

Aerologist was the senior Weatherman present. Capt Droulihet had relieved Capt Irwin Francis Byerly who had been the last CO of SACO. FWC Shanghai: CO CDR K.F. Lafferty, XO LCDR E.H. Potter, LT R.G. Terwilliger, LTJG R.C. Parker, WO Willard W. VanBuskirk, AGC Arthur "Red" Thomas (X-SACO), AG1s Marvin White and Jimmy Whittemore; AG2s Robert R. Collins, E.J. Freed, L.M. Rodney Homan, Cal Marder and Don R. Wise; AG3s H.D. Camp, B.F. Ellis, R.H. Houtalen, M.W. Thomas, J.R. Young, M.E. Pope, E.J. Ed Rousseau, "Willy" Thompson and J.V. Stice. Kang Wan Airfield: AG3s Frank Bailey, McCaffrey and Tarnow. ComNavWesPac staff and USS Eldorado crew: AGC Jack Tanner, AG2 Fred Farnsworth, AG3 Frank Baillie, AGANs Bill Willis and Leocaido Galang. Aerographers mates "took a number" in order to do weather work while enroute to Tsingtao.

A CPO as Seventh Fleet Aerologist - By 1949 Secretary of Defense, Louis A. Johnson, and the Truman administration had taken advantage of the "peace dividend" by cutting defense expenditures drastically. Weather men literally didn't know where their next pink pearl was coming from and personnel of some units brought toilet paper from home late in the fiscal year. AGC Joe Zaffino, fresh out of advanced AG "B" School, reported aboard the 7th Fleet Flag in Sangley Pt. P.I. as the Staff Aerologist. It was a billet normally assigned to a full Commander or even a "four striper" since it served the senior Naval officer in the western Pacific, in this case VADM Arthur D. Struble.



Peacetime made for a "quiet, comfortable" tour and Joe was happy with an AG3 as his only assistant but, in the early morning hours of 25 June 1950, North Korean artillery announced the onset of hostilities and the cold war went white hot as North Korean troops poured across the 38th parallel. VADM Struble's Fleet consisted of his flagship, the cruiser Rochester, the cruiser Toledo, their only carrier, Valley Forge and eight destroyers.

Navy weather broadcasts did not reach the Korean war operating areas and a skimpy broadcast from the USAF weather central in Tokyo was Joe's major data source. Bad

weather and or mountainous terrain could and would cut off or garble incoming data. Later Captain John Tatom would arrive in Tokyo to set up a Navy Weather Central. Despite his problems Chief Zaffino was able to produce reliable forecasts and the Admiral, whose wont was to rely on his own staff members above all others, depended on his output despite the presence of a LCDR in USS Valley Forge as the Task Force ranged up, down and around the Korean peninsula with air strikes and shore bombardments. There was no other forecaster aboard for consultation or relief which placed the heavy load squarely on Chief Joe Zaffino.

Korea escalates - In late June of 1950 President Truman authorized a blockade of North Korea and air strikes by American forces. The first combat test for AD attack a/c and F9F "Panther" jet fighters took place on 3 July 1950 in a strike on Pyongyang N.K. LTJG L.H. Plog and ENS E.W. Brown's VF-51 "Panthers" shot down two Red YAK-9s. The "inactive" reserves were called to the colors.

Iffy Strike Weather - On 21 July 1950 a typhoon, just south of Japan's southern most islands, was moving north and posing a dilemma for Admiral Struble and a difficult forecast for Chief Zaffino whose force was in the Sea of Japan. They could run northeast to safety or make a fast night run into the Yellow Sea ahead of the storm launching strikes from the lee of Saishu To (Chedju Do) to hit North Korean armies which were rushing to pinch off the remaining U.N. forces in the shrinking Pusan perimeter.

A Momentous Decision - Admiral Struble gambled on AGC Zaffino's forecast and turned his force westward at high speed risking the only U.S. carrier in the theater to typhoon damage. HMS Triumph was active in the Yellow Sea. The forecast held and air strikes were successful. A thirty car munitions train, two key bridges and other targets were hit hard and served to halt the North Korean advance. Chief Zaffino continued as Staff Aerologist until a week after the Inchon invasion.

Reinforcements - On 22 July 1950 Badoeng Strait, CVE-116, arrived in Yokosuka, with the 1st MAW (Marine Air Wing). The buildup continued as Phillipine Sea, CV-47, reported to the 7th Fleet at Buckner Bay, Okinawa having made a speed run thru the Panama Canal to the Far East in May of 1950. "Phil Sea" crew members: CDR Robert Mottern, AGC Willie Duke Flournoy (the "mad bomber" of SACO who blew up Japanese facilities during WW2 in China), AG1 Atwell and Stoy; AG3 M.S. "Bud" Scott and Bill Willis; Agan Murray, Bonetti and Graham. On the 3rd of Aug USS Sicily, CVE-118, arrived carrying Marine fighter squadron VMF-118.

Bronze Star for Joe Zaffino - In Sept 1950 the 7th Fleet Flag was shifted to USS Missouri and later in the month CDR Floyd Thompson and five AGs reported aboard to