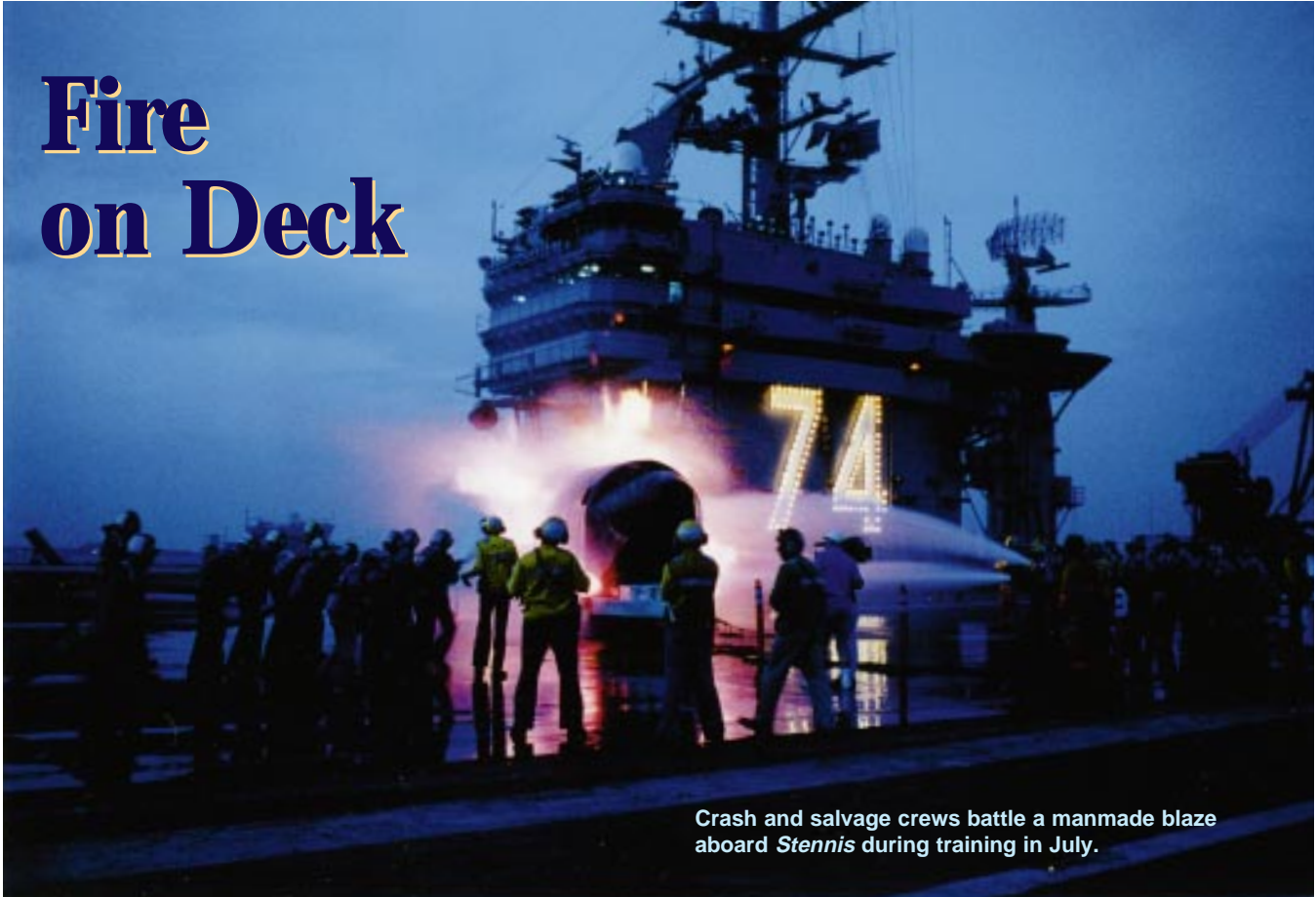


Fire on Deck



Crash and salvage crews battle a manmade blaze aboard *Stennis* during training in July.

Gary Trevino (SEMFOR)

Fire on the flight deck is probably a carrier crew's worst nightmare, but it was a common occurrence on board *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) and *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) between 8 and 10 July. As part of the "Crash and Salvage Olympics" in Norfolk, Va., crews from seven carriers—*Saipan* (LHA 2), *Guam* (LPH 9), *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), *George Washington* (CVN 73), *Stennis*, *Eisenhower* and the precommissioning unit of *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75)—tested their skills for the first time against an actual fire on board a carrier.

In prior years, training was conducted ashore with devices burning JP-5 jet fuel; this year's olympics incorporated a unique mobile trainer built to resemble an aircraft, which burns more environmentally

friendly liquid propane. Once a contractor is selected to build a commercial, off-the-shelf mobile aircraft firefighting training device for the Navy, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Patuxent River, Md., will begin testing the device, probably in 1998.

Flight Clothing Regs

The Bureau of Naval Personnel has outlined the policy on proper wear and appearance of flight clothing used by Navy personnel. The regulations detail when and where specific uniform items—such as the green flight jacket, flight suits and brown leather jacket—may be worn and by whom. They also address how patches or insignia may be worn on jackets and flight suits. Refer to NAVADMINs 164/97 and 193/97 for specifics.

JPATS Aircraft Named

The Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS), formerly referred to only by its Raytheon Aircraft name, Beech/Pilatus PC-9 MkII, was officially introduced using its new name in a ceremony at Randolph AFB, Texas, on 2 June. The T-6A *Texan II* was unveiled by VAdm. Patricia Tracey, Chief of Naval Education and Training, and Gen. Lloyd Newton, Commander Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB.

The *Texan II*, which accommodates a wide range of pilot body sizes, will replace the Navy T-34C *Turbo-Mentor* and the Air Force T-37 trainers for pilot, Naval Flight Officer and navigator training. The first of the Air Force's 372 aircraft are scheduled to begin delivery in



VAdm. Patricia Tracey, Gen. Lloyd Newton, USAF, and Raytheon Aircraft Co. Vice President David Riemer officially unveil the *Texan II* at Randolph AFB on 2 June.

1999; the first of the Navy's 339 planes will arrive at NAS Whiting Field, Fla., in 2003, with NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, and NAS Pensacola, Fla., to follow.

Hornet Under Wraps

On 17 July an F/A-18B *Hornet* was unveiled at NAS Patuxent River, Md., wearing a polymer applique in place of the standard paint job. The patented polymer, developed by Boeing and 3M, promises to provide many advantages over traditional paint. Using a pressure-sensitive adhesive, it is quicker to apply, generates no harmful fumes and is safer for the environment. An additional benefit may be that the applique is replaced when needed, rather than applied over other layers, providing weight savings when compared to planes that typically receive several overlaid coats of paint during their service life.

The specially prepared Pax Strike Directorate *Hornet*, covered more than 80 percent with the polymer, has flown 106 hours, two of them at supersonic speeds. Encouraging results from the tests to date led to a one-year extension of the flight test program begun in October 1996.

E-6B at Pax

Two months after its 5 May rollout at Tinker AFB, Okla., the newly designed E-6B *Mercury*

arrived at Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Patuxent River, Md., on 25 July to undergo electromagnetic compatibility and electromagnetic pulse testing. The tests will determine the aircraft's ability to survive while performing its mission in hostile electromagnetic wartime situations. All 16 Navy E-6A Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO) aircraft are being modified with additional electronics to become E-6Bs, and will continue the TACAMO mission of providing command and control capability for submarines, bombers and land-based missile sites. The E-6B will also take over the Air Force EC-135's airborne national command post mission in October 1998.

The new E-6B is undergoing electromagnetic testing at NAS Patuxent River, Md.

Roger LeJeune



Mishaps

Three pipefitters working on *Harry S. Truman* at Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., were killed by fumes from a leaking sewage line on 12 July. Richard Thompson, Roosevelt Eure, Jr., and James Morris, Jr., were long-time veterans of the company.

A T-34C *Turbo-Mentor* of Training Squadron 10, NAS Pensacola, Fla., executed an emergency landing at the air station due to a nose gear malfunction on 2 July. Neither the student nor the instructor on board were injured.

Roosevelt Gets Overhaul

Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) arrived at Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., on 8 July for a year-long overhaul period. The \$175-million maintenance cycle includes replacing all four propellers, blasting and painting the hull, renovating onboard storage tanks and upgrading many systems.

Marines Evacuate Civilians

Marine helicopters and troops came to the rescue of civilians caught up in a military coup in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Less than 24 hours after arriving on station off the African coast on 29 May, *Kearsarge* (LHD 3) dispatched CH-53E *Super Stallions* to begin evacuating civilians from the region. Above right, American civilians are escorted on board; bottom right, LCdr. Cindy Potter cares for two orphans rescued from the strife-torn nation.



Photos by PH2 Wesley D. Cheney



Photos by PH2 Wesley D. Cheney



An A-6E SWIP *Intruder* from the VA-75 *Sunday Punchers* approaches *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

© Erik Hildebrandt

Disestablished

VA-75 *Sunday Punchers*

A 28 February 1997 ceremony at NAS Oceana, Va., marked the disestablishment (officially 31 March) of Attack Squadron (VA) 75 after over 53 years of service. Cdr. James P. Gigliotti was the last CO of the *Sunday Punchers*, the Navy's last A-6 *Intruder* squadron, and its last attack squadron.

The *Sunday Punchers* began their history as Bombing Squadron (VB) 18, established at NAS Alameda, Calif., on 20 July 1943. Initially equipped with the SBD-5 *Dauntless* dive-bomber, the squadron switched to the SB2C-1/1C *Helldiver* in March 1944. During workups for combat deployment, the squadron's second CO, LCdr. Harlan R. Dickson, was killed in a training mishap.

With SB2C-3 versions, VB-18 headed for the Pacific on board *Intrepid* (CV 11) in August 1944, participating in strikes against Japanese targets in the Palau, Mindanao and Coron islands and on Okinawa and Formosa, where the squadron's fourth CO, LCdr. Mark Eslick, Jr., was lost in enemy action. VB-18 was in the forefront of the Battle of Leyte Gulf (24–26 October 1944), helping to sink the Japanese battleship *Musashi* in Sibuyan Sea action. Squadron crews also scored hits on Japanese aircraft carriers off Cape Engano, and on enemy ships as they retired from the action off Samar.

On 29 October 1944, as VB-18 struck targets at Manila and Clark Field on Luzon, *Intrepid* was struck by a kamikaze, but was able to resume launching strikes. A second kamikaze on 25 November knocked *Intrepid* out of action, and VB-18 returned home with the carrier to California. The squadron briefly moved to NAS Astoria, Oreg., before shifting to NAS San Diego, Calif., and upgrading to the SB2C-4/4E version. WW II ended before VB-18 could return to action.

After the war, in November 1945, VB-18 moved to NAS Quonset Point, R.I., and in July 1946 upgraded again to the SB2C-5 version and its Canadian-built equivalent, the SBW-5. In late 1946, VB-18 cruised on board *Leyte* (CV 32) on a goodwill cruise to South America. While embarked, VB-18 was redesignated VA-7A, and made two Mediterranean deployments on board *Leyte* during the late 1940s.

In 1948, VA-7A switched to the F4U-4B *Corsair* fighter, and was redesignated VA-74 on 27 July 1948, making one Mediterranean cruise with *Corsairs* before switching to the AD-4 *Skyraider* attack aircraft. On 15 February 1950, VA-74 was redesignated VA-75. After a 1950 Mediterranean deployment on board *Midway* (CVB 41), VA-75 entered combat over Korea from the deck of *Bon Homme Richard* (CVA 31). The squadron struck hydroelectric complexes and troop concentrations in North Korea. The squadron's thirteenth CO, Cdr. H. K. Evans, was lost

to enemy anti-aircraft fire during this deployment.

After a Mediterranean cruise on board *Bennington* (CVA 20), VA-75 upgraded to the AD-6 (A-1H) version of the *Skyraider* and made a western Pacific deployment on board *Hornet* (CVA 12). Four Mediterranean cruises followed, one aboard *Randolph* (CVA 15) and three on board *Independence* (CVA 62), as well as support to the quarantine of Cuba during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. VA-75 moved to NAS Oceana in October 1957. In 1963, the *Sunday Punchers* entered the jet age as the Navy's first operational *Intruder* squadron, equipped with A-6As.

In May 1965, VA-75 took the A-6A into its first combat, launching strikes over North Vietnam and Laos from *Independence*. The price was heavy: the squadron lost four A-6s in combat, with two crewmen captured and two killed, including the CO, Cdr. Leonard Vogt. Nevertheless, the A-6 was a proven success. After a Mediterranean cruise on board *Independence*, VA-75 was transferred from Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7 to CVW-11 for a second Vietnam deployment (1967–1968), this time aboard *Kitty Hawk* (CVA 63), with A-6B versions added for anti-surface-to-air missile missions. On this deployment, the squadron lost two A-6As and four crewmen to enemy action, while dropping over 13 million pounds of ordnance on enemy targets. The *Sunday Punchers* were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their record.

In 1968, VA-75 began a 27-year association with CVW-3 and made three Mediterranean deployments on board *Saratoga* (CVA 60), adding KA-6D tankers to its lineup of A-6A/Bs on the third of these. When North Vietnam launched its spring 1972 offensive in South Vietnam, VA-75 headed for the war zone on 48 hours' notice aboard *Saratoga* and pounded enemy targets during Operations Linebacker I and II. During this final Vietnam cruise, the squadron lost two A-6As to enemy action, with one flyer killed, one missing and two captured. Another *Intruder* was lost in a mishap, killing the squadron CO, Cdr. Charles M. Earnest.

Upon return from Vietnam in 1973, VA-75 upgraded to the A-6E. The squadron completed five more Mediterranean deployments on board

Saratoga through 1980. (The squadron CO, Cdr. Anthony J. Lynch, was killed in a landing mishap just before the last *Saratoga* deployment.) In 1981, VA-75 upgraded to the Target Recognition Attack Multi-sensor version of the A-6E, and along with CVW-3 made five Mediterranean deployments aboard *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67) through 1989. The first of these cruises also took the squadron into the Indian Ocean. On 4 December 1983, three VA-75 A-6Es participated in the retaliatory strike against Syrian anti-aircraft battery positions in Lebanon, destroying one position without loss to the squadron.

On 6 February 1984, VA-75 dropped laser-guided bombs against hostile factions attacking Marine positions in Beirut, Lebanon. In November 1984, in response to contingency operations in the Mediterranean, VA-75 rushed 7 officers and 80 technicians to augment VA-65 on board *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69).

In 1987, VA-75 became the Navy's first fleet squadron to operate the Systems Weapons

Improvement Program (SWIP) version of the A-6E. The following deployment that year found the squadron off Lebanon again, ready to respond if called. In January 1989, VA-75's KA-6D tankers supported the F-14A *Tomcat* fighters that shot down two attacking Libyan MiG-23 fighters. Later that year, VA-75 demonstrated the air-to-air capability of the A-6E SWIP version, becoming the first to fire the AIM-9 *Sidewinder* missile. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 resulted in the rapid deployment of *John F. Kennedy* to the Mediterranean and into the Red Sea as part of the Operation Desert Shield buildup. VA-75 launched A-6Es over Iraq on 17 January 1991 in the first wave of Operation Desert Storm. In 43 days with 498 sorties, the *Sunday Punchers* delivered over 1.6 million pounds of ordnance, without loss or damage to a squadron aircraft.

On one more Mediterranean deployment (1992) aboard *John F. Kennedy*, VA-75 (now without KA-6D tankers) flew missions over northern Iraq in support of the Kurdish relief effort, Operation Provide Comfort. Upon return home VA-75 shifted with CVW-3 to *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and deployed in October 1994 to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, flying missions over Iraq in support of Operation Southern Watch, and over Bosnia as part of Operation Deny Flight.

In June 1996, the *Sunday Punchers*, now part of CVW-17, departed home for their last deployment, this time on board *Enterprise* (CVN 65). Operating again from the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Southern Watch, VA-75 carried out the A-6 *Intruder*'s last deployment. Returning to Oceana on 19 and 20 December 1996, the *Sunday Punchers* and the A-6 were home for good.

Even after its return, VA-75 conducted proficiency flying as the squadron prepared for shutdown. The squadron conducted its last carrier operations on 12 March 1997, and flew out its last two A-6s on 19 March 1997.

See p. 22 for an account of VA-75's farewell to the A-6. VA-196, which was disestablished at the same time, will be covered in the Nov-Dec issue.



Before adopting the *Intruder* in 1963, VA-75 flew the A-1 *Skyraider*, top, in formation. Above, an A-6A *Intruder* is ready for a cat shot off *Saratoga* (CVA 60) during VA-75's initial carrier qualifications in 1964.