

February 16, 1951

Robert F. Smith

William Wagner

RYAN NAVION L-17B OPERATING ABOARD THE USS BADOENG STRAIT

During my visit aboard the Badoeng Strait on Thursday, February 8, I was able to gather many interesting facts about the L-17 which operated from aboard the ship during recent Korean operations. I had the opportunity to talk with Commander Fredericks, the executive officer of the ship and former BARR at Ryan, as well as Commander Harmon, the ship's operations officer, and a Lieutenant Commander Gates who had served with a squadron of support fighter planes during the Korean war.

Here are some facts: The L-17 that was aboard the ship was to all evidence an L-17B variety. It is the personal plane for Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almonds of the Army. The General is Commanding Officer of the 10th Corps, which includes the Marine 1st Division and the 7th Army Infantry Division. Prior to going aboard the Badoeng Strait, this plane served as the General's personal transportation around the greater Tokyo area. An Army Captain is the General's personal pilot. Commander Fredericks believes that we can get in touch directly with the Captain and from him obtain an interesting full story of the L-17B's exploits. Fredericks is digging up the name and address of this Captain now.

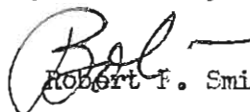
The L-17B was hoisted aboard the Carrier at Sasebo, Japan. The General himself didn't come aboard but his pilot did. The plane remained aboard the ship until approximately two or three days after D-Day at Inchon. When it came time for the takeoff the pilot was a bit worried about getting off in the flight deck space available. However, Commander Fredericks and others aboard the Badoeng Strait kiddingly chided him, themselves feeling confident the Navion could do it. As it turned out, with a 29 knot wind blowing across the deck, the L-17 took off in about 300 feet. The pilot and a load of luggage were aboard. The pilot landed the plane on a highway and shortly thereafter the General began using it as his personal transportation for inspecting the battle area at the front.

According to Lt. Comdr. Gates, who did considerable flying in Corsairs for the Navy in close ground support for American troops in Korea, the L-17s have done a spectacular job, apparently serving for far more than their original intent. He described the interesting radio arrangement for spotting that exists in connection with the L-17s. The Navion spotting planes radio to a jeep on the ground, which in turn relays the message to a control center -- perhaps aboard a carrier -- for the attack planes. In this somewhat roundabout fashion the attack is launched and once the attackers arrive in the target area, the spotting planes deliver directions to them direct.

The Lieutenant Commander also described some of the interesting dialogue he heard over airplane radio connections between these liaison spotters and the fighters. The Navions apparently had no armament whatsoever and were fit targets for AA fire. As a result, their pilots gave off with the most interesting flow of conversation one could imagine, telling how they were dodging shells;

between their humorous comments they'd slip in directions on where targets were and how the fighting planes could best come in to attack.

Commander Fredericks indicated that we should come back either on the following Monday or Wednesday and in the meantime he would try to locate from the photo files the remaining negatives of L-17 views taken while the plane was aboard the carrier. He also said he would try to dig up any additional information he might be able to find in his records. Further, he extended an invitation for anyone from our plant who might like to come over to be his special guest for a visit around the ship. He, of course, extended his personal greetings to you and to Mr. Ryan.


Robert F. Smith

Public Relations

P.S. Any information that I received from Commander Fredericks and the others which hasn't already been made public should be cleared for security through the Public Information Officer for Commander, Air Forces, Pacific Fleet at North Island. (Comdr. Buzz Lloyd).

Ship visited 2-16-51 by Locke, Wagner, Williams,
Sloan, Smith

Officers Met: Comdr Fredericks, Exec. Officer
Comdr Harmon, Operations Officer
Lt Comdr ~~Gates~~ Gotch, Asst Air Officer
Lt (jg) Larson, Public Info Officer

Badoeng's flight deck length = 550 feet

Lt. Gen. Almond's pilot:

Capt. Wm Bonna Capps, F. A.
0328729

H. Q. IX Corps

or
417 Sanford Ave.

Auburn, Alabama

Wife: Mrs Nell F. Capps

40 Capt. Wm B. Capps 0328729

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