

In Sept of 1965 elements of the First Cavalry Division with helicopters and light observation aircraft landed at Qui Non, South Viet Nam from USS Boxer which had carried them from Mayport FL via the Suez Canal.

CDR Fred Martin USN, now CO Western Oceanographic Center Pearl Harbor HI, then LT, was stationed at Danang in the late 1960s making surf and swell forecasts for a variety of activities. Individual Aerographers Mates made surf and swell observations at beaches such as Cua Viet, Tan My, Chu Lai and Cam Ranh Bay.

OASU Established - On 1 July 1965 the Navy's first Oceanographic Air Survey Unit, OASU, is established at NAS Patuxent River, MD. Tasks include aerial ice reconnaissance in the north Atlantic and polar regions and Operation Magnet which is concerned with world wide magnetic data observation and collection. In 1965 and 1966 FleWeaCens Norfolk, Guam and Rota installed CDC 3100 computers to become part of NEDN, Naval Environmental Data Network while FNWF upgraded their plant and hardware.

Upper Winds Critical - Fuel and ordnance loading for aircraft are determined by the wind factor but other factors make such forecasts critical. Oriskany Meteorologist (from 1966-1967) then CDR Conley R. "Dick" Ward put it this way; "One of the most critical forecasts I had to make was where the carrier should be at the start of its 12-hour period of flight operations and how strong the winds would be. Lots of wind translated into larger ordnance and/or fuel loads, or if the load remained constant, the carrier would require less speed thru the water. In such an instance, you might operate with six or less of the ship's eight boilers on the line. This was extremely valuable to the ship's maintenance force (Oriskany was 23 years old), for work could only be done in the boilers after 12 hours of cooling. Capt. Ward would become the Director of Naval Oceanography and Meteorology in another ten years.

First Master CPO of the Navy Named - On 13 Jan 1967 Master Chief Gunners Mate Delbert Black, a decorated WW2 veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor, became the Navy's first senior enlisted advisor.

On 24 April 1967 7th Fleet aircraft from USS Kitty Hawk on Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin made their first attacks on MIG bases in North Viet Nam.

A Step Up - The Office of the Naval Weather Service became Naval Weather Service Command, a "major claimant command", on 1 July 1967 and its missions modified to insure fulfillment of Navy meteorological requirements and Department of Defense requirements for oceanographic analyses; and to provide technical guidance in meteorological matters. On the same date the Naval

Weather Service Division, OP-09B7, was disestablished and its functions assigned to the new command.

There were approximately 1500 men and women in the rating in July of 1967.

Forrestal Fire - On 29 July 1967 USS Forrestal barely avoided total destruction in a shipboard inferno. Fires and explosions broke out aft during aircraft refueling and spread to the hanger decks. Casualties mounted to 134 dead and 62 injured. A berthing space aft occupied only two weeks prior by OA division Aerographers was devastated. Nearly everyone in the space was killed by exploding ordnance. Films later showed that a fully loaded aerial tanker located at a fueling station directly above the weather office was barely missed by rockets which "cooked off" during the fire. Senator, then CDR aviator, John McCain the noted former POW, was a member of the Air Group regularly briefed by Forrestal forecasters. Weather Office personnel included: LT "Frenchy" Corbeille, AGC Fred Baillie, AG1 Don Stetler and Dave Dunlap; AG2 Bill Blankenship, Dan Ford, H.A. Kelly, W.E. Ranft and George McMullin; AG3 R.M. Fleming; AGAN P.M. Almasy, G.P. Carns, Dave Christensen, J.I. Davis, H.F. Groves, B.D. Henrich, Bill Hudson, M. Labatos, M.J. Smith, J.R. Spinella, J.M. Winchell and C.H. Wright.

"Fleet Numbers" is born - In May of 1968 FNWF was redesignated as the Fleet Numerical Weather Central, FleNumWeaCen. During that same year 10 to 30 day long range forecast guidance commenced based on analog techniques.

New Regs - On 1 July 1968 precedence of sailors by ratings is eliminated, so that paygrade and time in grade become the single means for determining the level of authority. The term "Leading Chief" now set the most senior chiefs above their peers. Congress had approved "new" Navy Regulations in 1863 which decreed the deck skills of Boatswain, gunner and quartermaster to have precedence unless otherwise directed by a CO.

On 25 Oct 1968 V-1 a/c, WC-121-N, lost a starboard wing tip tank while penetrating tropical storm Judy. The a/c returned to Guam and made an uneventful landing.

On 6 Nov 1968 the NAS Lakehurst, N.J. lighter than air hanger was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

In March of 1969 Oceanic Development Squadron Eight, VXN-8, commenced gathering ice floe information for SS Manhattan during her historic voyage from the east coast thru the ice packed northwest passage to Alaska as part of Project Birdseye, the Arctic Ice Survey Mission.