



NAVAL AVIATION AT WAR

NAVAL and Marine Corps aviation is playing a big part in helping the ground troops win their war against North Korean Communists. NAVAL AVIATION NEWS cannot give a blow-by-blow word picture of the fighting, but it can present behind-the-scenes sidelights of the aerial combat, gleaned from communiques, news correspondents' stories and squadron newsletters, with latest news photos.

Helicopters are making more aviator friends every day in Korean waters. Ens. James Brogan, a *Corsair* pilot, had to ditch after take-off in the Inchon close air support operation when his engine quit. His external gas tank exploded on hitting the water. The plane guard helicopter piloted by Lt. C. D.

Haines had him out of the water in three minutes.

Helicopter pilot Lt. Gustave F. Lueddeke has picked three pilots out of the Pacific in recent weeks. First pilot to be saved was Capt. Vivian M. Moses, whose *Corsair* was hit by enemy ground fire and had to ditch in the water.

His second "save" was 2nd Lt. Doyle H. Cole who ditched when enemy AA knocked out his oil system. After being pulled into the hovering helicopter, Cole slapped a helpful "sergeant" on the back, saying, "Thanks, Mac," only to discover that it was BGen. Edward A. Craig, commanding general of the First Marine Brigade, who had hauled him in.

Third member of the "Lueddeke fan club" is Capt. James K. Johnson, picked up by the helicopter 15 minutes after his engine failed soon after takeoff from an aircraft carrier 70 miles at sea.

Another instance of nery flying by a helicopter pilot was reported from the land front. A *Corsair* was shot down south of Pyongyang and the pilot, Ens. C. E. Dorris, made a belly-landing. He was rescued by a Marine helicopter that zipped (for a helicopter, it's fast) in at 85 mph at low altitude, landed in enemy terrain and picked up the pilot, who was in good condition. The pinwheel pilot was Lt. William B. Evans.

Canyon Capers

Throwing bombs into caves at the end of a box canyon and then zooming up over a cliff at the canyon's end was the type of precision close air support work done by Marine fliers of the *Black-sheep* squadron.

The original target assigned the fliers was a large band of enemy troops hiding in rows of trees near the canyon. When the four Marine fliers began strafing and rocketing these trees, the enemy troops ran into the canyon and entered semi-concealed caves at the canyon's end.

Strike leader, Maj. Kenneth Ruesser saw the Communists disappearing in the caves. He asked permission from the ground control officer to fly down into the canyon and drop napalm into the caves.

Permission was granted and Maj. Ruesser and Capt. Charles Graber went into the canyon. Their planes were so low the napalm bomb would not explode on hitting the ground, so Ruesser dropped his bomb and Graber ignited it by strafing. Then Lt. George Dodenhoff made a perfect drop, followed by Lt. William Andy Androsko.

Later, Marine ground troops reported another entire enemy concentration in the caves near the town of Chidoyon was wiped out by close support aircraft using napalm.

Like Watermelon Stealing

Pilots flying jet fighters and attack planes can't say too much in praise of their equipment. LCdr. Dave Pollock's *Pollock's Panthers* were having a turkey shoot on a double-header train until it blew up in their faces.

They all got back to the ship all right, but the hard-working metalsmiths stayed up most of the night patching planes.

Some Fancy Shooting

Jet *Panthers* sweeping the Korean country side under leadership of Cdr. Harvey P. Lanham searching for targets around Inchon, climaxed a day by exploding a locomotive in a tunnel near Hwangju. Jets scouted neighboring airfields in a 150-mile radius for possible enemy opposition while *Corsairs* and *Skyraiders* plastered the Reds.

ACI OFFICER Baker, left, gets battle reports from Hamill, Crist, Dittmar, Casey and Thomson after Task Force 77 air strike



LOADING 5" HVAR rockets on a *Corsair* preparing for Korean strike are R. V. White, aviation ordnanceman, airman, and K. K. Lannin, airman; Navy pilots used rockets to clear out tunnels



CAPT. JOHN A. THACH discusses carrier close air support tactics on the bridge of a carrier with Lt. R. B. Heilman and Major R. P. Keller, Marine fighter pilots flying from her deck





SKYRAIDERS ARE carrying a full load of bombs to smash Red Korean positions; here W. R. Brundette, G. E. Spangler and Jon W. Ramsey inspect fuses of a wingload of lethal missiles

Legalized Flat-hatters

Just about the only pilots in the Navy who can flat-hat legally might be the dive bomber boys in attack squadrons like VA-55 in Korea. With 12 rockets and two 1000-pound bombs, their AD-4's are the load carriers of the war, operating from a flattop close off the Korean coast.

They have the real lowdown on progress of the war by virtue of their flat-hatting since a recent Op Order stated, "Window peeking is hereby authorized."

Under skipper LCdr. Doug Hodson, the "chief peeker" is Lt. Bud Gallagher, who makes a point of checking the contents of warehouses before blasting them off the landscape. For successful blasting, Gallagher and his squadron mates, Lt. (jg) Bill Jackson, Ens. Jim Pavelle, Atomic Aldrich, Mac McClain, Bubbles O'Connell, Jerry Covington and Buddy Hughes were awarded Air Medals by VAdm. A. D. Struble.

Although many of their closest friends

are jet jockeys, they won't stand still for any business of "selling props down the river." Aldridge was "propping down" a Korean railroad track one day when he noticed two trees moving closer together. Just for luck, he gave one of them a short burst. One handcar with eight Red soldiers embarked was scratched.

On another occasion, McClain caught a truckload of Commies on the road. Sensing trouble, the "liberators" took to the ditch. Unfortunately for them, Mac's aim was bad. He completely missed the truck—but hit the ditch.

Eager Beaver

One VF-111 pilot over Korea got so interested in seeing where his rockets hit that he forgot something. He flew along behind them, arriving at the impact area about the same time as the rockets. The aircraft was a Grumman factory overhaul job; an O&R could not have decided where to begin, when he

landed aboard.

However, there were many parts intact which were cannibalized and put to good use on other F9F repair jobs, and the skipper, LCdr. W. T. Amen, was able to quit tearing his already-thinning hair.

Short Tempers

Marine artillery spotters flying over battlefields in their little observation planes often get pretty mad without any armament, with enemy Koreans peppering at them from the ground.

Not a man to take this lying down is Capt. Francis A. McCaleb. He started carrying hand grenades along with him to toss at Reds when they get too active in shooting at him. He found his dive-bombing tactics were effective against small groups of enemy forces.

The idea of carrying weapons in unarmed planes is not new. Marines during World War II tried tossing out hand grenades and later on tied bazookas to the *Grasshoppers'* wing struts to blast ground targets.

Caveman Tactics

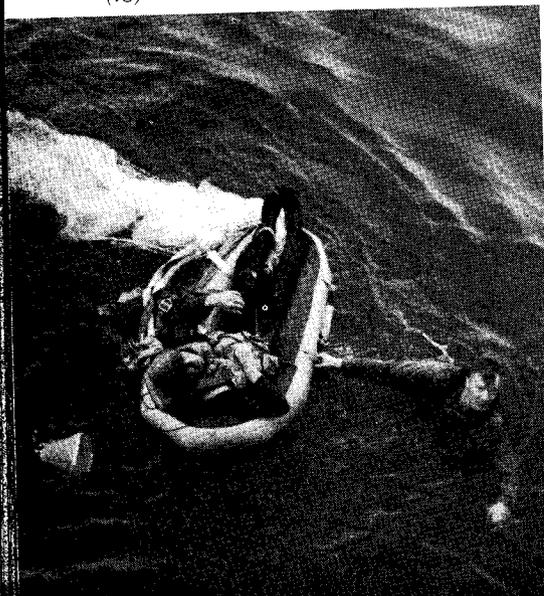
Aircraft machinist mates aboard the *Valley Forge* were perturbed and as Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate Staley K. Perich said, "The Korea war is getting on a personal basis".

Another mechanic with his face covered with grease, remarked that they expected to repair an occasional shrapnel hole in a wing or a bullet hole in a fuselage—that is war—but when North Koreans throw a rock into the intake duct of a jet aircraft, that is unethical.

But as Lt. Wayne R. Cheal will tell you, that is apparently what happened to him for as he strafed a truck convoy at "steering wheel level", he felt the object hit the plane. He was amazed to learn on landing that it was a rock, not a bullet which damaged his F9F *Panther*.

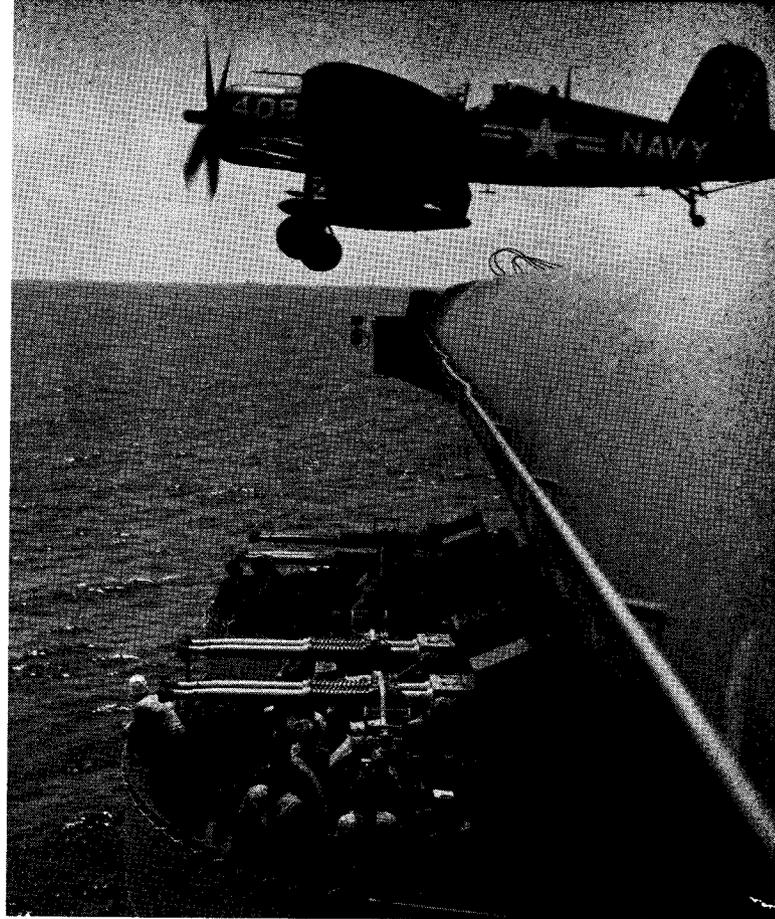
SHOT DOWN two miles off North Korean coast port of Wonsan, Lt. (jg) Nathan E. Curry was badly burned before he parachuted down

to safety. William A. Vogel of rescue destroyer tows him toward ship where others help pull him out. Korean plane was chased off





PANTHER JET gets belt of 20 mm ammunition loaded by Leonard H. Dalton and Gene A. Russan aboard a Task Force 77 carrier



SIGNAL CORPS photographer aboard a Navy carrier caught an F4U catapulted from carrier to support ground troops with rockets

Teeter Totter

One of the serious drawbacks about using carrier jets off Korea has been light surface winds encountered in the area. Catapults can put out only so much boost, and flights often had to be cancelled. One jet squadron was able to fly only 60% of its scheduled hops.

Marginal conditions under which they were launched also influence the loading, and there were few flights on which it was possible to carry rockets. Between VF-111 and VF-112, jet squadrons aboard one carrier, there were three instances of catapult bridles breaking at the start of a shot.

In each case the pilot stopped the F9F before it went over the bow—but in one case not before the nose wheel slid over the ramp.

Luck, All Bad

Who wouldn't be bitter about his changing luck, if it was like that of Lt. Marion R. Gallagher, a *Skyraider* pilot. One day he was dunked in the Yellow sea when the motor of a helicopter in which he was riding failed. The next day he brought his *Skyraider* back with 14 bullet holes in it and had to sit out the next day's strike.

Operations demanding the utmost speed found Gallagher's plane boxed in on the flight deck by grounded aircraft.

By the time he was cleared for takeoff, the operations officer of the carrier ordered his plane to stay aboard rather than delay the flight.

Packhorse of Fleet

Another first was set by the Douglas *Skyraider* in the Korean war when three of them flew from a carrier against Seoul with three 2,000-pound bombs plus a full load of 20 mm cannon ammunition. It was the first time the workhorse plane had been launched with three blockbusters.

After dropping their bombs, the three AD's piloted by LCdr. Winston Chick, Lt. (jg) Robert N. Krause and Ens. William C. Bailey strafed their target at speeds better than 350 knots, which is somewhat faster than the old TBM *Turkeys* used by Navy pilots in World War II would go.

Line Up For Medals

Thirty-four pilots and aircrewmembers from Fast Carrier Task Force 77 in Korean waters were lined up on the deck before their carrier left port. They were to receive awards from VAdm. A. D. Struble, Commander 7th Fleet.

Most of the ensigns were proud as punch but one supergrade lieutenant receiving his 16th Air Medal since 1943 was heard to remark, "I thought this was the Navy Cross line!"

Plenty of Targets

Marine fighter bombers out hunting Communist artillery and vehicles northeast of Inchon found such good shooting it did not know which to attack first. Capt. Warren Nichols reported when it was over the *Corsairs* had destroyed five heavy artillery pieces and damaged 93 trucks. T/Sgt. Leo Ihlt got six trucks with one napalm bomb.

LCol. Walter Lisheid's napalm bomb failed to ignite so Capt. Howard Finn set it off by strafing after he had dropped his own on a Red gun emplacement which was proving bothersome.

Planes Level an Island

Rearranging the contours of strategic Wolmi island, studded with Korean Red gun emplacements before the Inchon invasion, was a task assigned Navy carrier pilots.

Skyriders and *Corsairs* plastered the green island until it resembled a pile of dirt, using 1,000-pound bombs, anti-personnel bombs and rockets. Reported Lt. (jg) Edward H. Albright, a *Corsair* pilot: "There was a green grassy slope on the island yesterday. When I went back today every bit of grass was gone and only a few trees remained." Another pilot said he thought the island would "roll over and sink" from the steel load.



RESCUE HELICOPTER with stretcher case on side comes down to pick up wounded Marine



RAILROAD marshalling yard at Sunchon is plastered by 7th Fleet's carrier planes



BEACH SIGN, "Blue Waves," frames carrier Leyte, DD Buckley on Mediterranean duty

Tender Transports Troops

Not so exciting as the tales from the Korean war zone is the one related by the tender *Salisbury Sound*. At the last minute before leaving Pearl Harbor for the Orient, 113 Army men were shoved aboard, plus more cargo, which swelled her passenger load to more than 1200 persons.

The ship estimated it could pack in 700 without strain on food or water. It could carry 1800 by using the "hot bunk" routine and rationing the water, as long as the food held out.

On the way back to Guam all guns were test fired, and gun crews wished for a tow sleeve to sharpen up gunnery on. They were given recognition training with emphasis on planes likely to be found in the forward area. A shortage of films and other recognition material hampered the training program.

PHOTO LAB workers, Basil Hamlin and James Riddle, load aerial camera aboard an F4U



Mechs Keeping Busy

War isn't all shooting guns and swooping up and down carrier decks. There are the guys who work for the FASRONS, who keep the planes flying. They put in the midnight oil but few hear about it. FASRON-120, newly-formed in Japan, is an example. It reported its activities thus:

"Every job appears to have top priority in this race against time. A seven-day work week has been in effect since July with 87% of the crew aboard every day except Sundays, when 75% are working.

"This system enables each man to be scheduled for one day off a week. Besides giving all hands a breather, it enables various departments to continue their routine work without loss of efficiency."

Home At Last

When everyone else is heading west to the Korean war zone comes a news-

letter from VP-28 announcing its happy arrival back in Hawaii after a tour of combat duty on Okinawa.

Joyous wives, children and sweethearts turned out to greet the first three *Privateers* to roar over Barber's Point in tight formation, proud but discolored planes that had been patrolling Oriental waters. Working in hangars again was a welcome change from forward area conditions, the skipper, Cdr. C. F. Skuzinski, reported.

Who's the Enemy?

Shipboard handling of jets is smoothing out, one squadron reported from the forward area, but at first it was rugged. One month the squadron logged 15 shipboard crashes in 21 days, the next 20 crashes in 31 days. Comparing this toll with the one bullet hole received in that time in combat with the Koreans by the squadron's planes, someone wryly inquired: "Just who *is* the enemy?"

FOREST OF F9F Panther wings with tip tanks wait their turn to take off from carrier in Korean waters while Skyraiders with rockets and bombs fly off first due to longer endurance

