

- X Samar,¹⁵ Philippines - recreation in Fleet Anchorage
- X Legte,¹⁶ " " " " "
- X Oahu, Hawaii - brief stop-overs
- X Hawaii, " - to pay a call

Some Recollections, as of March 31, 1991

We were sometimes catapulted off the Horned but more often were not, in each case, if I remember correctly, sinking down below deck level after leaving the ship. Though I don't remember any plane from the four squadrons of our air group (bombers, torpedo planes, fighters and fighter-bombers) splashing - only the visiting Corsair after the typhoon.

My most embarrassing experience out there was as follows: One of the last planes in the traffic circle one time, ours got a "wave-off" from the landing signal officer because we were too close to the plane ahead of us, probably because of some delay on deck since I knew, of course, what the ^{usual} proper interval should be. Well, I raised the wheels and went around again, and by this time ^{ours} was the last plane in the circle. Coming in for a second try I got another wave-off because of forgetting to put down the wheels and so had to go around again! Meanwhile the Horned was headed into

The wind all the time, as it always is when planes are landing. Not only that, since the Hornet was the Flagship of the Task Group, all the other ships in it had to guide on it - at the time probably two battleships, two other carriers, ~~two or three~~ ^{five or six} or more cruises and perhaps a couple of dozen destroyers! The third try "never failed." I was, happily, not asked to see the Admiral or Captain, but it would have been more serious if the Japs hadn't already been pretty well routed.

We were never attacked by enemy planes when in the air. As pilots, ^{one of our two} ~~our~~ greatest dangers ^{were} was when we, ^{were} aboard ship when it was threatened by Kamakaze attack. If it had been hit when we were in the air, we probably could have landed on another carrier. Anti-aircraft fire was ~~also~~, of course, ^{the other} a great threat on most missions.

Our Task Group, ^(58.0) was one of four in ~~the~~ ^{under Vice Admiral Mitscher,} Task Force ^{58,} all much the same, which, with the refueling and other auxiliary ships, made up the Fleet (Fifth), under Admiral Spruance, who took over from Halsey just before our first mission. The Fifth Fleet was the principal striking force of the Pacific Fleet, under Admiral Nimitz, and the same can be said for our Task Force 58, which,

incidentally, was called Task Force 38 when it was under Halsey. The latter had established a great reputation in routing the Japs from various island bases but got fooled by them in the greatest naval battle of all time. This, ^{the Battle of Leyte Gulf,} was immediately following our (MacArthur et al) landings in Leyte. While the enemy was attempting a pincer movement through straits north of Samar and south of Leyte, to attack the lightly defended landing area, Japan's fast carrier force drew off Halsey, who didn't realize it was a ruse. The enemy's carriers having relatively few planes and being ready to be sacrificed in order to keep Halsey from interfering with the pincers. IT worked except that ^{the} lower half of the pincers was just about annihilated by our old battleships (some of which had been revived after being badly damaged at Pearl Harbor), and the northern half had turned back when it seemed to have victory within its grasp.

Our helldivers (SB2C-4's) were very sturdy, reliable, if rather ugly, planes. I never had any mechanical trouble* that I can remember, never missed catching a wire (and bouncing into the high barrier wire) and never getting a flat tire except perhaps taxiing. IT was a great plane to dive,

* EXCEPT WITH A GUN OR ROCKET

and on my last flight in one, just before being released to inactive duty, put the plane in a loop - just for fun. Compared with the hellcat fighter I flew over Guam it was, however, a "Mack truck" compared with a Porche. It was only the earlier models that gave it the bad reputation, as described by that crazy Marine in the book he wrote.

What I enjoyed most about flying, whether it was at Squantum, Jacksonville, Miami, Daytona, Alameda, Hilo, Guam or even over Japan or other hostile islands, was looking at the scenery, which was often spectacular and almost always interesting except when we were out of sight of land. The water falls dropping hundreds of feet off cliffs into the ocean at Hawaii, and Fuji and the live volcanoes of Kyushu and smaller islands, stand out in my memory. I remember one "volcano" we flew over seemed to be just emerging from the ocean depths. More of a satisfaction but a very considerable one was when one caught a wire and landed safely on the carrier after a mission, ~~but~~ but there was also much satisfaction in taking off and not going into the dirts, especially right after gaining back flight deck altitude after circling close to the water after take-off, which seemed to happen

every time.

Actually flying the plane was more routine than enjoyable, and it was apt to be tiring because we ^{almost} invariably flew in tight formation. This meant constant use of the throttle to keep close to the plane one flew formation on without getting too close. One couldn't relax for a moment. Enjoyable exceptions were the solo ferry flight from Dayton to Glenview, Illinois; flying the Hellcat in Guam; and going from Oahu to Kilauea, Hawaii, and back in the SBD. I might add flying the SBC biplane dive bomber, the enjoyment being ⁱⁿ manoeuvring the plane, as in the case of the Hellcat. Though there was much talk about having one's own plane after the war, when this became impracticable, I didn't seem to miss flying ^{much,} as far as I can remember, probably because of my having so many other interests or, perhaps more accurately, at least one very keen interest such as birds. No longer, however, was I interested in little else, as had been the case during my mid to late teens. Incidentally, I may not have mentioned earlier that altogether I logged something ~~something~~ over 1700 hours of flying in the four years, only a very small proportion of this on the 29 combat

missions since these probably averaged only perhaps four to six hours apiece.

A Recollection of November 29, 1994

Perhaps a week after climbing Mt. Shasta (see p. 132) on a flight, presumably from Alameda, or San Francisco Bay, probably to Fallon, Nevada, for rocket training, I looked north and saw Mt. Shasta in the distance, completely covered with snow. Only recently have I tried to measure the distance, which, assuming we flew straight to Fallon, came to about 225 miles as a minimum! There was no question in my mind at the time that it was Shasta, and it doesn't seem likely it was Lassen, which was distant a minimum of about 160 miles but is only 10,457 feet compared with Shasta's 14,162. I do recall seeing the mountains of Hawaii while flying south of Oahu at perhaps 12,000 feet and estimating the distance at 200 miles.