

Two Memories of 1962

by Raymond Guerra in 2011

It's funny how little reminders like reading about the crash of the Sea Vixen jet fighter in May 1962 stir the memory. I remember this well. The flight operations were at night. I had the 20 to 24, starboard lookout. The ships were zigzagging back and forth looking for any sign of the airplane. All ships were using searchlights. We were about 5 miles from the rest of the ships and I kept wondering why we were so far. Surely, with so many ships around, someone's radar caught the exact location of the crash.

Anyway, I remember, in the glare of the lights from the other ships, I spotted something in the water. I got so excited that, instead of using the sound powered phones, I yelled out loud "Objects in the water off the starboard beam". Don't remember who the OOD was, but we turned around. The signal bridge turned on their searchlight. The ship stopped and we lowered the motor whale boat. As it turns out, the "objects" were someone's trash; a box, some bottles, and such. Still remember that junk laying on the deck on the port side the next day. As I recall, we never did find anything significant.

As for changing home ports, I distinctly remember getting to Pearl Harbor on Feb. 6, 1962. The reason I remember this was because I had a 72 hour pass and \$5 in my pocket. I was determined to make use of that pass. Got a private room (community bathrooms) at the Armed Forces YMCA in Honolulu for \$1.25 per night. Hot dogs at Fort DeRussy were 10 cents and cokes were a nickel. Even splurged on a 25 cent hamburger. The cook threw in fries for free. We were in Pearl for 2 weeks because I had a 48 hour pass the next weekend (after payday). Still remember having to get a camera pass to get through the gate. We got to Yokosuka about 2 weeks after that.