MARINE COMPOSITE RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON

DETACHMENT-ALPHA
CVA-59

COMPOSITE RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON
MARINE
DETACHMENT ALPHA
VCVA-59

Acknowledgements

This book was compiled from the personal collection of photos and documents of Carl Dejon.

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MCARA War Stories

EA6A to the Mediterranean

Also See:
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Skyknight Down!

Early in 1971 a four plane **VMCJ-2** Detachment was attached to the Carrier Air Group on the Forestall for a six month cruise replacing a Navy VAZ Detachment. The primary purpose of the deployment was to evaluate the aircraft and its electronic warfare systems and equipment in the Carrier environment.

After a short period of time it was obvious that being a substitute for one of the regular CAG units didn't win the Detachment a popularity award. There was some tension on the Flight Deck between our Plane Captains and their counterparts which dissipated after a few weeks when the "regulars" in the CAG realized that the newcomers were professionals who wouldn't be intimidated and who demanded mutual respect. Another obvious example of the initial tension was when the Ship's Captain included me, a Marine Major, on the the list to become qualified in Ship Underway Refueling. After a few nights of duty on the Bridge, I was informed that one of the Navy Officers had pointed out to him that only Naval Officers can command a ship when underway and I was removed from the assignment. It worked out for my benefit because O-4s were required to stand Shore Patrol Duty and the Captain, unhappy that his training schedule was questioned, decided that although I was an O-4, as OIC of the Detachment I was excused from Shore Patrol assignment. Major Fallon, the Detachment's Executive Officers, wasn't so lucky and he was assigned that Duty in one of the choice ports where his spouse was waiting.

The Carrier did not have enough space to accommodate all the **EA6A** unique electronic equipment there fore a repair facility, staffed by Detachment personnel, was set up in Rota Spain. The SOP was to load one of our aircraft with all the electronic boxes needing repair and send them, on the last launch of the night/day to Rota with orders to return for the first aircraft recovery time when the ship returned to sea. During the entire deployment period there was a "black oil" shortage and all ships were directed to spend a significant time in ports or anchorage which provided additional time to repair the equipment before returning it to the ship.

The Detachment's mission of exposing the Carrier and attached ships crews to an active ECM environment provided to be very positive training for all concerned, however there was a problem with training the RIOs of the fighter squadron. When running intercept exercises, although we could still hear the radars in the "sweeping" mode vice a "lock on", the fighter crew would call "fox one" and "fox two" indicating a radar lock-on and subsequent "kill". It was obvious that these so called "kills" were simply indicating visual intercepts. To solve the problem we requested/received permission from the CAG, to run lights-out intercept training at night 1000 ft. above the fighters. That stopped the majority of visual "kills" as the RIOs were forced to use their equipment as designed. Based upon the mission accomplishments of the Detachment, COMNAVAIRLANT directed that the Detachment be cross decked at Rota Spain to the Saratoga and complete a second six month deployment.

There were two Carriers assigned to the Mediterranean during the second deployment, the Saratoga and the America, and midway through the period we were directed to provide training to the latter ship. However, before this could be accomplished there was a problem; one of the Saratoga's crew, infatuated with a lady in Athens, sabotaged the ship causing loss of two boilers/engines. The CAGs response was, although we were anchored off Athens, down-load most of the fuel from our aircraft and catapult them to recover on the America. It worked and a short deployment on that ship was enjoyed by all.

We returned after only a total of 10 1/2 months, the cruise being cut short, I think, because of the "black oil" problem, was awarded a Unit Citation and more important, given a new overseas-control-date that kept us from being transferred to WestPac for a few more years.

- Maj Dick "Cat" Conway OIC VMCJ Det

Timeline for the first EA6A Detachment to go aboard a carrier

August, 1970 - Started doing FMLP's at Cherry Point and Oceana NAS so the aircrews had to have been selected by then.

September, 1970 - Extensive day and night FMLP's at Oceana NAS.

October, 1970 - Day and night carrier qualifications aboard the USS Forrestal in two different cruises of two days each out of Norfolk, VA.

November, 1970 - One week shake down cruise aboard the USS Forrestal

December, 1970 - One week shake down cruise aboard the USS Forrestal

January 14, 1971 - Departed on the USS Forrestal for a six month cruise to the Mediterranean.

June 29, 1971 - Cross deck to the USS Saratoga as the USS Forrestal went home.

September 2, 1971 - Cross deck to the USS America as the USS Saratoga had some internal sabotage and had to go into Athens for four weeks of repair.

October 2, 1971 - Cross deck back to the USS Saratoga.

October 19, 1971 - Arrive back at Cherry Point. Career Marines were very happy as it now counted as an overseas tour.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

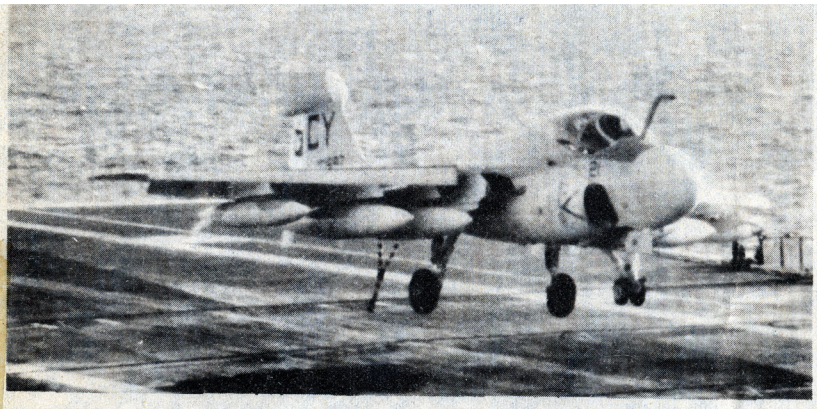
The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to [redacted]

MARINE COMPOSITE RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON TWO
(DETACHMENT ALFA)

For meritorious service from 5 January 1971 through 12 October 1971 during the initial employment of the EA-6A aircraft on board Task Force SIXTY attack carriers. Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron Two (Detachment ALFA) provided an essential new dimension to the carrier task force's electronic warfare posture in both strike warfare and defense of own forces, while conducting electronic countermeasures flight operations from USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59), USS AMERICA (CVA-66), and USS SARATOGA (CVA-60). Because of the squadron's outstanding success in displaying the critical value of the EA-6A weapons system in the sophisticated Mediterranean Electronic Warfare environment on board FORRESTAL, the squadron was rescheduled for a second consecutive Mediterranean attack carrier employment with SARATOGA from June through October 1971. In addition, the detachment developed and documented operational tactics which have provided a significant contribution to SIXTH Fleet readiness. By their continued determination, professional awareness, and inspiring dedication, the officers and men of Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron TWO (Detachment ALFA) reflected credit upon themselves and the Marine Corps, and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

John H. Chafee

Secretary of the Navy



AVIATION FIRST — Maj. R. C. Conway with Capt. J. D. Weber as his bombardier/navigator makes a three-wire landing on the deck of the USS FORRESTAL Oct. 3 to become the first EA-6A Intruder to land on the deck of an aircraft carrier at sea.

(Photo by Lt. M. L. Richardson)

Flight History Made By VMCJ-2 Intruder

The Marines have landed and all is well in hand.

Many times this statement has been appropriate and once again it can be used with justification and great pride when five crews from VMCJ-2 completed their day carrier qualification in their EA-6A Intruder aircraft Oct. 3.

The outstanding performance turned in by the crews headed by Maj. R. C. Conway was unique because it was the first time EA-6A aircraft have been brought aboard a carrier. It was also the first time aircraft designed specifically for electronic countermeasures missions had been brought aboard a carrier.

The detachment from VMCJ-2, to be attached with Carrier Air Wing Seventeen, received praises from all aboard the USS FORRESTAL for their outstanding performance. Col. G. H. Keller, CO of MAG-14, and LtCol. J. L. Green, CO of VMCJ-2, were among those aboard specifically to view the performance of the crews which included: Major R. C. Conway and T. J. Fallon; Captains P. D. Young, J. D. Weber, J. D. Weides, K. J. Kabza, and W. E. Fleming; Lieutenants C. V. Dejong, D. K. Roath, and F. A. Yahner; and CWO N. F. Charboneau.

Total flight time accumulated by the crews amounted to almost 25,000 hours with over 2,000 combat sorties, four Distinguished Flying Crosses and numerous Air Medals.

(See J-2 SCORES Pg. 7)

WINDSOCK

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VOL. 28 — NO. 41 | HOME OF THE 2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, MARINE CORPS AIR STATION, CHERRY POINT, N. C. | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1970

WELCOME ABOARD — Cpl. G. R. Hartman (left) and Cpl. H. J. Palmquist remove VMCJ-2's mascot, The Bunny, from the cockpit of the first EA-6A Intruder that landed aboard the USS FORRESTALL Oct. 3. The fight made the Furry Favorite 100 percent combat ready.

(Photo by Lt. M. L. Richardson)

J-2 Scores Aviation First

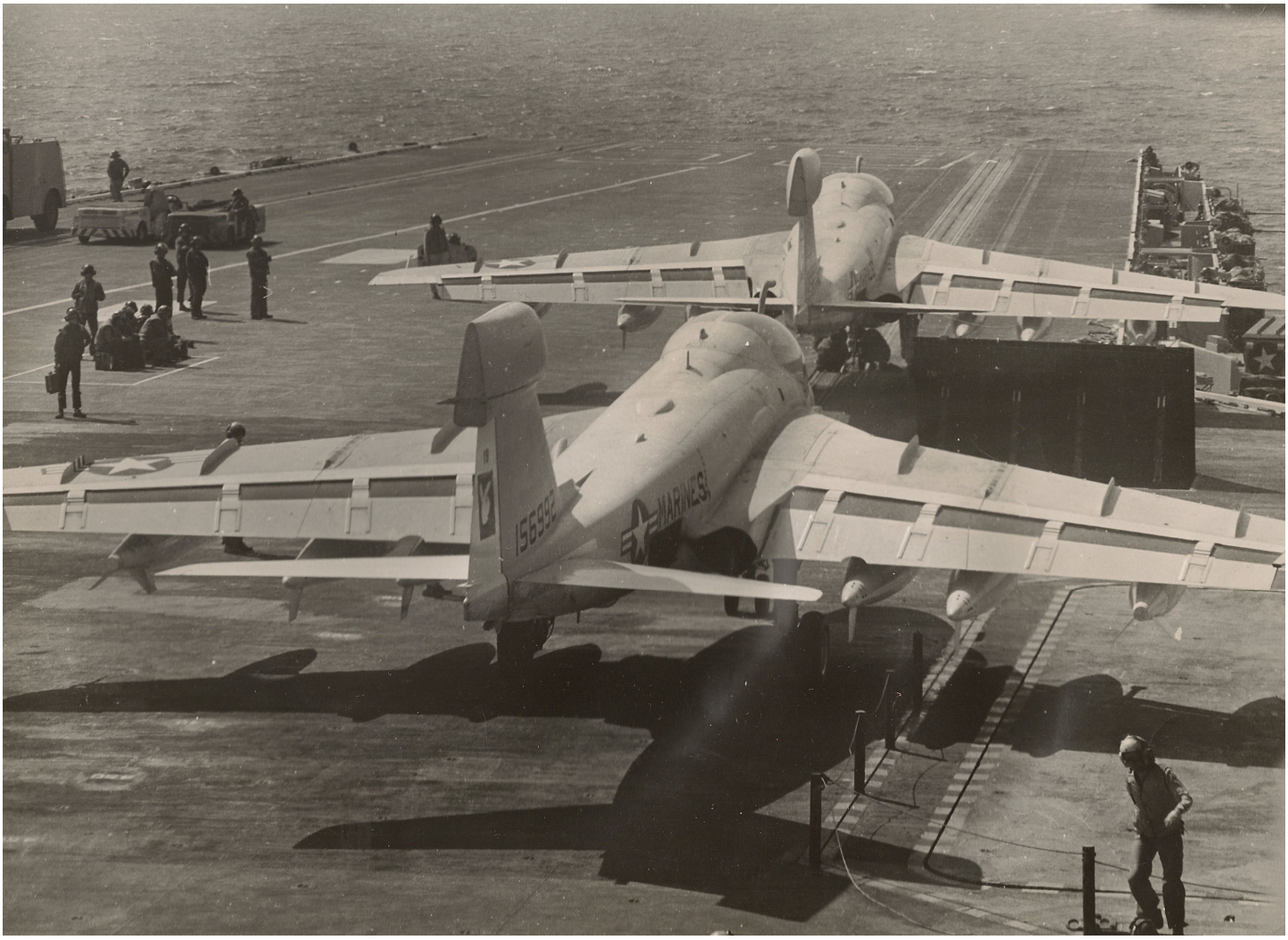
(Continued from Pg. 1)

One other unexpected crew member was carrier qualified during the weekend operations. He was none other than that intrepid and dauntless aviator, world-renowned traveler, and infamous Happy Hour goer, the VMCJ-2 Bunny. After all, the Tailhookers Convention in Las Vegas would be nothing without the attendance of such personalities as the Bunny.

For all flight crews and bunny, LtCol. J. L. Green, CO of VMCJ-2, had these words of praise: "The professionalism displayed by these crews and all those whose efforts made it possible for them to perform with such excellence exemplifies the can do attitude so much a part of Marine Corps tradition. Their performance is a credit to VMCJ-2 and I would like to extend my personal 'well done'."

Certainly such a performance could not have been turned in without the tremendous maintenance effort by all associated with getting the aircraft ready and who kept them flying. Maintenance crews worked three days around the clock to "keep 'em flying." GySgt. Calkins and SSgt. Lightbody and their crews have the thanks of all concerned.

Russian trawler that followed the USS Forrestal constantly during the sea trials off the coast of Norfolk, VA.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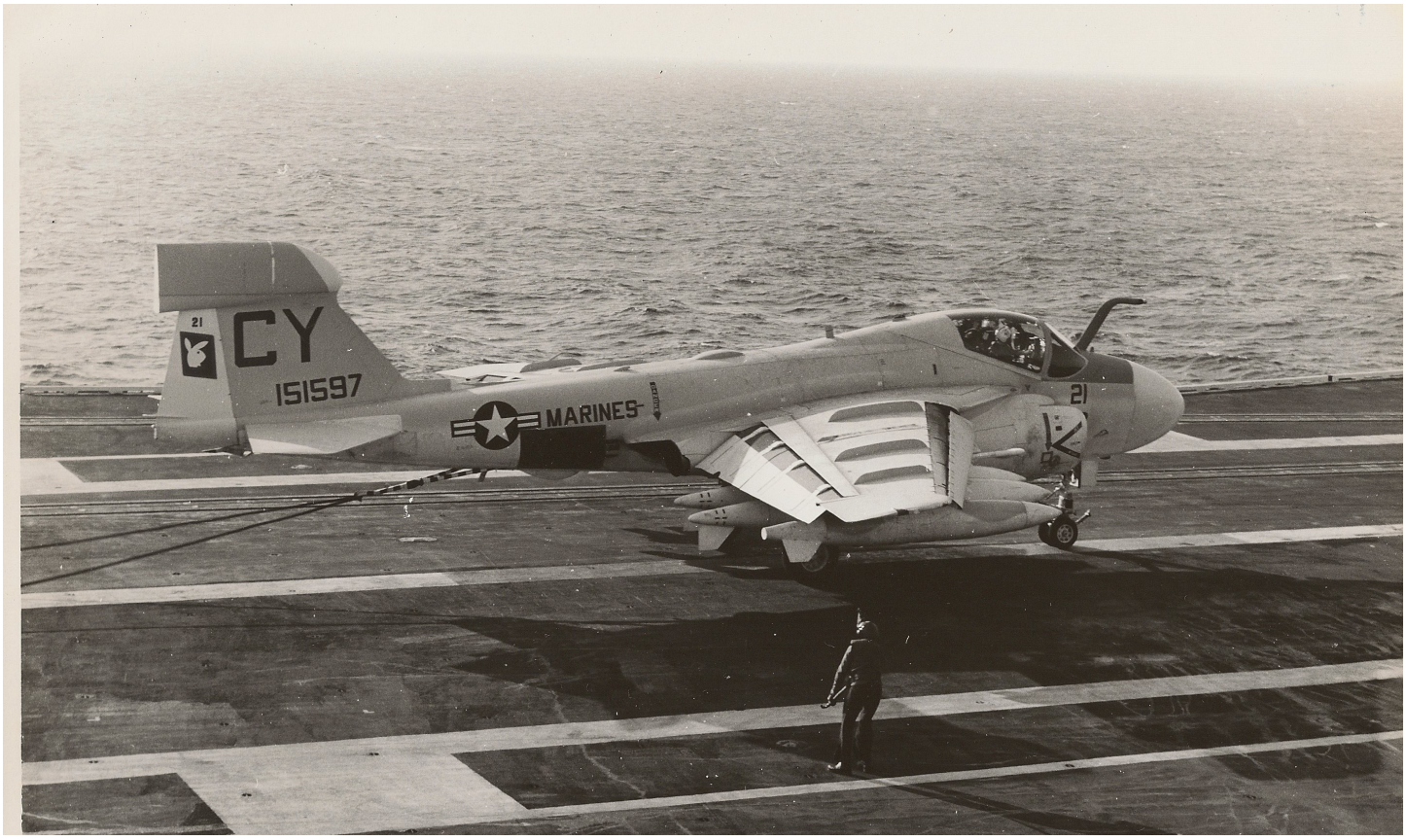
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THE FORRESTAL STORY

The FORRESTAL story began long before the ship herself was laid down. In the closing months of World War II, Admiral Mark Mitscher made the first recorded suggestion for a carrier with the general characteristics of the FORRESTAL class.

On July 12, 1951, the Navy announced that the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company had been awarded a contract to build CVA 59. The keel was laid on July 14, 1952, and less than 30 months later FORRESTAL was launched.

Commissioning ceremonies were held October 1, 1955, at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. On the same day, Captain Roy L. Johnson became the first commanding officer.

During her first eleven years FORRESTAL operated with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and off the U.S. east coast. Twice she was called on short notice to bolster U.S. forces in Europe; once during the Suez crisis in Nov. 1956, and then again in July 1958 during the Lebanon crisis.

In June 1967 FORRESTAL departed Norfolk for her first combat cruise in the Western Pacific, as a member of the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

A tragic fire on the fifth day of combat operations brought FORRESTAL's part in the war to an end. The conflagration killed 134 men and sent FORRESTAL back to Norfolk for repairs.

FORRESTAL deployed for the Mediterranean in July 1968. With air Wing 17 embarked, she recorded the longest CVA deployment in the Sixth Fleet - more than nine months.

Upon returning to Norfolk in April 1969, the ship's engineering spaces were overhauled for three months. FORRESTAL deployed for the Mediterranean in December 1969 for her eighth Sixth Fleet deployment which she completed on July 8, 1970.

FORRESTAL currently holds the coveted Battle Efficiency "E" award presented by the Commander, Naval Air Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

On July 2, 1971 FORRESTAL completed her nineth Mediterranean cruise.

U.S.S. FORRESTAL (CVA-59)

JULY 1970 - JULY 1971

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Captain C.F. DEMMLER, USN

25 NOVEMBER 1969

Captain L.A. SNEAD, USN

13 NOVEMBER 1970

Captain R.F. SCHOULTZ, USN

23 JUNE 1971

CVW 17

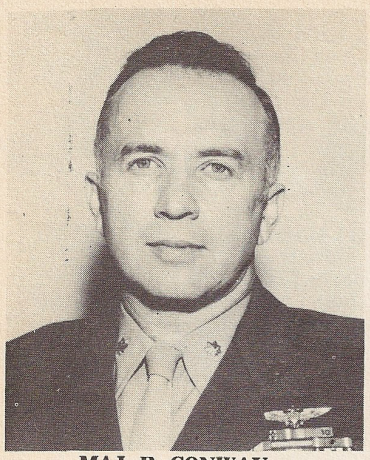
CDR. T. REPLOGLE
Commander 31 March 1970

CDR. M. McCANNA
Commander 8 April 1970

CDR. R. GARRETT

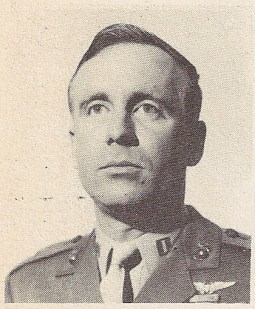
VMCJ 2

Detachment Alpha



MAJ. R. CONWAY

MAJ. T. FALLON



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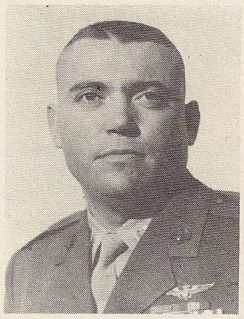

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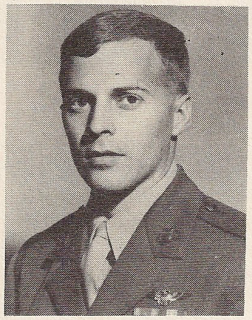
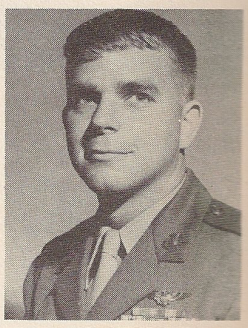
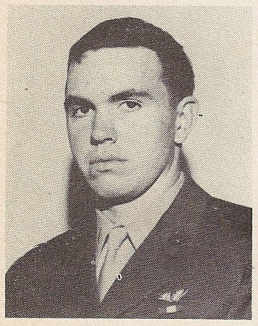


CAPT. D. ROATH

CAPT. F. KABZA



CAPT. C. DEJONG



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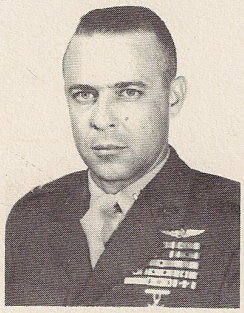
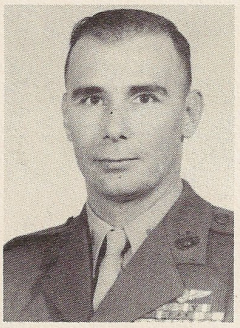
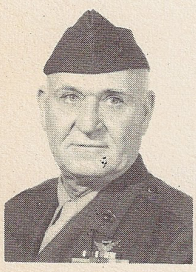


CWO2 W. FLEMING



CWO2 N. CHARBONEAU



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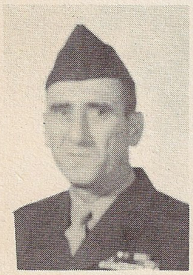
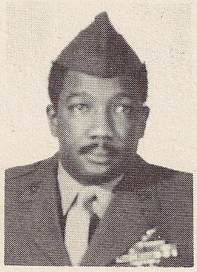
GYSGT Joseph Rowen
GYSGT Gary Williams

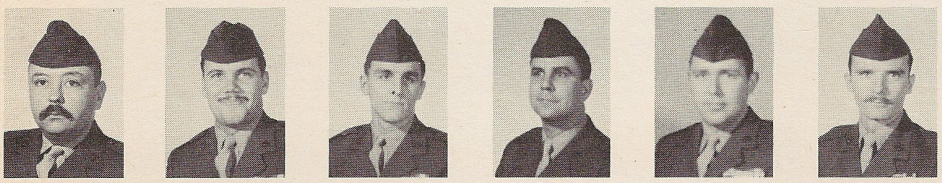




GYSGT Edward Mazik
GYSGT John Stone
GYSGT Martin Hernandez
GYSGT Eddie Bradley

SSGT Alberto Garza
SSGT Robert Gooding
SSGT Charles Colvard
SSGT Ronald Davis
SSGT Reyes Chavez
SSGT Charles Green

SSGT Eugene Grosvenor
SSGT Carl Rhoads
SSGT Gerald Whitlow
SSGT Donald Rehn
SSGT Clarence Mallory
SSGT Clyde Tew



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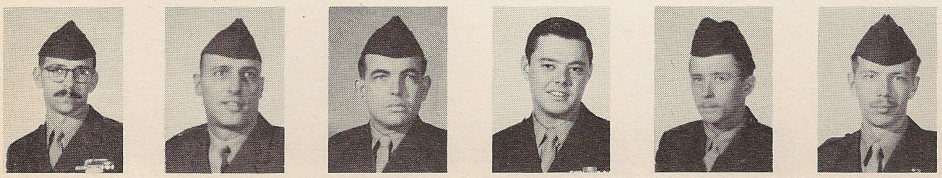
SGT Robert Graf
E5 Thomas Conelius
SGT James Atkins
SGT Harold Glosson
SGT Bruce Brower



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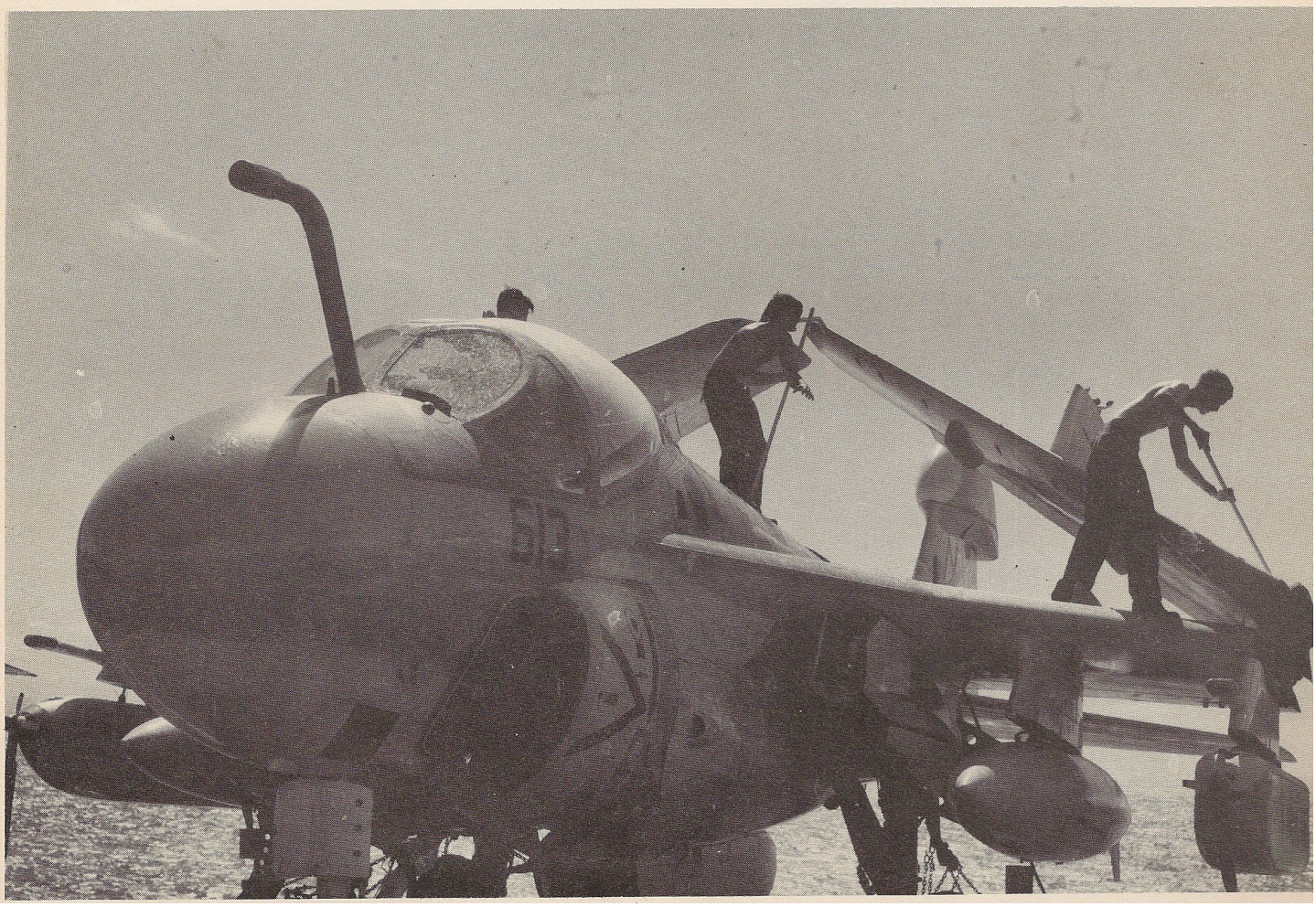
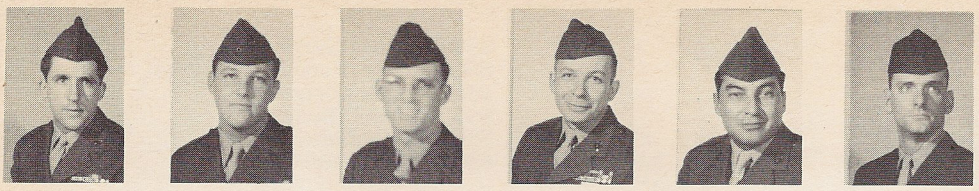
SGT Walter Gregory
SGT John Barrows
SGT Herbert Brehm
SGT Carl Bazzell
SGT Ronald Sliwa





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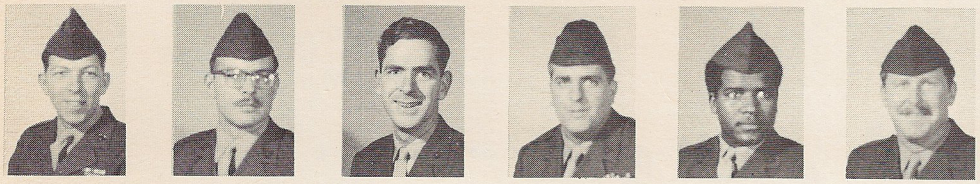
SGT John Updyke
SGT Paul Spring
SGT Roberto Romero
SGT Stephen Okruhlica



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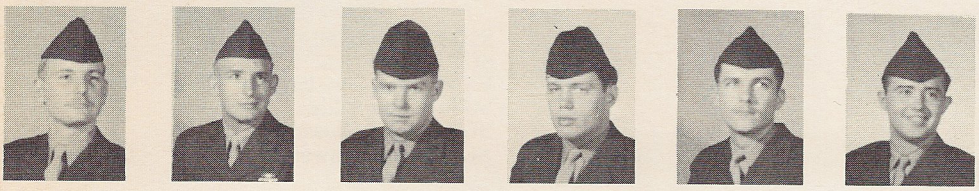
SGT Bradley Schroenghamer
SGT Richard Strader
SGT Matthew Niesz
SGT Calvin Thompson
CPL Gary Dailey



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CPL Owen Hagovsky
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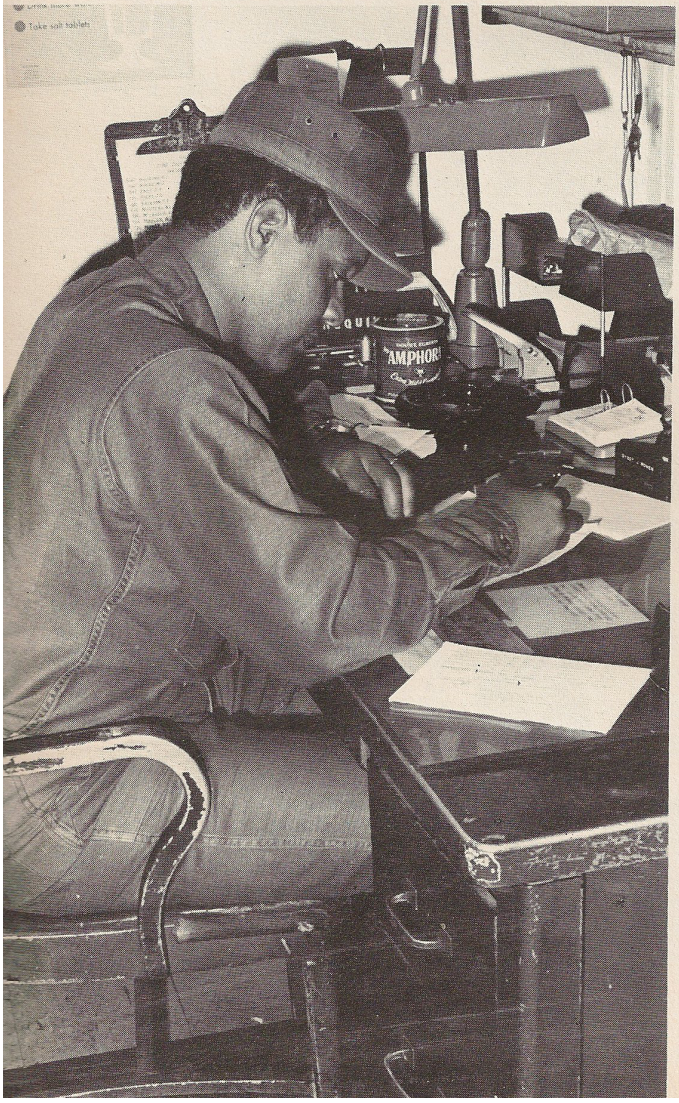
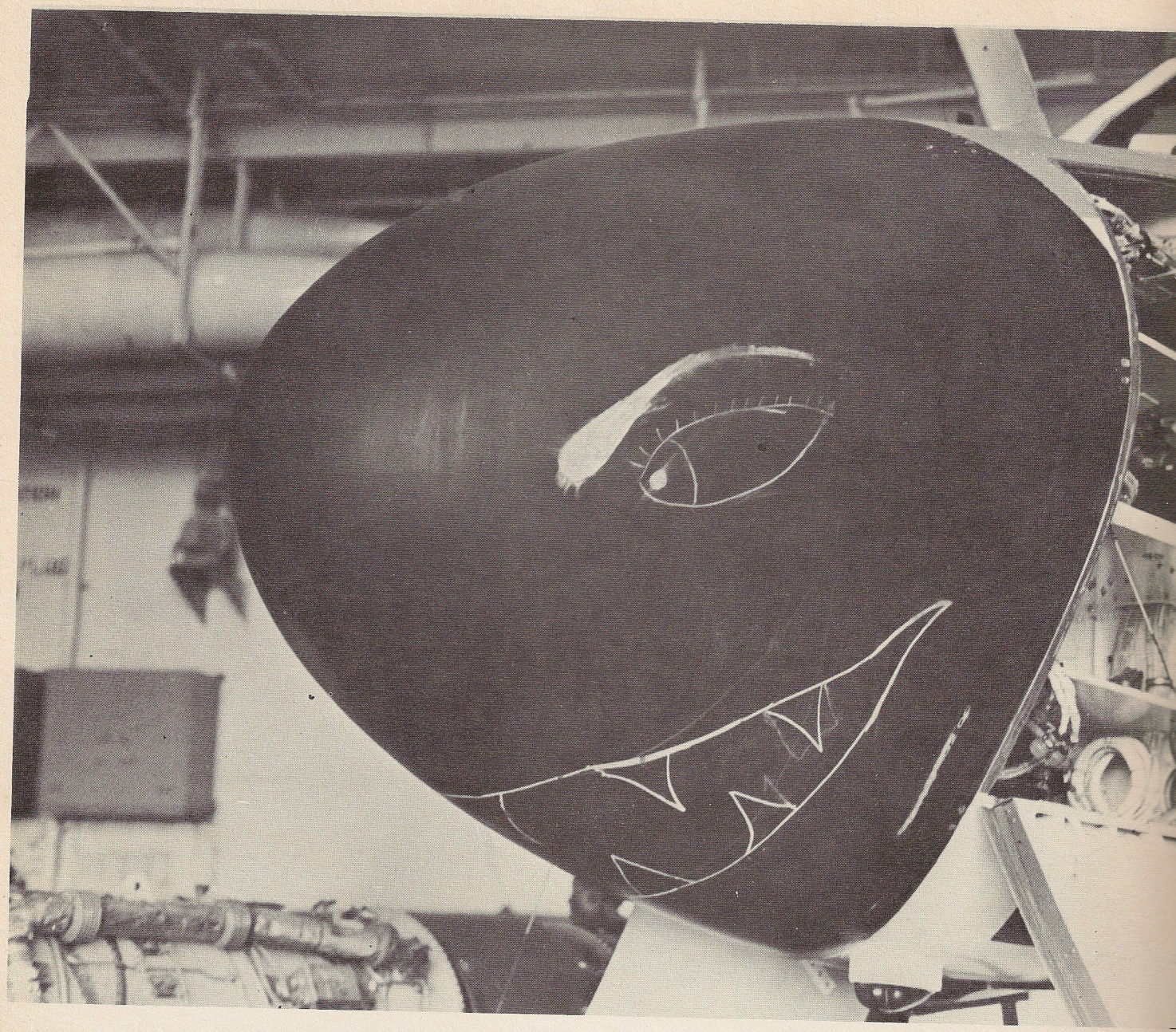
CPL Robert Luckhard
CPL Teddy Aultman
CPL Charles Bishop

P/C J R MORGAN


Take salt tablets
AMPHOR



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CPL Harry Palmquist

CPL Allan Moore
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CPL Robert Mitchell
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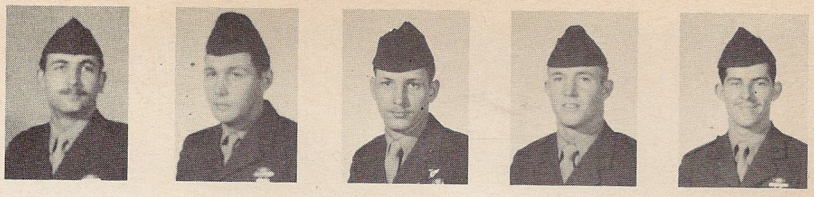
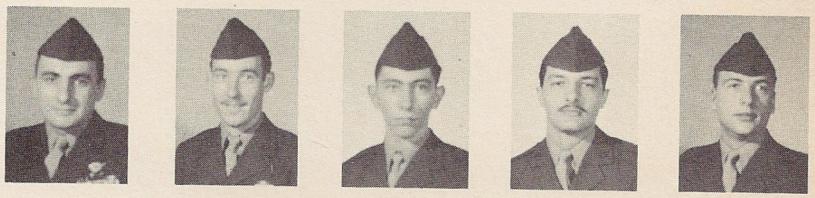


HM3 Robert Spain
CPL Zehie Steed Jr.
CPL Thomas Morris
CPL Alvin Mullen
CPL William Mrkvicka

CPL Fredrick Ruth
CPL Ronald Moyer
CPL Donald Schmacher
CPL Nick Nicotero
CPL Randy Stoeckel



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CPL William Tomasek
HM3 Robert Spain
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PFC Robert Jones

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L-CPL Francis Leppink
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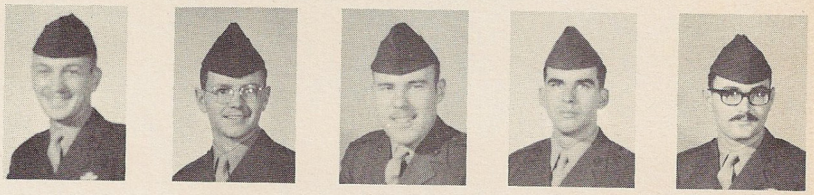

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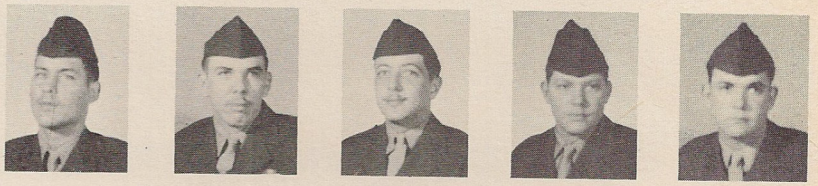

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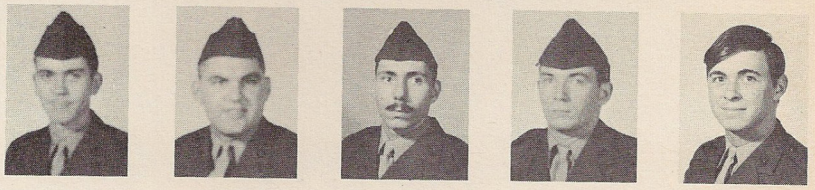

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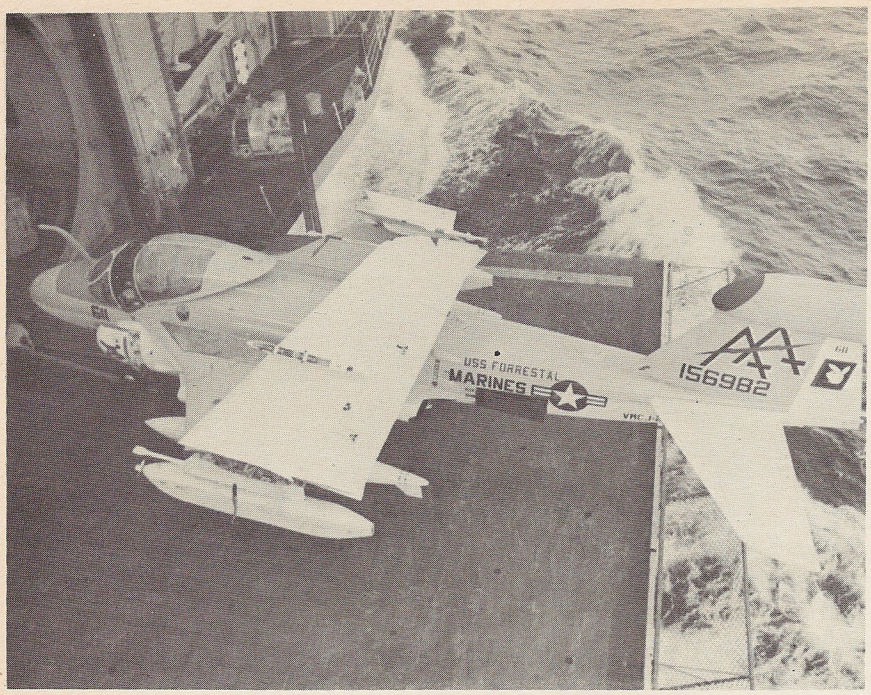
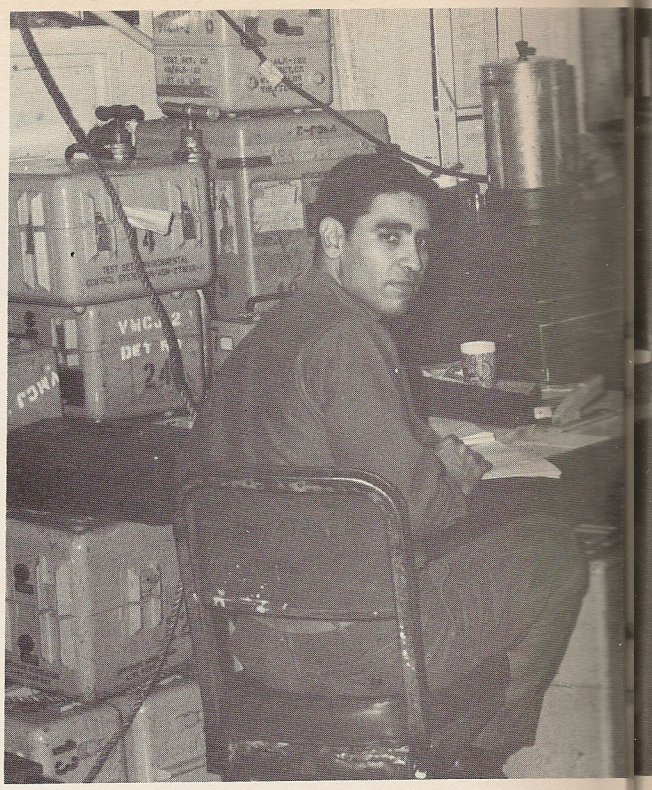
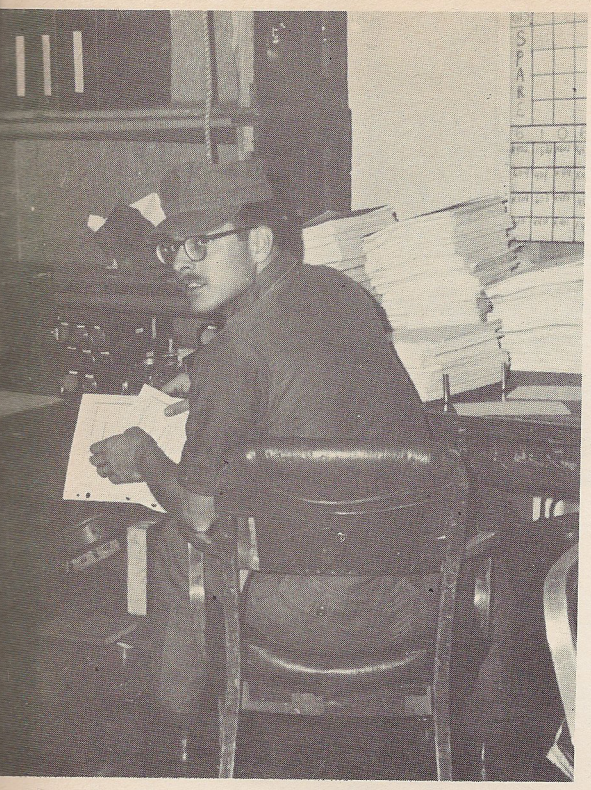
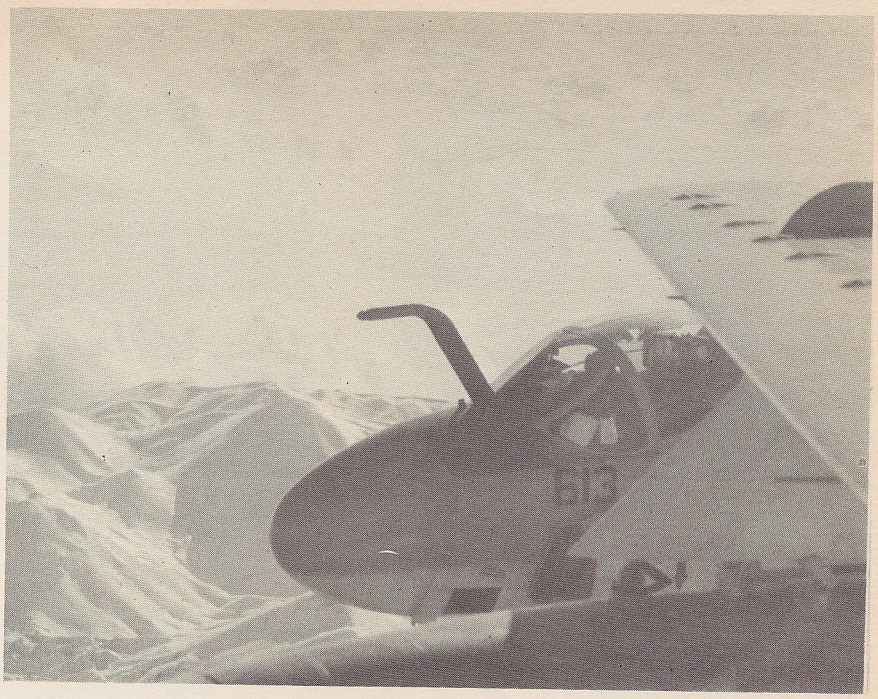

USS FORRESTAL
MARINES
156982







612

FIRST IN DEFENSE
U.S.S. FORRESTAL

Forrestal Centurion

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS THAT

CAPT C. V. DEJONG

a fearless and intrepid birdman has exhibited faultless courage, exceptional bravery and adeptness at judicious use of stick and throttle, has been low and slow and or high and fast, eased gun in-close, lined up late, overrotated, dove for the deck, boltered and has 100 times successfully arrested aboard USS FORRESTAL with less than strike damage or mortal injury to self or aircraft. For this feat he shall be recognized as a CENTURION and accorded the honor and all special consideration and privileges due such title.

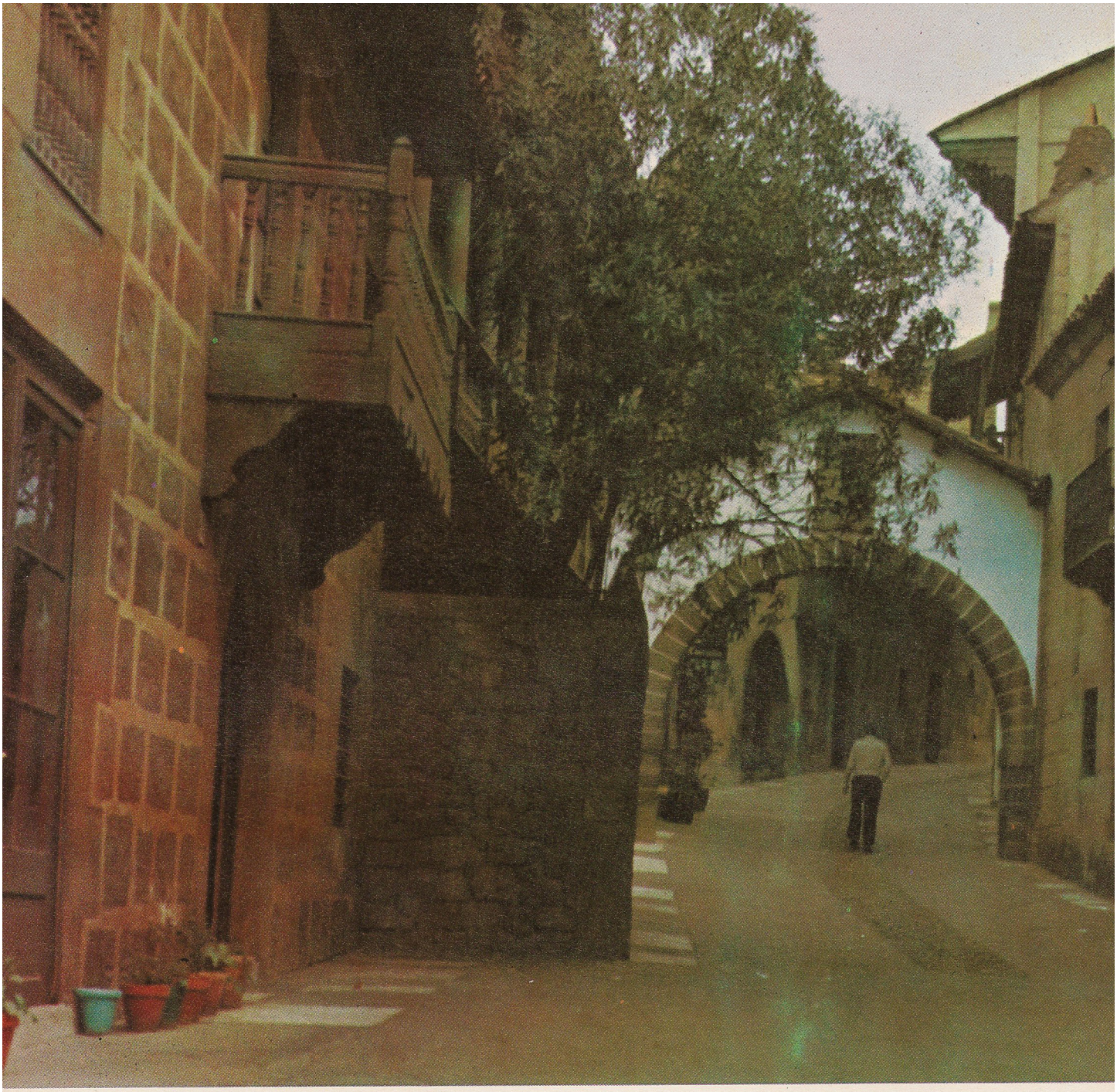
M. G. MC CANNA JR.
COMMANDER
CARRIER AIR WING

L. A. SNEAD
CAPTAIN, USN
COMMANDING

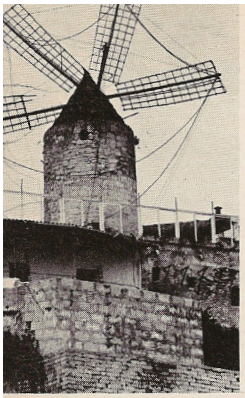
LIBERTY CALL

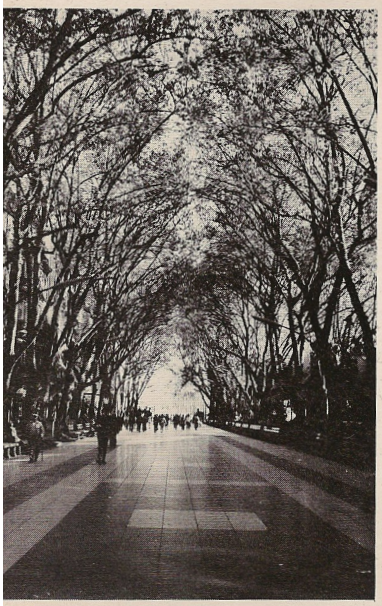
MALTA

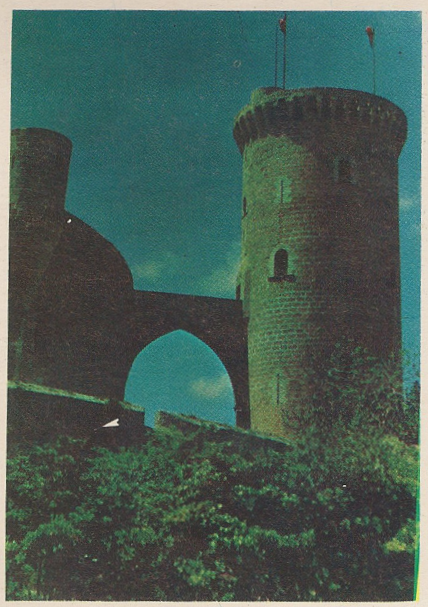
ATHENS



Barcelona, Andorra, Montserrat

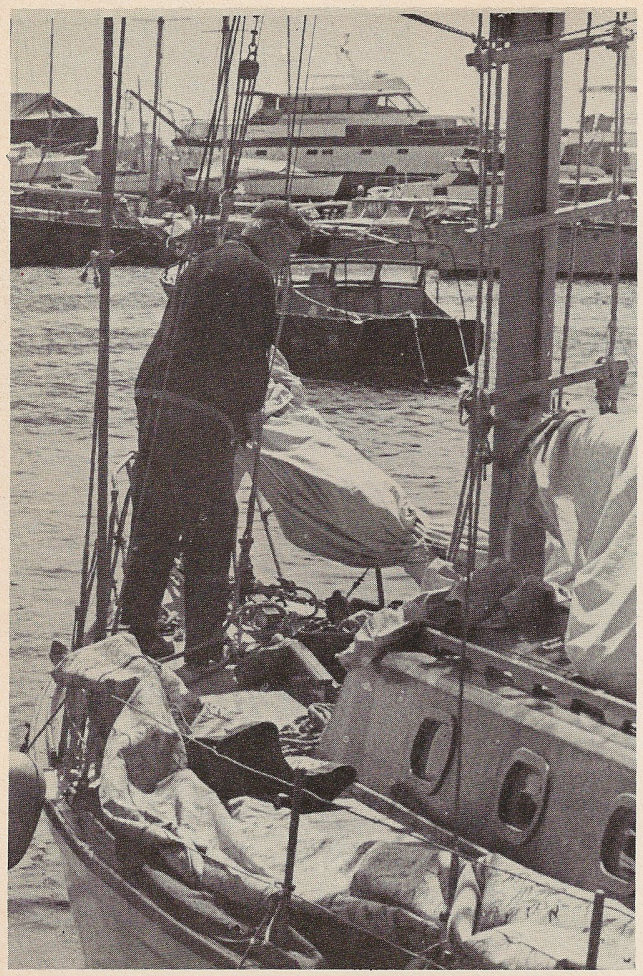


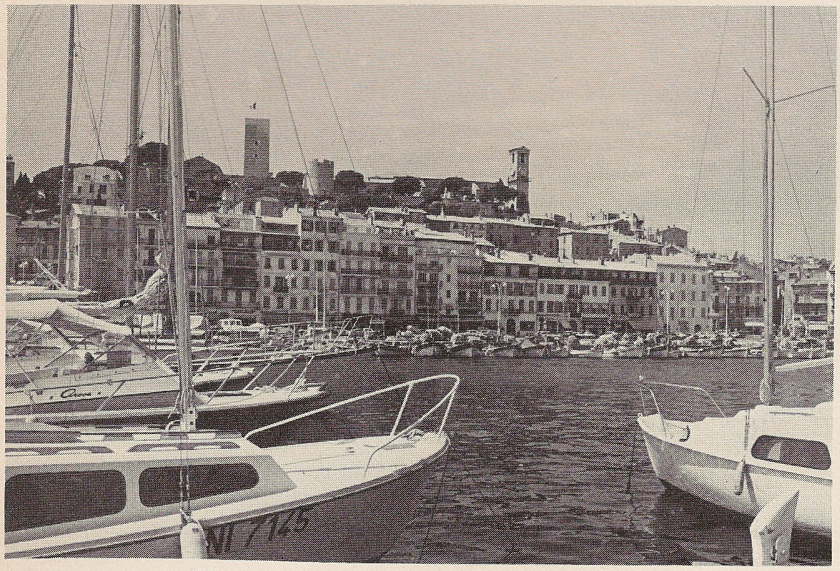




Palma de Mallorca

FRANCE





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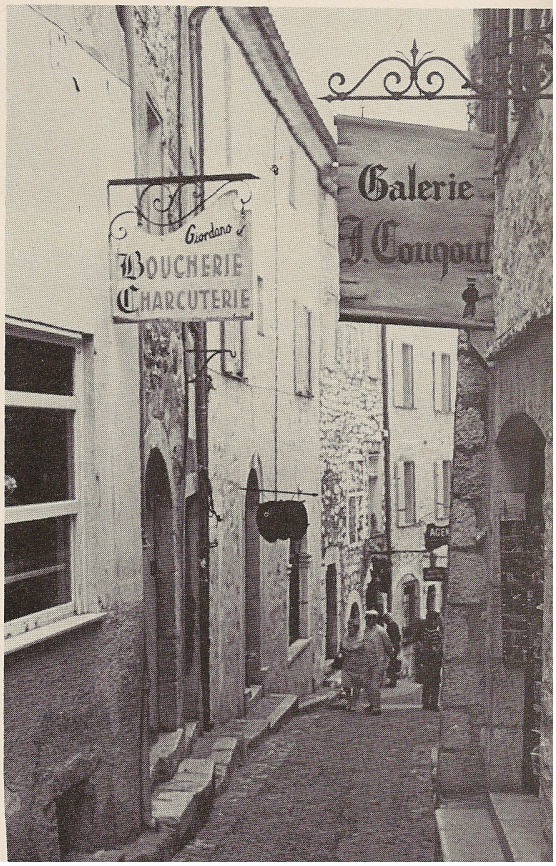

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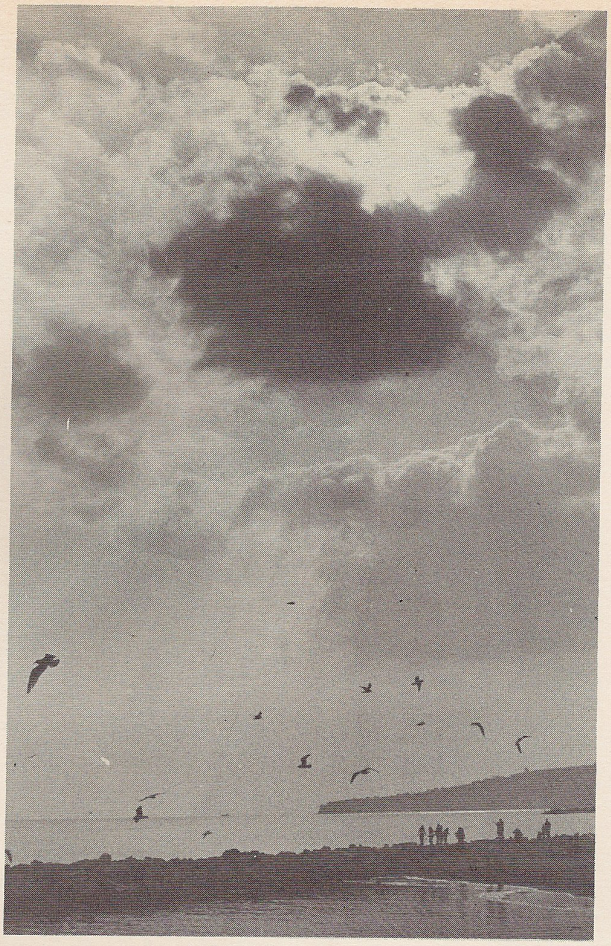

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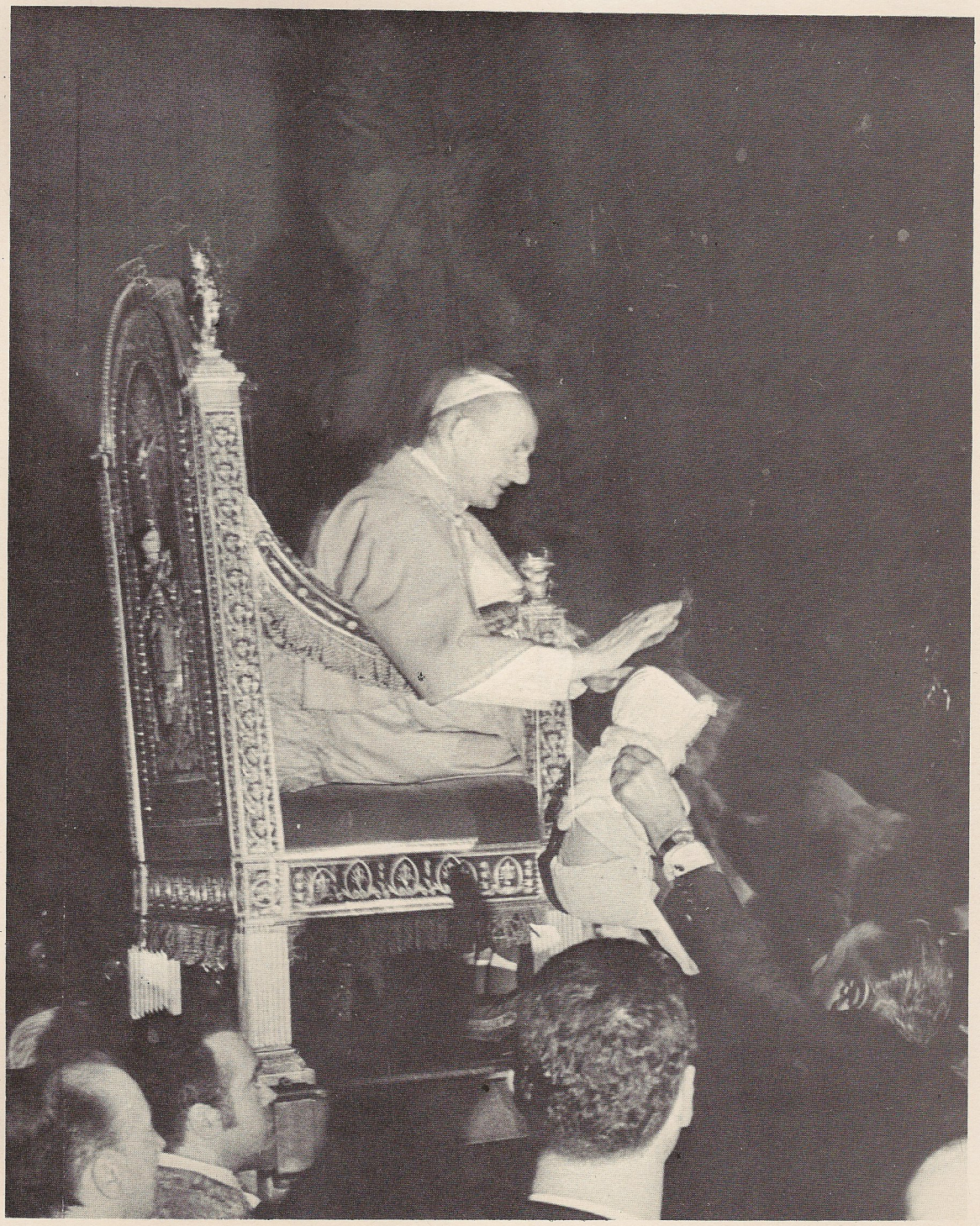

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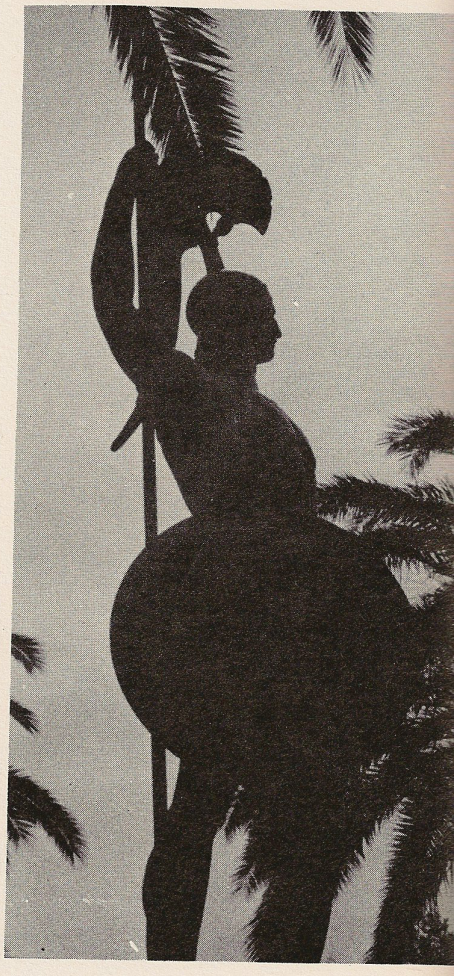
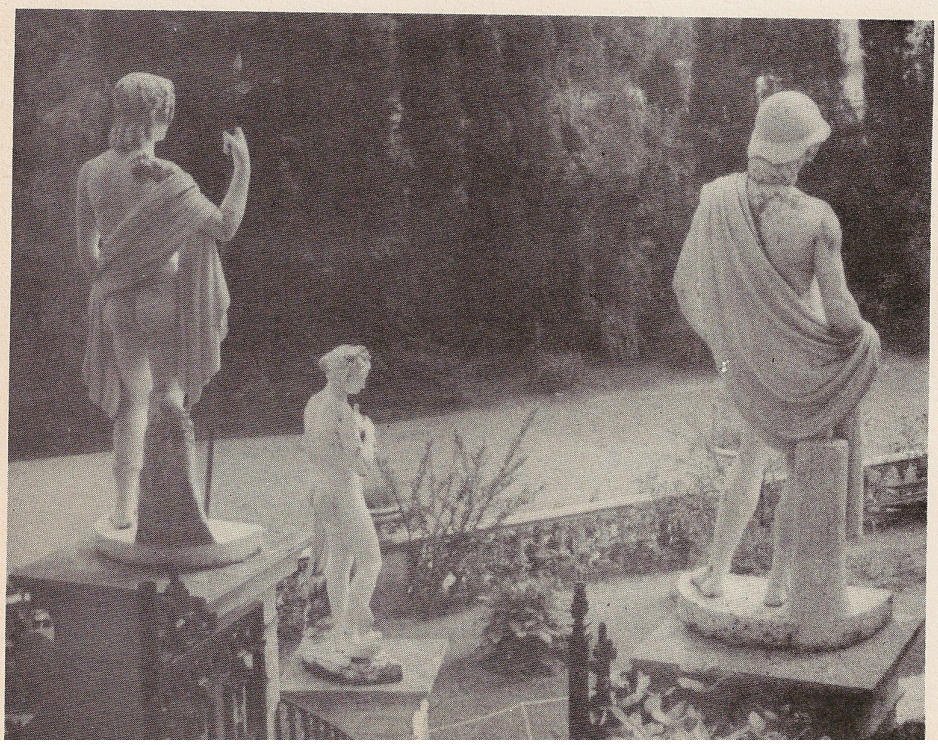




Be It Known That

Gloria F. De Jong

is a tired and true member of the

LOYAL ORDER OF SEAGULLS

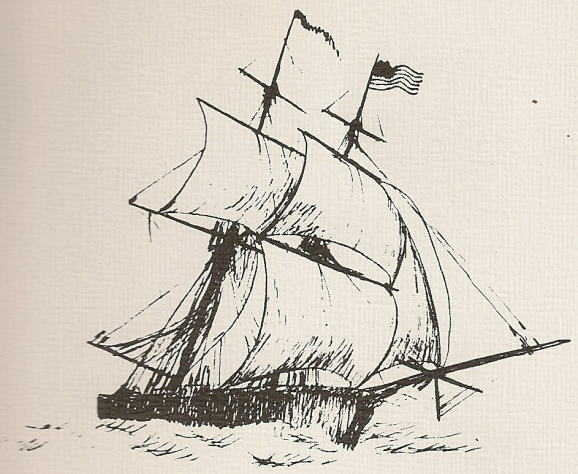
Having weathered the storms of schedule changes, cancelled boating, heavy luggage, cold rooms, cold water, aggressive cab drivers, and replies of "No Speek Englesh" in many lands, SHE is forevermore to be considered a veteran of the Mediterranean and a welcome sight on any fleet landing.

Issued this 2nd day of July 1971 for faithful service during the cruise of the USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) from 5 January to 2 July 1971.

L. A. SNEAD, Captain, USN
Commanding

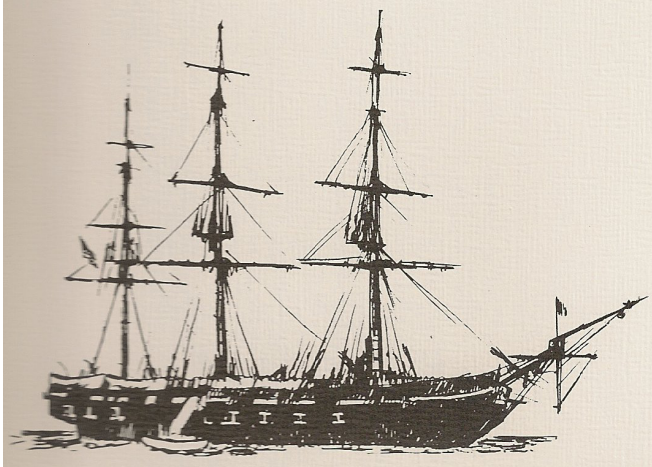
sara 1971

sara's history

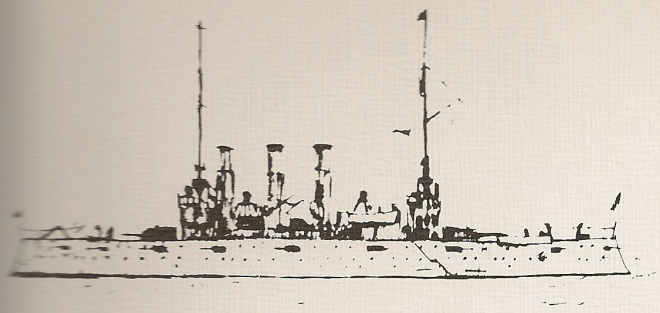


The first SARATOGA was 68 feet long and carried 18 guns. During the Revolutionary War she simultaneously captured two British ships whose combined firepower was 42 guns. During a wartime West Indies cruise she captured four enemy vessels.

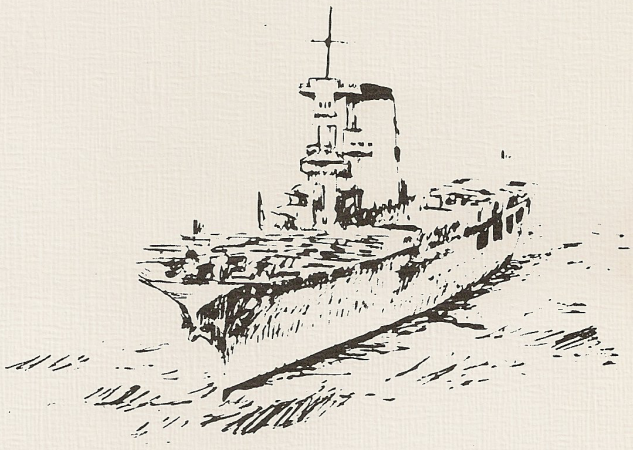
Commodore Thomas MacDonough displayed his Naval genius aboard the second SARATOGA on Lake Champlain during the War of 1812 when he defeated a larger British fleet. SARATOGA'S Fighting Cock symbol was born during the same battle. A Corvette, that SARATOGA was 143 feet long.



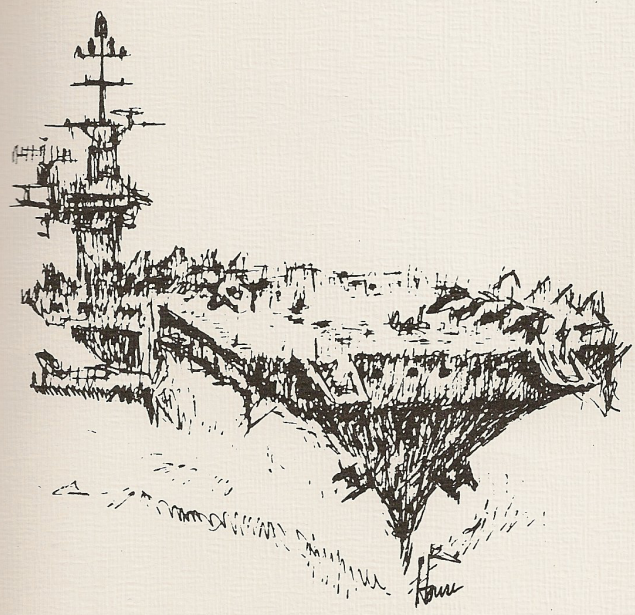
The third SARATOGA, a 150-foot sloop, was carried on the Navy's active ship roster for 65 years — longer than any other SARATOGA. One of her captains was another Naval hero, Commander David G. Farragut.



The fourth SARATOGA had that name for only a part of her commissioned time, from 1911 to 1917. The 380-foot armored cruiser was destroyed in the Philippine Islands in 1941 – three years after she was stricken from the list of active Navy ships – to prevent her capture by the Japanese.



The fifth SARATOGA (CV-3) was the first ship launched as an aircraft carrier. Her most famous skipper, William F. 'Bull' Halsey, became a Fleet Admiral during World War II and SARATOGA also distinguished herself throughout that war. The 900-foot carrier was destroyed in the Bikini Atoll atomic bomb test of July 25, 1946.



The present SARATOGA was launched on Oct. 8, 1955, and was commissioned April 14, 1956. During eleven deployments to the Mediterranean area she has been a fundamental cornerstone of U.S. peace-keeping efforts. She was called upon when the Cold War turned hot in Lebanon in 1957, and she was ordered south to the Caribbean following the Cuban missile crisis. When the Arab–Israeli confrontation grew into the 'Six Day War' of 1967, SARATOGA moved into the trouble area and returned there in September 1970 when tensions again boiled over. During her career SARATOGA hosted three Presidential visits. Dwight D. Eisenhower honored SARATOGA'S crew with a visit in June 1957, and President Richard M. Nixon called on the carrier twice – in May 1969 and again in September 1970. SARATOGA has recently undergone the first stages of conversion to the Navy's first 'CV' – incorporating elements of attack and anti-submarine operations. Continually modernized, always adapted to fit the concepts of the present, SARATOGA is a great lady fully equipped to handle her brood of high performance aircraft, accomplish her mission and support the men who live within her.

commanding officer

SARATOGA'S fifteenth Commanding Officer, Captain Dewitt L. Freeman, came to the ship from a tour of duty at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Captain Freeman began his naval career as an Aviation Cadet in 1943. After earning his wings, he joined Composite Squadron 27, later serving with Fighter Squadron 80 aboard BOXER and Fighter Squadron 111 aboard VALLEY FORGE. Following a tour as flight instructor, Captain Freeman attended Iowa State College, where he majored in Aero Engineering.

Captain Freeman commanded the Navy's first 'PHANTOM' squadron, Fighter Squadron 41, in 1962. He then took command of the 'PHANTOM' Fleet Replacement Training Squadron, Fighter Squadron 101, at Key West, Florida, during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

He commanded the fleet oiler TRUCKEE from January 1968 to January 1969, while the ship was Flagship for Commander Service Force Sixth Fleet.

No newcomer to the ship, Captain Freeman served as SARATOGA'S Operations Officer from May 1964 to June 1965. He stepped up to the rank of Rear Admiral upon relinquishing command and has been assigned duty as Deputy Commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces Southern Europe, Naples, Italy.

captain dewitt l. freeman

commanding officer

captain james r. sanderson

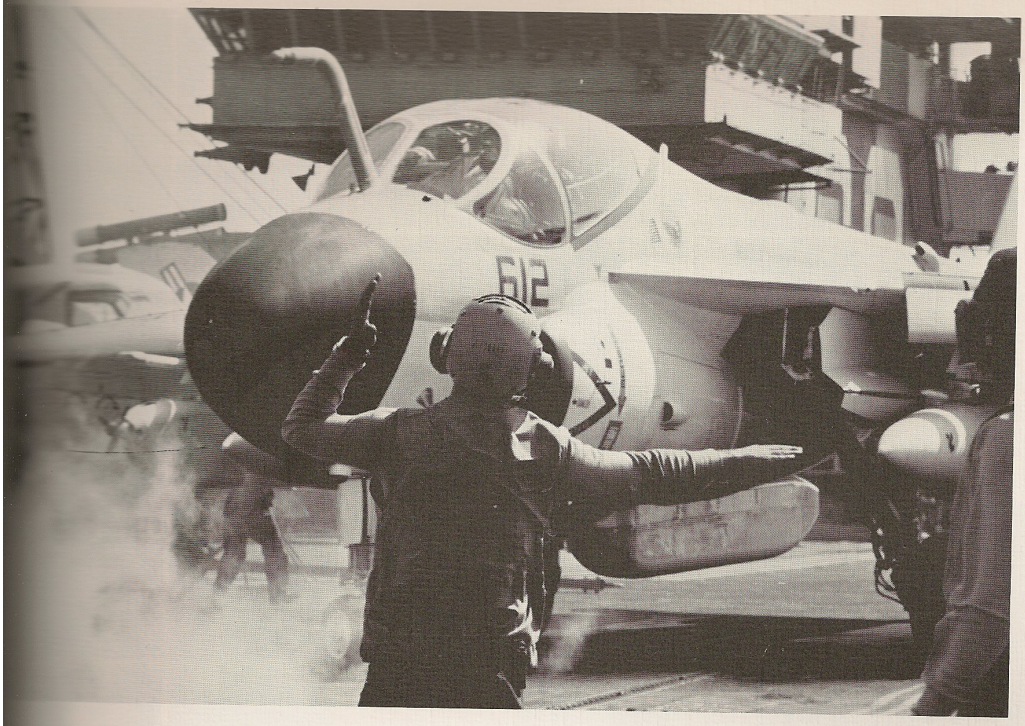
Captain James R. Sanderson took command of SARATOGA in August, 1971, returning to the ship on which he had been Air Wing Three Commander in 1964.

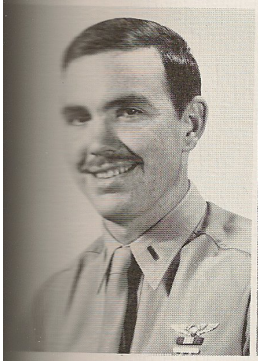
Captain Sanderson enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1943 and was commissioned as an Ensign in July 1945 after completing Midshipman School at Columbia University. He served in the Western Pacific aboard the destroyers MANSFIELD and BAUSELL.

Captain Sanderson began flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in May 1950. From 1950 to 1952, he served with Attack Squadron 195 onboard the carrier PRINCETON, earning the D.F.C. in Korean action. Other assignments included duty with Attack Squadron 16, Air Operations Officer aboard FORRESTAL and Attack Squadron 43. Captain Sanderson commanded Attack Squadron 76 aboard ENTERPRISE.

While in Washington assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Captain Sanderson earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations from Geroge Washington University. He commanded the ammunition ship RAINIER, and served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans on the staff of Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet prior to reporting to SARATOGA.

cdr p. t. gillcrist
cag





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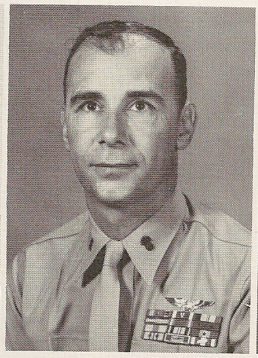

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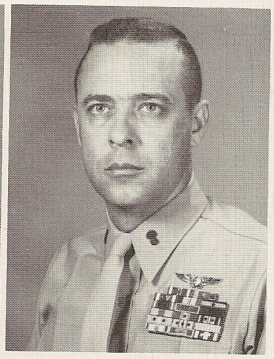

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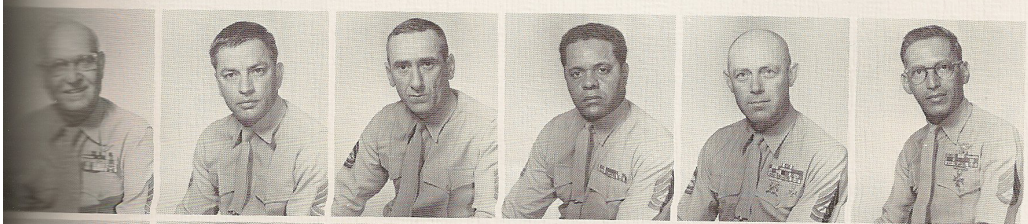
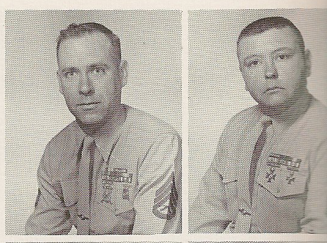


1stSGT J. Farmer
GYSGT M. Hernandez
GYSGT E. Mazik
GYSGT J. Rowen
GYSGT J. Stone
SSGT R. Chavez

SSGT C. Colvard
SSGT R. Davis
SSGT A. Garza
SSGT R. Gooding
SSGT C. Green
SSGT E. Grosvenor

SSGT C. Rhoads
SSGT F. Silva



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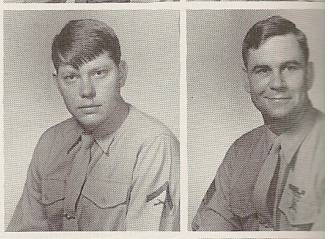
SGT J. Atkins



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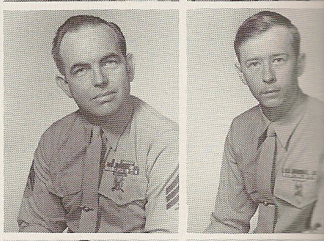

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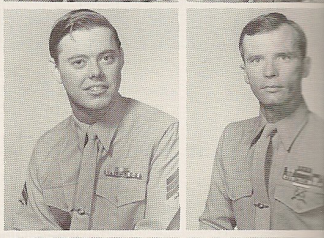
SGT B. Brower



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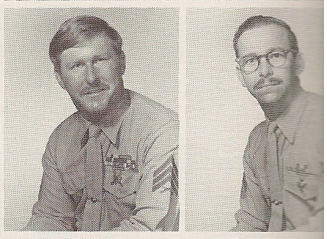

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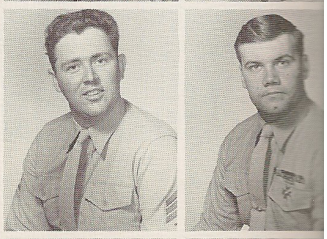

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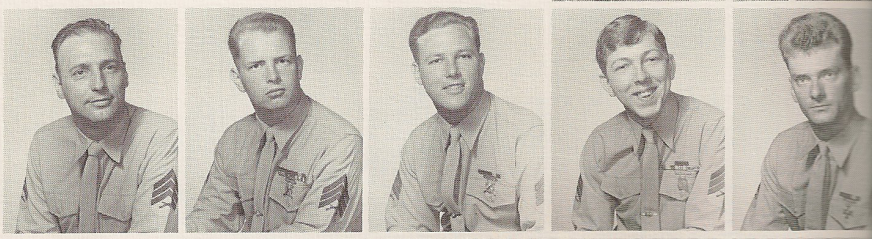

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SGT P. Spring
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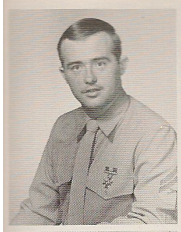
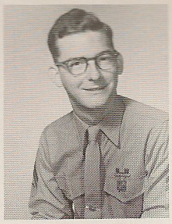
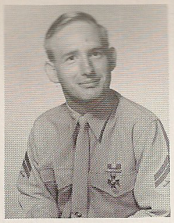
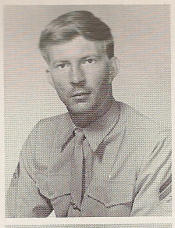
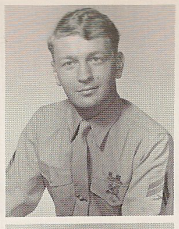

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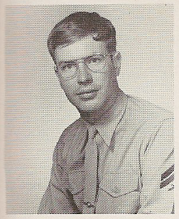
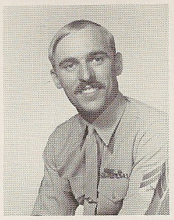

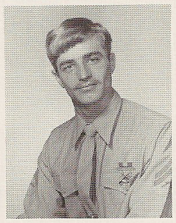
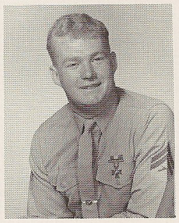

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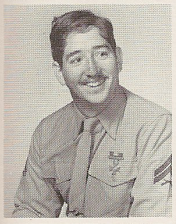
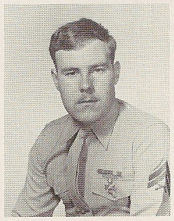

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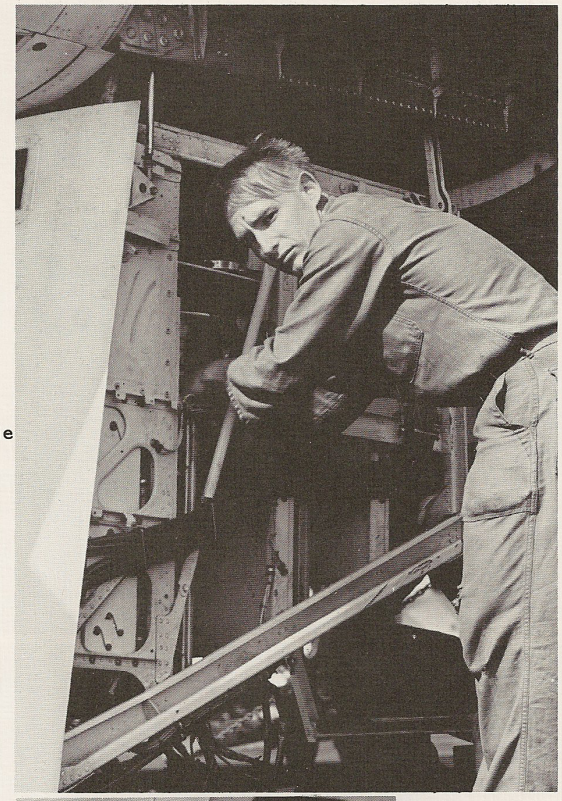
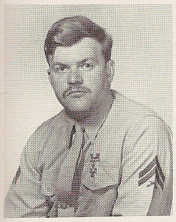
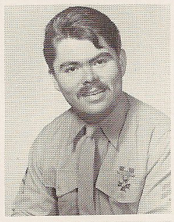
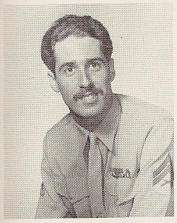
CPL C. Krueger

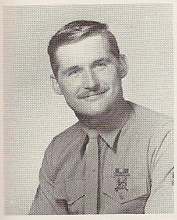
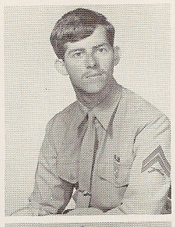


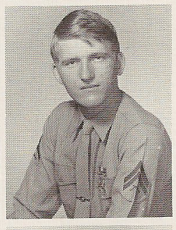
CPL A. Light
CPL J. Martinez



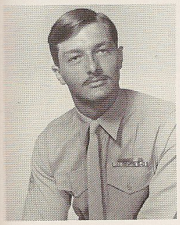
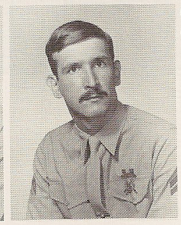
CPL W. Mauldin
CPL R. McCraigie

CPL A. Moore
CPL J. Morgan

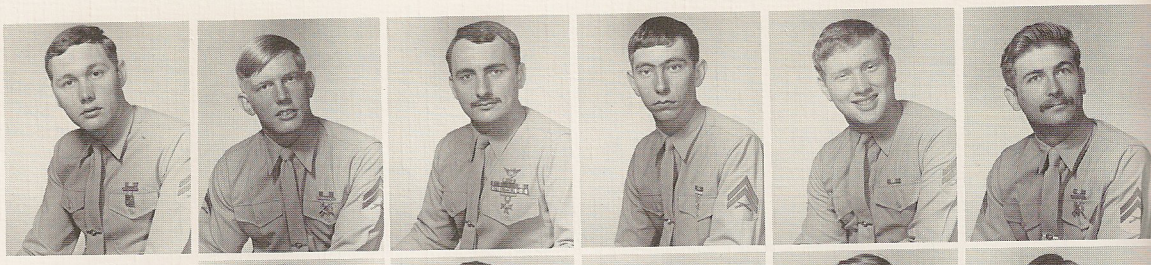


CPL R. Moyer
CPL A. Mullen

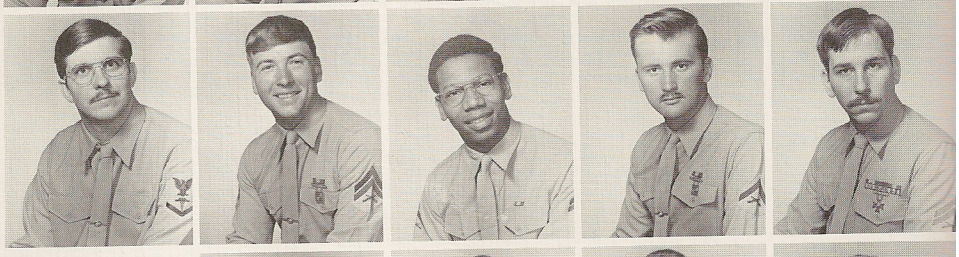



CPL N. Nicotero
CPL L. Nizeolek

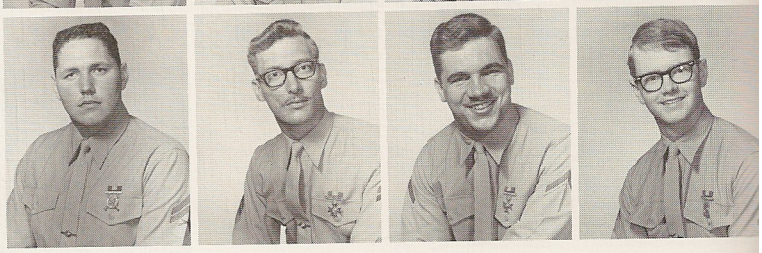
CPL G. O'Neill
CPL H. Palmquist
CPL F. Ruth
CPL D. Schumacher
CPL R. Shanks
CPL W. Sleeth

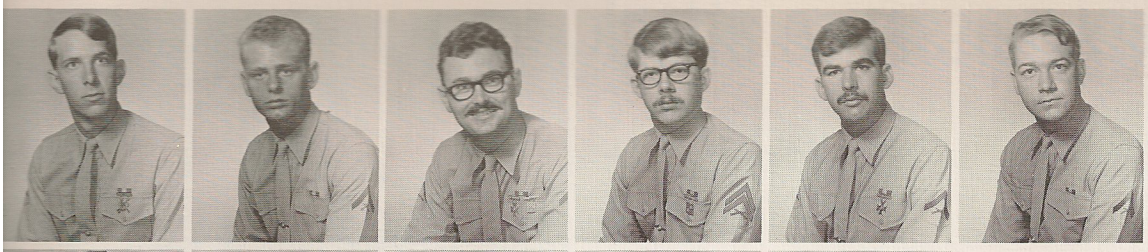


HM3 R. Spain
CPL R. Steckel
CPL Z. Steed
CPL W. Tomasek
CPL F. Turin

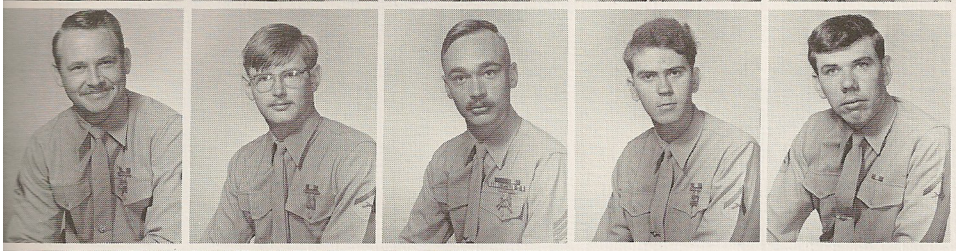


CPL R. Wagner
CPL L. Wolynia
LCPL J. Armpriester
LCPL L. Borden

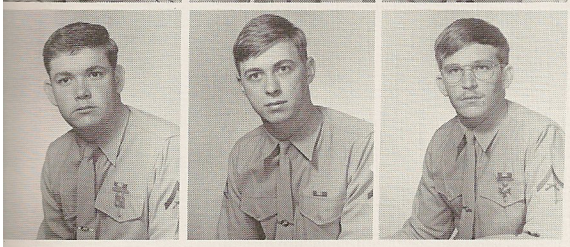




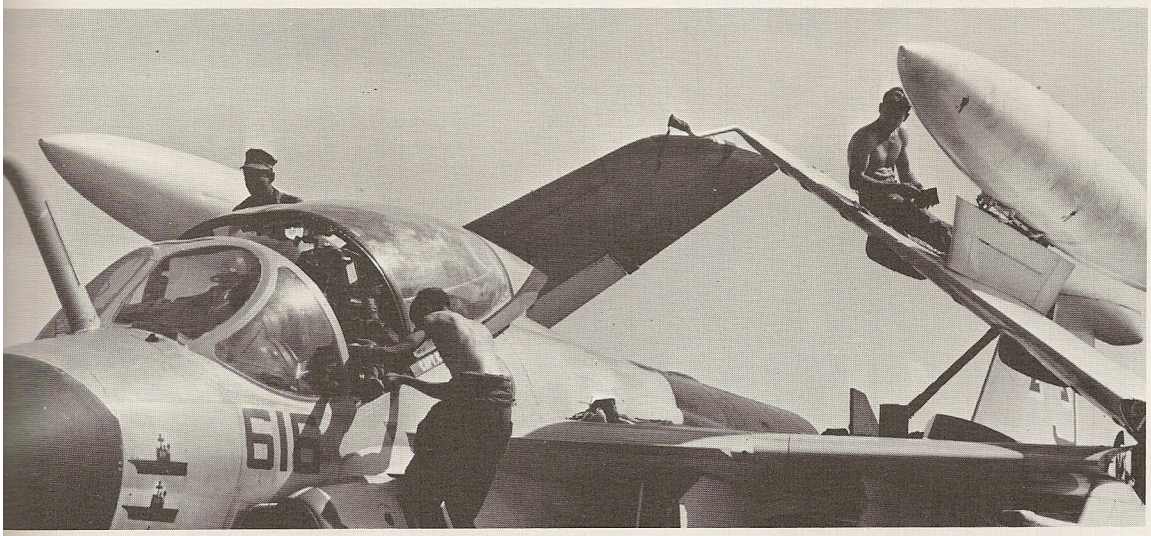
LCPL G. Finklea
LCPL W. Holm
LCPL R. Jacobi
LCPL R. Krebs
LCPL F. Leppink
LCPL S. Levan



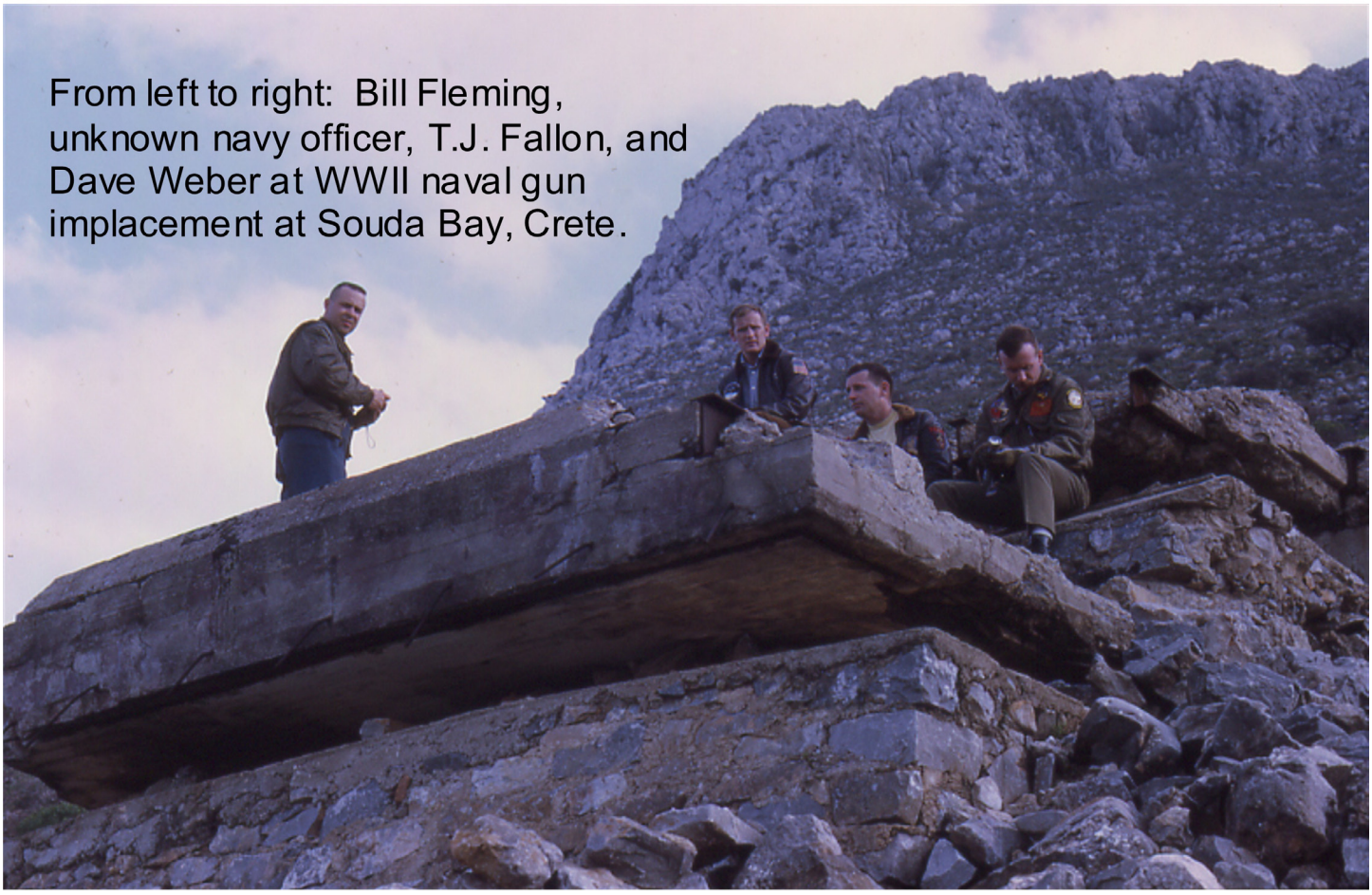
LCPL J. Milliken
LCPL J. O'Neill
LCPL F. Papen
LCPL E. Sadler
LCPL J. Sappington



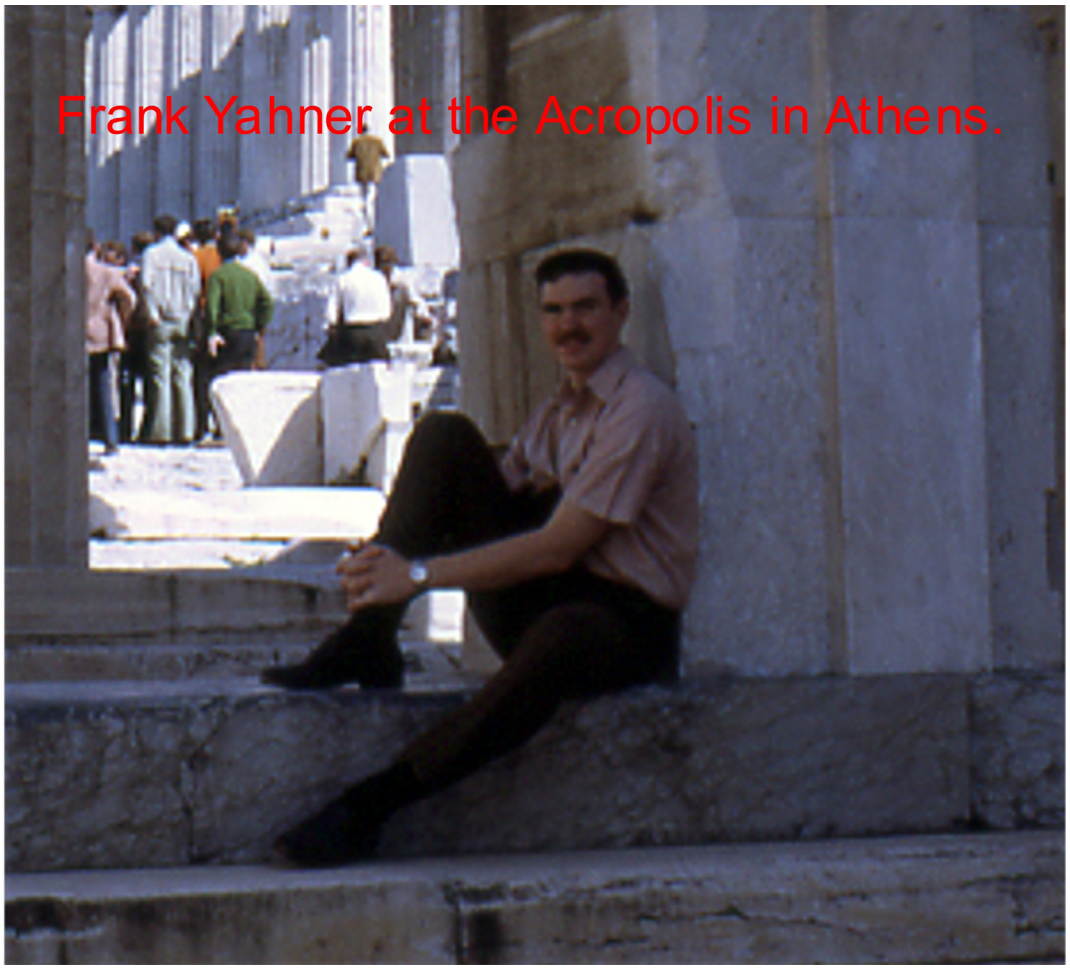
LCPL A. Sloan
LCPL B. Stone
LCPL H. Thierry



Anchorage in Souda Bay, Crete



From left to right: Bill Fleming, unknown navy officer, T.J. Fallon, and Dave Weber at WWII naval gun implacement at Souda Bay, Crete.



Frank Yahner at the Acropolis in Athens.

Note the three carriers painted on the nose representing the Forrestal, Saratoga, and the America.

Dan Roath and Norm Charboneau checking out the Spanish country side.
Carl De Jong and Bill Fleming in photo aircraft.

Dan Roath and Norm Charboneau
just getting flight hours cruising
around Spain.