

Don't Forget the Little Guys!

I wish to comment on "Answering the Call: Carriers in Crisis Response Since WW II" in the Jan–Feb 97 issue. The "little guys" got into the Korean War quite early, *too*. Capt. Jimmy Thach's *Sicily* (CVE 118) and Capt. Scotty McKechnie's *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) arrived on scene early in August 1950, each carrying a single Marine F4U *Corsair* squadron. In fact, the first expenditure of ordinance in that conflict by a Marine Corps combat formation was a strike from *Sicily* by Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF) 214. I was privileged to lead that effort against Chinju and Sinban-ni in southeast Korea on 3 August 1950. VMF-323 got involved a few days later. Those two skippers and their wonderful crews took marvelous care of "their" Marines in exceptionally demanding times.

NA News always brings with it a distinctively refreshing breath of salty sea air. Keep it up! *Semper Fidelis*.

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Ed's note: We received another letter pointing out that the "little guys" were overlooked in our carrier issue. In many articles through the years, *NA News* has heralded the significant role that escort carriers have played in crisis response. However, this issue had a specific purpose: to show the large-deck carrier's enduring value since WW II, and to focus on new technology, CVX and the future. This edition spot-

lighted the "big guys." Thanks for your kind words and interesting comments.

"Wheel Chair 7" Crew, Where Are You?

On 17 November 1960, C-1A *Trader* BuNo 136791, "Wheel Chair 7," launched off *Oriskany* (CV 34) piloted by Lt. C. L. Priddy with passenger Sen. Hugh Scott, who was returning from a two-week reserve cruise. As they proceeded to Japan, first to MCAS Iwakuni for fuel and then on to NAS Atsugi, they lost all electrical power while in instrument flight rules conditions. They had to make a wheels-up landing on a rocky riverbed on the Japanese island of Shikoku. The Navy was going to write off the aircraft until the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force at Tokushima offered to help. The aircraft was repaired for a ferry flight to Atsugi and was flown off by Cdr. Joe Massey and Lt. Tex Houston on 17 December.

A friend of mine owns this aircraft and last year took it to Oshkosh, Wis., for the annual air show. The C-1A has remained in all her glory, including the Fleet Tactical Support Squadron 21 patch she wore on her nose the day she landed on the riverbed. We may take her to Oshkosh again this year, and I am trying to locate Sen. Scott and the pilots involved. Contact Marty Hall in Fairbanks, AK, at 907-479-6493 or e-mail: 71250.24@compuserve.com.

FL 34476-4802, 352-854-6474.

VF-53/VF-141 reunion, JUL, Charleston, SC. POC: Harold Dolin, 9646 Hamilton Hills Dr., Fishers, IN 46038, 317-849-0128.

VPHL-2/VP-22 reunion, JUL, Las Vegas, NV. POC: Roy Bailets, 44049 Halcom Ave., Lancaster, CA 93536-6053, 805-948-2305.

Forrestal Assoc. 30th memorial ceremony for the Gulf of Tonkin disaster, 27 JUL, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C. POC: Kenneth Killmeyer, 121 Applegate Dr., Sterling,

Truculent Turtle

The "Truculent Turtle" article in the February issue of *Pacific Flyer* [reprinted from *NA News*, Nov–Dec 97] was very enjoyable. Capt. Rankin's account of "a radio blackout for about 18 hours" reminded me of a tiny role I played during the progress of the flight.

Only 18, I was a newly certified control tower operator at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., and had duty on 30 September 1946. No flying was scheduled, but I was eagerly waiting to help anyone who strayed into my airspace. At about 2000, the main speaker exploded with incredible volume and a light flashed showing a call on a rarely used frequency. It was an aircraft, identifying itself as the "Truculent Turtle," trying unsuccessfully to contact Oakland, Calif. I offered to relay and a voice responded, sounding relieved. The aircraft was 200 miles west of San Francisco, but it sounded close enough to be in Whidbey's traffic pattern instead of 800 miles south of me over the Pacific Ocean.

The Turtle's crew and I stayed in contact until they could talk to Oakland. Ironically, about the time they connected, their signal faded and I never heard them again. I didn't know until reading Capt. Rankin's article that they had endured radio silence for so long, because I have rarely heard a signal as strong as theirs was that night in the Whidbey tower.

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VA 20164-2103, 703-435-2813.

Aviation Boatswain's Mates Assoc. reunion, 28 JUL–2 AUG, Silverdale, WA. POC: Dave Deese, 1602 Vaughan Ln., Port Orchard, WA 98366, 360-871-5963.

EAA Fly-In Convention, 30 JUL–5 AUG, Oshkosh, WI. POC: EAA Aviation Center, POB 3086, Oshkosh, WI 54903-3086, 414-426-4800.

HMX-1 50th anniversary reunion, 14–17 AUG, Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA. POC: Maj. Ben Mathews or Maj. Mark Peters at 703-784-3117 or Mr. Albert Paul at 201-445-0882.

Reunions, Symposiums, etc.

Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVB/CVA/CV 42) reunion, 14–18 MAY, Rochester, NY. POC: Joseph Donahue, 5 W. Wright Ave., Waterloo, NY 13165, 800-437-0869.

Electronic Combat Symposium, 19–22 MAY, NAS Whidbey Island, WA. POC: CWO2 Paula Gough, 360-257-2973; DSN 820-2973.

Essex (CV/CVA/CVS 9/LHD 2) reunion, 16–21 JUN, Romulus, MI. POC: Bob Morgan, 6361 SW 106th Pl., Ocala,