

In Mediterranean

Dad joins crew on aircraft carrier

IT WAS AFTER midnight in Malaga. The liberty launch was returning to the USS Coral Sea. The 80-plane aircraft carrier had been in this ancient Spanish sea port for several days.

I caught an occasional glimpse of the oscillating green beacon as the boat full of weary sailors and marines chugged through the dark Mediterranean waters.

The green beacon was one way to alert crew members on shore they were to return at once to the ship.

I was among the returning crew members, a guest of my son, Mark, an electrician stationed aboard the ship. A Navy tradition permits male relatives to join a crew member for the return ride to the United States after a long tour of sea duty.

(Each guest must pay for all travel and living expenses.) We all now know, the Coral Sea didn't steam west when it weighed anchor. We watch it nightly now on television, a focal point of international tension.

AMONG AREA residents for whom activities of the Coral Sea pose special interest are Mr. and Mrs. William Breaugh of West Bloomfield.

Their son, Lt. Jim Breaugh, pilots an attack bomber assigned to the 39-year-old carrier, nicknamed "The Ageless Warrior." He was in the air over the Gulf of Suez during the Holy Week confrontation with the Libyans.

Bill Breaugh also was planning to meet the ship and ride back with his son. But the trip was called off immediately after a bomb ripped apart a Berlin discotheque, killing Detroit Sgt. Kenneth Ford.

"Bill Breaugh was notified in time of the cancellation. But I had left the night before and didn't learn of the call-off until arriving on the dock in Spain."

At that time we all thought the only change in the ship's planned departure for Norfolk was the cancellation of the family mem-

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— John Reddy

bers participation.

The crew of nearly 4,000 still had its hearts set on home.

We fathers who arrived early held out hope we would be permitted to ride the ship home.

LT. BREAUGH earlier had told his father by phone he suspected the ship's tour of duty might be extended.

That fear fueled rumors as the ship's crew watched what would happen to those fathers already aboard.

We would be bellweathers indicating which way the ship might go when leaving port. All was hope as long as we remained aboard.

We remained aboard four days.

Rumors circulated in the ship's 2,500 various compartments as rapidly and freely as the forced-in fresh air.

Calendars taped to bunks and lockers had large "X" cross-outs.

In the tight passageways, conversation was punctuated with, "I heard we are supposed to . . ."

But that night, on the liberty launch, tone of the dialogue changed.

"I hope we don't get extended. I don't wanna stay."

"If we have to stay, damn it, I hope we hit 'em good."

"Listen to these guys. It's not that simple. What scares me is they represent a cross section of the country."

"I heard we gotta stay."

A HAND-WRITTEN sign at the quarterdeck said something was up: "All liberty is secured." In the berthing area, seamen dressed amid the eerie shadows of night lights.

"You'll have to leave the ship first thing in the morning, Dad."

That fateful sleep was shattered: "Reveille, reveille, reveille! All hands, reveille!"

Still, the eerie night lights. "The chief engineer said we got to be ready to be under way at 0800. We're to head southeast between 18 and 20 knots. Sorry, Dad."

We fathers waited on the incredibly vast hangar deck, that mammoth work area bathed in amber night lights we never see in television shots of the ship.

Somewhere Lt. Breaugh was stirring. Mark and I said goodbye and he disappeared amid the sleek aircraft, bathed in the amber haze.

Morning cast its light on the waters as we cut toward shore, the USS Coral Sea a massive silhouette in the sunlit water.

Is it to be true that always there will be wars, and rumors of war?

John Reddy is the vice president/editorial for Suburban Communications Corp., the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

A big thanks to Bob Cook

To the editor:

On the north side of Grand River near the Civic Theater in downtown Farmington is a building bearing the name of Cook & Co.

Whatever other plans the new Farmington Downtown Development Authority may propose, I hope that the Cook and Co. Building will remain, for it is a significant structure of the relatively few on the main street of what is historic Farmington.

The Cook name in Farmington is legend. And the Cook name will remain among our treasures. The granddaughter, Judy Cook, of the Fred Cook whose building bears the name mentioned above has turned over to the recently enlarged History Room of the downtown Farmington Library the lifetime collection of materials that her father, Robert B., amassed during his 74 years.

Ms. Cook recently gave the members and guests of the Farmington Historical Society an overview of her father's large accumulation, some of which is carefully organized and catalogued, and more — photos, literally thousands, as one example — which is in boxes.

Because I believe that the community should know and thus come to appreciate the tremendous treasure now in the library, I will, in the paragraphs following, list in general terms the scope of the collection.

There is a primary card file, alphabetized by name. These cards lead the researcher to other sources.

There are index files on the Lapham and Thayer families. There are loose-leaf notebooks containing obituaries arranged according to time periods and al-

phabetically.

There are two notebooks relating to weddings, all of which are reprinted articles from various newspapers.

There are notebooks of biographies, two volumes vis-a-vis historical events.

There is a notebook of miscellaneous information, also alphabetically arranged.

There are undated obits, biographical material and material relating to property and land conveyances.

There is an index file of high school classes, pre-1927.

Unsorted material includes phone directories, property abstracts and deeds, birth and death certificates, letters, many of which are typed from original copies, and memorabilia regarding the post office, and Farmington families not in the master index.

Those of us who have been in the Farmington Historical Society since its beginning in 1982 have an idea of and an appreciation for the enormous legacy that Bob Cook has left us.

Farmington will forever be indebted to its own "Mr. Farmington History," Bob Cook.

Lee S. Peel,
Farmington

The coverage commendable

To the editor:

The board of the Springbrook Homeowners Association wishes to commend you and your staff for the excellent coverage (with descriptions and details) of the recent actions of the Farmington Hills City Council and the Farmington Hills Planning Commission.

Your descriptions and details of the many items discussed, especially those requiring later citizen action, may well be the only contact most residents will

have with these subjects.

Ballot time is not the time to hope these actions get approved.

We were pleased, in a show of hands at a recent association meeting (minimum attendance), that all were readers of your paper.

Jack Joynt, director,
Springbrook, Farmington Hills

Benefit dance huge success

To the editor:

Thank you very much for taking the time to report our Focus: HOPE Benefit Dance March 21.

Please know that we greatly appreciate your interest, and are happy to inform you that the benefit made over \$1,500. These funds will be turned over to Focus: HOPE to help feed the needy in the Oakland and Wayne County areas.

Mercy High School
Farmington Hills

Your story was great

To the editor:

Thank you for the great story on one of United Foundation's Heart of Gold winners.

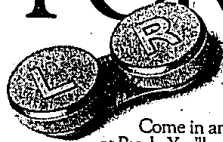
I know that Ida Krandle is as pleased as we are with the story. It is always inspiring to read about the good deeds of metro Detroiters.

We were very pleased with the article by Loraine McClain and hope that next year we can once again work with you to help publicize the marvelous deeds that Heart of Gold recipients do for our community.

Again, thank you for the time and effort that you spent on this story.

Cheryl A. Yurkovich
Communications Associate
United Foundation

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