the aircraft didn't move forward those damnable 6 to 10 inches as the propeller was winding down at the "cut engine" signal (while the pilot was being careless with the brakes). There was no recourse to your situation: you could not walk away and then return to place the wheel-chock: you could only stay and stand await your fate (or so it seemed, with a vengeance). // It'll be noticed in the foreground that 4 Airdales are about to push back the Hellcat's right wing; there should be Airdales doing the same to the left wing, and "where oh where are the Airdales who should be beside the wheels?" The groups of personnel around the parked aircraft are brown-shirt plane-captains who are awaiting each aircraft in turn to pair up with the pilot of "their" aircraft to discuss any problems that might have occurred during the flight. These brown-shirts are at all times upstream of the aircraft so as not to hinder the parking process. Since the Hellcats or the Corsairs always land first, those brown-shirts can be there to meet them while the brown-shirts of the bombers Avengers and Helldivers) will make their appearance later. That's a battleship up forward preceding the carrier, and usually there would be cruisers and destroyers also visible in the area.

"You'll Never Walk Alone"

"When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark
At the end of the storm
Is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark
Walk on through the wind
Walk on through the rain
Though your dreams be tossed and blown
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone".
(From "Carrousel" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II)

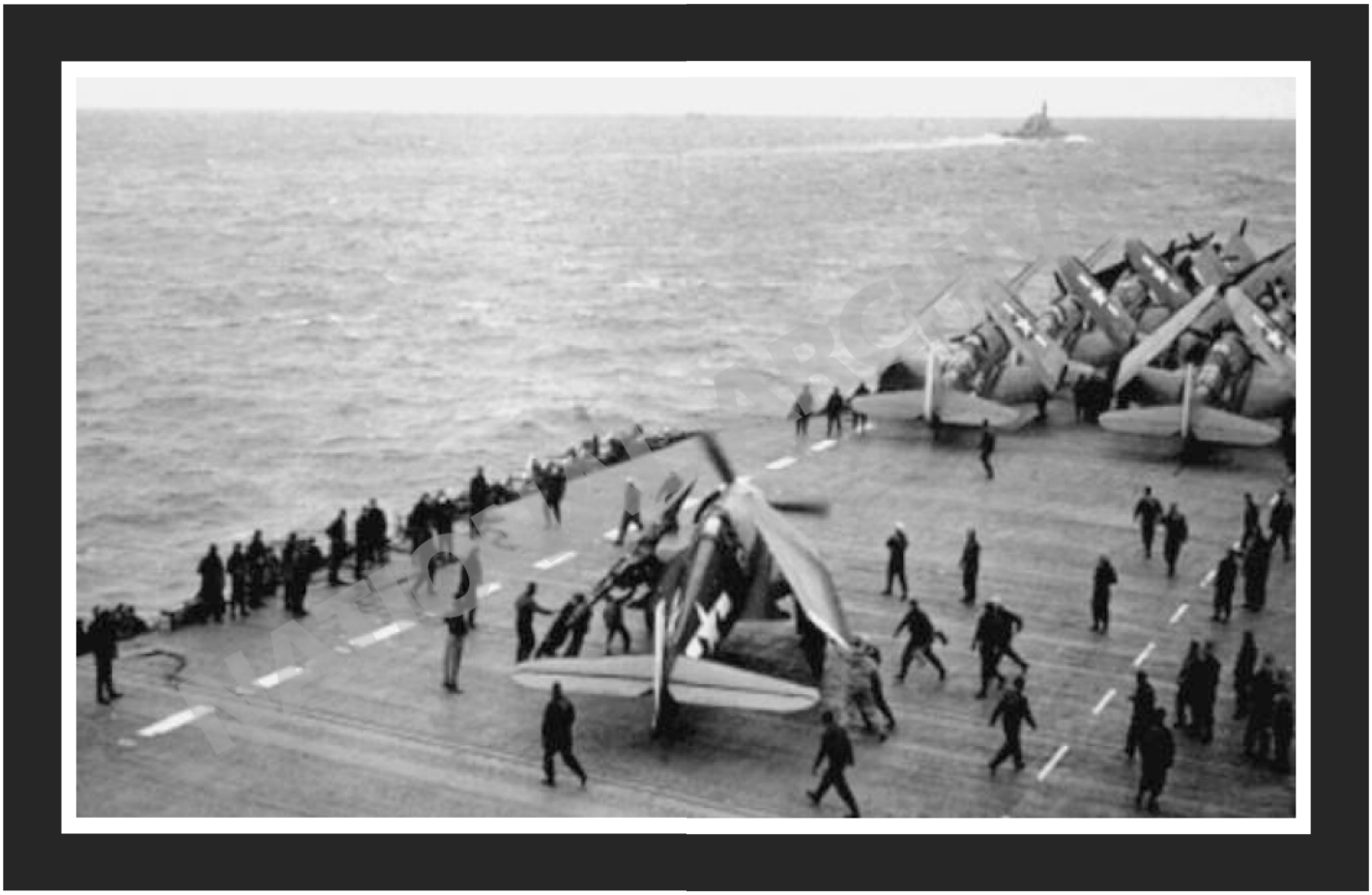
In retrospect, this picture evokes a dark and dreary period in my life (when on the Antietam). The gathering, encroaching storm seems to symbolize what was then my dark and moody humor (was "Moody" my middle name for nothing?).The reason for this state of mind, as has been said before, was that I was losing "my girl, my very life itself". And then, was it a quirk of Fate that when I was on a transport heading for home and hearing the song from the show "Carrousel" titled"If I Loved You" being played over and over again, I then received a letter from "my girl" that told me, gently, that she was engaged to be married to that V-12 Naval Officer Candidate? (The song of course said that the singer did not love the person to whom she was singing.) I was crushed and stuffed into a little ball. That was long ago and far away; it was actually another life-time. So it can be for all who now suffer: "You'll Never Walk Alone". (Note: to have your destiny at the whim of others (other than "the girl") is a case of atrocious servitude.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

JOIN THE CROWD

The personnel moving about are the blue-shirt Airdales while those standing to the sides are the brown-shirt plane-captains awaiting "their" aircraft. Apparently the weather is fairly raw as is indicated by everyone wearing foul-weather gear. This was definitely the case during the winter season in the Korean waters, one of our duty-stations. Our area of operations extended from the Korean waters to the 10 degree latitude. In the Korean climate, the wind over the flight deck made for some uncomfortable work-conditions, to be sure. The Hellcat in the foreground has stopped to allow the Airdales to fold its wings back, the Hellcat being the only aircraft requiring that assistance. This of course slowed the parking procedure to some extent but it also permitted the Airdale to the right, wheel-chock in hand, to easily join up with the Hellcat. We notice the Helldiver to the left in the process of taxiing into its parking space. This is normal. What is not normal is to have the Helldiver mixed in with the Hellcats: all aircraft types land as groups and thus park as groups. However, as has been said, each ship has irs own protocol (or perhaps it was merely a matter of being low on fuel or having a malfunction of some kind or whatever). Here it's clear that aircraft land every 30 seconds, making for a constantly active flight deck requiring alertness and vigilance and awareness of the flow of activity. (Perhaps the Airdales were jaded, but certainly they were not blase.) Sometimes "traffic jams" were inevitable, precipitating the real possibilities of one aircraft overrunning another aircraft. So in a way, one could say that an Airdale was an expediter. // For a month during our shakedown cruise and when I didn't have duty in the wheelhouse, I'd look down on the flight deck, impressed with these "expediters" little realizing that I'd be one of them very soon.

An expediter accomplishes a task with promptness so as to secure a smooth operation, which operation could be an assembly-line, the colossus of the modern world. So much of what we take for granted is a direct result of such systems. Thus, these "expediters" seen down there on the flight deck below do what's expected of them with due diligence, as does any responsible seaman. We too should do no less by also doing what's expected of us (within the bounds of legality and morality and respectability (where respectfulness can be defined as not doing or saying things that are offensive to polite society. Politeness in turn can be said to be the absence of grossness and excess; that is, a polite person does not intrude one's manners in a way known to be offensive to, and uninvited by, others. (And no, politeness is NOT weakness.) Etiquette may be a burden for some blockheads, but if not overdone, it makes for a much more cordial and palatable group. Lecture over. Returning to those indispensable expediters, it's equally important that we should also do that which we expect of ourselves. Here hopefully the die has not been cast, and we will always endeavor to set ever incrementally higher standards for which we aspire so that not only others, but also we will prosper. In the process of doing this we attain that prize that one receives on gaining increased pride in ourselves for having been the originator of useful and worthwhile things. One such worthwhile thing would be to "get our act together" by quashing all our petty and churlish jealousies that are derived from false pride. One could make a good case that a great deal of destructive behavior is due to festering jealousies. Get over it! You have too many important things you should be doing. And don't forget that there's a fine line between jealousy and admiration. But that's a book in itself and best left to those who devote a life-time to such critical matters. (Is it true that love is the desire to be what the loved one is?)



CASUALTY

Someone is being ministered to next to that TBM Avenger. We can only speculate what the problem could be, but it's most likely the radioman/gunner from the lower turret who's receiving the attention. The situation was apparently serious enough to cause the Air Officer to bring this Avenger aboard before all the fighters were landed, and even to stop the landing procedure itself. Thus we are made aware of the fact that just one person's welfare is important enough to bring the entire landing operation to halt. However, promptness is still a priority because presumably there are other aircraft circling the carrier right now awaiting their turn to land. Here, in this particular situation it's a matter of first things first. Needless to say, if the ship were under attack, this scene would be sharply modified by great activity. But accidents happen and they usually are sufficiently attended to, as here now. In the meantime, the plane-captain is on the wing checking with the pilot, and the area is filled with brown-shirts. That structure to the right is a derrick, on wheels and motorized, used to pick up disabled aircraft that have crashed upon landing. It was used only if the Airdales were unable to work a large dolly under the fuselage thus making the wreck mobile. We have a good view of how closely packed are the parked aircraft up forward. This of course wouldn't be necessary if there weren't so many aircraft that had to be accommodated. In a way it's a beautiful thing how well and how efficiently this is done under the press of time-constraints (30 seconds). But on the other hand, it's not beautiful: it's ugly when the ramifications of such a process (of "6 to 10 inches") is understood. Consequences are hard to ignore in such situations, and the damnable part is that you have to do it all over again. If one "studies" that group of parked aircraft, one can appreciate what's involved. It's not enough to say that it's "old hat" after a time. It NEVER becomes "old hat". I will vouch for that!

"First things first", that's as it should be: do we do the most important activities before doing the lesser ones? But this begs the question as to just what is most important, or even more important than that which you now hold high. To make this determination is not all that easy. For instance, at one time I thought that neural network technology was one of the most important items extant because of all the marvelous things it was going to be able to do. While it's been some time since I've worked with it, its effects don't seem to be all that prominent as concerns applications. Another technology with which I involved myself was that of photovoltaics, envisioning all the roof-tops being cover with panels that generated the electrical power needed to run a household. This too has not panned out, at least here in this country. Thus I incorrectly determined what was important and in the process perhaps wasted my time. (Personally, I do believe it was time well spent, but results specify otherwise.) However, these are but things in the realm of technology. For the more mundane of us who sojourn through life's travails, there are more crucial things that should be considered on the scale of importance. Certainly the one highest among the high is the subject of "faith". Everyone has, or should have, one's own idea of what "faith" means. Some are religiously and organizationally oriented. Some are not oriented at all. For them, I truly wonder at their seeming oblivion of the many wondrous things that enfold us each and every day: the miraculousness of that small universe that is a simple blade of grass as just one of the millions of other examples. How can they slough off this vast world of Nature that sustains our very lives? How can they not see that all of mankind is pervaded by the Almighty's hand at every turn? Is this not a firm foundation for our faith?


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"AU SEOURS"

Immediately upon landing, a medical doctor leaps up onto the wing to determine the extent of the injury to the slumping radio/gun- ner. The pilot probably radioed ahead to the ship that in an encounter with the enemy the radioman/gunner was hit by whatever hit the lower part of the rudder. But it's not clear what happened since the rest of the aircraft, at least on this side, seems to be undamaged. One clue is that the gunner did not return the "turtle-back" (just in front of the tail-section) to its normal position. Perhaps he couldn't do so. The Helldiver's in the idle mode right now with an Airdale applying a wheelchock to the right wheel to assure no forward mo- tion as the doctor ministers to the gunner. At the same time the plane-captain is about to jump on the wing to learn more from the pilot. It's not apparent what the Airdales on the left side are doing, but at least they're front and center to render whatever aid they are able. The yellow-shirt in the foreground remains at his station while there are none visible to the right and further forward are the usual complement of brown-shirts awaiting "their" aircraft. This is not a typical situation what with the delay in the process of parking air- craft. Whenever the smooth flow of aircraft to their parking spots is interrupted, bad things are more apt to happen (at least from an Airdale's point of view). Again, as in the previous picture, this Helldiver isn't in the proper sequence of "fighters first, bombers next", but again, this is due to the problem shown (these problems can and do occur at any time). In the foreground can be seen the shadows of the radar antennas and dishes atop the superstructure. These radars were advantages to our forces as opposed to the enemy which had no such radars. As said, these radars detected the enemy far out and thus enabled our CIC to vector our CAP to the boggies. Here everything is open and therefore manageable. However, further up forward, things become congested and thus much less manageable.

"Au secours", to the aid of those or that which is in need. This is an old-age well nigh enshrined tradition, most noticeable in our society in the form of our police and fire departments (with the medical profession being the most notable). True, not all of us, and probably most of us, are not prepared or able for such demanding service. However, it need not end there. We all should at least be able and ready to "lend a hand" as are those Airdales in the picture. Here now we're not referring to the physical aid, but rather that aid that bolsters others' outlook on their difficulties. Often specific aid is not even called upon to assuage these problems. A kind word, a simple but genuine gesture is often sufficient (so as not to overdo and thus undo what is offered). Hence genuineness and sincerity are the jewels of sympathy (and who doesn't need a little sympathy once in a while?) while the maudlin and excessive can be counter-effective. Can you let your behavior represent your sentiments without "wearing your heart on your sleeve"? (Moderation in all things is not a bad motto). Would that the world were populated with the affable, for then the world would have a better chance to prosper. Those who must vent, those who generate heat instead of light, are only a drag on society's prosperity. That generosity of spirit that promotes that generosity of moral support allows us to gain that freedom from being dependent on others (that scourge of mankind). When will we learn that concern and compassion for others is the foundation of a civil society? As others prosper, so shall we prosper while a sincere concern for others' welfare can only enhance our own condition. Thus will we be grateful for these small favors of moral support and thus do we say 'au secours" to the less well-off, for their fortune is ultimately our fortune. How can society do less?

. .



MUSCLE POWER

As has been mentioned, the F6F Hellcat requires manpower to fold its wings. After the latch has been disengaged, the wing is free to be pushed to a folded and latched position. Since the wing takes a downward motion, the Airdales have the advantage of a certain amount of gravity being available to them. This downward motion generates momentum which the Airdales use to build up some acceleration as the wing folds completely back into a latched condition. The "trick of the trade" is to take advantage of the downward and increasing momentum to generate the acceleration which translates into force (F = ma). To most, having aircraft with their wings folded (Hellcats and Avengers backward, Helldivers and Corsairs upward) is an anomaly. After being among these "broken aircraft" on a crowded flight deck, nothing could be more natural. What was not natural was to become used to the close proximity of so many of these "broken aircraft" while trying to negotiate among them during the runup to a launch. While there were no bullets or bomb fragments with which to contend, there were those lethally angry propellers in abundance and in very close proximity that would never go away, day after dreary day. The launchings, the landings, the parkings, this we could manage for a week; but after a month of this constant mental drain, we had "had it": the excitement and novelty were long gone. If at first the Airdale didn't possess that quality of fortitude, he damn well learned it early on. All this while on the intellectual scale the Airdale's job was at the very bottom, even elementary in the extreme (although self-preservation is not always all that elemental). The tenor on the flight deck during flight operations was very sober and very taciturn. There was little to say and even less desire to do so. There was serious business at hand and it was being done in a workmanlike manner. Distractions were the enemy that would take advantage of any lapses of attention to the job.

Fortitude, that ability to persevere through 'thick and thin', is required not only on the flight deck during air ops, but also in our every- day lives. Without fortitude, all else of substance and importance would go by the wayside. Fortitude bespeaks of strength, that endurance under affliction that will carry us through the dark times. Perhaps fortitude shines the best in that realm of rectitude that shores up an often sluggish society. What is rectitude? Looked at in a certain way, what would we do without rectitude where the rules of society, the code of conduct, were flaunted at will and whenever so inclined? First mindless chaos, then destructive anarchy. For example, what if everyone were inebriated at the same time? What would happen to those emotionally close to you? Stepping back, why are only some "allowed" to become intoxicated? (note the word 'toxin' and you obtain a inkling of the substance of which we speak). No, we are not being spoil-sports here. Why should others have to clean up the mess, figuratively and actually, of those who impose themselves on the rest of us? That is, where do they get the conceit to inflict their drunkenness on others? Why do those who drink to excess think that they're anything but obnoxious? Don't drunks know that in their stupor their brains (what we like to call 'minds') are physically deteriorating? (and once gone, are irretrievable). Don't they understand that getting drunk, being an alcoholic, is an admission that they "can't make the grade" and lack self-confidence? [To say that it's a physical disorder is out of the ken of this discourse]. Do you know of any quality people who get drunk? No. While its true that some people like to live "on the edge" (of sanity), it's also true that some people are imbeciles. Alcohol kills. Speed kills. Alcohol and speed kill with a vengeance that's criminal!!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"COME AHEAD"

To our left, out of our view, is a "huge", ponderous TBM Avenger ominously approaching in fits and starts as its engine gives forth threatening roars in defiance. As you observe, we are not intimidated, but we are somewhat concerned starting now. Equally intent is the yellow-shirt, a non-commissioned chief petty officer (wearing dungarees), as he gives the pilot the "come ahead" signal. Try to imagine, if you will, an imposing machine towering 16 feet above you as its large propeller-blades slash at the air, alternately spinning fast, then slowing, now fast again, progressively drawing near. You quietly hope and pray that the brakes will not fail at such critical moments because this massive machine has such a large amount of momentum when it speeds up. But you're not too disturbed by this for you know that there are two Airdales at each wheel with wheelchocks in hand ready to chock should the brakes fail and you know perfectly well that the Airdale's mind is strictly on the business at hand. Right now the TBM is heading for a point just to the right of the yellow-shirt's right hip. When it gets there, it'll smartly pivot on its left wheel heading straight for the TBM in front of it. Then starts the testy lurching advance toward the tail-section of that TBM ahead, to a point 6 to 10 inches away. When it arrives there it will have been a quick 10-second dash up the deck from the touch down point at 10-20 mph to the 20-second stop and go progress described above. This was a short but vivid journey that's reproduced similarly for each and every other aircraft that touched down (except for those aircraft that went down to the hanger deck via the elevators). // To the right the Airdale is holding a wheel- chock and back of it are the tow-bars used to pull the aircraft back aft for respotting for the launch that afternoon. (No, there's no respite either.

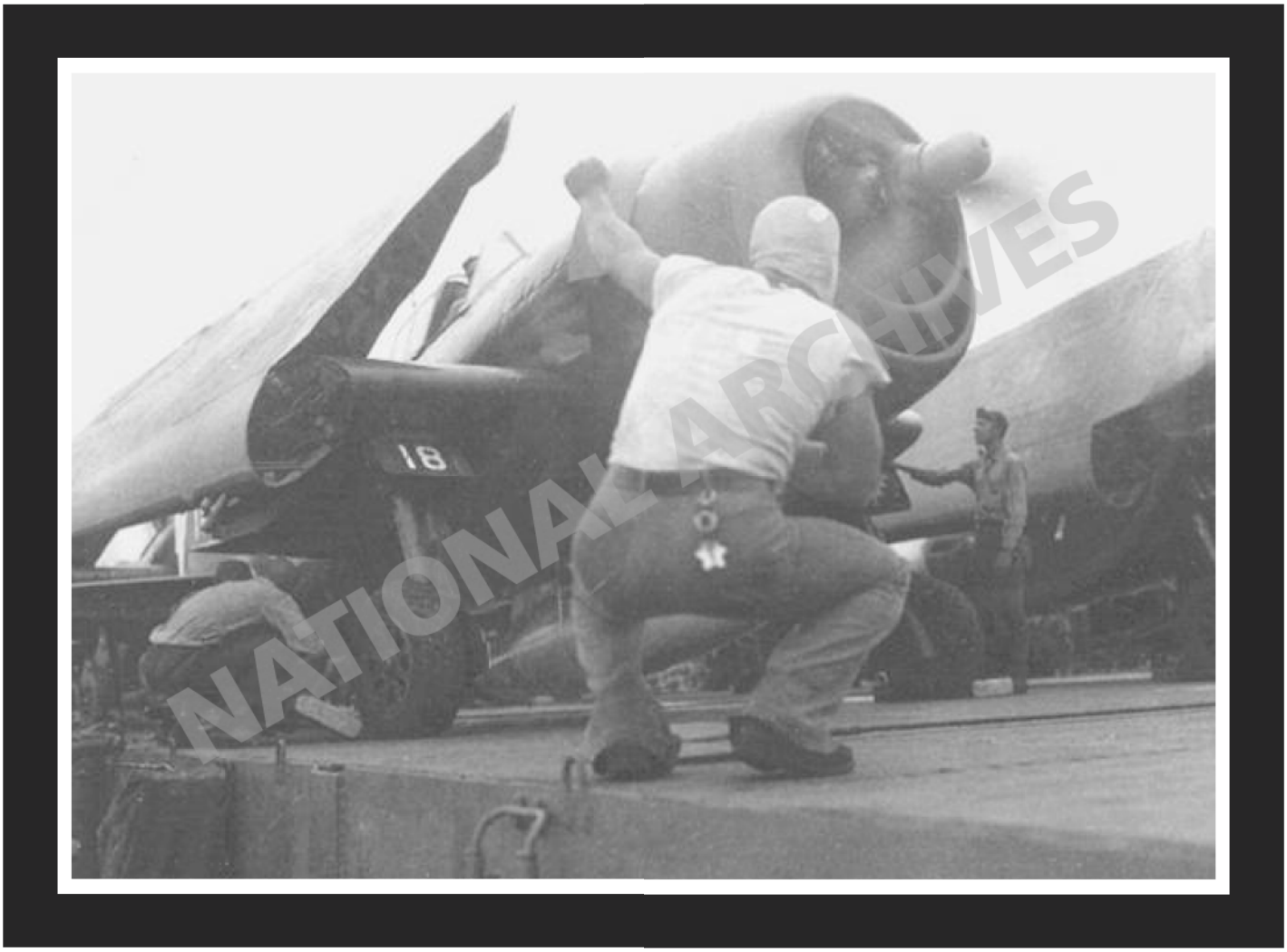
It would be ideal if each and every parking-event proceeded without hitch, hindrance, or error. And it would be ideal if all our wishes were consummated. Or would it? The former is definitely true while the latter is definitely to be questioned, is it not? What if your wish meant the imposition, the detriment, the demise of someone else? Therefore, how does one define 'ideal'? Is 'ideal' the same as 'perfection'? Well no, say the rationalists because 'perfection' is impossible since it can't be improved upon or surpassed. Then could not it be said that the 'ideal' is the 'best'? This is closer but who's version of 'best' will be used? While 'best' refers to what's avail- able, 'ideal' refers to what's most desirable. It could then be said that what's most desirable is not available. (Or possible). And what I consider most desirable is not what you consider most desirable. However, some will say that there's little between 'desirable' and 'ideal' except that the latter is more desirable than the former. Some will say that idealism derives from previous experience while others say that it springs from a rational, pure intellectual exercise. Then there's the confrontation of those of the practical bent versus those of ethical ideals. It would seem prudent that the idealists not ignore those pesky unintended consequences. This all brings to mind one of my favorite topics, servo mechanisms, where the actual output of a system as detected by sensors is compared with the desired output as determined by what we're discussing here. The difference between these two signals is applied to the input of the system to bring it back in conformance with the desired output. Radars are trained on targets this way. So perhaps the 'ideal' is that result determined from past experiences that will provide the very best result given the circumstances and the acknowledged consensus of respected others. [One ideal that would seem to have passed that test: sexual relations almost exclusively be an expression of love.]



ANOTHER HELLCAT PARKED

Another Hellcat noisily settles into its allotted spot, albeit, albeit some distance from the usual packed confines of a normal parking operation. The Airdale has already chocked the left wheel while another Airdale is in the process of doing the same to the right wheel as the yellow-shirt applies the "hold" signal to the pilot above. Note, just behind the Airdale to the right, the two 20-mm cannons pointing straight downward from the leading edge of the wing. Also note the keys dangling from the belt of the yellow-shirt, his unofficial quasi-badge of authority, he being an enlisted non-commissioned petty officer This presents an interesting situation in that this non-commissioned petty officer is giving absolute orders to a commissioned officer (the pilot). Such are the exigencies of fight operations. The pilot is obliged, no, required, to follow the directions of the yellow-shirt to the "T" and without question. In effect, the pilot is completely compliant to the yellow-shirt's directions during the parking process (just as he is to the LSO during the landing process). These situations bespeak of that sense of cooperation that relies only on how best to accomplish a job, and not at all on how people perceive themselves as fitting into a particular hierarchy. Cooperation that functions on the basis of fulfillment of a task by the group and that focuses on the achievements of that group, as opposed to individualism, is the mode that was found on the flight deck where harm was close at hand. (Individualism certainly has its place, such as leadership, in the overall scheme of things but the flight deck during flight operations was not that place). The Hellcat came to its position by pivoting on its left wheel after having reached that spot from 45 degrees to the straight ahead line. This means that the yellow-shirt had to start that pivot at precisely the correct spot else the left wheel would have overrun the edge of the flight deck. Too far away, too much wasted space, Too close, too much danger.

Today happens to be the 60th anniversary of D-Day, that day on June 6, 1944 when the Allies stormed the beaches of Normandy in France (my Mother's birthplace). It was a momentous day, a day when the world held its collective breath as it awaited the outcome of this incursion of "Fortress Europe". There was much blood shed by the self-sacrificing forces invading Europe that day, and many, too many, never survived to watch the sun set on those beaches. Soldiers from a great many nations participated in this battle to wrest from the enemy a foothold on the continent. A great deal has been said and written about this and the following battles and the heroism that buttressed the efforts of the Allies, so I will not "gild the lily". Having said the above, and for the sake of perspective, it must be said that many millions of others warring on our side were lost on the Eastern front both before and after D-Day. This also was co- operation, on a mammoth scale. Further, history tells us that there were 60 million souls lost during WWII, most of whom were civilians while many cities on the continent were annihilated: this tragedy simply exceeds comprehension. In the meantime, our country was well protected by two large oceans. This is what is called perspective. Just as the war could not have been won without cooperation, so too do we prosper in our personal lives by cooperating with others. This can take the form of trustworthiness or cheerfulness or kindness or courteousness or friendliness or helpfulness or loyalty or just plain being a nice guy. It so happens that Ronald Reagan died yesterday, and it can be unequivocally said that in his public persona he was the quintessential "nice guy" He was firm without losing his ability to be cooperative in his tenure as President of the United States. Would that we could all even partially emulate him.


18
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LET'S GO PARKING

One could well ask, "What's the justification for writing an entire book about a single day of a simple-minded job that's done over and over, day after day?" Some (many?) might also say that such a book deals with tepid, even trivial, activities (especially when compared to the many exploits that evolve from the telling, and retelling, of the D-Day event; this is certainly so since the first book was received with such resounding silence). Well, allow me to address this: this picture, and the many others in these two books as generated by the Navy photographers, in my opinion demand recognition and exposition. The naval war in the Pacific was on a lesser stage than the war in Europe where millions resided and where the major countries of the world existed (no offense meant here). The Pacific War was not forgotten, but it was in effect subsidiary (in spite of the carnage to the troops). This is no complaint, just a fact. So I took it upon myself to do my little bit to redirect some attention to the suffering done in the Pacific in this global war. Here can be detect- ed 4 anomalies in this otherwise fine picture of a Hellcat taxiing up forward to park. First, where are the yellow-shirts? Second, where is the Airdale at the right wheel? Third, why is the radio-mast upright during a landing operation? Fourth, why is that sailor to the far left wearing "whites"? I don't know on all counts. I do know that that group of sailors to the right of the "white" sailor are not flight deck personnel (since they're wearing white hats and not cloth helmets). So where is everyone (the blue-shirts, the brown-shirts, the yellow-shirts?) I don't know. I do know though that my first month on board the Antietam at sea I had my duty station on the bridge/pilothouse seen just below the 40-mm guntub. It was somewhat exhilarating to be there where this huge ship was being controlled. I of course didn't do any of the controlling except for a few turns at the helm as a quartermaster-striker in the Navigation Department.

On occasion I've pointed out what I consider to be anomalies (inconsistencies, incongruities) based on my experiences on the flight deck. While I don't understand these anomalies, this doesn't mean there isn't a valid, a reasonable, a rational explanation for them. I try to clarify them by being as observant as I'm able, but still logical answers are not forthcoming. The desire to understand things that puzzle us would seem to be a universal aspiration. To accomplish this, it would be my recommendation to be very observant. A more likely explanation for not understanding a situation is a fundamental lack of legitimate facts concerning the anomaly. That is, we're inadequately informed, and thus should we embrace considered opinions which eschew snap judgments ("look before you leap"). In a word, we must have that developed faculty of being able to separate the wheat from the chaff, no mean feat (to be able to make this distinction). This is why one needs a discerning discrimination. (A healthy curiosity will help this effort, but this attribute is primarily to make life interesting.) It's vitally important that we learn to differentiate fact from fiction if we are not to be used and abused. This calls upon us to evaluate, and so clarify, what is and what is not valid, what is reasonable, what is rational. I hesitate to say it because I've done it so often, but I will because it's so important: this requires that we LEARN. (Learning by experience is fine, depending on what it is you're learning.) Again, and again, thoughtful consideration and critical thinking is sometimes your only salvation (this I know). Rational thought must be considered the bellwether of a healthy society and for the individual, the way to overcome the anomalies of life. Stick to the firm foundation of the fundamentals, and don't become too "cutely clever" as I've sometimes tried to do.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TRAFFIC-JAM

Though it doesn't look like it, we have a traffic-jam here. Actually, the problem is to the right out of sight , where the yellow-shirts are having difficulty in placing the aircraft in their slots in a timely manner. No matter what the circumstances or how many times it's done, parking a large high-powered aircraft in extremely close quarters is one step removed from a uniquely tense situation. While both the yellow-shirt and the pilot were the very models of earnestness, an admirable virtue, there was always that ever-present chance for human error. These men were not machines, nor were they even emulating machines. To be sure, it's not too much of a stretch to say that what they were doing required that 'delicate touch' as they 'gently coaxed' those behemoths into place. Sometimes they're so engrossed in the process to be unaware of the continuing stream of on-coming aircraft. Sometimes that sense of care replaces that urgency that always exists during the parking process. It's then that the traffic piles up and there develops a real possibility of damage done to man and machine. Too fast and there's trouble. Too slow and there's trouble. As in most things, that fine-tuned balance acquired over time and with experience is after all the best approach and attitude. Here in this picture can be seen a yellow-shirt officer to the left and two yellow-shirt petty officers to the right with the usual spectators on the catwalk. All of the yellow-shirts are concentrating on the next ponderous TBM approaching to add to the traffic-jam. At the same time, there are two TBMs to the left, fully revved up and chocked by the Airdales, ready to move forward at the behest of the now (and always) busy yellow-shirts. The ocean's calm, the sun's bright, but things are not moving apace because as in all things under human purview, there are 'bumps in the road, and the virtues that we hold close are not always able to resolve things as desired. The following will very briefly address some such.

INTEGRITY: that unshakable adherence to the principles of proper and appropriate conduct which can be found in those of sincere rectitude. Trustworthiness that bespeaks of a personally integral honesty. Faithfulness that inspires confidence in those in need of it.

RECTITUDE: that state of mind that's earnestly lawful and that scrupulously follows the well-established rules of conduct that include even-handed justice and fairness to all those who are law-abiding. Egalitarian principles are the bulwark of a moral society.

CONSIDERATION: a sincere concern for others who are less fortunate than yourself. A well-developed understanding of the condition of others which implies an insight that only comes from a thorough exercise of the intellect. Empathy is the its essence of it.

FORTITUDE: that patient courage to suffer under affliction, privation or temptation without losing control of one's embrace of high values. It is the intellectual strength to hold firm and to endure under conditions of mental/physical adversity, trials and tribulations.

RESPONSIBILITY: the personal requirement or condition of obligation to given imperatives. To be accountable to those things within one's assigned purview. One who shows dependability and accountability for one's actions without the need to be proctored.

PRUDENCE: careful forethought concerning possible contingencies; caution in that "discretion is the better part of valor"; the good sense not to "fry your brain with drugs"; having the providence of not wearing your sexuality "on your sleeve" (demure is beautiful!).

LOYALTY: strong attachment to tradition, ideals, commitments, causes, values, friends; faithfulness and sacrifice for loved ones; sentiments of devotion to those near and dear; willing obligation to the weak and defenseless; allegiance to country ("semper fidelis").


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NO ANOMALIES HERE

No anomalies here in this picture-perfect view of a typical, unrelenting parking process as the aircraft start to "stack up". Even the day's picture-perfect with those fair-weather cumulus clouds starting to form. I grew up in a town that was rife with trees (which was fine with me), but we seldom had a full 360 degree panorama of the sky above. However, on the carrier with its flat deck we always had a full view of the sky available at all times. It was probably this exposure full time that made me aware of the beauty of the sky, allowing me the opportunity to fully appreciate that sky that was often embellished with huge and magnificent cloud compositions. It put one in direct contact with God's majesty. But now's no time to be gazing skyward while big machines traverse the deck, propellers a-whirling and wind a-blowing. Here this Hellcat in the foreground is being properly escorted by two Airdales who have been allowed to slow down to a moderate pace as the Hellcat approaches the assembled group up ahead. The yellow-shirt in control of this aircraft can be seen just to the right and behind the left wheel another yellow-shirt "beneath" the upright, stationary propeller-blade furthest to the right controls that approaching Hellcat. Additionally, note the two yellow-shirts to the far left awaiting other aircraft (Hellcats). Everyone else in the picture is either a n Airdale or a brow-shirt plane-captain. All in all this is a well-ordered and well-managed parking process. In a matter of about 20 seconds the Hellcat in the foreground will be sidling up next to the Hellcat in front of it. In another 10 seconds another Hellcat will be right where "we're standing now'. WHY embrace the values as defined so briefly on the previous page? Why embrace any of the virtues that have had an enduring place in human affairs? What benefits will accrue to justify our efforts to conform to those virtues deemed so important to a usefully abiding society? Briefly, let's try to explain them.

INTEGRITY: When serious matters are afoot, we all need the security of believing in others. How can business, friendships, and yes, love prosper when integrity is not reliable (nonexistent)? Confidence engendered by trustworthiness is a gift that can't be duplicated.

RECTITUDE: As you treat others, so too will you be treated. Fair-mindedness tends to radiate in all directions making our milieu more agreeable. The repercussions of a kindness will eventually find its way back to you and your surroundings, and goodwill thrives.

CONSIDERATION: As we become more empathetic toward others, we come to know ourselves better. Those who "know thyself" are far better able to handle difficult personal problems. This insight comes far easier for those who feel a genuine goodwill toward others.

FORTITUDE: To persist, to endure, in the face of arduous adversity for a worthwhile cause/goal is reward in itself. To succeed in overcoming those barriers to reaching that cause/goal is to realize a satisfaction that can't be bought: "I never promised you a rose garden".

RESPONSIBILITY: to prevent varying degrees of damage, and ensuing shame, caused by one's egocentrism; to avoid a diminished condition of stability in society, both local and general; desirable things will not be done, to the detriment of all; it builds self-respect.

PRUDENCE: avoid adversely impacting others with your mistakes and poor judgment; why "reinvent the wheel" of others' past mistakes? Nip problems, and worse, in the bud; command respect from others by exhibiting good judgment concerning questionable acts.

LOYALTY: without it, the fabric of tradition, ideals, commitments, causes, values, friendships, loved ones will be rendered asunder; trust, without which we all would suffer, is lost. Less loyalty, one's life stands on shifting sand and that most endearing quality aches.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HOME AGAIN

Home again, the last two Helldivers come aboard just before we can be overtaken by that storm to the right which adds its part to the subtle, yet also stark, grays that make this tableau something to be savored. While I don't like to admit it, this picture puzzles me due to the fact that one Airdale has already chocked the left wheel even as this Helldiver seems to be advancing as seen by observing the Airdale to the left. For the sake of continuity, let's presume the Helldiver's advancing as normal and is being directed by a yellow-shirt just to our left. There's still ample distance to cover to reach a point 6 to 10 inches behind the aircraft to our right. However, an- other puzzlement exists in that the Helldiver's wings have not yet been folded up. This normally occurs just after it's unhooked. Such has just been done to the Helldiver in the background which should now be folding its wings, to advance 20 seconds after this near Helldiver. It will charge up the deck at about 20-mph with the Airdales clutching the wing-struts as they're being "dragged" along. As has been said, this is a formidable feat in that they're only about 6 feet from the source of a strong wind being generated by a 1,900-hp engine. But that's alright because it breeds a steadfastness that's useful in many circumstances such as this one when the Helldiver now starts to lurch forward in increments as the pilot alternately applies full power interspersed with jabs to the brakes. It's then that one begins to feel that visceral sensation as the Airdale yet again experiences a rendezvous with his own personal destiny. (Perhaps other Airdales have other sentiments about this "parking event". That's fine, but to me it was such a profound experience that I've probably mentioned it too often. Then it was emotional; now it's intellectual. Either way, it was long and drawn out and full of anxiety.)

"I was emotional then but intellectual now". Actually, back then it was a large portion of the former and a small portion of the latter while now it's essentially reversed. Being a thinking but also sentient being, I believe these are reasonable partitions. Most of all, we should not shy away from our emotions for they need not cloud our intellect. Who can say that our emotions do not reflect a strength that can in no way be duplicated by the intellect alone? Further, I would be aware of those devoid of healthy emotions for in them do we note the seeds of severity. Strength yes, severity no. "The measure of a man" is not his intellectual capacity and strength, but rather it's his intellectual capacity and strength modulated by his emotions. We would all do less, less our emotions. In truth, 'man' less no emotions is no 'man' at all; he's but a caricature of a 'man'. All of this is not to diminish the importance of the intellect. Far from it, for as an example, how can a worthwhile democracy function less the intellectual capacity to discern and detect fraud and fraudulent activities? Unfortunately there are those who disparage "those pointy-headed intellectuals". I take personal umbrage at this characterization because while not being one, I would like to feel associated with (most of) them. They're the ones upon whom we rely to lead the way to better things (scientists and engineers and thinkers in general). How can one adequately define one's beliefs and understandings without being able to "ring" one's views against those of different views (not different values)? Just as a vine needs a tree upon which to climb, so too do we need (friendly) adversaries by means of whom we can further fabricate our own ideas. "Friendly persuasion" should have an honored place in our society, keeping in mind that your 'opponent' could certainly be more knowledgeable than you, and even smarter. Thus does one LEARN, to society's betterment. Democracy demands no less, nor surely should you


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HERE WE GO AGAIN

Here we go again in our effort to squeeze yet another aircraft into that packed assemblage of bulky machines as this Helldiver folds its wings. From this view one clearly understands how and why the pilot is completely dependent upon the yellow-shirts as the SB2C is carefully guided forward to its parking space. Any number of people are arrayed around the periphery of this "playing field" to watch the 'show'. The yellow-shirt in control of this Helldiver is out of view to the left while there's no Airdale at the left wheel (?). With 40 Airdales in V-1-F Division and 90 aircraft per flight operation, each Airdale goes through this process 4 ½ times per flight 9 times per day (90x2/40=4.5x2=9. Personally, I quickly learned the percepts of Stoicism while standing next to the SB2C, the TBM, the F6F, the F4U as each lurched forward those final inches (LITERALLY). I learned the meaning of putting my trust in the Providence above. And prosaically, I learned what it was to be patient as 2 strangers presided over my destiny (strong words, these, but true). It's a noisy place, this deck, with large 'bodies' moving in fairly orderly fashion, unlike the intermittent wind-blasts as the aircraft wheel and pivot about. There's no carelessness to be found here because no two parking events are the same. This is good because now alertness is the normal mode: it's surprising how quickly these 'lumbering' machines can move from here to there (except for those last 5 yards). It's impressive how much more prominent these aircraft are when they're 'fired up' and on the move. The propeller turns to a blur as the Helldiver lurches its last few feet as others are impatient to follow. But follow they do, for follow they must. And now just those last final inches further, the deed is done. Thus do you receive yet another reprieve that can only relieve the tension that you've been bequeathed. I know I've overdone this 'parking problem' but it was such an integral and intense part of my life that I just let it flow true.

Patience at the wheel-strut is a virtue, for an Airdale is obliged to be there. However, the young, being young and thus impatient by nature, are hard-put to show patience about things over which they have no control. The rest of us have long since learned the virtue of this kind of patience (while being patient about those things which are arbitrarily and deliberately and maliciously withheld is quite another story). Further, for all of us to be inactive in the guise of patience is naught but negative. Thus, if you have no control, practice patience, be of good cheer, and seek other outlets. But if per chance you do have control, patience now becomes simple malingering. The control spoken of here refers to the free choices we have in a free society (which does not condone the freedom to give others a 'hard time'). Along with this freedom of choices is responsibility for rectitude. Before we're able to make intelligent choices, it would be prudent to have at least an outline of a goal(s) that serves as a guide to achieving one's desires. This requires responsibility and maturity. Making decisions concerning important outcomes require detailed forethought or courage or full knowledge or all three. Most of our decisions that reflect our choices are, or should be well-defined: 'recreational drugs' are POISON, excessive drinking is excessively stupid (and even criminal), fast driving is illegal (and absolutely criminal), dare-deviltry is lame-brained, and avoidance of serious studying is ignorance. Everyone is free to make a list of bad, and very bad, choices. It's a worthwhile exercise and clears the mind for better things to the betterment of oneself and society. Remember, and remember it well: one's choices and our decisions in our daily lives are a clear and direst reflection of who and what we are. A serious question: "Do we want to be truly proud of ourselves?"



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

'IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST'

The SB2C Helldiver, so-called "the beast" by the pilots, is being leisurely escorted to its parking spot when the pilot suddenly applies full throttle to the engine. It's clearly evident that a bomb-bay door has been damaged thus preventing the closure of the doors. Those dark areas under the wing are the wheel-wells which make for a smooth underside of the wings. The Airdale seen here is 'out of uniform' in that he has no cloth helmet and no goggles. At 6' 2" I couldn't walk under the wing as is this Airdale; I took the outside of the wheel-strut. As a matter of fact, I definitely recall that all the Airdales on the Antietam were no taller than 5' 10". This was purposeful be- cause the shorter the Airdale, the less the wind-resistence presented. It was also for this reason that most of the Airdales were stockier than the one seen here: shorter and stouter equals less wind-resistence. Unfortunately, I also weighed only 170 lbs., not the most stout of people (even though I did play tackle on the football team). Thus I was somewhat tall and somewhat slender, which meant that I was just made to be pushed around by the wind. At the time this never entered my mind. Let's face it, at that age and in that situation, one is not apt to intellectually analyze; one was apt to feel the emotions and the visceral effects of the predicament at hand, but to ex-plicate? The situation was not conducive to 'why' but rather 'what'. When coping under duress at that age, it was a matter of 'how'. The analysis would come 60 years later. // This is a very noisy place in which to be as the entire aircraft vibrates in unison with the varying engine rpm. It was also a very humbling experience to be next to a roaring 1,900-hp engine at full throat. At the time, still being 'wet behind the ears', it felt as if this large noisy machine was merely suffering my presence with indifference and disdain, only allowing me to come near at its discretion. Such are the trifling impressions of a neophyte Airdale as I remember them.

As the wind sweeps across the flight deck and scours everything in its path the Airdale must learn to withstand these gales that would have him in harm's way. And so it is with us that we must resist the blandishments of those who would have us follow in the paths that would leave us askew and even in the shadows of iniquity (tempted by things shameful). To the quick, an excellent example of this is that promiscuity is wrong primarily because it belittles and diminishes what should be beautiful: the physical expression of emotional love. Just as to be demure is beautiful, to be virgin until such love is upon you is to be golden for you. Why tarnish the best when once lost, is lost? But enough of what should be obvious and what should be personal. Furthermore we are, after all, speaking from the flight deck of an aircraft carrier where many dangerous activities are being undertaken (even if not a 'killing field'). // Peer-pressure is most often associated with being misguided by bad attitudes in return for 'feeling good', for feeling comfortable. (We all are intelligent enough to understand the basics of 'bad': those things that are unnecessarily deleterious to others, and ourselves.) But there's also good peer-pressure where we feel drawn to the outstanding examples of those who de facto lead. Thus it's incumbent upon us to be able to recognize the good from the bad types of peer-pressure. Why be attracted to temporary satisfaction by following bad peer-pressure only to have it leave you in disarray? This is difficult for most of the young and those of little experience in the ways of of fleeting enticements that are ephemeral by definition. They have not as yet learned the rewards of patience nor the virtues of fortitude. This is called a part of maturity, just as is looking to the positive examples of peer-pressure on which to build a firm foundation.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SPACE TO SPARE

In the tension of the time this tableau, as framed by a wing on either side, clearly shows 4 of the 6 personnel on the deck to be moderately transfixed as the propeller of the Hellcat to the right, hidden by the wing, quickly winds down. The yellow-shirt has just given the "cut engine" signal with his right hand as his left hand is still clenched in the "brake-signal" [a moment before, both hands were chest high.] But where-oh-where is the Airdale who should at this very moment be placing the wheelchock around the wheel? Ordinarily the space between the right wing and the left wing seen here should be no more than 4 to 6 feet apart. This would cause the yellow-shirt to be behind the stabilizer (the horizontal part of the tail-section) of the Hellcat to the left [behind the person with arms folded]. This person is probably the brown-shirt (plane-captain) of this Hellcat being parked, waiting to climb onto the wing as are the other 3 plane-captains (on the wing of 'their' Hellcat). They're opening the panels in the wing so as to determine how many rounds of 20-mm ammunition remain in the tray. The plane-captain to the left can be seen unscrewing a panel now. These panels can be clearly seen on the wing of the Hellcat to the right, right above the two 20-mm gun-barrels pointing straight downward. Those standing on the deck are Airdales who are returning from up forward to go back aft to pick up another aircraft. This picture provides a good idea of the constrained situation in which they'd find themselves should a landing aircraft bounce upon touching down and bound over the barriers and into these parked aircraft. Even worse would be an aircraft that missed the landing area entirely and landed in among these aircraft. There's no place to seek shelter in these occurrences and as aircraft pushed against aircraft, mere flesh would suffer. However it must be said that the situation at hand is more than occupying their attention and so such contingencies are of secondary concern.

These three plane-captains conjure the age of yore when squires served "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table".This was a compelling concept of those men of rectitude, strong and bold and brave, who took an oath to protect and defend the weak, the weary, the defenseless, the infirm, those in need, the truly dependent souls who required help and consolation. That mythology of this shining spirit seems to be tarnished in this age of self absorption. Do we care about others, do we have a genuine concern for their plight? Are we sincere in our words of solicitude? (keeping in mind that words have specific meanings and can have different meanings in different contexts and usage. Reading extensively will be a great aid in this endeavor. Try considering and defining the word 'friend'. Or, how about the phrase "man's best friend is a dog"? And can someone be considered a friend while withholding, even faultlessly, fundamental secrets? (But we become too deep here.) The foregoing brings up the subject not of words, but of 'facts'. How is it that two people can see and hear the same thing and interpret it as if from opposite poles? Obviously their past growth pattern will explain much of it as well as will their developed biases. But even with that, their interpretations still come out at opposite ends. Perhaps the quality or characteristic of stubbornness can explain much of the difference, but if they truly believed in the utility of truth and were honest with themselves, I believe that there would be much less contention and confrontation in our lives. We could say the same of the thoughtful reader who is open-minded and partakes of the text with an objectiveness devoid of prior agendas. (Thoughtfulness can be thought of as the genesis of that wealth that is good judgment and probity.) [I inadvertently drifted toward the subject of politics.]


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

This most likely would be a shakedown cruise which tests the ship and its equipment before being accepted by the Navy. The reason for saying this are the 2 civilians (hatless) at PRI FLY (where the Air Officer resides during air ops) and at the bridge further forward. [It was during the Antietam's shakedown cruise off Trinidad, SA that I spent a month on duty in the pilot house next to the bridge forward of the PRI FLY.] This also appears to explain why there are only Helldivers and Avengers on deck, lacking the Corsairs and Hellcats. (Air ops are finished for now). Note that only 4 of the bombers could be placed across the deck while 5 of the fighters could be so spotted (and sometimes as many as 6). It's also seen that it was relatively easy to pass between 2 Helldivers because their wings folded relatively far from the fuselage (not so the TBMs, F4Us and F6Fs). Thus we didn't have that much of a problem with stress as we negotiated our way among the Helldivers during a launch operation. During normal times the aircraft were not intermixed as here. The SB2Cs were together, the TBMs were together, and so on. If my count is correct, there are 27 aircraft on deck here. This is considerably short of the standard complement of 20 SB2Cs and 20 TBMs plus the 30 F4Us and 30 F6Fs. The question arises as to where all of these aircraft reside. A full deck consists of 90 aircraft, leaving 10 aircraft on the hanger deck. But the hanger deck can hold 60 aircraft so that for a normal launch about 70 aircraft are on deck and 30 are below on the hanger deck. Then, after a number of the fighters have been catapulted, there's room for a faster deck launch from about 400 feet from the front of the flight deck. (The elevator takes only about 3 seconds to transition from hanger to flight deck; add to that the time to push the aircraft onto and off the elevator) A neat package that usually worked well. From an Airdale's perspective though there were 200 wheels to service for each flight op.

Perhaps the above was something of interest and perhaps it wasn't. Whatever, that's fine. But what's not fine is not to be interested in anything. (It must be said at the outset that some things are intrinsically more interesting than other things, and to know the difference requires intelligence. In fact, 'interest' and 'intelligence' are cut from the same cloth: what interests you reflects your intelligence). In the same manner, those of a desultory nature are only short-changing themselves when focused discipline will restore some resolve. Certainly all of us at one time or another have faced discouragement of one sort or another. We have only to look at the word 'discourage' to note the word 'courage'. Not all courage is of a physical nature: it's found also in the determination one shows in overcoming what appear to be obstacles at the time but what in fact turn out to be the catalyst to seek another way out of the morass of confused thinking. Thus we'll find a new direction to travel and are pleased for it. One of the most therapeutic antidotes to malaise is to come upon something to enlist your enthusiasm in a constructive way (and to feel good about yourself at the same time). [Constructive means literally the opposite of destructive; it also means to improve something that's already satisfactory, which will also make you feel proud.] In these efforts to improve something, or yourself, it would seem to be useful and prudent to advance in many small steps rather than to attempt to reach higher in one fell swoop (he who leaps could fall, drastically.) Further, it would definitely be incumbent on ALL of us to be good listeners of everyone, especially those of legitimate experience. If nothing else, it's of very basic courtesy. But well beyond that, we can all learn from the most erudite to those at the bottom of the scholarship-scale. Listening IS learning.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ANTIETAM SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

This happens to be the Antietam on its shakedown cruise in 1945 with, by my count, 11 Helldivers (SB2C), 4 Avengers (TBM), and 15 Hellcats (F6F). Since the white flag, to the immediate left of PRI FLY, is still on display, flight operations are still underway. There are probably some TBMs still to be landed and parked. Note the number "92" on the tail of the closest TBM. Somewhere there's another TBM with the number "100" to complete the squadron. But since this is a shakedown cruise for the ship and not the squadron, most of the rest of the squadron is "on the beach". The personnel on the deck are a mixture of 'old hands' and new recruits but I would not guess at the ratio. Since I didn't join the V-1-F Division until April, I was the 'new boy on the block' and everyone else was by then an 'old hand'. (Right at this very moment I could well be on my watch in the pilot-house standing behind the engine-room signaler or even at the helm.) Each squadron of aircraft was an entity in and of itself led by a Commander. As a squadron it was assigned to various activities and in this case, to the Antietam. During my 13 months as an Airdale we had more than one squadron rotated onto the Antietam. Actually, it would be more correct to say that the SB2Cs were a squadron, the TBMs a squadron, the F6Fs a squadron and the F4Us a squadron and together they formed the Antietam's squadron. Furthermore, this combined squadron was merely a ten- ant on a ship, but naturally the tenant was the "raison d'etre" for the ship. As previously mentioned, the Antietam was the first ship in the fleet (so it was said) to receive the twin-engine F7F Tigercat and the F8F Bearcat. We didn't keep them long and I believe they were never integrated into the fleet (the jets came along). I don't tear up, but it does bring a certain sense of pride to recall that I spent many an eventful day on this flight deck of this marvelous ship where interesting things, sometimes tense and anxious, happened.

Yes, it's true that I was proud of my efforts as an Airdale on this flight deck of the Antietam. While I didn't need motivation to do my JOB, pride is a great motivator for accomplishing your own personal projects. (Said previously, jealousy is another motivator, but because it can be corrosive, it's best left alone for the good positive kind usually falls prey to the bad negative variety where envy and acrimony are elicited. (Has anyone ever figured out how to enjoy life when it's filled with acrimony?) Envy is the close cousin to the equally bad trait of coveting others' whatever. It's a grossly misdirected form of motivation.) The key here is to develop self-reliance based on self-motivation of which pride is no small part. One of the joys for which we should be eternally grateful is that self-reliance makes dependence moot. If we can't appreciate this, we're in deficit. Keep in mind that if you lose a 100-yard dash running at 9.9 seconds to the winner who ran 9.8 seconds you are still 'a winner' in most peoples' books. So it makes sense to develop our abilities to gain the pride which augments our motivation which allows us to improve our abilities which..... Implied in the word 'pride' is the word 'quality'. We're just kidding ourselves if we do slip-shod work and then jut our chest out. (That would be embarrassing would it not? Is 'shame' related to 'embarrassment? And has the concept of 'shame' even become extinct? In this day and age?) Instead of false pride we should tune up our sense of just what conduct is appropriate (including what words mean). Let's use our 'smarts'. It sometimes seems as if using reason and being reasonable are in short supply where emotion, that vital and indispensable quality, now appears to be the mode of choice. While we wouldn't be human, or humane, without emotions, let there be 'BALANCE', now, always.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IN PORT

In port "and the livin's easy". Wherever there are pictures with sailors in 'whites' you know that 'liberty' is at hand. 'Liberty' is 12 hours ashore where one half of the ship's crew goes ashore and the next day the other half has shore leave. To those left on board, only the essential housekeeping is continued. This view provides an interesting perspective of the aircraft packed together (just aft of the aft 5-inch gun-mounts.) We're looking at the quarterdeck from whence everyone arrives and departs the ship. Out of view is a lectern at which the Officer of the Day (a lieutenant) resides along with a quartermaster petty officer, a marine guard, and probably a master-at-arms (policeman0 petty officer. As I recall, we enlisted men would only show our ID Cards and then scoot down the gangway (25 feet of 40 steps (?)) while all the commissioned officers would salute 'the flag' by facing back aft. Returning to the flight deck, we can notice 6 of the 9 20-mm machine-guns that are occupying the catwalk. Below them are some life-rafts that when released will fall 40 feet to the water below. (Why that sailor is standing on one of them I don't know. What I do know is that this isn't any hijinks because there were no such things on board a Navy ship.) That these few life-rafts and some others will afford any use to 3,000 personnel on board an Essex-class carrier is not clear. However, everyone wore a life-preserver, 4 inches wide and folded once, around his waist at all times. There was a small tube through which you blew to inflate the tube. How long this would last I don't know but every little bit of help available is that much better. After the war we of course no longer wore them. If there were facilities ashore for the aircraft, they would fly to 'the beach' instead of staying on board as here. At Tokyo Bay, Christmas 1945, we kept them aboard (note picture.

There's a topic that requires direct confrontation, to be prefaced with some necessary background: when I was 16 and 17 years old I played football on my school team We were pretty good. In fact, one of our players was selected as a college All-American. My position on the team was as a tackle on the line of scrimmage. In those days we played both offense and defense, we wore leather helmets, we had no face-guards and no mouth-protectors. Back then it was considered good technique on defense to at times 'submarine 'em'. This meant that we would plunge head first (face first) low and hard at the shins of the opponent's offensive line to try to disrupt any coherent play in that area. (This is not to suggest that this is now good advice because to do so in effect to take yourself 'out of the play'. Besides, how smart is it to lead with your head?) Having stated the above, I'd now (as then) like to categorically and emphatically say that to be sensitive is not to be weak, to be imbued with sensibilities is not to be frail, to be gentle is not to be delicate. I embrace those who are sensitive, who possess sensibilities, who are gentle. It's been correctly said that gentleness is the strongest thing in the world. Let it be etched in stone that a man's no less so for being gentle. In point of fact, gentleness is a natural condition of life and those who are otherwise are in contradiction to life's very essence. Furthermore, there's no necessary relationship between gentleness and delicacy as some would have it (not to disparage the latter). Sometimes only the strong are able to be gentle, and their strength is known by their gentleness. Gentleness is to be found in self-control, a function of strength. Is not self-control the essence of strength? To be sure, hard choices and difficult predicaments need not be impeded by the characteristics of sensibility and gentleness In addition gentleness and a caring attitude is no impediment to clear and logical thinking. Space allowing, I would like to 'prove' this assertion.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MEASURE THE ANGLE

Measure the angle between the leftward slope of the propeller-blades and the vertical. This angle, due to the 3-point stance of the air-craft, is easily seen in this direct side-view. This view also affords us a clear indication that the tip of the propeller at the 6 o'clock position is directly underneath the forward part of the propeller-hub. Thus the propeller reaches as far forward as the nose of the hub of the propeller. This hub-nose then represents the position at which catastrophe begins. Would that it were so straightforward: factored into this situation is the fact that each of the aircraft have tail-sections that slope backward from the top, down there at the '6 o'clock area'. This means that the nose of the hub can be 'safely' distant from the top of the tail-section but at the same time be well into the tail-section's lower part. (This is especially true of the Corsair). This all becomes somewhat involved and not worth delving into beyond what's been said except to add that it truly is 'ticklish' business to know how far is too far. Added to this scenario is the fact that both the yellow-shirt and the Airdale are forward and back respectively from the direct side-view. Therefore our perceptions of the relationship of hub-nose to tail-section are distorted, causing difficulties for the yellow-shirt and even more palpitations/agitations for the Airdale. Added to this is the fact that the propeller isn't clearly discernable, thus causing much more chagrin as the aircraft 'hiccups' its way forward while you have absolutely no control over the event as it progresses. Two strangers do but you have no recourse except, to use the vernacular, 'sweat bullets'. Yes, there are many things over which we have no control (including the parking event). But there are things over which we do have control and what follows will be an attempt at a 'roll call' of such. (Even though this subject was considered previously, it's of such importance to a smoothly running society that it needs a reprise). And who would not want a smoothly running society? Only psychopaths, those out of touch with reality, and only malcontents, those obsessed with looking inwardly. It's here that those of a religious bent stand out as the keepers of a generous society. To begin: as long as one is not hurting, what does it cost to be good-natured? To embrace nonconfrontation? Getting along with others, if not natural to you, should take on the aspects of a duty, remembering that everyone is unique and different. Be generous of others' opinions as you would have them generous of your's. Be reserved when being judgmental and instead refer to one's fundamental character. Don't be afraid to give the other person the benefit of the doubt until that's no longer tenable. At the same time hold fast to to your values which are well grounded. Understand that it would be very useful to be easygoing in all things that do not challenge your basic values such as trust- worthiness, decency and the like. Learn to give slack to those who are hurting and sympathy to those in need. Do your best not to burden others with your difficulties and don't wear your problems on your sleeve. Be diligent not to impose on those who do not want to be imposed upon. Come to truly understand what it is to be considerate of others. Learn to appreciate, to be sincere. Contribute to the welfare of society by not being argumentative or prejudicial. Realize that it's not necessary to be compatible to be agreeable. Stay clear of those who dislike you. Likewise be open-minded about political discourse and acknowledge that you are not the repository of all wisdom. Realize that this is not as easy as it sounds for some people. Know that one's faith is intimately personal; leave it be. Finally, give serious consideration to the above. A quick addendum to the previous page for the football buffs: we played a cerebral single and double-wing offense, and we were allowed only cross-body blocks or shoulder blocks, holding both our hands over (on) our chest.


129
128
NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

ENEMY ACTION

A chapter "Enemy Action" requires that the pictures that follow will each and everyone show a ship that has in various ways been woefully transformed, from majesty to dispiriting and often agonizing distress, with all the attendant and painful loss of life and limb. In addition, since I never experienced what transpired in these pictures, I believe it would be presumptuous in the extreme to try to describe what were the physical conditions on those ships at those times of bomb-blast and ensuing conflagration. For that reason, and throughout this chapter, an allegoric motif will be used with an Airdale named "Dale" as the protagonist, as he struggles against an implacable foe.

So, to begin this chapter, it will be reiterated that the Antietam did not engage in any enemy action (although we did have General Quarters due to enemy submarines. We never were told of the proximity of the Japanese surface and air forces. "Were they just over the horizon, ready to pounce?" It turned out that they were not. But I often wondered how I would react to their appearance, what with the daily reports that we received of the kamikaze attacks on the "fleet that came to stay".). Therefore, this chapter is not in the first-person (as are all the other chapters of this book). Instead, this will be a joint exercise of our powers of perception of a topic with which most all of us are ignorant. And just perhaps, the Gods willing, we can at the same time improve upon our capacity to empathize. (Also, this chapter will be without the "Hollywood treatment" of these types of subjects where flagrant exaggeration and shameless prevarication abound. Let us duly shun both.) This chapter, "Enemy Action", could perhaps best be epitomized as the "cult of the Kamikaze", those pilots who, with extreme malice, deliberately crashed their bomb-laden aircraft into you and your ship. Here was someone who wanted to and did single you out for death. (But at least here you basically understood his reasons for his actions, which in turn in some way made it "easier" than if you had no clue as to why you were singled out.) When on a fully exposed ship (a redundancy), to be attacked somehow seemed more personalized than if one was not exposed and one was not singled out. With this somewhat oblique introduction, let's give consideration to those intrepid souls (and Dale) who went into harms way with the wrath of a seemingly indomitable foe "forever" lurking just over the horizon.

Setting the stage, consider, if you will, being assigned to the flight deck of an Essex-class carrier which is on station just sixty miles off the coast of Japan during 1945. These were extremely perilous times for "the fleet that came to stay". As the ship steams along the coast of Japan, you (and Dale) go about your daily duties, as does everyone else on the flight deck. Over there you observe a red-shirt filling the tank of an F6F Hellcat with high-octane gasoline. But the red-shirts seem to be everywhere doing the same thing, to the F4U Corsairs, to the SB2C Helldivers, and to the TBM Avengers. Gosh, those aircraft look big, towering over you, at once sleek and bulky and glistening in the sun. They seem to be so docile now, now that they're quiet. But you well know how menacing they become once they're roused from their quiescence, sputtering to life and then all growling in their defiance. How is a mere mortal to contend with such a mass of unadulterated power and fury? One just does, that's all. The flight deck now is not so much an airfield as it is a forest, with the F4U wings jutting upward, then the F6F's with their wings neatly folded back, while the SB2Cs further back also point their wings skyward, and finally all the way back aft are the TBMs with their huge wings somehow bent to the rear. At

the same time, another group of red-shirts are rolling out the munitions of the day on little dollies: smallish 250-lb bombs and rockets for the F6Fs and the F4Us (although these aircraft could and did carry bombs up to 500-lbs and even 1000-lbs and more). But it's the TBMs that take on the 2000-lb torpedoes, while the SB2Cs are loaded with 1000-lb bombs. The smaller 250-lb bombs are being loaded under the wing by means of manpower, while the bigger ones are raised by mechanically-geared hand devices. (This represents an overwhelming amount of high explosives that are ear-marked for the islands of Japan. A nasty business, this, but one that unfortunately has to be done.) The blue-shirts (you and Dale) are essentially done with your job of moving all the aircraft that were up forward, after the parking operation, to their positions back aft in readiness for the launch operation that's to begin shortly. This respotting process took about an hour, given circumstances such as required maintenance for given aircraft (it's similar to that game where you have to move nineteen little numbered squares (1 to 19) into a numerical sequence, one to nineteen, when there are only twenty available spots in a constrained area of only twenty locations. That is, there are nineteen aircraft and space for only twenty aircraft, and you want to put aircraft number 5 here, and aircraft number 12 there, and etc. This may sound foolish, but it is a real problem for the officers who want to place the aircraft in certain particular positions as proscribed by maintenance requirements. Remember, in this game, time is of the essence, to be sure, and the Airdale must do his part by being lively and proactive.) Also on and around the flight deck are the gunners who are manning their guns (at least as a skeleton crew). This includes the 20-mm guns along the catwalks, the 40-mm guns up in the superstructure, and of course the 5-inch guns on the flight deck as well as the four of them just below the level of the flight deck. Here and there you will notice an Airdale taking a catnap or just "shooting the breeze". His work has been done until the forthcoming launch operations in a little while. And of course the lookout stations are manned as a backup to the ever vigilant search radars. This radar, that big one up there, slowly rotates round and round, searching for that telltale unknown blip on the radar console that spells trouble. Sometimes that big "bedspring" search radar (others are circular dishes) stops its rotation. Look up there, it just stopped, and it's now oscillating back and forth in a 20 degree arc. It has noticed something, and it wants to "sniff it out". Has it seen anything untoward? (We all know what "untoward" means) Well no, because it reverts back to its normal rotating motion.

With the deck packed full with seventy large aircraft (the other thirty aircraft are down on the hanger deck, most of which are ready for launch), allowing for very little open space, one feels confined. This is an environment that allows for no sense of freedom. For those whose duty-stations are below decks, how they feel about being confined, I don't know. But I do know that I would be very uncomfortable (not that the Navy is in the business of providing comfort). And don't even mention how the submariners feel! But then, they're a "different breed of cat". So now here we are, sharing this limited space with seventy large aircraft imposing themselves on us, they that are all gassed up and loaded with high-explosive bombs. The day has turned slightly overcast, and the wind is picking up slightly to generate moderate swells coming in at a thirty degree angle that causes the deck to have a slight roll combined with a lazy pitching motion. Flight quarters today will be in forty minutes, the middle of the afternoon. Not sixty miles away lies the coast of Japan, and the sun is still bright enough to the west to make the sky less penetrable in that direction. Do they (the enemy) know we're here, soon to send a swarm of aggressive aircraft bent on laying waste a part of their sacred land? How will they react to this death and destruction? What will they do in response? How are they going to constrain this massive fleet just off of their coast? The answer isn't long in coming because there to the southwest are some tiny black dots. We look up to notice that the large search radar, the one that has stopped rotating, is now vigorously oscillating back and forth, back and forth, over a small sector in the direction of those black spots. One of the carriers starts to send up some F6Fs and F4Us. They are to be the Fleet's CAP (Carrier

Air Patrol), the ones who go to meet the enemy to hopefully repel them. And then, there it is: over the loudspeaker the bugle loudly blares out, twice, in a brisk, staccato manner, CCCB, DDDC, EEEDCBC. Now the boatswain's mate pipes over the loudspeaker his wailing, forlorn sound CE,CE,CEDCBAAA. Next he intones "Now hear this. Now hear this. All hands man your battle stations", followed by a loud insistent, persistent "BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG .....". There's an immediate flurry of activity as everyone scrambles to their prescribed stations, grabbing helmets on the way. And then, over the loudspeaker the bugler sounds the Flight Quarters call, followed by the boatswain's mate saying in a deep monotone: "Now all hands, man your flight quarter stations" This action is partly due to wanting to clear the deck before the enemy arrives, since a deck-load of gassed up and armed aircraft are anathema to the ship's well-being. And so let's now go to the pictures to find out what happened after the above scenario just presented. It won't be pleasant viewing in the abstract, and it'll be difficult to fathom what it was like to have undergone such an ordeal. Part of this ordeal is the realization that this is not necessarily a one-time happening It could happen again tomorrow, or the day after that, and so on. Added to that is the fact that one is always in an exposed situation, that one is known to be in a certain area, and one has no idea when one will very possibly be subjected to physical punishment. One never knows. (The mental anguish in these circumstances is just a way of life, regardless of what does or doesn't happen.) But the following pictures will tell the tale.

MAY DAY (M'AIDE)

The tale to be told here is the simple fact of an enemy pilot, filled with vengeance, slipping through the defenses to drop a 500-lb bomb on the deck amidships just forward of the two dual 5-inch gun mounts, as the ship "plowed" through the seas just sixty miles off the coast of Japan. Evidently, the CAP was unable to fend off this enemy thrust, and the ship's guns did no better. This of course was not always the outcome of an enemy attack. But it was, unfortunately, the result too many times, especially when the air-raid consisted of the Kamikazes. In this case, again, it was a matter of "those fighting to die against those fighting to live". But here, it was a bomb that the flight deck personnel saw arcing down toward them, becoming bigger and bigger as it approached closer and closer. One looks upward, mouth somewhat agape, both transfixed and frightened by the spectacle of what was unfolding. It would do no good to run for cover, because what cover was there? One could only hope that the helmsman responded quickly enough to the brisk, demanding order "right full rudder!" But it was not to be so today. There were too many other distractions happening all at once (other enemy aircraft). The command came too late. And besides, that break in the clouds from which the enemy bomber appeared was not noticed soon enough. The explosion was loud and sharp, as were the the flying shards of jagged metal that flew through the air. Again, there was nowhere a safe haven in which to weather the blast, and many a red-shirt, and many a yellow-shirt, and many a green-shirt, and many a blue-shirt, and many an officer felt the withering hail of metal. Some perished on the spot, while others acquired various grievous insults to body (and soul). I would point out that, knowing that the flight deck is 900 feet long, it is seen that the compass of the blast is about 100 yards all around. A goodly part of the ship was woefully rendered asunder, adding its "body parts" to the overall detonation. (This is unlike a bomb-blast on land, where much of the energy of the blast is expended in moving the earth and digging a hole.) In addition, the force of the blast could well cause one to be swept, unharmed, over the side of the ship, never more to be seen, ever. (Such an occasion is truly a "missing in action" episode,

What was almost the worst thing that could happen, did happen. But it was certainly not the worst thing that could have happened. Notice all those aircraft back aft on the flight deck. Having been respotted there, they were in turn, all of them, filled up with high-octane gasoline and loaded with munitions. This being the case, if the bomb hit amongst that assembly of closely packed aircraft, "all Hell would have broken loose". This would have been an actual holocaust, a fearsome occurrence beyond adequate description by any but those who were there. For now, let us heed this ship, this ship whose condition is grave, and whose crew (and Dale) is being pushed to the extreme. Even when pushed to the extremities, this Essex looks proud and strong. In this picture, one can't help but involve both one's intellect and one's emotions. We can intellectually notice the mass of aircraft, the slight heeling motion of the ship as it tries to dodge the terror falling toward them from the skies, the breadth of the smoke indicating the extent of the destruction, the state of the sea, the conditions of the weather, the lack of gun-fire, and so on. Or, we can "feel" the heat of the flames, the pain of the shrapnel tearing at bodies, the confusion of the men (and Dale) on the flight deck as they fight the fires, the dread of further secondary explosions, and so on. But whether it be intellect or emotion, we can only marvel at the fact that there were, then, men of the Navy, tried and true, who gallantly carried our cause to the very hinterland of the enemy despite horrendous casualties.

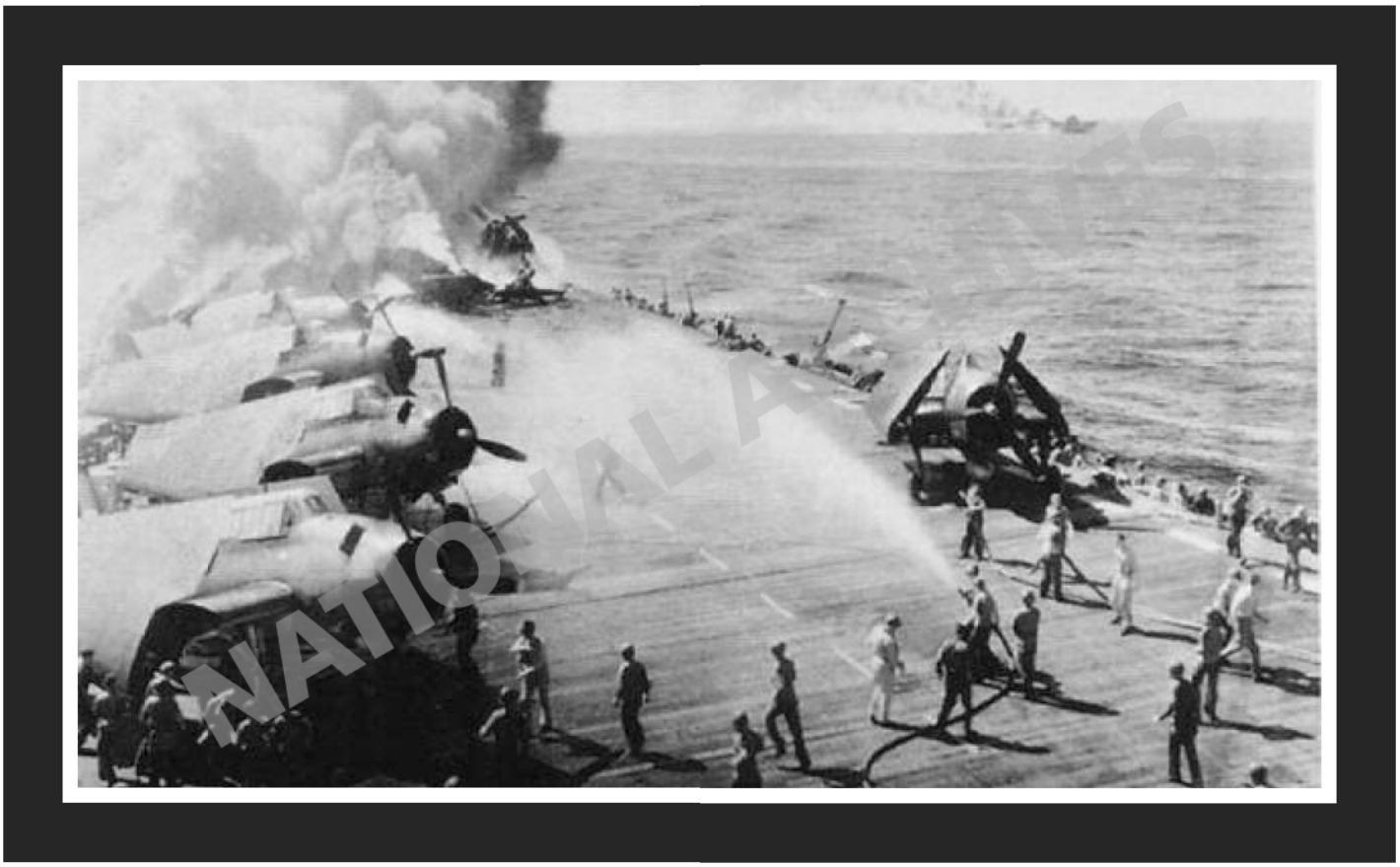


SMALL CARRIER

This picture was chosen because I like it as a "painting". I also like it because it has the deep darks and the light lights with enough mid-tones to make it a balanced whole. Because the objects in the picture are "soft", I therefore classify this picture as a "painting". And yet it has resolution to a sufficient degree to satisfy a realism that makes this picture compelling. Even without having the hard edges, the picture still "jumps out at you". I believe this is because the contrast-value is strong, but not harsh. It's too bad that a picture that has such good "artistic" qualities (in my opinion) must be of a subject that shows pain and death and destruction. But that happens to be the subject of this chapter, and we must adjust ourselves when considering these pictures (there will be no "gratuitous" pictures though; the pain and suffering involved will only be implied. There will be no visuals of these things.)

But to the content of the picture: this is one of the smaller carriers as is noticed by the configuration of the TBM Avengers to the left and the straight flight deck to the right. Evidently, a bomb hit this ship back aft, laying waste those aircraft (and personnel who happened to be in the area). Those Airdales to the lower right manning the fire-hose are, I presume, marching it back aft toward the fire. There's a question as to whether it'll reach that far back aft, and there's a further question as to why there aren't additional hoses "up and running" back aft near the fire. There are hose outlets along the flight deck just above the catwalk (and below the flight deck). The Airdales should be there, close to the fire. Also notice, on the horizon, an Essex which has been attacked by other enemy aircraft. Though it's not clear, this Essex appears to have taken serious punishment. (More on this in the coming pictures,)

We can wonder why there aren't, apparently, any Airdales down there at the fire when the situation seems to cry out for it. One answer could be that the initial explosion made inoperative the fire-hoses in that area as well as killing the personnel in the area. In any event, I believe that there should be some sort of Airdale presence there. Perhaps, this being a smaller carrier, there were fewer Airdales at the fire because there were fewer Airdales available. Notice the two shadowy figures closer to the flames. But what are they doing? Why do they look so casual? Where's the sense of urgency? And what are those personnel in the lower left corner doing loitering around? Don't they know there's a fire getting out of hand? Questions. Questions. I would like to think that had Dale been there, he would have been front and center at the periphery of the fire, doing SOMETHING. After all, fire is a direct threat to the ship itself, and simple preservation should be adequate motivation. It's my thought that when there is a clear and present danger, the response is essentially automatic. One does not sit down and analyze, when time is of the essence. The Dale that I know, using good judgment all the while he's quickly acting according to the threat, would be there. And he would be nimble of thought in resolving the situation. And he would stay there until the job was done. And when the job was done, he would quietly retire from the area. And then, should it occur, he would feel uncomfortable with any possible recognition because he never would have felt that he had done anything exceptional (according to his standards). His mode of thinking is that if he could do it, it was not exceptional, and therefore nothing worth even to consider extolling. (Maybe a chuckle would be suitable though.) I believe Dale has his bearing set correctly, and besides, this attitude of his simplifies life considerably: there's a problem; so do something about it, but by all means, in a rational way.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DOOM'S DAY

The following set of twenty-one pictures will partially chronicle the trials and tribulations of the U.U.S. Franklin, a ship that suffered greatly due to a single enemy aircraft on a fateful day in March of 1945. (The following pictures, all of them in this chapter, fittingly will be dark and somber, gloomy and dismal, as properly befits the dire plight of these valiant ships of the line. And the ensuing brief accounts of this arduous life-and-death ordeal will be based on the various reports made by others.)

The ordeal of this venerable ship started on March 19, 1945. She was preparing to launch an attack against Kure and Kobe on the Japanese coast. As such, she was in a condition of maximum vulnerability: she had a deckload of aircraft all loaded with high-octane aviation gasoline and rockets and bombs of various sizes up to 1000 pounds (each aircraft could carry at least 1,000 pounds). What could be potentially more self-lethal? So it was that the Gods of War were not to look favorably on this ship on this day. This is because a single enemy aircraft seemed to appear out of overlying cloud-cover, and despite the fire from the Franklin's 5-inch and 40-mm guns, this aircraft was able to drop two 500-lb bombs on the ship. One of them went into the forward elevator, causing great havoc on the hanger deck with its complement of aircraft. The other 500-lb bomb exploded on the flight deck amid the aircraft warming up for launch operations. Both bombs started huge fires fed by the high-octane gasoline, while the bombs in/on the aircraft in turn detonated, causing a veritable Hell for the pilots in the aircraft as well as the Airdales crouching beside the aircraft. The rockets installed under the wings of the aircraft were 11.75-inch "Tiny Tims", and in the heat of the fires, they too began to be "launched, with devastating effect. The entire back half of the flight deck was in the process of being consumed, and the men who survived the initial impact were in a living nightmare. The area was all ablaze and saturated with flying fragments of metal. Who could survive such a holocaust? As it turned out, 724 could not, and 265 Purple Hearts were given to those who did survive the catastrophe. With a total of 989, about one-third of the crew would be casualties that dismal day. That gloomy day was responsible for the award of 393 medals of various types, including 19 Navy Crosses. Looking at this picture, one could imagine that that plume of smoke, rising and wending its way toward the Heavens, could well be thought of as a massive funeral pyre that was paying homage to the Gods of War. What horror had they wrought? Who but the devil himself could conjure such an abomination? I would warrant that there are none among us who could adequately fathom that which we can but dimly imagine. Should we even try? No, but we can cry.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A LITTLE CLOSER

Moving in a little closer, we get a little better idea of the extent of this fire-storm where it can be seen that a good portion of the flight deck is covered with dense smoke. And notice the shear size of the fire-ball in relation to the size of the ship. It's true that an Essex-class aircraft carrier is a large ship compared to other ships, but when it's compared to to a conflagration of the size shown in this picture, the ship seems sadly small. It's especially "sadly small" when it's realized that one can not have free room to move about to fight such a fire. One is absolutely constrained to the area between the catwalks that border both edges of the flight deck. If the ship rolls, the blazing gasoline follows that roll, putting one in serious jeopardy of being forced over the side of the ship, never to be heard from again. It's a cruel decision that one must make: subject oneself to the fierce fire that will not be subdued, or "go over the side"! It's a decision that does not allow for even a short deliberation. In the agony of an intense, encroaching fire, does one even consider the ramifications of "going over the side"? Does one even consider that from fifty feet, water becomes very "hard"? Does one give the slightest thought to the fact that the ship is moving, constantly moving away from the point of impact? Does one understand that in all likelihood, one will not even be noticed "going over the side"? So how does a mere mortal survive such an explosive situation? And should he survive, how does a mere mortal endure such a ghastly inferno in such close quarters? These questions really have no suitable answers, at least from someone who was not there. All I would do is to point out what should be the obvious: that a mere man is not made to withstand such a situation as pictured here. The only positive thing to be said here is that the fires' smoke, from a distance, makes for an attractive scene. But there are no doubt those who would be adamant that beauty should never be seen to have been derived from such painful distress. It might seem almost blasphemous that it should be so. This is a very philosophical question to some people: should good be allowed to derive from evil? This borders on the adage that "the end justifies the means". Most of us would automatically say "no". On this the academics among us might gladly go where "angels fear to tread", asking "What is the 'means', and what is the 'end'? There are those who could (and probably have) written volumes about such things, and as long as they don't "have an axe to grind", fine. So a mere sentence or two here merely serves to initiate this never ending debate. I have my own views about these things, as should others also, especially if they are a nexus of the "means" and the "end".

But yes, those are indeed "angry" clouds (when the ship is in view). When it is not in view, there is a certain dramatic impression that's apparent. It reminds me of a sky full of large, bulbous cumulus clouds that are fast turning into thunderhead clouds. Who could not be moved by such a marvelous display of Mother Nature? And if I'm not mistaken, am I imagining things when I perceive, half-way up the picture, the side-view, looking to the right, of a "brain"? Just asking.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DESTINY

That ship, but for the Grace of God, could be mine. ("There, but for the Grace of God, go I".) So must have said those who were watching, in awe, that once mighty ship as it was being quickly reduced to the edge of oblivion by that huge ball of fire. (Recall that this ship is 300 yards long, and that it is steaming out from under that fire-ball. That she survived this calamity was a small miracle, but she did, as did all the Essex-class carriers. What is now going to be said below takes a very brief, but necessary, philosophical turn.)

Was it her destiny to have had to deal with the terrible odds that she faced that day? And even, was it her destiny that it was she, and not us, who was at that precise spot when the enemy aircraft burst out of the low-lying clouds with the vengeance of revenge? Was it also our lot to have been spared , this time? How should one, how can one, fathom what the Fates have in store for one? Here, of course these are questions about which one has precious little control, what with those bent on our destruction. And if one has no control over coming events, in a larger sense, how does one measure one's freedom? Could one's freedom and liberty be just the whim of unseen and unknown "destiny"? And also, why ask such questions when one is helpless to effect what is to come? Is fatalism the answer? (It certainly was when an Airdale attended an aircraft as it was being parked after having landed on board.) And yet, hasn't everyone, at one time or another, thought that one has been ill-treated by the Deities? Is this natural? Is this wise? Some say "no", while others say "yes". But, at one time or another during periods of quiet solitude, one surely has pondered the question as to how "destiny" is determined. If it be the Deities, then so be it. But what of other determining factors? What can then be said of freedom and liberty? Doesn't "justice" subsume "freedom" and liberty"? And what of "prescribed destiny"? And shouldn't "liberty" and "destiny" always be mutually exclusive? Again, questions, questions, nothing but questions. The answers must be found elsewhere, but perhaps this picture will stimulate the search for the true and underlying meaning of "destiny" (where destiny is untainted by mere mortals who would have it otherwise by making your destiny a result of the their perverse and arrogant injunctions, and which, perhaps at the same time, are based on rank deceit.) But let's just say the obvious directly: "control" and "destiny" must be mutually exclusive. Otherwise, "destiny" is not the TRUE destiny of the Deities, as is vividly seen in this picture of the U.S.S. Franklin, a ship we should all revere. But let's end this passage on a positive note; to wit, if Destiny is preordained, then learn to live with it. If it is not preordained, then consider it to be "Kismet", the name of a beautiful musical play that will forever elevate the spirits and assuage the soul. Listen and enjoy.



EVEN CLOSER

Some time has elapsed now and we are even closer to this catastrophe, close enough to make out individuals up forward. But what of back aft? Back aft where the smoke is still so dense that one is at the very limit of one's endurance. Does one lose one's bearings in such an environment? Very probably. Does one stay close to the deck? Yes, if survival is uppermost in one's mind. And yet, it's not hard to imagine that if one were in a fighting mood, one would be hell-bent on "slaying the dragon", that fire that was everywhere around. This in turn calls for an examination of one's attitude concerning this situation. There are those, no doubt, who feel the pressure to seek the safety of being up forward. Their lack of experience, their lack of age, and their lack of a suitable background even, could explain this attitude. On the other hand, there were undoubtedly those who could almost be said to relish a situation that would test there mettle. They were the ones who positively thrive on challenges, and this picture amply shows such a challenge. Finally, there are those like Dale who see an overriding importance in a job that must be done, and done NOW. This job takes on the status of a duty that must be done for the sake of the ship and the sake of his shipmates. And need it be said that it must be done for the sake of one's country. (When I attended Yale many years ago, I distinctly recall the motto to be found in various places that said: "For God, for Country, and for Yale". This is not a saying unique to Yale surely, and certainly it can be found in many other places (with Yale replaced by the appropriate name). This is good, most especially because it puts the group above the individual, in a generic way. We must always, surely, believe there are things higher than self, even though self-interest is not a bad thing. In fact, many good things derive from this attitude. But I'm preaching to the choir, am I not?). The first-named person will have to be discounted in this crisis. The second person is certainly a valuable addition to the team. But in my opinion, the third person (Dale) has that involved dedication that is required to accomplish this difficult task. He has the staying power that usually only comes from those who see duty above all else. This type of individual is not hard to find, fortunately. Dedication to a cause (third person) will always trump dedication to self-interest (second person). Again, this shouldn't be seen as a put-down of the second person. His services are needed as he show-cases his individual capabilities, and at times such as these, all the help that available is needed. At the same time, it's the leadership of the third person that can be the difference between success and failure in these situations. Without leadership, the task at hand can be likened to a powerful ship without a rudder.

Speaking of the ship, this picture shows the Franklin from the starboard side, as opposed to the previous views. The dark ship, etched, makes a compelling picture against the bright background, while the dark smoke from the fire is ugly for what it signifies, and yet, at the same time, it contributes to the drama of the moment. But what destruction is being hidden by this pall? What terrible things does it conceal? What a forlorn sight, augmented by the burning oil/gasoline as it flows from the hanger deck to the sea below. And it brings to mind what was said in the first volume: "I'll close this book with a citing of the Navy's motto: "Honor, Commitment, Courage". It means, I believe, the following: Honor in not shirking one's duty, Commitment in fulfilling that duty, and Courage in being intrepid in doing that duty". This picture could be a metaphor for this motto, a motto that has served the Navy, and the Country, well through these many years. .


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DUTY

Things are coming into a little better focus now, and the destroyed aircraft back aft are now visible. For instance, the etching of the previous picture seems to be more three-dimensional. Notice the Airdales up forward subduing a secondary fire, and the tilted mast due to the initial explosion. If we were able to zoom into that smoke and fire back aft, what would we see? We would observe those who survived the first cataclysmic detonations doing what had to be done. In a word, doing their duty.

And just what is the meaning of "duty"? The dictionary lists multiple meanings as refers to people, including a moral expectation and legal obligation; a task required by one's position or occupation; obedience due a parent; an act of respect; a task expected to be performed; and an assigned place of service such as military service required of a citizen of a country. What was not listed here is what I consider to be an "implied duty" which cannot be pigeon-holed into any one of the above categories. Rather, it implies all of the above listed categories, and then some. For instance, doing what is "correct", doing what is "right" is implied in any discussion about the word "duty". Is it "right", is it proper, is it beneficial, is it appropriate, is it good, is it morally sound, is it virtuous, is it just, is it fair, is it lawful, is it well advised, to do the opposite of these things in the name of "duty" if one is so ordered? Invoking the word "duty" can lead one onto a slippery slope of misinterpreting words, or pitting one's interpretation against another's. Appropriateness is key here. But nevertheless, there are those situations that are so transparently clear as to make the above moot and beyond academic. Such a situation is shown in the adjoining picture where not only one's own life is in the balance, but in a larger sense, those others on the ship. Duty takes many forms. Duty might engender leadership, and duty might (should) call upon leaders and leadership. Either way, self-initiative is the key here. In the best of worlds, "duty" should be a manifestation of one's refined sense of obligation and responsibility and rectitude. But this begs the definition: what is the obligation? what is the responsibility? what is the rectitude? Naturally, opinions vary. So we are reduced to the maxim that one's duty is to do what is right, being left with the requirement to resolve what is "right". This is probably a never- ending exercise that will never be acceptable to everyone (your "right" is his "wrong", and visa versa). But is there anyone, anywhere, who would question the obligation, the responsibility, the rectitude of all able-bodied men throwing themselves into the fray of combating this fearsome menace of smoke and fire that threatens to consume them? This is so whether it be for self-preservation or not. No, fortunately no one has to understand what it is that is one's duty here. Actually, life doesn't have all that many clear-cut decisions as this one, this clear clarion call to duty.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HONOR

A destroyer has reached the Franklin first, but it does not have the wherewithal to do the job of putting water on the blaze It appears to be moving away to allow us, a bigger ship, to approach. The air attacks are over, but the threat of submarine attack is an ever present danger, especially when two ships are steaming side-by-side.

The dense smoke is clearly seen to be an obstacle to any damage control parties on the flight deck. (On a carrier, the damage control party on the flight deck consists primarily of Airdales.) The duty here is clear while the conditions are very obscure. Who are those who will step up to do this arduous and onerous job? The vast amount of smoke provides a very easy cover for those who would shirk their duties. This brings us face to face with the concept of "HONOR".

So how does one even define "honor", a word not easily grasped. Perhaps this will help: when I was a Boy Scout many years ago, I remember how I was taken by their oath which starts out thus: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country..." There, in a very straight-forward manner, is an encapsulation of the meaning of the word "honor": "...do my best to do my duty..." One could add various things such as doing one's best "above and beyond the call of duty". But again, there's that word "duty", and again we say things such as "doing the right thing; maintaining rectitude; fulfilling one's obligations; integrity of untarnished actions; being honest in the face of subsequent injury;" and the like. But here, we will take a little different approach. The situation here is made to order for those who would temporize the meaning of "honor". Since the smoke is a ready-made mode of concealment, one could easily stay back, stay away from the task at hand. In a word, one could SHIRK one's obligations, one's duties, and no one would be the wiser. So, we can say that an honorable person is the one who does not shirk one's appropriate duties, and does not try to avoid what clearly should be required of one. (But what should be clearly required of one? That is a question for elsewhere.) We can go even further and say that the truly honorable person is one who does the arduous, the onerous, yes, the dangerous, job when what is done is known only to God and that person alone.

And so it was that Dale was fortunate enough to have survived the initial cataclysm with all his required faculties available He immediately groped his way back aft, adjusting his position according to the heat he felt. He was able to find a fire-hose outlet at the catwalk still in tact, at which time he, along with others, sprayed the area as best they could. He later received the Purple Heart for his "minor" wounds, and that was that. BUT, he felt a satisfaction that few others had an opportunity to feel and that no medal could ever bestow. He also felt he had been true to himself, the first prerequisite to any self-fulfillment and of which Honor is a cornerstone.

(Looking at this picture, the shear magnitude of the fire, as represented by those various shades of black and white, is awesome. The area covered by that smoke would cover about two football fields (American) of deck-space. Where to go? What to do once there? This is a floating inferno that shows no mercy and and gives no respite.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COMMITMENT

We're close now, but not close enough to render aid. We're at the ready, manning the fire-hoses, prepared to pour volumes of water onto this woefully stricken ship as best we are able. As one, we gaze at the fierceness of the fires (the multiple explosions having now subsided), and our adrenaline starts to pump more strongly the closer we approach this massive ship in the throes of a fight for its very life. The impact we feel is visceral, the affect is palpable, the more so as we guardedly approach this great ship in mortal distress. As we look, we try to imagine how those on the Franklin can manage their jobs of fighting the fires, or even, how they can, how they do, manage to survive amid all that searing smoke. To do so requires a resolve of great proportions.

This then brings us to the second word of the Navy motto: Honor, Commitment, Courage. The scenario of this picture is a perfect example of the definition of the word "Commitment"as it applies to the Navy motto. In essence, that word here refers to the fulfillment, the accomplishment, of one's assigned task. It most certainly applies here, in this picture, to those who throw themselves into dark, threatening clouds of smoke to somehow bring to heal those raging fires. It means, here, to sustain those efforts of doing one's job no matter what the odds are against them, no matter how difficult the job, no matter how weary and tired they become, and no matter how difficult the duty. It means to endure, knowing the job that you are doing is right-minded and vitally important to the well-being beyond yourself. Commitment to self is fair; but commitment to outside of self is fairest. "Navy commitment" can never accommodate self-interest. Admittedly, this commitment requires, to a certain extent, a motivation derived from some inner call that your mission is consequential. However, this in turn is overridden by the fact that in any case it is YOUR job. You would always want your mission to be worthwhile in every sense of the word, but this cannot always be so. You would always want your cause to be just. This, admittedly, is a prerequisite to be determined by others, when they then call upon your dedication, your commitment. But once this has been established, "commitment" calls upon you to (silently) pledge your all to the task at hand. It becomes your obligation. It becomes your trust. For those that are on the Franklin, the cause is clear. Who among us would not feel inwardly compelled to devote all our energy to the preservation of our ship, our "home"? Commitment has never been so clear-cut, so desirable, so necessary. With the Franklin, it was to be found, thankfully, in abundance.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COURAGE

As we begin to ease up to the Franklin, we notice burning gasoline still gushing over the side from the hanger deck. There are of course aircraft on the hanger deck that were all gassed up and ready for launch operations. These aircraft were destroyed by the secondary explosions, spilling gasoline that was then ignited. As the ship took on water from the fire-hoses, it lists somewhat, causing the "water-fall" of liquid fire. For the time being, we can only stand and watch, garbed as we are in our foul-weather gear, and wonder how is it that mortal men can be immersed in that "cauldron" of death and destruction, and still survive? And in those conditions, how do they stand and fight the good fight?

To address that question, we will consider the third word of the Navy motto: Honor, Commitment, Courage. Courage here will be most succinctly defined as that characteristic of one who is intrepid in fulfilling one's duty that encompasses danger to life and limb as is found on that ship. The dictionary defines courage as that quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty and danger without fear and with firmness. (Most of us would question the phrase "without fear", but then there are no doubt others who would not.) Implicit in this definition, perhaps, is the inclusion of those who are willing to take risks, regardless. This would seem fair enough, given the caveat that most usually that risk is preceded by candor aforethought. However, very often the situation doesn't allow for this. Still, it would seem that courage should be imbued with a certain amount of intelligent thought to produce the best results. Otherwise, the undertaking would be reduced to foolhardiness. Everyone has one's own set of parameters for "courage", and everyone has one's own limitations. In addition, no one would question the flat-out nerve it takes to go down a curvy, icy path at 80-mph on a pair of skis, or to flip and spin in the air 50 feet above the ground, or to fly down a steep slope and then sail through the air when ski-jumping, or twirl in the air 8 feet above rock-hard ice, or zoom over a ramp on a motor-cycle, or....., or..... These activities take a great deal of gumption, "guts" if you will, but do they come under the heading of "courage"? They are entered into with enthusiasm, knowing full-well the difficulties and rewards. They are exercised slowly at first until they become second-nature, a feat that dumbfounds we mere plebeians. So, we can say that these athletes do their activity willingly, and under no duress. Thus, as fantastic as their performances are, are they courageous? To an extent they are, but this is not the true coin of courage. True courage is called forth unexpectedly, with no practice runs to guide it. (Foolhardiness will not be discussed here, as will not derring-do and bravado. They have no place in a serious discussion of a serious subject.) Question: can one who is fearless by nature be considered to be courageous under circumstances of danger? The answer would appear to be "yes" and "no". The word "courage" would seem to imply that "fear" is an inherent ingredient of that word. But why begrudge a fearless person's heroic act? Perhaps it's possible to learn to face danger and dangerous situations with equanimity. Repetition makes learning possible, does it not? In the "final" analysis, it would seem that the true courageous trait is much more apt to be found in those who are outward- looking rather than inward-looking. As a final word, it would also seem that courage can be characterized as being proactive, while bravery assumes the role of being reactive (where bravery is characterized by confident fortitude that faces and endures anything threatening.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FEAR

We're almost there, and we can already begin to feel the heat coming from the fierce fires that are concealed by those swirling clouds of smoke. The melding of the grays and the darks and the lights has its own fascination, but this can never mask the fact that this scene also portrays the ugliness of death and destruction that leaves one with the cold sweat of the unknown. Isn't it true that that "waterfall of fire" surely looks like the one-eyed presence of some huge malevolent beast churning, ever churning out its noxious exhalations, just daring us to approach so as to be consumed along with the others? An involuntary shiver takes hold, and we are betwixt and between being transfixed and repulsed by what we see.

Dale, an ordinary fellow with an ordinary background, found himself in an extraordinary situation during those moments of intense explosive eruptions (when two 500-lb bombs found their mark). So there he is, a nineteen year old youth, suddenly and violently engulfed in a situation of which he has absolutely no prior experience. He's initially stunned by the ferocity of the onslaught, and in the confusion of the moment, he does his best to get his bearings. But very quickly he comprehends the sheer magnitude of what it is that has befallen this proud ship. What he can detect of what has happened is beyond his imagining (and we won't even try). But what he feels, at least at first, is abject fear. Fear can take on many aspects. Here it is the very basic fear of an event that happened so abruptly and that was so completely unfamiliar to him that he was dazed and reeling. Fear of the unknown has now been transformed into the here and now as represented by the havoc on deck, where one cannot perceive where and what the danger is because of the dense smoke. And one cannot retreat and regroup because of the space-restrictions of the flight deck. Dale is now truly "between the Devil and the deep blue sea". (It is not meant to say that this is the most fearful event extant, but instead, it is meant to say that this is indeed a fearful situation by anyone's reckoning, especially for one so new and untried.)

The dictionary defines "fear as being a distressing emotion aroused by impending pain, danger, evil, etc., whether real or imaginary". There is a difference between a possible fearful eventuality, and the fear engendered by a "here and now" danger. This fear of the unknown perhaps is more unsettling in its apprehension than the panic caused by the chaos already upon us. In both cases, the stress induced by the fear can be so debilitating that one becomes diminished in one's ability to contend with the problem at hand. However, this agitation due to our trepidation can at the same time gird us for the fight to come (quelling and subduing the fires). That is, the fear itself can in a way bring about the very mental attitude needed to properly counter that which opposes us: after the initial shock generated by the fear, one "gets mad at" that which is causing the fear, and thus this anomaly is the vehicle of one's salvation.

The above merely "stirs the pot", and should one have the will to periodically seek a little solitude now and then, then one can become one's own philosopher. But here on the Franklin, Dale doesn't have the luxury of being philosophical. That will have to come later, after the effort to fight or perish.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TO STRUGGLE

We (the cruiser U.S.S. Santa Fe) have finally reached a point where we can put some water onto the U.S.S. Franklin, and especially on that "evil eye" still glowering its defiance at us. Now that our battle is being closed (brought close), the palpitations of anticipation are being replaced in proportion to the exertion of our efforts. To our untrained eyes, all seems but confusion: smoke and fire and intermittent explosions. Yet, in a peculiar way, there is little shouting as one would expect in situations of great anxiety as we approach closer and closer. Instead, observing all that turmoil, there is mainly quiet determination.

And on the Franklin, what of Dale and his compatriots who are actually in that turmoil of death and destruction? The struggle here is certainly herculean, where those who were lucky enough to have survived can now fight the good fight. If the adversary is relentless (and it surely is), then so too must you be relentless (and vigorous and unyielding). Can someone explain why anger, even vehement anger, toward a mortal enemy can be very salutary? Probably the answer lies in the understanding of what it means "to struggle". In Dale's case, where his very life is at stake, "struggle" takes on a meaning far different from struggling with, say, a math problem, obviously. (There are those who say that NOTHING is obvious, but we'll give them wide berth.) It would also seem obvious that there is a direct proportionality between the exertion expended and the consequences of the outcome of the struggle. And thus it is that anger provides the added fillip necessary to carry the day. While "to struggle" implies everything from fear to discipline to pride to choice to endurance to intelligence to initiative to teamwork to selflessness to perseverance, one could well say that its wellspring is plain and simple "anger". That this should be so is not particularly praiseworthy, and it is not necessarily (?) so. However, the struggle that Dale is confronting does demand extraordinary resources, and Dale is well-served by this mindset of pure, unadulterated anger (at the fire and the "demons" that sustain them). It would seem that the word "struggle" is a generic word encompassing many shades and interpretations. But here, on the Franklin, its meaning is very clear-cut. Body and soul are at stake here, and his attitude preempts all else. What good to be a magnificent physical specimen but lack the will to struggle, to overcome the adversity on all sides, everywhere? Dale may be a neophyte in this business of fighting the devastating flames that seem to be whichever way he turns, but his will to overcome these blazes will never be extinguished. He knows what it is to struggle , to fight the good fight. And so, to struggle against overwhelming odds in a noble cause is the purist form of what it means "to struggle".



CHOICE

What with the water between the ships beginning to become all roiled up by the approach of our two ships, and our closer proximity to this enormous disaster, this monstrous calamity, this picture takes on the appearance of seething anger and hostility. This impression seems to be augmented by the deep darks and the light brights which makes for a dramatic and grim tableau. As one peruses this picture, one can see the juxtaposition of the relative tranquility to the left, but the actual turmoil to the right where there is a fire-storm within which the dead, the half-dead, the half-alive, and those fortunate few who are still viably alive, such as Dale.

The circumstances on the right side of the picture establish the perfect situation for one to make a choice: do what certainly is right and needs to be done, or shirk one's clear and present duty. The surfeit of smoke, making concealment easy, would easily allow the evasion of doing the right thing. This choice vividly reflects on a fundamental aspect of one's character: do what is right and difficult, or do what is wrong and easy? In large part, character is behavior and behavior is character. Here, there is an absolute obligation for all able-bodied men to contribute all their energies to the cause in this time of dire need, notwithstanding the fact that there is a fire-storm confronting them in a woefully confined space (the flight deck). This abundance of smoke makes it very easy for those so inclined, for those of lesser resolve, to stay back and "let the other guy do it", even though the choice here should be crystal clear. The environment here makes this possible without any adverse repercussions, and thus the choice for these people is made much less difficult. The smoke makes choice an option. The honorable reject choice in this situation. It would seem that this is a classic example of "choice" being a defining moment in one's life, and for one's self-esteem. To go forward into the fray is to place oneself in mortal jeopardy, while to stay back is to assure one's safety. What to do? What is one's choice here? For Dale, it goes beyond duty; there is no choice to consider. A job needs to be done, and fast. Without the slightest hesitation he instinctively moves toward the fire, as if duty were inbred. Making the right choices throughout life will have this affect on one's actions. In Dale's case, the hard choices have long ago been made so that now he knows what action is required without giving it a second thought; his actions are literally second-nature because he had "always" made the right choice since "way back". But for those who are not so positive in their outlook, there are options to be considered, and "choice" is an immediate imperative. They have to weigh the pros and cons of what they should do. This is fair enough as concerns what specific actions to take concerning the ship, but what of the more basic decision as to which direction to take? forward toward the fire, or backward to relative safety under the cover of the smoke. Are one's thoughts inwardly directed, or are they properly outwardly directed? The "right thing" to do here is obvious. What is not so obvious is what you would do. The point to be made here is that with the correct thought processes from long ago, the response to this situation here would be completely automatic, would it not? As a caveat to this discussion, it should be said that it is appropriate that we should always be ready to "walk in the moccasins" of those who do not respond to this situation just as we think we would. What we consider to be clear and unambiguous is not necessarily so to others. For instance, if one has a bad case of nerves, one becomes ineffective, and thus a hindrance to the task at hand. (Remember that saying, "nervous in the service". But it would be inappropriate here to list those reasons for not doing one's duty, even though the situation literally cries out for only one choice: here a choice is not an option.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DISCIPLINE

We, the Santa Fe, have finally made our way to our destination: cheek-to-jowl with the Franklin. All hands are manning their fire-hoses and we're putting a fair amount of water onto the Franklin. In addition to subduing the flames, this water is also contributing to the slight list that the Franklin is experiencing. Notice a few helmets appearing on the bridge just above the empty Admiral's bridge. All the various guns are quiet now, pointing forlornly toward the sky. Again, the darks and the brights give this picture the feel of a silhouette such that the lack of details allows us to better empathize with the gravity of the situation. (I've thought long and hard about where the photographer was placed in order to take this picture, but to no avail. No matter.)

What do we get from this tableau? Many things emanate from this picture, not the least of which is the clear sense of dedication that has been summoned to confront this serious situation. "Commitment" comes to mind. Here we'll just call it "Discipline". One of the first things one thinks of when the military is mentioned is the word "discipline". What kind of military force would it be if it lacked discipline? Without it, all would be of little consequence. For one thing, the required efficiency of effort would be sorely diminished without that discipline of commitment. This teamwork in fighting the fires requires the proper use of discipline. What of one's performance under duress when one is bereft of discipline? Can the demise of proper conduct be far behind? So let's define discipline as the commitment to do that which is prescribed within a framework of required rules. (It is of course implied that the rules are righteous and that they circumscribe rectitude. This underlies the phrase "play by the rules". In this, it always helps to be absolutely honest with oneself.) We all (?) do this every day, albeit under far less stringent conditions than are found here on the Franklin. So, we could just as well define discipline as an adherence to and maintenance of the rules required to accomplish a (difficult) task or to perform a requisite duty. (Here "duty" is used generically.) We now have to consider how it is that an ordinary fellow such as Dale, from an ordinary background back home, can and does do so well an arduous task under great duress. After all, Dale has had absolutely no prior experience in situations where "all Hell is breaking loose", as here. Preparation is the key, but not preparation for a specific set of conditions. Discipline is a learned trait, and if one learns well, one earns the ensuing benefits. What must be learned is to understand reflexively, without conscious reflective cogitation, what is right and proper and correct, and what should be done within given circumstances. It wouldn't hurt to always be receptive to pondering the pros and cons of given situations and so exercise one's powers of discernment. Then, when called upon to act quickly as here on the Franklin, one can do so by means of second-nature, without having to think about what it is that one should be doing. To make this possible, these "lessons" should be learned early on in life. (But can anyone be adequately prepared?) An apt analogy to this concept can be found in sports, or some such prescribed activity where one doesn't just suddenly achieve outstanding results. We can all admire the salutary results of discipline derived from hard work. Previous diligent work makes for "effortless" discipline, the kind of discipline that makes for a more simplified way of going through life, and most importantly, for its magnificent display here on the U.S.S. Franklin. In a larger sense, society itself is the benefactor of those who have long since learned the tradition of self-discipline. It's a beautiful thing. Would that all of society were so enriched.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INITIATIVE

The fire-hoses are now being directed from the 40-mm gun sponsons up onto the flight deck fifty feet above the sea below. The look of that sea appears quiet now, indicating that the ships have "slowed to a walk", making them perfect targets for hostile submarines. This view gives a good look at the two seaplanes on the stern of the U.S.S. Santa Fe. They are somewhat of a puzzle since their function is to provide reconnaissance for the ship, which is amply provided by the carriers' CAP. Those manning the fire-hoses on the Santa Fe are subdued, and even nonchalant (?). This no doubt is in direct contrast to that which is happening on the flight and hanger decks.

Most assuredly, we know that on the Franklin there is rampart activity. Also, I dare say that there is little barking and shouting going on because I would hope that most, if not all, hands are taking the initiative to do that which has to be done. Initiative may sound like a docile word, an innocuous word, but in situations as are found on the Franklin, initiative provides the power of survival. Initiative at its most basic level is that one originate action for a useful purpose. There certainly must be opportunities to do this, on all sides, on the Franklin. With Dale able-bodied and "all fired up", what can he be doing to help the cause? Since Dale happens to be a self-starter, we can be sure it's something useful (because he's also intelligent). Initiative implies the trait of leadership, and this in turn usually means leading by example. If one sets a proper example, others respond positively. In such circumstances, there is no need to tell someone what to do: others observe the beneficial results being derived from the leaders actions. All of this of course refers to to physical activity, but it need not be only such. Of course here, it is. Thus, one could say that the prime purpose of initiative, here, is to overcome the natural inertia derived from the fear of what surrounds the men of the Franklin. That is, it would seem that this initiative of which we speak is a very useful antidote to the natural fear any intelligent person would feel in those circumstances. Thus one should endeavor to make "initiative" second-nature to one's day-to-day activities, even though the outcome wouldn't necessarily be life-threatening, as it is on the Franklin. Here, it's relatively easy to be a self-starter because the situation just cries out for positive action. However, in benign circumstances, the need for initiative requires a much more stout resolve. In the "final" analysis, "initiative" requires a trained mind-set that thrives on the challenges of accomplishment, where achievement, no matter how limited, must be a source of self-satisfaction for initiative to flower.

One might say that self-motivation is a synonym for the word "initiative". I would place "self-motivation" as a subset of "initiative" because the former doesn't imply strongly enough action, any kind of action, that is so important to the word "initiative". (Motivation implies encouragement only.) There will be those who disagree. That's good. (One's initiative would seem to be a character-trait that permeates one personality in a salutary way, and to the benefit of all. Everyone has their own ideas as to what should receive the benefits this all-encompassing word "initiative". Personally, I would vote for the innovation of productive capability by means of computer/mechanical engineering, closely followed by medical advances. But we are going FAR afield here. Sorry about that, because this is a book about the Flight Deck and Essex-class aircraft carriers and the lowly, but committed, Airdales, tried and true, who did such a yeoman's job "keeping 'em flying" by pulling and putting wheelchocks and putting out fires. Simplistic, yes, simple no.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INTELLIGENCE

We can almost touch the Franklin with its superstructure towering over us. It would seem that the worst is done, but there still remains that terrible pall over this grievously and disastrously stricken ship. No obvious signs of life are evident. Are we dealing with a ghost-ship? Our senses say "yes", but our intelligence says "no".

Speaking of intelligence, how can anything remedial be accomplished without it? It's all well and good that initiative gets one started, but once started, how best to overcome those raging fires of a while ago? The training received at the fire-fighting school will serve one in good stead, but what of implementing that training? This is where "intelligence" comes to the fore. Defining this word, intelligence represents the capacity to reason about things that are not (immediately) clear and to thus come to understand that which was not originally grasped. Intelligence also represents the ability to grapple with facts and meanings and truths. The results of successful intellectual activity can be called intelligence, where evaluated conclusions are obtained from observed (TRUE) facts. Intelligence represents mental discernment and an aptitude for finding that "if A, then B". Now that intelligence has been set forth, what of it? Well, wouldn't one rather fight a fire beside and among those with a given sufficient amount of intelligence (all other things being equal)? Being smart (having quick intelligence) certainly is a plus here where fast response to the situations that exist, as are found on the Franklin, is really beneficial. Questions keep leaping at the fire-fighters, such as "do we use water or foam on a particular area, or would it be better to use a 'funnel' of water as opposed to a spray from an applicator, or etc., etc."? Conditions change, circumstances are modified, and the fire-fighters must accommodate.

Another aspect of fighting a fire is how one relates to those others who are also doing "heavy lifting". Specifically, how does one interact with one's fellow compatriots? It can be safely said that the greatest success will be obtained when there is the greatest cooperation. And what promotes this cooperation? It would seem that this cooperation is best served when one genuinely feels respect for each and every person,. This will express itself when a lowly seaman stands side-by-side with a commissioned officer, both of whom are soaking wet and grimy and grim, dragging hoses, hauling debris, and the like. My knowledge here is only in my imagination, and so I will not profane those who experienced the Franklin's agony with artificial scenarios. But I will repeat what was said previously: it is of paramount importance to genuinely feel respect for each and every person extant, regardless of one's relative station or color of stripe (until and unless that person proves otherwise). How can even the hint of strife ever survive where there is always the cordiality, sans reservations, of sincere, nondiffident respect for everyone, from the very least of us to the most exalted? (This respect does not imply a fast friendship, or even a friendship. No, it means what it says: respect a person inherent "dignity".) Just as one is innocent until proven guilty, so too does one deserve plain and simple respect until and unless shown not to merit it. How that would ease the frictions that are found in life, everywhere! How it would "grease the skids" of interrelationships! (Before closing, it will not be said here that the above implies in any way that fraternization is implied. This is an entirely different subject that requires more space than will be found here, and it is not considered germane to this discussion above.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PRIDE

Look at this scene. What a dismal scene at! Look at this spectacle. What a somber spectacle! Look the sullen fumes arising, providing a starkly poignant backdrop for those 5-inch gun-mounts. Look at those gun-barrels, pointing defiantly skyward. What a sad scene, not unlike the eerie mists that ascend from the wastelands of the moors. And are those guns guardedly at the ready, ready to fend off any further intruders seeking to wreak more havoc on this poor afflicted ship?

At the same time, those same guns pointing upward could in a very real sense symbolize the pride of the unvanquished whose indomitable spirit says " We shall never give in!". These stalwarts from the Franklin are indeed fighting the good fight. As a matter of fact, right now Dale is lugging a fire hose from the starboard catwalk over to that seemingly unquenchable fire back aft. (Remember, most all the Airdales were killed outright by the initial bomb and the ensuing blasts, so Dale has to do double and triple duty.) For some, the pride of accomplishment in fighting the fires hardens the resolve of even the least of them. Pride can take on many flavors, some of which are listed by the dictionary: pride (lofty and arrogant assumption of superiority), deceit (an exaggerated estimate of one's own abilities and/or attainments), self-esteem (an estimate a one's self that is higher than that held by others), egotism (an excessive preoccupation with one's self and one's concerns), vanity (self-admiration and excessive desire to be admired by others), vainglory (unjustified pride), and boastfulness (speaking of oneself in an exaggerated manner). Those negative flavors also include haughtiness, arrogance, disdain, contemptuousness, pomposity, swagger, and superciliousness.

On the other hand, the positive aspect of pride (which allows Dale do good work) consists of self-esteem, self-respect, self assurance, and self-regard, all of which are underpinned and cultivated with dignity and decorum. True pride takes no pleasure in recognition or credit. True pride revels in a job well done. True pride conforms well with humility, while at the same time being vigorous in aiming for the best. True pride is a ramification of a modest self-respect. True pride allows Dale to do yeoman's work fighting for his ship and his shipmates. True pride allows one to be an instigator of beneficial enterprises (such as found on the Franklin today). True pride can be seen in the lowly job performed by the Airedale who pulls and puts wheel chocks day in, day out. True pride can be found in doing one's sworn duty. True pride embraces honor and honesty. True pride embraces commitment to a cause higher than oneself. True pride (to be proud of oneself) is not to be denigrated, but rather, celebrated.

(What IS to be denigrated are those bullies who try to belittle one's pride and seek to diminish one's efforts. Fortunately, Dale is able to ignore these foolish bagatelles. After all, don't the bullies have to wrestle with their myriad insecurities and demons, and thus deserve a modicum of sympathy from those of us not so unfortunate? An improved society demands an answer of " yes ", troubling though it may be to some.)



ENDURANCE

We are now on board the Franklin, as observers, allowed to be a peripheral part of Dale's world. The flight deck aft is aswirl with dense, impenetrable smoke that seems to consume those who enter it. To the right, just below the level of the flight deck, are the gunners, still at their battle-stations. Note the 40-mm gun pointing upward at 45 degrees, while the 20-mm guns just beyond are in the horizontal positions. And just beyond the 20-mm gins is the deck-edge elevator which is directly opposite the island superstructure (out of view to the left, where is also seen the mast that anchors one end of a wire radio aerial). Again, what a grim scene with its darks and lights. And in that shroud of smoke are men and machines (aircraft), the former fighting while the latter are fiercely burning. The darkness can be penetrated with flood-lights; the smoke can only be endured. One might wonder where all the fire-fighters are. The answer should be apparent: those who are not dead or dying are in that cauldron of smoke and fire, putting foam and water wherever it's needed, and praying that those secondary explosions won't find them. The task at hand would seem nearly insurmountable, and so it would be were it not for the indomitable endurance of the men of the Franklin.

Endurance can take on many aspects. Here, one can endure the situation of smoke and fire. One can also endure the crushing fatigue of fighting that fire. And one can endure the pain generated by that smoke and fire. But perhaps that which requires the most endurance is the weariness felt by the emotional confrontations that are unavoidable. One can reach that level of exhaustion just as easily from the exertions of emotional turmoil as from the physical deficits of energy no longer available. Who's to say which is more debilitating? At least the latter has a pretty well defined boundary. But the "bottom line" is that one must take the cards that are dealt and make do. On second thought, "make do" is only the starting point, because there are still mountains to be climbed. Thus, one must summon up one's stamina and "thumb one's nose" at these trials and tribulations that at times seem to be overwhelming. There are no doubt those who will disagree, but it is considered, after much thought, that one of the great satisfactions in life is to meet a challenge and then to overcome it. (Please, no dare-devils.) And anyway, perseverance and fortitude are their own reward (remembering that bellwether "self-esteem"). Finally, who can forget that this ship, this Franklin, is our home and our refuge in a wide and hostile sea. I'll close this segment by quoting from a portion of Rudyard Kipling's marvelous poem "IF":

> "If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
> To serve your turn long after they are gone,
> And so hold on when there is nothing in you
> Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on'"

(One would be well served if one were to obtain this poem and read it over, and over, and over again, till it saturated one's psyche. It would be one of the most salutary things which one could put on one's agenda.)



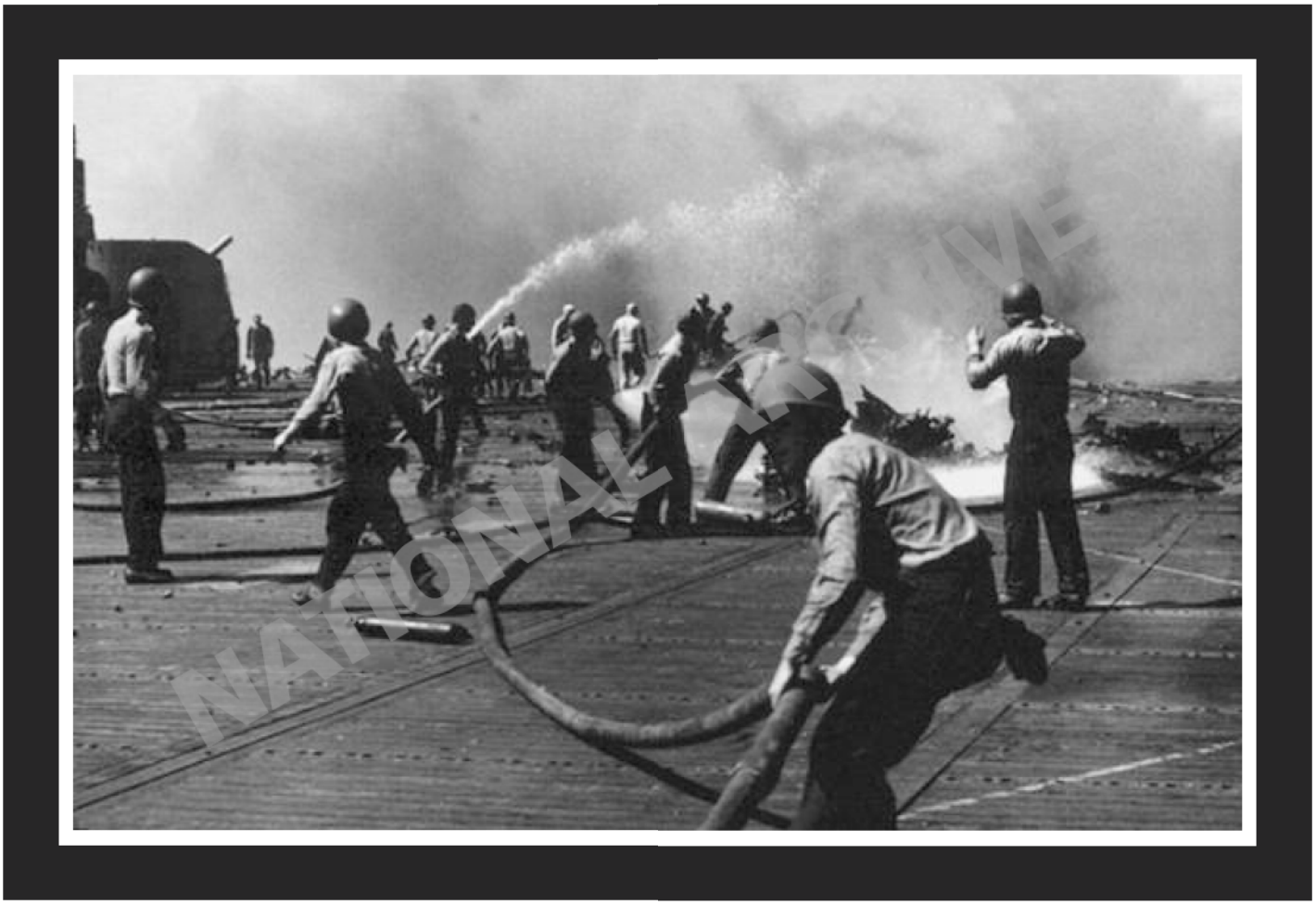
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TEAMWORK

Progress has been made; hope prevails. It appears that some of the gunners have been brought on deck to lend a hand (because probably most of the Airdales perished at the first impact (of that 500-lb. bomb.) Also, since there are no faded dungarees evident, as was wont with most all the Airdales, these must be non-Airdales. This is because the Airdales' dungarees were most always frayed and worn and weathered and ground down to a faded blue due to the constant wear and tear of crawling and crouching and dragging oneself on the flight deck as a means of self-preservation.) Lugging a full fire-hose is not the lark it would appear to be. There's a lot of force coursing through those hoses under "full throttle". To direct one for any length of time seriously call's upon one's endurance. When the personnel is limited, the duty is long. One of the problems of a high impact situation, as here, is the integrity of the hoses and the fire-fighting equipment. The gross destruction from the explosion and ensuing fires affects not just the the personnel and aircraft, but also all the equipment used to fight the fires. Back aft, in all that smoke, it is very difficult to know what has and what has not been damaged or destroyed. But since the equipment is located just above the catwalks, it's semi-protected. (Talking about protection, note that none of these "firemen" have any protective gear on at all. None is available, so none is worn.)

Afterwards, when everything was finally secure, Dale was asked how he felt trying to manage the task at hand. He said, in a somewhat pensive tone, that even in all that heat he had a chilling sensation of being all alone and separate from any kind of support, moral or otherwise. When under duress, he said that that feeling was greatly magnified. He also said that it was akin to always being confronted by an unseen, covert, and seemingly unassailable foe, where all was but hopeless. And he said that he wished he felt like he was on a team, instead of being a lone sailor alone in that smoke and grime, with no help visible.

Teamwork is of the essence, especially here on the Franklin at this time. That is, teamwork makes possible that which couldn't be accomplished without it. It's an apt analogy to the practice of team sports. Teamwork is not only useful and helpful, but at least here, it is mandatory. Working for a common purpose, especially when survival is at stake, almost demands that all hands work as a team. So lessons learned on the playing field find direct applications here on the flight deck. And just as it's important to a team's success to have "stars", so too is it important to have leaders (on the flight deck). (The "stars" must have a proven "track record" though.) Most people can relate to this concept. Just as a sports-team does best that best masters the teamwork ethos, so too do the men of the Franklin do their best when helping one another, and reinforcing each other. (Unfortunately, there are those who don't feel that this is enough; they want to be carried. The expression "Get out of the wagon and help push" is so very ripe with rectitude.) Cooperation will almost always trump individualism. The lack of (deck) space (here) emphases this very neatly. Big things can be accomplished when there is a common cause that is considered in cooperation with others. The Franklin's agony proved this concept of teamwork "in spades".



NATIONAL ARCHIVE

"ABOVE AND BEYOND"

With heads bowed, behold the damage is done, the devastation complete, the result cruel, and the agony palpable. How to adequately portray such a scene? Once there was vibrancy, now but destruction. Once they could feel, now it's unreal. Once they could fly, now heaven is nigh. What to make of such a dismal scene? Only one propeller-blade remains, as if it were an arm reaching to the Deities above in supplication, while the guns nearby never relinquish their pose of defiance. Where is everybody? Is this a phantom ship floating about in the mists of limbo? (Actually, this picture is not of the Franklin, as witness the large square search radar antenna. But this picture does replicate the horror that was experienced by the Franklin and no doubt also the individual acts of courage and bravery and heroism that such events seem to call forth.)

"Above and beyond the call of duty". So says an Act of Congress in defining the meaning of the Medal of Honor. This medal delineates a requirement that exceeds all others, including England's Victoria Cross, France's Legion of Honor, or Germany's Iron Cross. Those medals are bestowed for performance of duty in the face of extremely hazardous conditions, where life and limb are at risk. The Medal of Honor, on the other hand, says "ABOVE and BEYOND the call of duty". This implies, if not explicitly stated, that one has performed a voluntary act of valor (greatly) transcending the requirements of duty. That is, one goes (well) beyond the bounds of solely obeying orders. (We will not muddy the waters by delving into the wiseness of any particular order.) They are those who have braved dangers beyond those expected of them, performed acts seemingly unreachable, and in the process, placed their very lives in extreme jeopardy. These occasions were not infrequently done to save the life of another, where bravery becomes heroism when one willingly jeopardizes one's own life to save another's life. To have done so for one who is near and dear is certainly admirable, and is a subset of Loyalty, definitely a noble sentiment. But to have done this deed for someone who is unknown is to place oneself on the threshold of sainthood. How often this has been done, only God knows. For the rest of us mere mortals, we can only marvel and genuflect as tears roll down our cheek, and say "Thy Will has been done".



SELFLESSNESS

Same locale, different view. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" seems a fitting and appropriate annotation for this time and this place. The once living are now dead and dying. The once proud aircraft are now but sad rubble. Where once there was life, there is now a requiem. Where once there was activity, there is now only desolation. Where once there was enterprise, there is now only demise. Now that the damage has been done, the arduous task of renewal must be begun. The lifting pall of smoke has yet to finish its job of bringing finality to this indecent turn of events. And again, there is no one anywhere to be seen. Did not anyone survive topside? Sad, sadder, saddest; what else can be said?

The previous page dealt with duty, honor, sacrifice, and heroism. Now, that will be decreased a notch or two to consider selflessness as it applies to what has just happened here, keeping in mind that heroism is the culminating apex of selflessness. Selflessness could be something as simple as voluntarily relieving someone manning a fire-hose even though he himself is weary with fatigue. The key word is "voluntary". One of the attributes of selflessness is the fact that leadership can be built upon its exercise. Consider a neophyte, doing what it is that he is able to do in this scene of carnage, who observes a veteran plunging into the smoke and hell-fire with no self-concern evident. It's not farfetched that the neophyte is in turn inspired to emulate this conduct. And is not the ship the better off for this act of selflessness? And does not this example of selflessness encourage courage, a commodity in great demand at this time and this place? And does not this newly found courage lend benefit to the survival of the ship? One would think that the answers are self-evident. Or are they? There are principles here that do not submit to easy answers. As a further benefit, selflessness tends to engender self-esteem, because one knows, deep down, that it's the right thing to do, as well as perhaps motivating others to do the same. (Has anyone ever heard of a bully who has self-esteem? A self-assured bully is the rankest of oxymorons.)

Selflessness is the antithesis of self-serving That's no revelation, but maybe the fact that selflessness personifies strength, is. Strength here does not, obviously, refer to the physical, while "strength of character" should ring a bell. Going a little afield, selflessness could be something as easily defined as one's deferring to another the approbations that one might equally deserve (this is nicely expressed in the song "The Wind Beneath My Wings", a beautiful concept).

To close this somewhat provocative subject, it could be said that selflessness finds its purest form, other than heroism, in the word "altruism" ("The principle or practice of unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others".) Most of us can relate to this definition, but probably only a special few could adhere to the word "devotion". It's been a couple of generations since the word "altruism" has been seen or heard, and that's too bad. (Perhaps the word is not "tough" enough for the masses. Those who think thus are, it would seem, way, way off base.) It could also be said that the selfless people do not have the phrase "quid pro quo" in their vocabulary. It has no coinage in their world. Finally, it could be said that the selfless world yearns for the qualities as were found in the days of old when Sir Galahad and the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur's Court held sway. (So closes these very short, short essays as elicited by the saga of the U.S.S. Franklin on that fateful day in 1945.)


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BATTERED BUT NOT BOWED

This is the U.S.S. Franklin, battered but not bowed. The U.S.S. Franklin was the most heavily damaged warship in U.S. Navy history to be able to return home under her own power. But it had been touch and go whether she could survive the terrible punishment she experienced a few days earlier. At one time, the Franklin had a twelve degree list to starboard (island superstructure side) due to all the water having been put on the fire. Her electrical power was defunct for a time, but the engineers were finally able to connect an emergency diesel generator to the main distribution panel. This enabled the ventilation-fans to purge the interior of the ship of smoke. Some of the engine fire-rooms were damaged so that there was no boiler pressure for the ship's engines, causing her to drift aimlessly. Considering that she was only fifty miles from the coast of Japan, this was a real problem. So she was taken under tow by the cruiser U.S.S. Pittsburgh, but this allowed for only three and one-half knots. The picture here shows that she was eventually able to make about twenty knots under her own power.

Here we see what looks like a floating battlefield, craters and all. Remember, this battlefield rises fifty feet above the sea below, so the combatants have no place to go, and no place to hide. The damage clearly shows that this battlefield extends from the very stern to about 100 yards forward. In effect, and in a phrase, the personnel were literally "between a rock and a hard place", trapped on a "killing field". To the right were the fires from Hell, to the left was the sea of eternity. Part of this is reflected in the casualty list (according to the literature available): 836 killed, 265 wounded, one-third of the ship's complement. Of course not all the casualties were on the flight deck. The hanger deck received horrendous destruction, understanding that the hangerdeck is an enclosed space containing aircraft loaded with bombs and high-octane aviation gasoline. (The pictures of that destruction are not fit for civilized consumption.) The Franklin's personnel received 393 medals, the largest number ever presented on a single ship.

The following quote is taken from Gareth Pawlowski's excellent book "Flat-Tops and Fledglings": "Bombs were exploding everywhere, each explosion bigger than the one before. When the 5-inch service magazine blew up, it was a living nightmare; airplane engines with the propellers still attached, jagged pieces of steel, ...human beings, were hurled the length of the ship, tossed hundreds of feet into the air to rain down like a hailstorm. The entire after-end of Big Ben was a sheet of flame! Aircraft, pilots, and crewmen became human torches as aviation gasoline poured over the side of the burning vessel. Survivors could do nothing more than seek cover where they stood while rockets, bombs, and ammo mixed with twisted steel and deck splinters saturated the air around them".

Such was the hideous end for many of our long-gone compatriots. Not mentioned in the above quote (but implied) was the fact that there were those who were unharmed by the blasts but were nevertheless blown overboard. If they survived the fall fifty feet below, they faced an eternity in that cruel and foreboding sea (there was nothing between the edge of the flight deck and the sea below except a one yard wide catwalk with a two and one-half foot high wire "railing") Books have been written about the saga of the U.S.S. Franklin, and it is presumed that they all have a dramatic story to tell. This book only provides the pictures.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This picture was included because, now that the smoke has cleared, it gives a better idea of the devastation that was wrought. The picture lacks detail, but the impact is none the less for that. The opening to the left (just to the right of the 5-inch gun mount) is what is left of the elevator back aft. The initial and succeeding blasts were of such force that the elevator was lifted up off its supports and then left to fall back askew. This gives some idea of the immense energy involved in this particular cataclysm, this violent upheaval. To the right of the elevator is the large opening caused by one of the 500-lb. bombs that the enemy aircraft dropped. (Keep in mind that the entire back half of the flight deck was filled with aircraft, packed closely together. The Franklin was in the process of launching those aircraft for raids against Kure on the Japanese inland sea. And those aircraft on the flight deck had an Airdale at the wheel of many of those aircraft, ready to pull the wheelchock, in turn. The noise on the deck at that time was so thunderous that they would not have heard that lone Japanese "Judy" dive-bomber overhead. But if they had looked up, they would have frozen with anxiety (wouldn't they?), seeing it coming straight at them, not wavering one bit. And then they would have seen those two odious black objects arc down, down toward them, ever closer and closer, ever bigger and bigger, those two purveyors of death. Were their names on those two missiles? As it turned out, the answer was "yes".) So it was that that bomb found its mark, exploding on impact. It also carried all that destructive energy to the hanger deck below, causing secondary fires which provoked a chain of additional explosions and fires there. Further back on the flight deck can be seen some of the remains of aircraft. This whole area was once populated with fully loaded aircraft. The results of the massive conflagration there has since been mostly cleared away (jettisoned over the side). This ship suffered the most grievous of calamities and yet was able to limp back home under its own power. This then closes this part of the chapter on that gallant ship, that heroic ship, the U.S.S. Franklin.

Note: This chapter is not meant to be a perverse exercise of one-upmanship where someone says "my situation was worse than your situation, my casualty list was bigger than your casualty list, my disaster was worse than your disaster, and my war was bigger than your war". Such an exercise would be a disservice to everyone concerned (both those involved in the experiences and those not so involved). This chapter has been an honest and balanced representation of what actually happened during WWII, as represented by those who were there. One-upmanship is childish in the extreme, and has the unpleasant odor of deceit. The above recitation is an ugly emotion, and would seem to smack of nothing so much as jealousy, pure and simple. And what's more corrosive than jealousy? (Besides, doesn't jealousy imply a covert manifestation of insecurity? And aren't bullies jealous of something or other? Just asking.) One tends to muse when certain words are brought forth, and one tries not to moralize, or be smart-alecky. But at times, the times seem to just cry out for SOMETHING to be said, casually though it is said.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

It was gray and blustery, that day on November 5, 1944, and it felt like a bad omen to the pilots and crew of the "Blue Ghost". At about 1300 on that dreary day, the Lexington's search radar locked on some "bogies" (enemy aircraft) about eighty miles to the west, toward the Philippines. She scrambled some F4U Corsairs and F6F Hellcats to intercept the bogies before they could reach the Lexington and her Task Group 38.3. This CAP was able to destroy only one one of the seven intruders before the others ducked into the heavy cloud cover. Within minutes, they reappeared and commenced their attack on the task group. At 1338, the Lexington's guns were able to "splash" a Zero (Jap fighter aircraft "Zeke") at 1,000 yards off the starboard beam (at right angles to the direction of the ship). Almost immediately thereafter, the lookouts spotted another Zeke pressing home a similar attack, but from the port beam. Despite the heavy antiaircraft barrage from the Lexington's guns, the Japanese pilot was able to drop his bomb. Being a Kamikaze, he continued his run at the Lexington and smashed his aircraft into the port side of the island superstructure, completely destroying the signal bridge just below the navigation bridge. (It is presumed that he wanted to drop his bomb onto the aircraft parked back aft, but also to veer into the bridge to "take out" the control center wherein resided the Captain of the ship.) The Kamikaze, as he disintegrated upon impact with the signal bridge, caused fragments of his aircraft and the superstructure to spew havoc onto the personnel (Airdales mainly) at that location. The bomb hit further back on the superstructure, exploding against the armor plate of Battle II (the secondary conning station, i.e., the after bridge from where the ship is controlled should the main bridge be knocked out of commission. All of this was also shattered and demolished.) Burning gasoline and the effects of the bomb blast splintering the superstructure added to the general carnage. Damage Control parties (Airdales) were able to finally subdue the fires within twenty minutes, but not before suffering serious casualties. There were 42 men who died instantly at the site of the crash, and a further nine were listed as missing, while 132 were wounded to various degrees. In the meantime, the Lexington's gunners were able to shoot down another Zeke attempting to crash onto the U.S.S. Ticonderoga nearby. This Kamikaze did his worst, and we can be fairly certain (?) that he did not have a scintilla of remorse about it.

This dramatic silhouette shows the Lexington from the starboard side, abeam, just after the Kamikaze struck (on the other side). As one studies all the minute features of this picture one can be drawn into the things that are being played out topside on that flight deck. For instance, knowing that there were bogies in the area, what were those Airdales thinking as they prepared to launch those aircraft arrayed back aft? Did they think that their ship would be spared instead of one of the others in the task group? And why should they be spared? After all, they (their ship) were one of the major ones responsible for the death and destruction the Japanese were experiencing. As has been said before, the rallying cry on both sides was "GET THE CARRIERS!" And what were they doing right now, now that they were being called upon to confront a raging fire that was threatening to envelop "their very home"? And what of those other Zeros overhead, concealed in those dense clouds? Were they preparing to pounce? And of course there was always those ubiquitous enemy submarines lurking, ready to deliver the "coup de grace". Questions, always questions.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

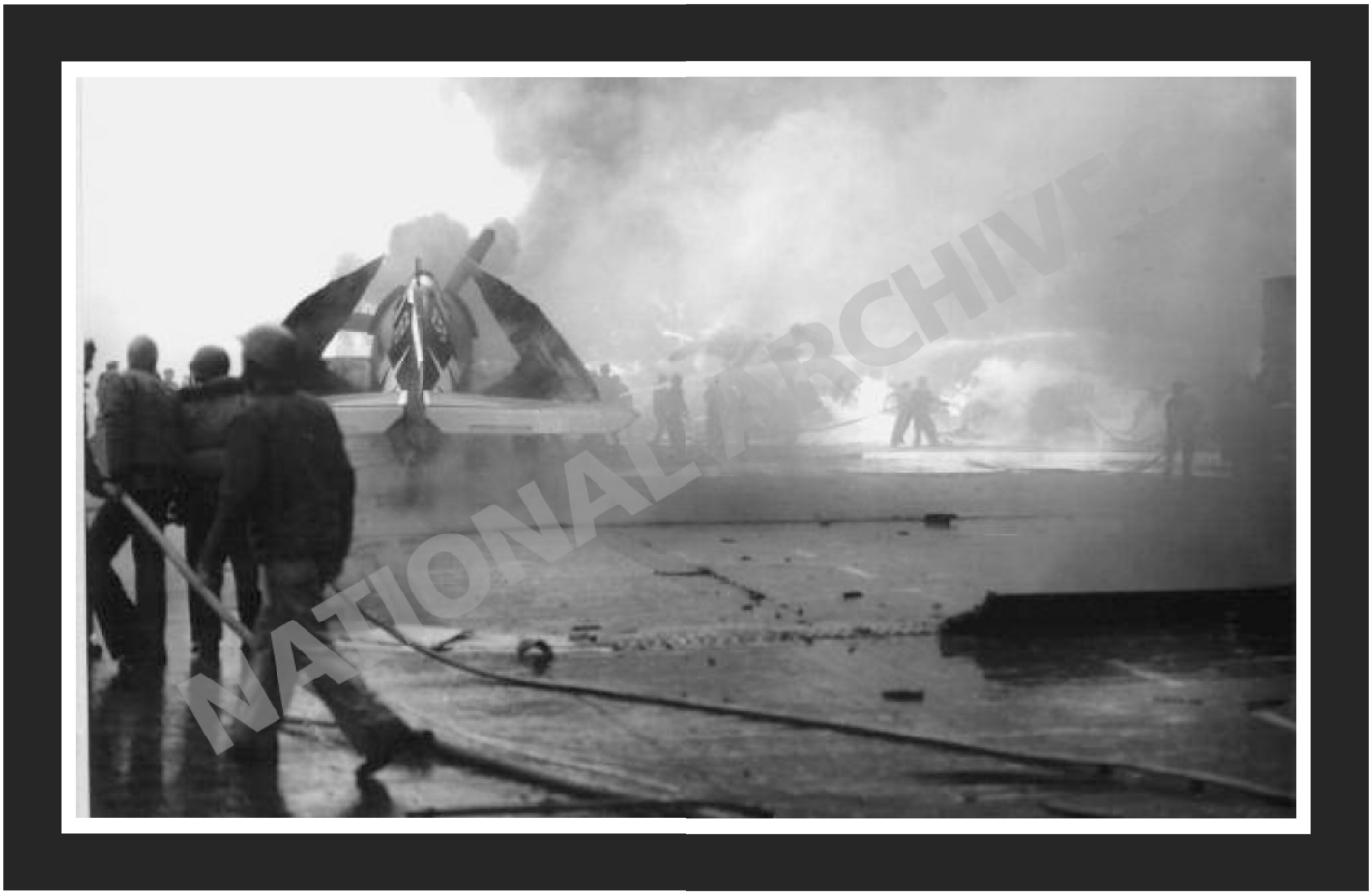
LEXINGTON II

(This is a well-framed picture in that the focus is set for that F6F Hellcat, with the Airdales to the left somewhat out of focus (thus being less dominant) and the activity to the right blurred by the fierceness of the fires. Upsetting though what this scene represents, it nevertheless has a certain soft, satiny quality to it that stands it in good stead.)

Before flight operations, and before we would go to the aircraft parked back aft, the Airdales would "hang out" by the island superstructure, "shooting the breeze" (WWII lingo for talking about "warrior-subjects"). This is where we would muster when the "Flight Quarters" was sounded (before we went to a wheelchock). This was home-base, this was our "hang out".

This is also that very same area that has now been cruelly and savagely ravaged, as described on the previous page. The area now is shrouded by smoke to mark the spot where that Kamikaze pilot chose to slam his Zeke, smashing everything in the area. That horizontal stream of water is being played directly onto the superstructure where there are now the remains of numerous Airdales and signalmen (who were on the Signal Bridge). One aches to contemplate that just a little while ago there were vibrant people there, just milling about, never imagining a few minutes earlier that these would be their last moments. True, this certainly is not unique, especially in a war-zone, but for those who survived, this was very disturbing: a trajectory of five degrees to the right or left and it would have been them who had been incinerated. Not a pretty thought. The Airdales to the left are attending to secondary fires, while those to the right are contending with the primary fires. The horizontal stream of water is clear enough, but what is not clear is whether they are also making use of foam. Since they are so close to that bright area, one could presume that it is foam, and not fire that we observe. Foam is very useful for gasoline fires because gasoline and oil float on water. (Who can forget those pictures taken at Pearl Harbor with men swimming in the water that seemed to be on fire.) Another technique that was used, especially with close-in fire-fighting, was a device attached to the hose-nozzle that then applied a wide-angle spray to the fire. Using this device, one could approach the fire close-up, suppressing it as one moved forward. Of course the important thing was to put volumes of water on the fire, and this in turn required the integrity of the equipment. A bomb-blast, in these close quarters, could damage the fire-fighting equipment, puncture hoses, and render pumps useless. Several hose outlets were located in the superstructure area at flight deck level, and those of course were unavailable here in this situation. Anything that imposed on the equipment that generated the water-pressure was certainly a huge detriment to the ship's fire-fighting capabilities. And there was no reserve equipment available.

This is a dismal scene, what with the figures seemingly engulfed in a place of chaos and carnage. It almost looks as if they themselves are soon to be consumed. This didn't happen, of course, and fortunately the main fires were controlled within about twenty minutes, according to the reports. This in turn made the flight deck ready for flight operations, which were in fact conducted. There were the CAP aircraft that had to be brought back and there were raids that were previously planned. It's strange how warfare seems to engender an urgency that apparently is never found at other times. Would that we could function in this way in times not so pressing.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LEXINGTON III

The fire at the base of the superstructure is now fairly well under control, much more so than it was in the previous picture. There seems to be a casualness in the air here, and just maybe the mood that prevails is one in which "we just missed the 'big one'" (although to those Airdales and signalmen who were lost, this WAS the "big one"). Different people certainly have different feelings where (when) one has just been spared the "big one". Those in this picture seem to be none the worse for wear after this calamity. (It is believed that "calamity" is a personal word, one usually referring to the one who has been overtaken by a grievous affliction, disaster, or misfortune. It implies that it is a self- centered occurrence, and so, since the Kamikaze's crash didn't adversely affect oneself directly, it is not for one to say it was a calamity. One doesn't usually say that YOU had a calamity. It's up to the person who's affected to assign the word "calamity". But since we are all "brothers under the skin", and especially "brothers in arms" on this ship, what happens to one in effect happens to all shipmates. It is similar to (on board a ship) that dictum of the "Three Musketeers" when they say "One for all, and all for one". So here we can use the word "calamity" when referring to this Kamikaze attack on our ship (because we were all targets). (A fine distinction perhaps, but precision in the use of words, and their meaning, will serve us well. And the writer is certainly not an authority, but rather only an encourager of thoughtfulness, both toward the use of words, and ultimately, toward relationships with others.).

Here it looks like the Airdales are going about the business of cleaning up the flight deck in preparation for flight operations. There's a war going on and we don't have much time to "lick our wounds". Hoses are still strewn about and there is probably debris to be picked up. When an aircraft runs down the flight deck during a launch operation, the air blast made by the propeller is so great that any debris on the deck could be kicked up and become small missiles that could pierce our unprotected bodies. That would just add to the original casualty list. (If it's not one thing, it's another.) In circumstances such as this, my own inclination (and nature) was to be a clean-up party of one. For reasons that are irrelevant here, my nature was to be a loner. However, let it be said, loud and clear, that I was always a team-player, and even while being a loner, I was definitely not a recluse. "Shooting the breeze" with most everyone was certainly not an effort. After all, it would seem obvious that one could work very well with others without at the same time feeling that it's necessary, or even useful, that everyone likes you. No, not at all. It's the common purpose that should be the motivator (presuming there is a common purpose). Incompatibleness is no excuse for keeping a distance and not working together. "Getting along with one another" should definitely not be a cliche. To the contrary, not to get along would seem to be the height of arrogance. (Separate from that, and as an aside, to be vigorously disliked (for reasons unknown), and even scorned and shunned, over the years by a friend who was held in high esteem, that is a cross to bear.)



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LEXINGTON IV

This picture shows very vividly the stark results of that Kamikaze attack discussed in the previous two pictures. We are looking at the superstructure below and to the right of the Navigation Bridge. To be precise, the middle of the picture is just slightly below where the Signal Bridge WAS. That light colored horizontal rectangle is the extension of the Flag Bridge, right below the Navigation Bridge. Continue this rectangle to the right to just above that Jeep to the right, and you will have defined the exact location of the former Signal Bridge. There were probably four or five signalmen there at the time, this being General Quarters. Probably those are some of the remains of the Zeke on the deck that have not been removed yet. Even though the rectangular "wall" is (was) made out of steel armor plate, it was no match for an aircraft slamming into it at over 300-mph. That armor plating is there to protect personnel from shrapnel and the like. Battle II (Bat II) is one level above the Signal Bridge and back aft to the far right, also "protected" by armor plating (Bat II is the secondary Navigation Bridge, to be used if and when the Navigation Bridge up forward is knocked out. Bat II was my General Quarters station when I was still in the Navigation Division.) The report available that discussed this incident mentioned that the Kamikaze also dropped a bomb before crashing into the Lexington. It said that the bomb hit Bat II, but this picture shows no such thing. Perhaps it was actually hit further up on the superstructure, out of view in this picture. But here, Bat II is definitely intact.

Imagine, if you will, seeing a large machine hurtling toward you at over 300-mph, propeller whirling furiously, and seemingly aimed DIRECTLY at you. Unless they were "heads up", the signalmen wouldn't have had time to get out of the way because egress from the bridge was not that easy. If you were a gunner, at least you felt like you were able to do something positive to protect yourself. But all those who were not gunners (including the Airdales) could only watch and hope and pray that someone got him before he got you. It was a gruesome contest, this pilot fighting to die as your compatriots were fighting to live. For the non-gunners, it must have been a completely hopeless feeling: are "your guys better than their guy"? But this was not an athletic contest; this was for keeps. Anyone who underwent similar experiences no doubt look upon some of the athletic fans (fanatics?) as not far above the level of fools. Enthusiasm is fine and good, but "to live and die" over a sports contest questions ones good sense (this from someone who is (was) fairly proficient at standard sports like football, basketball, baseball, tennis, and whatever else that does not threaten life and limb. Rock climbing is out, as are some other esoteric activities such as free-style skiing.) It's not my intention to finish this page on a rather flippant note, given the depth of the contents of this picture. People who wanted nothing so much as to survive this war were snuffed out in an instant after having seen what was to become of themselves mere moments before. And at the same time, those others on the ship who were not singled out on this day had to go on about their business of the day: some to clean up the effects of the crash, some to continue navigating the ship, some to man the guns, some to prepare for the next launch, some to man the lookouts, some to ..... As they say, life must go on, but with the smell and visual effects of what had just happened, it's something more than a simple distraction. There are other threats out there and they won't go away just to accommodate us, that's for sure. And that next launch is soon to take place and we have to get ready to launch aircraft and .....


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TICONDEROGA I

On January 21, 1945 the U.S.S. Ticonderoga had a bad day, a very bad day. But at the same time, it also had a good day that day. The bad part was that at 1205, while conducting air strikes over Formosa, the Ticonderoga was found by a Kamikaze and became a victim of that scourge. The Kamikaze came out of the sun and crashed onto the "Big T"'s flight deck alongside the Number Two 5-inch gun mount, causing the fire-ball as seen in this picture. As noted above, the good part was that the Kamikaze, for whatever reason, was a poor marksman in that he didn't smash his aircraft into that aggregation of aircraft back aft on the flight deck. These aircraft were in the process of launching a flight of strike aircraft. Since they were fully fueled and loaded with bombs, a hit here would have torched the entire area. That didn't happen; that was the good part of the day. The bad part of the day was that there were more than 100 casualties, killed or wounded. Since there was a launch operation in process at the time, most all of the Airdales were back aft amidst those aircraft which were revving up in preparation for the launch. Thus there were no Airdale casualties from the initial bomb-blast.

The captain ordered an immediate course change to keep the wind from spreading the fires and to keep the smoke out of the ventilation intakes. Some of the ship's compartments were flooded to give the ship a 10-degree list, allowing water and gasoline to drain over the side. After extinguishing the fires, the Airdales pushed the damaged aircraft over the side. Unfortunately, the rising smoke acted as a beacon to the enemy not 60 miles away on the island Formosa. At 1300, three additional Kamikazes were sighted and shot down. However, another one was able to break through the ship's defenses and crash into the island superstructure. Fortunately, he too was a bad marksman, unless of course he and/or his aircraft had been struck by anti-aircraft fire before he reached the ship. Within hours the fires were extinguished, the ship was righted, the compartments were pumped out, and the Ticonderoga was able to make its way back to Ulithi Island and comparative sanctuary.

When one contemplates this picture, one is duly impressed by the large fire-ball and smoke. But is one also fully aware of all those men in that area who are now no longer even recognizable? They were going about there business in almost complete indifference to everything except their own specific jobs, with no inkling of what was about to happen. Then in a flash, all was oblivion. Perhaps you also notice the water next to the ship being "kicked up". This is very likely due to the debris that was once whole, and is now making slashes as the pieces fall into the water. It should be remembered, also, that the Kamikazes carried a sizeable bomb whenever they sortied out from their base. Thus, when the aircraft hit the ship, there was the combination of a bomb-blast destruction along with the immense fire-ball due to the gasoline igniting. The flight deck was thus one big conflagration, as is seen in this picture. (Consider the size of the ship when considering the size of the conflagration to understand the enormity of this violent upheaval.) How can a neophyte of an author in any way adequately describe what happened here? And is it necessary to even try? No, I think not.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TICONDEROGA II

On the previous page, having just disqualified myself, I will nevertheless forge ahead to the end of this chapter. Here we observe the harrowing sight of that fire, up close and personal. What can be said of such an ugly view except to say that this is Hell-fire at close range, and that there were those who had to confront such a situation up close and personal (hopefully not to be consumed by it in the process). As large as the flight deck is, keep in mind that it has definite, finite parameters. That's to say, it is bounded on all four sides by a 50-foot drop to the sea below. Probably it would be better not to survive such a fall to the sea below than to have to submit to that slow demise in an unforgiving sea. (No doubt there will be dissenters, and I certainly won't argue the point.) These are things that are not usually considered by those who look at this picture, but they certainly are thoughts conjured up by an Airdale who is "still wet behind the ears". Another thing not usually considered when looking at pictures such as these is the fact that the fire-fighting equipment is sparse and far between. That is to say, there certainly is not an array of equipment "aligned neatly on the wall ready for use". And even the equipment that is available could well have been destroyed or made useless by the initial and ensuing blasts and fires. Improvisation could likely be the key to survival in these situations and leadership, as has been mentioned before, would of course be of paramount importance to the salutary conclusion of such a life-threatening event.

That's a very deadly looking fire, that's a very ominous looking fire, and out there in the wide expanse of ocean, there are no additional "fire stations" available to lend aid. "Mayday" (m'aide) signals won't help either, and neither will the funeral pyre that only serves to attract an enemy thirsting to finish the job (along with the stealthy submarines that are attracted to the area like predators of the deep that they are). It's a hostile environment out there, and there's no place to hide. And once found, there's no way to outrun those who would do you harm. You can only turn and fight because "fight or flight" is in no way an option. So you defend yourself as best you can to determine whether you will be bloodied or not, or whether you will even survive. But then, this was "The Fleet That Came To Stay", as was so eloquently said in the video series "Victory at Sea". The stirring theme music of Richard Rodgers for this series is just about perfect to set the mood for the life of those committed men of the U.S. Navy during 1945. Would that we could have some of that spirit rub off onto the generations that have followed. But then, this has been done, according to the sages, and that is good. That is very good.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

TICONDEROGA III

In my view, the photographer of this picture created an attractive study, even given the fact that the subject-matter is downright damnable. But here again, the bright brights along with the dark darks ameliorated by the "smooth" variations of the grays, makes for a dramatic tableau. At the same time, there's enough detail to generate interest in the picture without also distracting.

But to the business at hand. The men of the Ticonderoga (the Airdales) appear to have the fires pretty much under control now and seem to be methodically dousing the various fires. While they are doing that, we notice that the deck seems to be smooth, much like steel. This is not the case. All Essex-class carriers had wooden decks made out of planking 2 3/4 inches thick. The joints, and where the planks abutted each other, were caulked with a tar-like substance. This combination of wood planking and tar-products in the deck would contribute to and sustain any fire on the deck. The bomb would blow the aircraft apart, thus spilling high-octane gasoline all over the flight deck. This gasoline would of course ignite, which in turn would burn the wood and tar-products in the deck. All of this combustible material would in turn consume the aluminum of the aircraft and leave only the engine as remains. With such intense heat generated, the hose-men are seen to be somewhat removed from the fires. Whatever was left of the aircraft had to be jettisoned as quickly as possible to clear the deck for oncoming flight operations (if possible). It was of course the Airdales who did this job. Because the ship was only a temporary home for a squadron of aircraft, after an episode as is seen here, the squadron is released from the ship. A new squadron is then assigned to the ship. This new squadron could have likely been one that had been training on the U.S.S. Antietam.

Thus it was that the Antietam would "supply" a new squadron to the Ticonderoga, should it be rehabilitated soon enough. That was the Antietam's function in the larger scheme of things. However, one day early in August 1945, we were told that we were no longer going to be a training ship because we were assigned to go join a Task Group on station off the coast of Japan. Presumably, one too many carriers had been damaged severely enough that replacements were required. We actually sent a bombing raid against an island en route to the coast of Japan. But the Gods of War decreed that Peace was at hand, and thus we never did engage with the enemy. Instead, we reverted back to being a training ship while also patrolling the coast of China and Korea in peace-keeping duties. I suppose this was something for which we should have been thankful (and we certainly were). And yet, and yet at the same time, there was a peculiar feeling of not having been a part of achieving this hard-fought victory. "We didn't do our part". At the same time, there were no doubt those who were perfectly content with their "inaction". I guess it was mixed emotions. However, that we were "soon" to go home was certainly the predominant feeling, even though one couldn't help being glad to have been a part of this carrier, the activity of this carrier, the colossal enterprise of this carrier. And this carrier remained on duty off the coast of China until at least until the month of May 1946 when the author was FINALLY sent home. (Those who served the longest, went home the soonest. Fair is fair, but hard is hard, even while counting one's blessings.).



BUNKER HILL

It was May 11, 1945 and the U.S.S. Bunker Hill was steaming 76 miles east of Okinawa on an overcast day. At 1012 of that morning, 25 of her aircraft were flying strikes over Okinawa, while 30 aircraft were revving up on the flight deck in preparation for an imminent launch, and 48 aircraft were on the hanger deck being fueled and armed with bombs. Then, similar to the fate experienced by the U.S.S. Franklin, a Zeke (Zero) aircraft emerged from low cloud cover on the Bunker Hill's starboard beam and streaked toward her. The Zeke dropped a 500-pound bomb onto the aft flight deck aft of the Number Three elevator, and then itself crashed into those 30 aircraft warming up on the flight deck. Fire erupted instantly. The bomb had penetrated the wooden flight deck, exploding on the gallery deck one level below. Very shortly thereafter, a second Zeke attacked the Bunker Hill in a vertical dive, crashing itself on the deck near the island superstructure. Fires quickly spread in the gallery deck compartments and passageways, as well as in the island superstructure. These two Kamikazes turned the Bunker Hill into a blazing inferno. The cruiser U.S.S. Wilkes Barre trained hoses onto the fires, but not to much effect (in the picture, the cruiser is approaching the Bunker Hill but has yet to render effective aid). This day the Bunker Hill sustained losses of 347 killed, 43 missing, and 246 wounded in various degrees. Notice the number of men missing. These could have been completely consumed by the bomb-blast and/or intense fires, or some of these could have taken their chances by going over the side, never to be heard from again. (Water isn't as hard as the ground, but from fifty feet in the air, it's HARD.) Those pilots whose aircraft were on the hanger deck at this time were therefore in the Ready-room on the gallery deck near the point of the bomb-blast. They were part of the 347 men killed.

For comparison purposes, be aware that the Bunker Hill is 300 yards long. A little more than half of that is engulfed in a thick smoke that cuts visibility to near zero. How does one fight a fire in such rank conditions? How does one not choke on the overwhelming and noxious fumes, to near exhaustion? How does one who is there even imagine what is happening on the flight deck and gallery deck? How does one keep his wits about him amid that plague of smoke? How does one know what to do in this self-contained Armageddon, where life and limb is in the balance for those among the living? If an Airdale survived this apocalyptic eruption, it would have been a miracle. (Let the readers apply their own lurid prose to somehow get their arms around this picture of suffering and death.) But there are about only 45 blue-shirt Airdales on board originally. This means that most of the casualties were found among the brown-shirts, the red-shirts, the green-shirts, the yellow shirts, the gunners on the catwalks, the marine gunners, the officers, and who knows who else?

This picture certainly elicits our deep-felt feeling concerning the plight of the personnel on board the U.S.S. Bunker Hill. It's almost beyond imagining. And yet, there it is, in all its ugliness. It seems to just about consume most of the ship. However, it was able to survive and return home to the states. But its war was over, and so was everyone else's the following August, VJ Day. (Before closing this page, a word about the picture in spite of the gruesomeness implied by this view: that is that the photographer caught a moment in time that was stunning. Not just the contents but also the excellence of the silhouettes: far though we are, we are drawn in by them.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

METAPHOR FOR WAR

This depressingly dismal scene is nothing so much as it is a metaphor for war. It was included as a fitting conclusion to this chapter that tried to capture the essence of war at sea. This picture seems to suitably conjure the poignant feelings of complete isolation when in mortal distress on the open ocean. It's not to be diminished, but augmented, that we notice Mt. Suribachi dimly in the background. (Mt. Suribachi, that spot on which the marines famously raised the American flag.) This scene reflects the reality of warfare at sea in a very pungent way. In a larger sense, this tableau, this striking scene, is the exact opposite of that which seems to permeate the contemporary times. There is nothing in this picture that in any way implies the sense of deception, the sense of guile, the sense of deviousness. There is no dissembling here, no trickery here, no intellectual legerdemain here. Rather, this picture is a straight-up representation of mortal combat, the ultimate reality.(Notice that the variations of the grays all contribute to the morose mood portrayed here, and to that ultimate reality.)

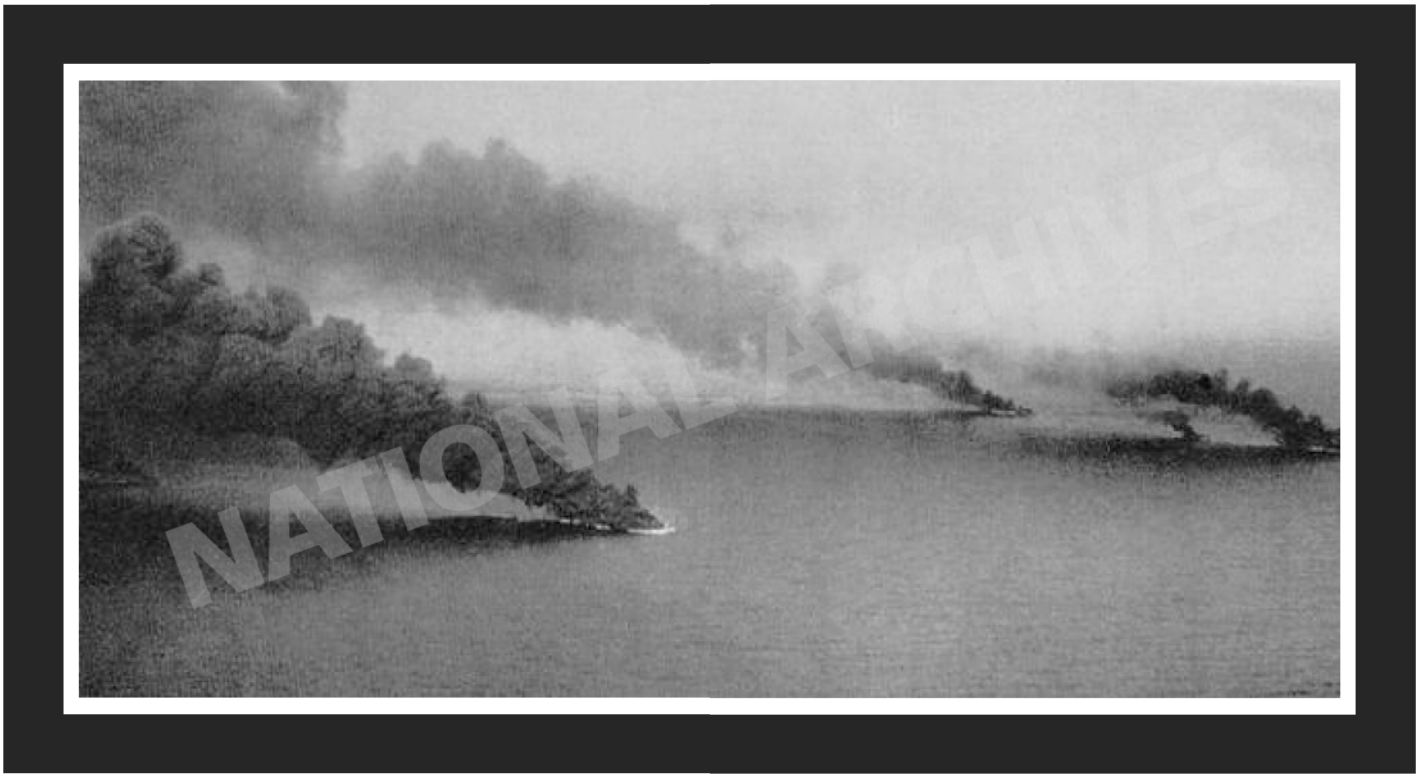
But this picture is more than a representation of the locations of the dead and dying. There, at the source of those infamous plumes, are the specific casualties that resulted from those ignominious, odious Kamikazes. Every day, we on the Antietam would read about those casualties in our daily bulletin, the "Go Get 'Em Antietam" Gazette. It would list, every day, the number of men wounded, the number of men killed, the number of ships damaged, the number of ships sunk, the number of aircraft lost, the number of Kamikazes taken under fire, the number of enemy ships damaged and sunk. And for good measure, it would itemize the extent of the damage that our ships had suffered. Sad to say, one would become somewhat inured by these daily statistics, but not so much so as to feel absolved from their possible future implications to ourselves. But as has been said, we (the Antietam) were never subjected to this (and possible death), and for that we were forever grateful, as would be our children yet to come.


NATIONAL ARCHIVES

MT. OLYMPUS

And finally, here one shares the view with the Gods from Mt. Olympus as they look down on what fools we mortals be. Had we also their preternatural powers of observation, were we able to read the minds of others as do the Gods, perhaps then we could understand why there are those who undertake the acts of aggression that can only lead to war, which in turn allows such occurrences, as here, to happen. Because a handful of evil men are so driven to seek dominion over others, so too are innocent men under duress and forced into mortal conflict to counter them. (As disquieting and unpleasant and even vile as the phenomenon of preternaturalism is, it seems that it would certainly be useful in controlling the predators of the world.) And it would seem that while the Gods of War can only be assuaged by conditions of conflict, it would also seem that the Gods of Peace could counter this by the eradication of those conditions that favor that conflict. But this requires human understanding, seemingly a rare commodity. (Now we swim in murky waters, so we will move on.)

If ever there was a forlorn and mournful scene, this is it. What could be sadder than those benighted ships, isolated and alone on a hostile sea, with those nearby who would wish them only harm? One feels small and belittled on the vastness of the ocean, one feels alone with assistance clearly remote. And yes, there's a certain finality to this scene, with the strife over, and the end close at hand. Those plumes of smoke have now become markers just as surely as are the tombstones in the church yard. The stark melancholy of the scene and the grimness of those "clouds of war" that darken the sky surely causes one to pause. All is somber, all is gloomy. But then, and yet, that wide expansive ocean all around us is the carriers' domain, where she is able to roam at will in search of those who would do her harm. The carriers, yes they are vulnerable, but that is why they were made: to search out and destroy those who would do us ill, those who would seek the ruination of our nation, those who would try to take away our "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". So in conclusion, let this book be a rousing tribute to that most stalwart of all breeds, the gallant, the magnificent, the Essex-class aircraft carrier!



EPILOGUE

At the conclusion of writing this book I quipped to my wife, with a chuckle, that never has so much been written about so little ("A Day....") with so small an effect. While it's true that probably only that small cadre of Essex-class carrier Airdales will be interested in these two books, it's also true that without these books that same small band of intrepid youths verging on nascent manhood would pass and be forgotten, unlike those scores of warrior-soldiers and marines and airmen vested with admiration by the multitudes down through the ages. After all, those Airdales were a relatively very small group on the scene for a very short period of time,never to be seen or heard of again. These two books, alone of ALL books, seek to provide the Airdales with just a very, very small place in the sun so as not to go into the dust-bin of history, not even an obscure footnote to the most detailed accounting of who did what in that great conflagration that was WWII. It could be said, without much danger of contradiction, that besides being at the bottom of the totem-pole on board ship, the Airdale is also a complete nonentity to the general public. So why shouldn't they be forgotten? Though their job was simpleminded, as has been said, it was NOT simple. This should not of itself lay claim to remembering the Airdale; rather, their place was a necessary part in contributing to the optimum operation of the daily, arduous and important flight operations under frequently adverse and dangerous conditions. But this is no place to compare "my duties" against "your duties" for most everyone contributed to the vicissitudes of the war effort, and we'll leave it at that.

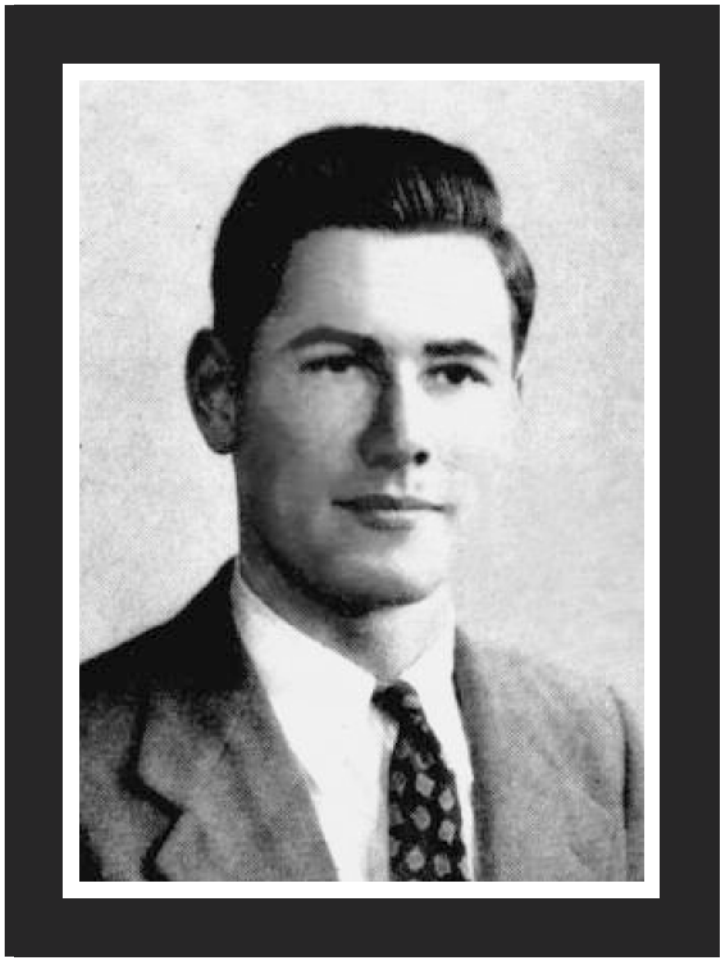
Since no one else was involved in the generation of these two books, all errors are my responsibility. For instance, I think on retrospect that I once said that the Battle of Midway was begun on June 6 instead of June 4. (I believe that the D-Day invasion of Europe (June 6) recognition was in progress at the time I wrote that and thus my inadvertent mistake. That Battle of Midway having been the acknowledged turning point of the war in the Pacific, how could I mistake June 4 with that event?). Needless to say, every effort was made to be completely accurate and honest about everything found in these two books. If it were not so, rest assured that they would not be printed. While I alone must take the criticism for any mistakes or typos, I can not let this go without saying that these two books would not have been possible without the many others obliquely involved: the outstanding Navy photographers who created the exceptional photographs, the archivists who made available the thousands and thousands of these photographs of all the myriad of subjects (unfortunately the carrier photographs were mixed in with all the others in random fashion), the engineers and technicians who designed and developed the laptop computers and scanners and printers, the software programmers who designed and developed the operating systems and the software to allow the digital enhancement of the photographs, and finally the printers who produced the books.

These three photos of the U.S.S. Antietam were given to us as we lay at anchor in Tokyo Bay on Christmas 1945. This ship was my home from January 1945 to May 1946, from which I spent only two weekends at home in January 1945. This alone makes that ship something far more significant than an artifact of steel as I traveled the high seas from here to there doing things I would not have ordinarily chosen to do. On viewing the larger picture of the Antietam, it occurs to me that at the time I received these three pictures I took no special note of the remarkable juxtaposition of the beautiful Mt. Fujiyama overlooking the majestic man-of-war with its 100 aircraft that were made to deal death and destruction: one could well say it is the sacred looking down on the profane. And so this is a good way of ending this "day's endeavors" by being given another one: life is sacred while that of (violent) death is profane.


U.S.S. ANTIETAM (CV-36) CHRISTMAS 1945

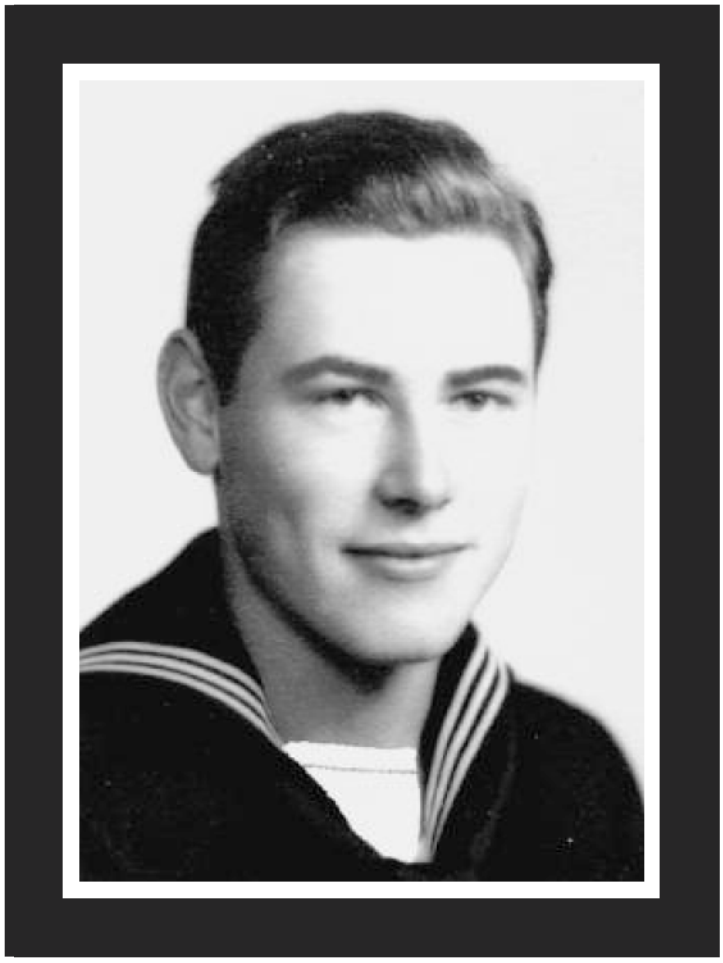
1944

The author attended Newark Academy in September 1939, the start of WWII, and he graduated from Newark Academy in June 1944, the start of the invasion of Europe. These were five years of international tumult of a scale unknown to mankind, and were amply chronicled in newspapers, magazines, and newsreels. Besides college preparatory courses, the author participated in varsity football, basketball, and elsewhere in baseball and tennis and swimming activities. He was a member of the student council, and by the time he was a Freshman at Newark Academy, he had earned the Eagle Scout Badge with Bronze Palm (having had the advantage of having gone to a scout-oriented summer camp since he was seven years old).



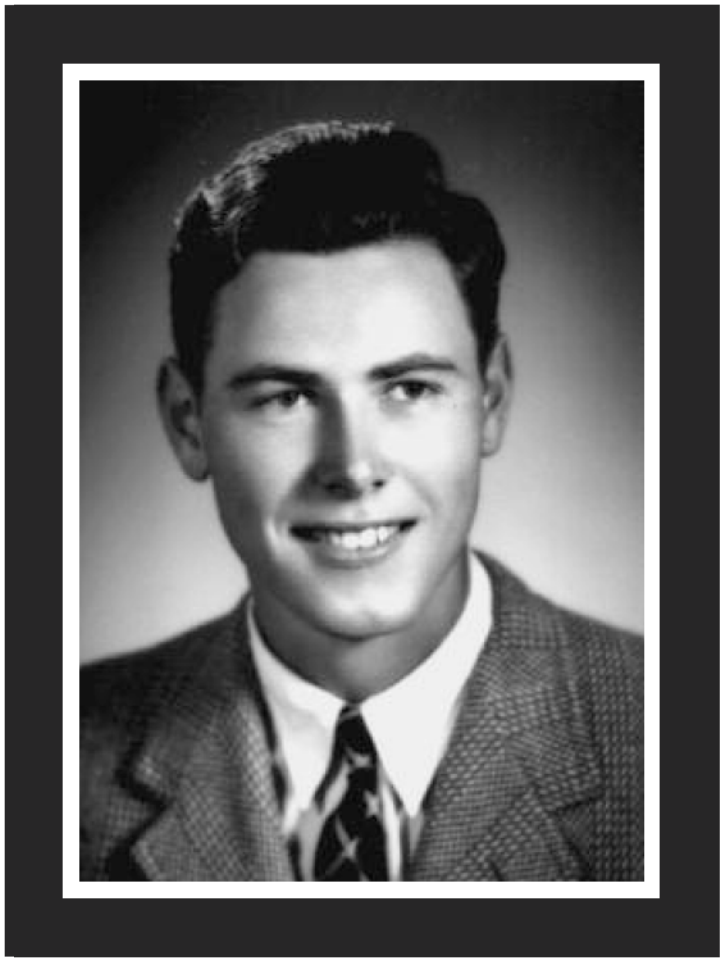
1945

Just out of boot camp and still "wet behind the ears". And just ahead would be the Receiving Station at Newport, RI, where I, the author, was assigned to the Quartermaster (Navigation) Division of the U.S.S. Antietam, nearing completion at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. The prospect of being on the bridge of a large carrier was exciting, and for about a month's duration, I did stand watch there and spent some time at the helm (steering such a ship was definitely a memorable experience, and with nary a blush, "I did so without a hitch".) So, how explain the subsequent transfer to the flight deck? "Pick a number". (I've made every effort to be as honest and precise as possible, about both the events and my thoughts throughout this book).



1946

The author in the 1946 Yale Freshman Yearbook, two years after my enlistment in the U.S. Navy (from fledgling to "old salt" in two short years. Wiser, if not smarter.) This somewhat melancholy picture captures well my state of mind upon returning home to learn the fate that was to be mine, so well described in the song "What Now My Love?" That which was feared the most had happened. It took two years to find it out, and then a new journey was mandated. Foolish now, but devastating then. The war, having been over since August 1945, had completely subsided in the consciousness of the civilian population by the time I returned home in May 1946. The attitude I received was "Well where have you been?" as if I had been playing hooky. This was a very difficult time and I can only apologize to one and all for my constantly somber mood then, then when my only recourse should have been found in the WWI song "Smile". But I was derelict in my conduct, shamefully so. I can only say, "I'm sorry".



1996

Newark Academy, 1939-1944

U.S. Navy—U.S.S. Antietam, 1944-1946

Yale University, 1946-1950
(B.S. Business Administration)

New York City banks, 1950-1952

Electronics companies, 1952-1959

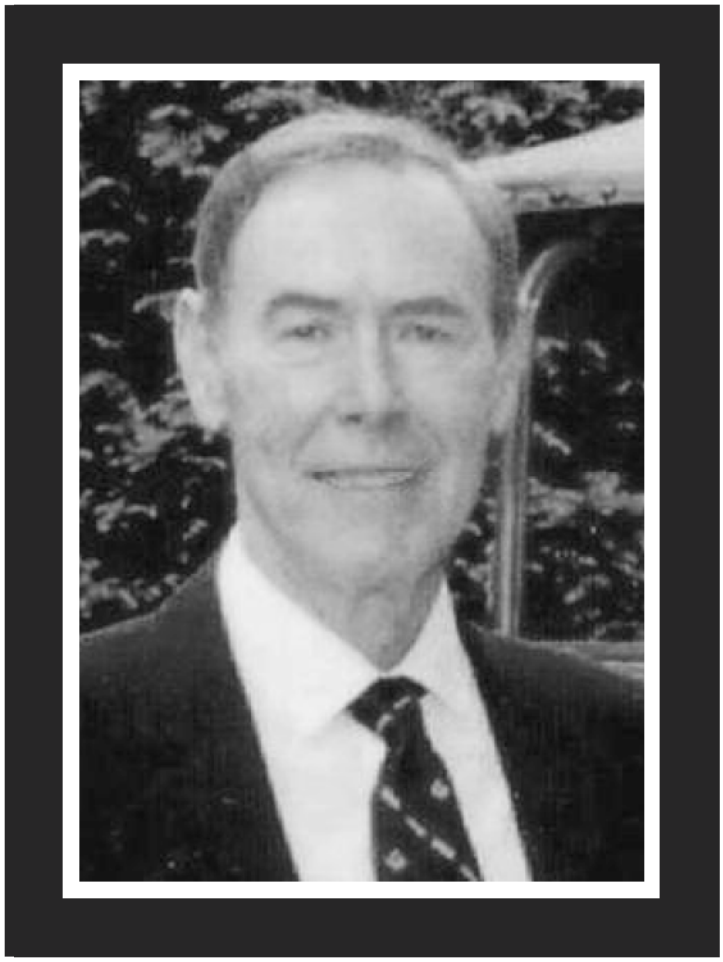
Fairleigh Dickinson Un., 1959-1961
(B.S. Electrical Engineering)

Western Electric Co., 1961-1962
(Bell Labs)

Vitro Labs, 1962-1964
(Management Engineering)

Navy Department, 1964-1991
(Management Engineering)

Retired, 1991 (1st book incorrectly stated "1989" instead of "1991".



"TRULY I SAY UNTO YOU"

To the point, on the one hand jealously promotes the envy that causes naught but corrosion and destruction while on the other hand jealousy can generate that happy state of admiration where one seeks to emulate that which the other is. There, we have just described that eminently elusive condition called "love" (as succinctly described by the song "You Are The Wind Beneath My Wings"). If this desire to emulate takes on a romantic aspect one seeks to consummate that desire directly. But all is not well as yet. The crown of the concept of love is to be found in the book of faith found in the Bible, to wit, "1 Corinthians 13":

"If I speak in the tongues of man and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I have to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Such then view that which is timeless, that which shall remain the salt of the earth, they who shall inherit the ages.

This book has taken a fair amount of time since it was completely a one-man effort. The pictures were chosen from literally thousands of photographs as taken by U.S. Navy photographers. It was a huge job to pick out the ones that would be right for this book, given a certain balance that I thought would best portray "a day in the life of an Airdale" on the flight deck. Being a novice at this sort of thing, there are no doubt flaws in the final product. But it's really the pictures that tell the story, and I'll rest on that.