Ropeyarn Sunday "Sea Stories" and Open Trackbacks

Description

So, last week, there we sat, we salty sea dogs, the question posed and we all awaited an answer from the â€œshore basedâ€• component that worked in our shore based offices.

I figured I had figuratively placed the DC plug in the gaping hole that was causing figurative water to flood our hull. Feeling quite smug, but for only a very few brief seconds, she responded: â€œWhen is the next one (Combat System Assessment)?â€• Not to be outdone, I said â€œIâ€™ll let you know.â€•

She left, the atmosphere was different. We, the guys thought we were gonna chalk one up on the score board and it was, at the moment, a draw, or at the least, undecided.

Russ, my trusty LDO LT was given the task of calling the USS WAINWRIGHTâ€™s (CG-28) XO, who had been his Weapons Officer on his prior ship to see if we could bring along â€œour XO.â€• The answer was, sure. Well, minor issue, XO, our XO is a â€œshe.â€• â€œNo problem, Iâ€™ll be off at school so she can use my stateroom.â€•

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Boyâ€¦the train was leaving the station at full throttle and here I thought the â€œgirlâ€• would just be quiet and go back her office and make sure our travel arrangements were on track.

Anyhow, a Combat Systems Assessment (CSA) was a 36 some hour trial of a ship, where we usually arrived around 0700-0730 and sat down in the Wardroom to to introductions, lay out the game rules and shake hands. Yes, we were there to help, and yes, they were happy to see us. From there, my team of 12 to 20, depending on how complex the shipâ€™s equipment, went off to review the paperwork for various programs and do some safety checks. During this period, the ship was getting underway, or in some cases, clearing the sea buoy and heading to the â€œOPAREA.â€• The ships under DESRON SIX routinely went to sea the day before we arrived to practice, and weâ€™d ride a tug boat out at Oh-Dark Thirty to the vicinity of Ft Sumter to meet them.

In most cases, by the time lunch was wrapped up, we were meeting to listen to the shipâ€™s company Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) brief the two sets of exercises to be run in the late afternoon and early evening. The first drill set was before evening chow, the second after chow. By about 2200-2300, we were sitting down to listen to the CSTT critique the drills. The purpose here was not to see if the crew passed, as much as to determine if the CSTT was able see mistakes and record them, so they could plan to train to correcting them next later on. If they saw what we saw, then it was a good chance the ship could train into the future.

After we listened to the crewâ€™s debrief, then my team would meet to discuss the dayâ€™s events. Provided there were no glitches along the way, like correcting safety issues, of making sure all the equipment was propeorly configured for training, we might get into our assigned vistor â€œpitsâ€• by 0100 or 0200.

At 0600, we usually were on deck, walking around Combat Information Center (CIC) to observe the preparations for the â€œDTEâ€• (Detect to engage), where a contracted Learjet would fly, pretending a very slow cruise missile (since it couldnâ€™t make .9 Mach) would fly in, while the crew exercised their detection and engagement systems. By late morning, the DTE would be wrapped up, for better of worse, and my team and I would gather to grade the performance. The ship would head towards port. In some cases, weâ€™d manage to get the debrief in before entering port, and other times, weâ€™d do it upon arrival pierside.

Our commandâ€™s vehicles would be waiting for us (when in the Norfolk area), and weâ€™d depart, sometimes with good feelings all around, and fortunately not often, to snarls and cold glares. By then, it was usually the end of the work day ashore. The 36 hours was almost straight through.

The teamâ€™s normal work schedule? Monday/Tuesday â€“ CSA (as above), Wednesday â€“ Fly somewhere in a Naval Air Logistics Organization (NALO) C-9, Thursday/Friday â€“ Do it again, Friday afternoon, fly to back to NORVA. Next week? Rinse and repeat. If we were doing shipâ€™s in other ports, the NALO pilots and aircrews were happy to haul our butts there, beginning at about 1330 Sunday afternoon.

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Oh, yeahâ€¦we were on â€œshore duty.â€•

Next week: LCDR Hobbs rides the USS WAINWRIGHT (CG-28).

Category

1. Open Trackbacks

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