

FIVE STAR



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PREPARING FOR LAUNCH

BY MC3 ANDREW WATERS



An F/A-18E, assigned to the "Fighting Swordsmen" of strike fighter squadron (VFA) 83, prepares to launch from the flight deck. Photo by MC3 Gian Probhudas.

Sailors assigned to the air department's V-2 division aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) performed extensive maintenance and testing on the catapults and arresting gear on the flight deck ensuring Ike was ready to pass Flight Deck Certification.

The V-2 Sailors working on this equipment spent several days and nights maintaining and repairing wires and engines so the ship can safely catch aircraft.

"The level of work required to get the gear online is synonymous with moving mountains," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Andrew Van Winkle, an arresting gear chief aboard Ike.

"We had to bring all four engines out of inactive equipment maintenance," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 2nd Class Kimberly Chuck, an Ike arresting gear topside petty officer. "We had to stay long hours and work until the early morning to get the wires ready to catch the aircraft."

Bringing the arresting gear back to an operational status was only half the battle to get Ike ready for flight deck certification.

According to Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 1st Class Nancy Dutcher, the bow catapults' leading petty officer, getting the catapults operational was no small feat either due to the complexity of these systems.

"Between getting the hydraulic fluid running, maintaining proper temperature levels and making sure every system worked together, getting the catapults operational was a big issue," said Dutcher.

The amount of moving parts that goes into launching aircraft off of a flight deck is often unrealized.

"When people think about a catapult, what they see is the steam and the

cat track on top of the flight deck, but what people fail to see is what's below deck: what really matters," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Jonathan Polanco, a bow catapults chief aboard Ike. "There are a lot of mechanical and electrical parts that go into motion."

The vast majority of the Sailors who work on both systems are new, presenting its own set of challenges to overcome.

"It's been so long since we've been operational that even the people who are qualified are out of the game, so we haven't been able to fully jump into training other people," said Dutcher. "We are taking it slow and making sure that no one gets hurt."

Complex systems mixed with a green crew has a high potential for mishap, so V-2's chain of command has been doing everything they can to ensure their Sailors' safety.

"Complacency is always my number one fear," said Polanco. "Becoming complacent on the flight deck shows a lack of respect for the flight deck and the equipment."

Even with all of these challenges, the work had to be done correctly and on time for Ike to fulfill its primary mission of launching and recovering aircraft.

"You can't have an aircraft carrier without launch and recovery," said Van Winkle. "We have a direct role in accomplishing the ship's mission. It is easier to face some of the struggles we face knowing that what we do is critical in that task."

V-2 will continue to work around the clock to keep the catapults and arresting gear operational and keep Ike mission ready.

FLYING SQUAD

BY MCSA BRIANNA THOMPSON



Sailors man the hose to combat a simulated fire. Photo by MC3 Nathan Beard.



Engineman 2nd Class Darrin Goss works as a phone-talker. Photo by MCSA Trent P. Hawkins.

The at-sea fire party, otherwise known as the Flying Squad, is a collection of Sailors, aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), who are the first line of defense against shipboard casualties while Ike is underway. These Sailors come from many rates.

Whenever a casualty happens damage control central calls away the Flying Squad to muster at the corresponding repair locker, don their personal protective equipment (PPE) and make their way to the casualty.

"Flying Squad's job is to perform preventive maintenance on damage control equipment and use it if necessary in a casualty," said Damage Controlman 2nd Class Marissa Macaluso, Flying Squad's on-scene leader.

Chief Damage Controlman Dana Cox, a member of Flying Squad's rapid response team said just like general quarters, members of flying squad operate out of a repair locker where Sailors man different roles depending on the casualty.

"We are the fire department for the ship," said Cox. "We have to get to the scene as quickly as possible before the casualty gets out of hand."

To be a part of Flying Squad, Sailors must be qualified in basic and advanced damage control. When Macaluso came aboard Ike during its 2016 deployment, she started out as the on-scene messenger and she would send messages from the scene to the locker in case of a loss in electronic communications.

"I was so nervous during my first casualty," said Macaluso. "Because you never know what to expect when you arrive on scene."

Damage Controlman 2nd Class Jeanette Rochefort is Flying Squad's repair locker leader, she came aboard in 2017 and started as a phone talker and plotter, over the next two years she earned more qualifications and worked her way to her current position.

"Just get in the books and learn and practice the positions," said Rochefort. "Get on teams like the hose team, read about their positions in the red books and take the drills seriously."

Along with gaining knowledge by actively participating in Flying Squad, Macaluso amassed her current knowledge by asking questions.

"I took a lot of information from people who had already been here," said Macaluso. "They have the experience and the knowledge. I think I annoyed everyone with how many questions I asked."

Flying squad is an on-going responsibility, whether they are in chow or asleep after Taps, members of Flying Squad always have to be on the alert to protect and maintain the ship.

"It's alright to be nervous, because that's always going to happen," said Macaluso. "Let that nervousness drive you."

For Sailors interested in joining the Flying Squad, route a request chit through your chain of command and get approved by the Fire Marshall and Damage Control Assistant (DCA).



Sailors receive a haircut in the enlisted barbershop. Photo by MCSN Jairus Bailey.



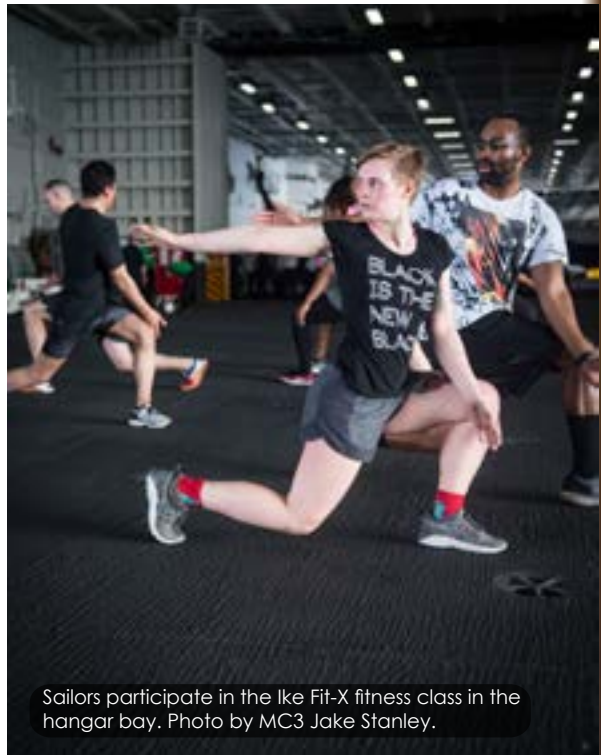
Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Brian Tyson and Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Jordan Buckner configure a Weapons Skid, MHU-191. Photo by MC3 Ashley Estrella.



An F/A-18E Super Hornet, assigned to the "Rampagers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 83, lands on the flight deck. Photo by MC3 James Norket.



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Mia Amor Lapan drives a spotting dolly in the hangar bay. Photo by MC3 Ashley Estrella.



Sailors participate in the Ike Fit-X fitness class in the hangar bay. Photo by MC3 Jake Stanley.



Aviation Electrician's Mate 3rd class Devin Boatright assigned to the "Rampagers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 83, troubleshoots wiring for a fuel system of an FA-18E Super Hornet in the hangar bay. Photo by MC3 Jake Stanley.

THE MEN WHO WENT DOWN WITH A LOST WORLD WAR II AIRCRAFT CARRIER

BY ED CAESAR, AT WAR



A World War II helmet found by the Petrel, a high-tech research vessel, at the bottom of the Pacific. David Maurice Smith for The New York Times.

When The New York Times Magazine published my story about the hunt for the wreck of the U.S.S. Wasp, an aircraft carrier sunk by torpedoes in the Pacific during World War II, I expected a certain amount of correspondence from readers who had a particular connection to the ship. There were 2,248 men on board when it was hit. More than 2,000 of those men survived.

Dozens of people wrote — either to me, or on the comments below the online article — about the experiences of husbands, brothers, fathers, uncles, grandfathers and great-uncles who had served on board the Wasp. One reader described how the explosions after the torpedo strikes knocked his grandfather's shoes “clean off.” Another said her father, who swam for 17 hours after the order to abandon ship, spoke of “the water being on fire and the sharks.”

Jane Pepper from Media, Penn., told me about her late husband, G. Willing Pepper, who served as an officer, and who often told his family the story of the “awful day” the ship was hit. Willing Pepper spent eight hours in the water, without a life vest, before being rescued by a nearby American warship and treated by doctors. The medics, however, did not know Pepper was allergic to the penicillin with which they treated him, and he slipped into a coma. When he awoke weeks later, the first words he remembered hearing were: “Good heavens, he’s going to live.” Pepper died in 2001, at the age of 93.

Perhaps the most remarkable exchange I had in the aftermath of the story’s publication was with someone who remembered the Wasp as if it was yesterday. Brig. Gen. Reginald Van Stockum was born on July 8, 1916, exactly one week after his father, an English infantryman, was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme — the bloodiest day in British military history. His mother remarried an American, and the family settled in Washington State. In 1937, when he was 21, Van Stockum was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. In 1941, he boarded the U.S.S. Wasp and took command of the Marine detachment on the ship.

In May 1942, he played a part in perhaps the Wasp’s greatest achievement, which was delivering British Spitfire planes in the relief of the island of Malta. During this period, he got to know many of the officers who would feature so heavily in the story of the Wasp’s sinking, five months later. My descriptions of the men on board the Wasp were drawn from naval and newspaper reports. Here was a man who had served with those characters, shoulder to shoulder.

Van Stockum fondly remembered John Shea, author of the heart-rending letter to his son, as a fine naval officer who hid his intellectual capabilities from his fellow sailors. He laughed when he spoke about Shea’s superior, Michael Kernodle, a “character” who was known as “the ugliest man in the Navy” — a sobriquet he apparently wore with pride and good humor. Van Stockum recalled that, in the

Mediterranean, another officer, Benedict Semmes Jr., had patiently showed him how to steer the ship from the bridge, and had identified the towns of the North African coast that to Van Stockum appeared only as twinkling lights. (Calm and patience appeared to be strong qualities in Semmes: months later, after the Wasp was hit, he chose not to tell a group of fellow swimmers that a shark was circling them, lest he cause a panic.)

When the Wasp transferred back to Norfolk Naval Yards later in 1942, the carrier came under the command of Forrest P. Sherman. Van Stockum recalled that Sherman was a kind and reasonable officer who transformed the atmosphere on board. In June, when the Wasp reached San Diego, shortly to depart for the Pacific theater, Van Stockum was told he would be leaving the ship, bound for other duties with the Marine Corps. He entreated Sherman to let him stay on the Wasp, but the orders had been given.

Van Stockum was replaced by a Capt. John Kennedy. Some weeks later, Van Stockum received a “very fine” letter from his successor. “We’re still afloat,” it read, “and I hope we stay that way.” On Sept. 15, 1942, Kennedy was killed with nearly 200 other sailors. Throughout the rest of World War II, during which Van Stockum fought with the Marine Corps with distinction in the Pacific theater, he survived many other close calls. But he would never forget his service on the Wasp.

Welcome Back

STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON (VFA) 131



"THE WILDCATS"

The mission of Strike Fighter Squadron ONE THREE ONE is to safely professionally provide administrative support, expert maintenance, and lethal employment in order to effectively execute the full range of Strike Fighter missions.

Underway Sunday Services

0800 - Traditional Protestant Communion Service
0900 - Roman Catholic Mass
1030 - General Protestant Service
1700 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
1900 - Gospel Service

Daily Services

Monday-Friday

1100 - Roman Catholic Mass
1900-2000 - Daily Catholic Devotional

Monday-Thursday

1200-1230 - Gospel

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SAILOR OF THE DAY



MED / MH

HM3 TANGANIYKIA GRAY

FROM YONKERS, NEW YORK

JOINED THE NAVY FEBRUARY 9, 2011

REPORTED TO IKE NOVEMBER 9, 2018

WANTS TO BECOME A PHYSICAL THERAPIST

FAVORITE MOVIE - MAZE RUNNER: SCORCH TRIALS



IKE'S MOVIE PLAYLIST

★★★ TUESDAY, APRIL 16TH, 2019 ★★★

CHANNEL 5

0815/2015: *SAILOR OF THE DAY'S CHOICE*

1045/2245: CRAZY RICH ASIANS

1315/0115: SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

1545/0345: SNOWDEN

1815/0615: THE PRINCESS BRIDE

CHANNEL 6

0815/2015: THE BIG SHORT

1045/2245: THE POST

1315/0115: CRIMSON PEAK

1545/0345: ARRIVAL

1815/0615: DUNKIRK

CHANNEL 7

0815/2015: BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

1045/2245: FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD

1315/0115: FIRST MAN

1545/0345: GLASS

1815/0615: INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

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ON THE COVER:

Sailors take inventory of a pipe-patching kit during a general quarters drill in the forward galley of the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). Ike is underway conducting flight deck certification during the basic phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan (OFRP). Photo by MCSA Trent Hawkins.



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