

KOREAN AIR WAR



GATHERED in flag plot aboard *Phil Sea* are 14 stars. *Adm. Radford* meets *RAdm. Blick*, *VAdm. Clark*, *VAdm. Briscoe*, *RAdm. Storrs*.

patched a crash boat from the coast. Progress of the plane was followed closely by radio. About 25 miles from the Korean east coast, the pilot dropped below the fog for a water landing. He sighted a South Korean fishing boat and guided his plane close to the craft before dropping into the water.

The plane floated long enough for the three men to climb out on the wing and organize their escape before jumping into the water. Sea waters weren't heavy, but flying clothes made it difficult for the men to stay afloat. One of the men swallowed too much salt water and appeared in danger of going under. Kuehler kept him above the waves until



POWER fails as *Corsair* gets a few feet above the flight deck of the *Philippine Sea*.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although the truce in Korea has been signed and there is no longer any Korean Air War, NANEWS is running the stories this month in recognition of the exploits of the Navy's pilots who fought the last months of the war.

Thirty Seconds of Action

A Navy *Corsair* piloted by Ens. Douglas E. Cross, took off from the flight deck of the *Philippine Sea*. A few feet above the flight deck, the engine stalled and his plane started to slide off toward the water. With the left wing cutting the waves, the plane splashed into the water just off the port bow.

As Cross struggled to get out of the sinking plane, a helicopter winged over quickly for a pickup. The pilot, Lt. (jg) Leroy M. Kile, lowered the rescue loop and successfully picked up Ens. Cross.



AS PLANE starts to slide off to the water, *Corsair* cuts the waves with its left wing.

The helicopter deposited the pilot, wet and shaken but unhurt, back on the flight deck of the carrier. The time elapsed from the *Corsair's* crash to the pilot's return to the flight deck was 30 seconds.

Some Things Smelled Fishy

While on a patrol mission with eight other planes from the *Philippine Sea*, Lt. Robert Kuehler found his plane was running low on gas. He was trying to make the coast and a friendly airfield in South Korea with his two crewmen, G. N. Alkire and A. J. Franklin.

When the cruiser *Saint Paul* got word by radio that the plane was trying for the coast and was low on gas, she headed south at high speed with her escort destroyer *Prichett* to aid in the rescue. At the same time, the Air Force dis-



CROSS grasps for rescue hook as Lt. (jg) L. M. Kile hovers overhead to make the pickup.

help came.

The fishermen lost no time in heading for the downed plane. Within ten minutes after the ditching, their boat was alongside, pulling the airmen on deck into piles of fish from the day's catch. None of the men spoke English, but their cooperation was excellent. They made the men as comfortable as possible before heading for land.

About an hour after the rescue, the AF crash boat came up in search of the downed fliers. A flare from the pilot's rescue kit brought the crash boat alongside for the transfer to the *Saint Paul* which had just arrived on the scene from 25 miles northward.

Medical officers found the men in good physical condition, although a bit shaky from the experience and smelling strongly of fish. After the airmen had

washed off the fishy smell and rested a while, the crewmen told of the landing. They were worried when they started down, but Kuehler put the plane down "just as smooth as on a carrier." He kept the wings up until the last minute, then dropped her into the water with hardly a jolt.

Gunfire on All Sides

William N. Longley, AD1 (AP), serving aboard the heavy cruiser *St. Paul* in Korean waters, is a member of a select Navy trio. He is one of the three enlisted naval helicopter pilots in the Far East.

Normal duties involve routine scouting patrols for the ship and aerial spotting for the frequent coastal bombardment the cruiser dishes out to the enemy. On occasions, however, Longley and other helicopter pilots are called on to rescue downed airmen over enemy territory. These pilots must continually dodge enemy gunfire and sometimes

Communist batteries, which had spotted them, opened fire on the clearing, pouring approximately 50 rounds of 76 or 105 mm shells into the area. The men took refuge in a nearby cave until the barrage lifted. Within a few moments, Marines arrived in a jeep with the wounded man and the helicopter took off. Enemy batteries again opened fire but failed to bring it down.

Forbush earned the DFC for this.

Polka Dots Take Over

Although Communists in North Korea have felt the fury of the *Checkerboard* pilots' attacks, that isn't the reason they're seeing polka dots these days. The checked pattern of the Marine squadron aboard the *Bairoko* is being replaced. The cowling design of the Marine planes is being painted with bright red polka dots, used by its replacement, the *Polka Dot* squadron.

After nearly three years of continuous combat flights from the decks of rotating

carriers on both coasts of Korea, the famed Marine *Checkerboard* squadron has passed its tradition to the *Polka Dot* squadron, new to Korean war headlines and complemented by nearly 80 percent Reservists.

Seeing Eye Seadog

Lt. (jg) Howard Thayer saved the life of a wounded shipmate with his seeing eye tactics for the second time in a year.

Thayer gained his seeing eye reputation in 1952 while flying with Ens. Ken Schechter over North Korea in *Sky-raiders* from the *Valley Forge*. Schechter was diving through heavy flak to bomb a rail target near Wonsan when an enemy anti-aircraft shell exploded in his face.

The blast ripped off the top of Schechter's cockpit and sprayed shrapnel into his face, chest and shoulders. He was blinded and losing blood rapidly. He signalled for help and Thayer came to his aid.

Giving directions by radio, Thayer



ONE OF three enlisted helicopter pilots in the Far East, Longley boards his helicopter.



TWICE a lifesaver, Lt. (jg) Thayer stands before his Panther jet aboard the USS Boxer.



DESPITE almost useless wing flap hit by Red shell, LCdr. W. Carver returned to Phil Sea.

gunfire from their own friendly ships.

There was a time when Lt. Russell T. Forbush and his engineer, Robert W. Behnke, flying from the *St. Paul*, went through at least 200 to 300 salvos during a daring hop to pick up a wounded U. S. Marine. Nearly 50 salvos were fired by Communist guns at short range in an attempt to shoot them down.

When Forbush and Behnke took off for the evacuation point, they were hugging the ground to escape flying shells. Their aircraft flew most of the distance at from 10 to 15 feet off the ground and never more than 50 feet. They arrived at the pick-up site and set down in a small clearing.

MARINE begins to paint over *Checkerboard* emblem to make way for *Polka Dot's* emblem as LCol. Jewson, *Checkerboard CO*, watches.



guided Schechter out of enemy territory and searched desperately for a place to land. Thayer, after leading the way through 150 miles of Red-held territory, talked in Schechter to a blind landing on a tiny dirt airstrip 10 miles south of the front lines. Under Thayer's expert guidance, the blinded pilot brought his crippled plane in for a perfect landing.

Back in Korean waters, flying a *Panther* from the *Boxer*, Thayer led another crippled shipmate to a safe landing. Thayer's squadron was ordered to attack a strongly-defended troop concentration area near the central front. Thayer's wingman, Lt. (jg) J. J. Chambers, was hit by shrapnel in both legs and arms.

of a *Boxer* plane squadron, he noted a man standing to one side with the name, CASSADY, F. L., stenciled on his shirt. Since the usual spelling is Cassidy, he was surprised enough to see someone who spelled his name with two a's and more amazed to see the identical initials of F. L.

Francis Leon Cassady stopped to talk to Chief Francis Luther Cassady. He found that both of them had 12 years of naval service (counting one year of Reserve time during which both were salesman). To his continued surprise he found that both of their service numbers begin with the three digits of 321. They both married west coast girls, were born no more than seven miles from each

was flying off the *Badoeng Strait* in the Yellow Sea. Cleeland, Mullins, Gillon and Lt. J. B. Goery were on an armed reconnaissance mission over the coastal supply route running from Chinnampo to Hanch'on. When Goery made a rocket run on a dock area, he was hit and forced to ditch his plane in the Taedong estuary about midway between Sok-to and Chinnampo. The time was 1400.

Hearing the *Mayday* distress signal, Watson and Wallace, who were flying a naval gunfire spotting mission nearby, came to join in covering Lt. Goery. As the rescue 'copter came within one mile of the downed pilot, a warning was sounded over the radio that *Migs* were approaching the area from the north.



ENGINEERING personnel, A. N. Male, Cdr. N. Sonensheim, Chief Machinist O. Parrott, inspect damaged coupling on *Phil Sea*.



SAME first name, middle initial and last name astounds Francis Leon Cassady as he meets Chief Francis Luther Cassady.

The enemy shell blast also knocked out his radio and instruments. It was just the reverse of Schechter's plight when he had instruments.

This time, Thayer was forced to give flying directions by hand signalling. He took the job of escorting Chambers to a landing strip. Weak and losing blood rapidly, the injured pilot could fly only a few minutes more. Some 40 miles to the south and a few minutes later, Thayer led Chambers to an emergency crash on a UN airstrip.

Repairs on The Line

While pounding Communists' front-line positions in all-out carrier operations, the *Philippine Sea* was forced to operate on only two of her four shafts. Working day and night, engineering personnel made repairs at sea, allowing the ship to keep *Skyraiders*, *Panthers* and *Corsairs* striking over North Korea. They stayed in the fight despite a serious handicap in carrier speed.

Hoppy Meets Hoppy

While Francis Leon Cassady was passing through the sleeping compartment

other in northern Missouri and both saw considerable action during WW II in the Pacific theatre.

Although they may be related, they doubt that they are. Both of their nicknames are Hoppy.

They Tried Anyway

Last December five Marine *Corsair* pilots fought off four Red *Migs* while flying Rescap over Chinnampo. For their daring attempt, four of the pilots, Cpts. D. P. Gillon, Jr., C. L. Mullins, A. Watson and C. M. Wallace, have been awarded Silver Stars by MGen. Vernon E. Megee, commanding general of MAW-1. The fifth pilot, Maj. David Cleeland who directed the Rescap, has been recommended for the Navy Cross.

Besides keeping the *Migs* from attacking the rescue helicopters that were trying to rescue a downed pilot, the Marine pilots destroyed four shore batteries. The fliers all were in the air more than four hours when they finally returned to their carrier. None of the flight returned with more than 30 gallons of fuel.

The flight was composed of members of the *Checkerboard* squadron which

The helicopter hovered where it was and asked for F-86 *Saberjet* cover.

Cleeland told the "chopper" pilot not to worry, saying that "*Corsairs* had fought *Migs* before." He then directed the helicopter to go in and get the downed pilot. He told Mullins to circle Goery as he was doing and asked Wallace, Watson and Gillon to provide high cover.

At 1420 the *Migs* arrived at about 12,000 feet. Gillon, Watson and Wallace started fighting them at 5,000 to 7,000 feet. Mullins provided immediate cover at 1,500 to 3,000 feet while Cleeland circled from sea level to 1,500 feet. The attack continued for nearly 15 minutes with the *Migs* making repeated runs during the entire period.

Wallace, Watson and Gillon met the attacks with head-on firing runs with their wing guns and five-inch rockets. Throughout the battle, the *Migs* pressed their attacks extremely close, often passing within a few yards of the *Corsairs*. Twice Mullins was forced to fight the *Migs*, but only once a *Mig* broke through the entire cover and reached the lowest level. There it was fired upon immediately by Cleeland, who was waiting.

When the "chopper" pilot saw the *Corsair* cover fight off the Reds, he proceeded to the downed pilot and made several unsuccessful attempts to pick him up. As the *Migs* cleared the area, Cleeland strafed the beaches. Watson, who was out of ammunition, made a reconnaissance of the adjoining beaches.

A second helicopter came into the area, but also was unsuccessful in picking up the downed pilot. Then a crash boat entered the estuary. As it came within 1,000 yards of the pilot in the water, shore batteries opened fire and the boat was forced to make a run for safety. A close hit damaged the boat and both engines failed. During this time, Wallace spotted a gun position and

terranean, South China, Tasman, Yellow, Red, North and Caribbean Seas. On their Korean tour in the Sea of Japan they made almost daily flights over it to strike at North Korea.

Aside from the eight seas, the six airmen have sailed and flown in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans as well as the Bay of Bengal, Persian Gulf and English channel.

That One-Half Got Them

Once regarded as an outmoded means of transportation, ox-carts have arrived again in Korea. The North Koreans use them to carry explosives. That's why the carts are designated alternate targets for UN aviators, if they can't make the first.

Down below, Lt. D. B. Edge saw a train that had just left a tunnel in the heart of Songjin. He radioed its position to Lt. C. Z. Stevens and then moved in for the attack. Although it was pitch dark and they had no flares, the two *Corsair* pilots came in on an extra-low bombing run.

Lt. Edge placed a bomb on the tracks in front of the train, stopping it, then zeroed in on rails in back of the train. The two pilots proceeded to give the train a working over with their 20 mm cannons. For good measure, Lt. Edge scored a hit on the boxcars with a 250-pound bomb.

Farther south, Lt. J. N. Longfield and Lt. H. J. Airey picked up the position of



SWAPPING "sea stories" over coffee are Valley Forge's six globe trotters, Green, McCabe, Jackson, Walker, Bunker and Bangham.



THIS IS handiwork of shipmates for his slip-of-the-tongue. Lt. John W. Fornof, Boxer pilot approves their painting job.

silenced it with two rockets.

Meanwhile, Gillon spotted another gun and made repeated runs on the position with only one of his guns firing. Cleeland, who had the only remaining ammunition, gained altitude and made four rocket runs on a cave gun position. He scored effective hits that silenced the position.

Cleeland then directed the four pilots to return to the ship while he remained to brief the flight that had been sent out to relieve them. He returned to the ship four-and-a-half hours after leaving it with no ammunition and less than 15 gallons of fuel. Despite the heroic rescue attempt, Goery was never recovered.

They Saw The Seas

With the completion of the *Valley Forge's* fourth tour of combat duty in Korea, six pilots could claim they have sailed not seven, but eight seas and flown over them as well.

The globe girdlers are LCdr. L. B. Green, LCdr. C. H. McCabe, Jr., Lt. D. G. Jackson, Lt. H. M. Walker, Jr., Lt. S. J. Bunker and Lt. (jg) J. F. Bangham. On a world cruise aboard the *Valley Forge* in 1947-48, they saw the Medi-

They sometimes receive more than their share of attention aboard the *Boxer* on account of Lt. John W. Fornof. He had just completed his day's mission against the Communists and was in the squadron ready room being debriefed. Reeling off the destruction he had caused, he concluded with "... killed three-and-a-half oxen."

The debriefing officer thought this over for a moment, then stared at Fornof with raised eyebrows. Realizing his blunder, Fornof amended, "I mean three oxen." Word soon spread through the carrier and his mechanic heard of it. The next day, when he went to his plane, he found, newly painted on its side, three-and-a-half oxen.

Just to prove he had a sense of humor, the next day the pilot claimed the destruction of a telephone pole. This too was promptly drawn on his plane's fuselage.

Scratch One Train

Night hecklers from the *Phil Sea* were flying through murky skies along the east coast of Korea when a hole suddenly opened up in the overcast. Opportunity stared the pilots in the face.

the train and rushed to their fellow pilots' aid. They spent their bombs on the targets, then returned to the Task Force.

A little later, Lt. J. Snyder and his wingman, Ens. Paul Wasquist, both *Phil Sea Panther* pilots, were reconnoitering a rail line near Songjin. They came across three groups of boxcars scattered along the line and unleashed their rockets. Moving towards Songjin, they continued to strafe boxcars they encountered. Snyder knew of the train which the hecklers had crippled and saved two rockets for it.

Knowing the area around the train was heavily defended by anti-aircraft, he made his attack at high speed and sent one of the rockets into the boxcar. Turning back, he made one more run and placed the other rocket right on target. By then the weather had completely closed in and further flights were cancelled.

● **NAS BIRMINGHAM**—When the Marines say "he was really shook", they're talking about TSgt. Henry L. Hamlett of the station MAD. A Marine for six years, he received a notice from his board to come in and register for the draft. That's what shook him.