

Edward M. "Ed" Fitch, Jr.
(Administration)
VF-781
1950-1951



Aboard USS Bon Homme Richard (CV-31)

letter to Lou Ives

Dated 7/10/89
Noted 9/12/89
Posted 4/14/90

9/12/89 Here is my computer letter I tried to write

Dear Lu

I saw your note to Collie asking for data on the squadron. Since I am trying to learn how to use a computer God knows how it will turn out ... But here goes any way.

You asked about gettin in ... I was living with my mother at the time and she cried her heart out making me promise I would not volunteer for the Korea conflict ... I promised her I would not so she could sleep easy plus I had just gone to work with Bayly Martin, and Fay and did not want to jeopardize my job ...

Well I got a call from my mom on 20 July 1950, saying I had

“BUPERS dispatch 192334z 20 JULY 1950 ordered to active duty NAS Los Alamitos for further assignment by ComAirPac as member of squadron VF-781.”

When reporting for duty I failed the eye test rite eye 6/20 left eye 5/20 correctable to 20/20 So I was granted a requested waiver so I could go with the gang ... and be a volunteer even though I did not agree in the beginning ... Every time I hit the “A” I seem also to hit the cap lock. reason for the various type style [as in original] ... I might also say that I asked for discharge the day I got in (told minimum of 2 years)

I am off the screen and I hope it @)kints4all of this letter ... More as time allows.

Love ya
/s/ Ed

FIRST PORT AFTER INITIAL LINE OPERATIONS WITH TF-77

May 1950. USS *BON HOMME RICHARD* (CV-31), with VF-781 aboard, went straight from Pearl Harbor, bypassed Japan, and steamed to the Korean operating area.

After a couple of weeks on the line, the *BHR* went to Sasebo, a port on Kyushu, managed by the Brits.

From time to time, our troops were all over the local scenery and watering holes. On about the fifth day in port, a few gathered at the Camp Mower (U. S. artillery) O-Club.

That evening, the O club was populated by Navy submariners and Navy pilots.

After making a few sarcastic remarks about pilots, one submariner reached over and submerged Cran's (Ray Crandal) necktie in his drink. Cran chuckled, gently took the submariner's tie in his hand and dunked it first in his drink, and then splashed it back in his face.

Both pilot and submariner stood. The fight was on.

In the dim light, the submariner's dolphins and Navy pilot's wings couldn't be distinguished; so there was the odd scene of pilots punching pilots and submariners punching submariners.

McCabe knocked a guy through the base drum (or maybe that was at Rapid City AFB). At least he framed one guy with a toilet seat. Cran's shirt was torn off. People were hollering.

Then the Shore Patrol showed up – a bunch of white hats, commanded by Ed Fitch. Ed took one look, recognized the pilots, and coined a few bad words.

Thanks to Ed's masterful handling of the situation, not a single one of our guys spent the night in the poke.

(story from Lou Ives)

#106486S

3-14-41 Enlisted - became Seaman 2nd Class
5-24-41 Aviation Cadet. NAS Corpus Christi
6-4-41 Assigned to Class 5C-41C
8-26-41 Assigned to Photographic/Parachute Division
10-13-41 Washed out as flying cadet
1-27-42 Commissioned Ensign AVS
Became Parachute Officer, NAS Corpus Christi

Responsible for packing 5000 parachutes every 30 days. Didn't have enough men so set up school for Parachute Riggers. To qualify, had to jump a chute you packed – as O in C, I made about 6 jumps with the men.

One jump I shall never forget: I had a 1st Class PR who gave me nothing but trouble. One year old Ensign vs a 25 year service 1st class. So one day Ensign Fitch challenged him to a free fall jump from 10,000' – who would open their parachute last. Well I was determined to be last so I waited and waited and finally I saw his chute billow out so I put my rip cord (which I still have) and just as my chute billowed out I hit the ground very very hard. The ambulance started over to where I was landing as they thought I wasn't going to make it. They did pick me up but after I got my breath I was OK. No one challenged my orders or command after that. I had made my mark with the crew.

6-1-43 All men went to sea. I got WAVE Parachute Riggers in their place. Being only with men did not know about the female anatomy - periods, breasts, cramps - you name it. I had one prostitute in the group who got so many calls during working hours I ordered NO MORE △ calls from 08:00 to 16:30 – still had to get the parachutes packed so Ensign Fitch had to design a chest protector so could get the parachutes packed (their boobs hurt). Every nite at the “O” Club at the BAR where I was, they started kidding me about my project “chest protectors” so we could get the chutes protected.

Every design to cover BIG 44's to pimples was no easy task so after about 10 chest designs, I gave up and developed a foot pedal rig and that worked. So – we got our job done.

At the “O” club I used to get kidded about our monthly physicals. Men were marched down to sick bay for a “short arm” inspection (the usual stuff). So I marched the girls down to sick bay every 30 days for the “small box” inspection.

I volunteered for every duty that came along to get out of there, but to no avail. One day an edict came down. Any one 4 year shore duty had to go to "Sea." So I volunteered for "Chemical War School." After the school, to CASU 5 for assignment to the fleet. So – they were looking for a night air group to be formed so I volunteered and was assigned to a VT (N) 42 as Administrative Officer.

The 1st carrier Kula Gulf (CVE-102).

After many narrow misses on the night landings they gave us a bigger ship on the *USS Batan* (CVL-29), so after losing all most all our aircraft (too narrow a ship and it pitched up and down) to broken wheels, frames, wings, struts, etc. we were assigned to CV3 VT(N) 63 – good old *Saratoga*.

Off to Iwo Jima to fly night missions over land and Mount Suribachi. The middle games on the TBM was an observation platform for Marine Officers who would look and report to the ground below. Needless to say I went to several missions as the tail gunner. One time went as photographer – did this in Korea too. I have some of those pix.

4-1-44	Commissioned LT.
1-26-46	Released from active duty.
6-1-46	LCDR.
4-18-47	Became Personnel Administrative Officer VF 783 at Los Alamitos.
10-27-47	Became part of CVGL 54 Air Group as VF 54 Administrative/ Personnel Officer.
7-20-50	Recalled A/D.
7-20-52	Active duty Korea assigned to VF 781.
7/1/54	CDR.
7-20-54	Released from active duty to VF 775 Los Alamitos.
1-1-57	Air wing staff 77.
7-1-61	CAPT.
1-1-73	Retired.

8-26-85 Retired with pay after 20+ years.

While training at the reserves (June 46) I went back to school (USC) graduated and went to work for "Los Angeles Examiner." After 1 month quit.

Went to work at USC running the Employment Bureau for 2 months while looking for a job.

My friend Donald Leahy called and said I should go see a Mr. Martin of Bayly Martin – I did and went to work as Mail Boy with opportunity to grow. Became president in 75 – and

12-31-86 Retired after 29 years of service to a life of leisure – at the beach in Newport Beach, Calif.

13 March 52 - Wedding stuff

How the guy put the live roosters in our car and put the car somewhere else so it took us a little while to find it. I hid the car so you guys couldn't find it and someone told and you found and put "SIGNS" all over our car. ONE A NITE ALWAYS A NITE and some you can't print. Bird do-do all over luggage, etc.



Ed and Bev Fitch

A Couple of Stories:

BOULDER CITY, NEVADA, 1953
ED AND BEV FITCH WEDDING RECEPTION – I

We were in the reception line. The line was moving slowly.

Ed scanned the line of guests waiting to shake hands and give best wishes.

Then he spotted Lou Ives. Lou had a look on his face that Ed recognized (“here come the condoms”) from the custom of passing a condom from the well wisher to the bridegroom during the handshake. Ed was wary – and prepared.

Lou was escorting a beautiful young blond woman (who, for some reason, he kept referring to as 40C cup).

Ed was not prepared for 40C when she passed the condom during her handshake. He dropped it. It was on the floor in front of God and everyone aboard.

After several tries, Ed was able to kick it under Bev's floor length dress.

The line resumed.

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BOULDER CITY, NEVADA, 1953
ED AND BEV FITCH WEDDING RECEPTION – II

During Ed and Bev Fitch's wedding reception, Ed realized he hadn't picked up his laundry. He asked Lou Ives if he would pick it up for him.

Lou was able to get the laundry without problems.

The reception was still in full swing when Lou returned from this errand.

He located a table that was not overburdened with wedding reception artifacts. He opened the laundry package. He arranged Ed's laundry on the table.

Skivvies went in one row, shirts went in another. Socks went in a third pile, and handkerchiefs in a fourth.

So everyone could see Ed was embarking on his new journey with a clean wash.

(stories from Lou Ives)



Edward M. "Ed" Fitch (l) and Arthur G. "Art" Guy (r)

1951

(photograph from Monty Monteau)

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