

Chapter XXI

Paula Drussell Continued

February 15, 1943 – February 26, 1943

It wasn't surprising that there were some transfers taking place, but to learn that his friend and executive officer, Commander Owen was leaving the ship was completely unexpected. He had been promoted to Captain and was to take command of a new auxiliary carrier being completed on the west coast. He had until the end of the coming week to wrap up things on the Reprisal. His replacement, Commander Terrell Southridge would not be reporting for two more weeks. Since Commander Owen was scheduled to be on leave anyway, Captain Brason and Commander Whithouse had planned to share his duties.

Other transfers also meant that Commander James, the air group commander, would also be leaving. Replacing him was Lieutenant Commander Lovelace, who had been the commander of Fighting Eleven. Sheffield's old wingman, Lieutenant Ronald "Cowboy" Perry moved up to that spot. Both men received promotions in the process. Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Solozar was also leaving. Aviation Machinist's Mate Evans was now the senior enlisted man. In all about two hundred men were leaving the ship. They were replaced mostly by enlisted men fresh from boot camp and officers from the various officers training programs that had been established around the country. At least the core of the crew remained intact.

During the first half of the week, the work at the navy yard was completed on schedule. On Thursday morning, the dry dock was flooded and the ship was refloated. With the assistance of some tugboats, she was moved out into the Elizabeth River and got ready to get under way for the sea trials in Chesapeake Bay, steaming as far north as the mouth of the Potomac River before returning to her berth at Pier 7.

That day, the first half of the crew returned from their leaves as the other half left. Yeoman Gover reported in with the Captain Brason upon his return. "How were things in Clarksville?" the captain asked.

"That's Clarkston, sir. I had a good visit with everyone, but now I'm back and ready to get back to work."

"It's good to have you back. There's a lot to do all of a sudden."

Mace wrapped things up in preparation to move to the west coast for his new command where his ship was to be home ported in Alameda. On Friday night, a farewell party was held for Mace, Pat and their boys at their home. Sheffield ran into Paula there and they made a date for dinner and dancing the following evening.

Yeoman Gover drove the Captain to pick up Paula, with one stop on the way. Paula met him at the door, "Oh my goodness! Daisies. They're my favorite. How on earth did you know?" She took them from him and gave him a kiss of appreciation on the cheek.

Evelyn, standing behind her mother, smiled and gave a thumbs up.

"Come in Sheffield, while I put these in a vase." Evelyn had already retrieved one for her.

Sheffield helped her with her coat and escorted her to his car. The back seat was very roomy, yet she chose to sit close to him.

Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra were playing at The Peacock Ballroom at Seaside Park in Virginia Beach. After dinner at one of the restaurants, they went to the ballroom. A mirror ball reflected speckles of light along the walls as Sheffield and Paula took to the floor as the orchestra began "In the Blue of the Evening". With each number, the light changed color to suit the mood of the piece. After a three or four dances, Tommy Dorsey called for a mixer and they traded partners for the next few numbers. The first exchange was with a married couple and after that Sheffield found himself dancing with a woman who was a good twenty years older than him, almost old enough to be his mother. She was actually a very good dancer.

When they finally got back together, Paula said, "I really need a cigarette. Why don't we step out for moment." They left the dance floor and took a seat at a table in the corner. "I never smoked before Gary died. I started because I found it helped to steady my nerves. Now I'm getting hooked on them." She said as he helped her with her chair.

They proceeded to have a long conversation. It was really the first time that they just talked. They each told the story of their lives with their mates and of their deaths and how they managed through the time since. Sheffield told her how his faith in God had got him through. She admitted that her's had wavered.

"I have to tell you," Sheffield said, "meeting you and the time we have spent together have helped me realize that I can move past Geannie and that there is someone out there for me."

"I know what you mean. I feel the same way. Hey listen, the evening is slipping away, lets take advantage of this marvelous music."

Sheffield took the cue and rose from his seat and took Paula by the hand and lead her back to the dance floor. They held each other just a little closer and Paula rested her head on his shoulder. The next number was "You Taught Me to Love Again". Paula looked up at Sheffield and said, "Regardless of whatever happens, this will always be our song. I don't know where things might go with us, but because of you, I know that someday I can love again." Then she tenderly kissed him on the lips.

Sheffield didn't really find the kiss particularly exciting. Her lips were soft, but the after taste of tobacco was not very pleasant. He wondered if feelings for her might develop, if given the chance. He found that he enjoyed her company and being with her. Little by little they were getting better acquainted. He responded, "I don't know either, lets just enjoy the ride and see what happens."

After another number and another mixer round, they got back together for a couple of more numbers, then called it a night. He motioned across the floor to Yeoman Gover, who had enjoyed himself

while waiting, that they were ready to leave. Sheffield helped Paula with her coat and arm in arm they walked out to the car. By now Morris knew the way to the Drussell home.

This time he accepted an invitation to come in for a moment. Evelyn had put Jillian to bed, but she and Brent were still up. Brent demonstrated a good knowledge of various types of aircraft, both Navy and Army, which led to a story or two, including how he met Mace.

"I'd love to fly sometime." Paula dreamed.

"You've never flown?"

"No."

"Well, I'll have to do something about that. I need to get in a little flying time to keep my flight status active. Would you like to come along?"

"Yes, yes! I'd love too."

"Since Monday is Washington's Birthday and the bank is closed, how would Monday afternoon work?" he asked as he got up and made his way to the door.

Paula got up to follow. "That would be great!"

"You better dress warm and bring a coat, it can get pretty chilly up there. I'll come for you at, say one o'clock?"

"I'll be ready. Thanks for this evening. I had a wonderful time." She held him tightly before letting him go out into the night. As she let go, she kissed him again.

Evelyn, who really liked the captain and would love for them to get together, was watching. The sight made her giggle.

"Good night, Paula. I'll see you on Monday."

"Good night, Sheffield."

As he walked out to the car, to where his driver had been patiently waiting, he wondered why there was no zing in her kiss.

Sheffield got tied up with a matter of business aboard the ship and was running late. He dispatched Yeoman Gover to go and pick up Paula at her home and take her to the Norfolk Municipal Airport and he would meet her there.

Since he was taking a civilian up with him, a woman at that, he couldn't check out a military aircraft. A civilian plane would do as long as he could produce the ticket showing when he checked out and checked back in, the amount of time flown and the type of aircraft, it would qualify for keeping his flight status active.

A plane from the air station would not have cost him anything, but the price to rent a plane was certainly worth a date. Earlier that morning, Yeoman Gover had called over to the airport to schedule the

flight. The airport had been taken over by the Army Air Force during the war, so private and commercial aircraft shared the facility.

Paula was surprised to see Morris show up without the captain, but understood. He drove her to the airport and got the gear that she needed. Unlike Geannie, who wore a dress for everything, even airplane rides, Paula wore a pair of slacks. She was all bundled up and fitted with a leather helmet with wool ear flaps, goggles, scarf, and parachute when Sheffield arrived.

While Sheffield put on his gear, a mechanic started up the plane, a Stearman. Rather than the typical yellow of navy trainers, this one had a red fuselage and blue wings. With the engine running and the wheels chocked, Sheffield helped Paula up onto the wing and into the open cockpit. While strapping her in, he blushed as he put the crotch strap between her legs and fitted the harness straps around her chest.

Once she was strapped into the front seat, he climbed into the pilots seat and strapped himself in. He gave the signal and the chocks were removed and they taxied onto the main runway for take off. It was a partly sunny day with a bit of a wind. The temperature was forty six degrees at the time.

He could see her clutching the sides of the open cockpit as the plane lifted off the runway, taking off into the southwest. As they climbed higher, she held on tighter. Once Sheffield leveled out she, she relaxed her grip and soon let go altogether.

He swung around to the north and made a pass just in front of her house. With the wing dipped as they flew by, she got a good look at her home from the air. They flew on to the north and he gave her her first look at the the ship he talked so much about.

The plane gained altitude as they crossed Hampton Roads and straightened out into a northerly course up the middle of Chesapeake Bay, going as far as the mouth of the Potomac River. Unlike Geannie, Paula seemed quite subdued during the flight. He could see her looking all around and taking in the sights, obviously enjoying herself.

At that juncture, he swung around and came farther inland and headed back to the south. As they neared her hometown of Richmond, he could tell that she was searching for someplace below. Once she found what she was looking for she put her arm out and pointed to an area of to the right. Taking that as a cue, he banked right and began to descend. He could tell that she was transfixed an a particular house. He made a pass with the wing dipped, then came back around for another pass. He could hear her shout over the roar of the engine that that was her mother's house.

Leaving Richmond behind, they climbed back into the sky as they flew over the countryside back toward Norfolk. Passing just to the south, they swept out over the Atlantic Ocean and circled around Cape Henry and over Hampton Roads to line up with the airport and began the descent. Once back on the ground and the plane had taxied up to the hangar where Sheffield shut off the engine.

Paula just sat there, still basking in the thrill. Sheffield was soon on the wing next to her seat and helped her undo the straps. As she stood up she said, "That was the most thrilling thing I have done in a long, long time." Sheffield took her hand and helped her out of the cockpit and on to the wing. He hopped to the ground first and turned around, reaching up to her. Putting his hands on either side of her waist, he lifted her to the ground.

At that point, with his hands still on her waist, she threw her arms around around his neck. "I don't know how to thank you enough."

"I'm just glad that you enjoyed yourself. Seeing you grin from ear to ear like that is all the thanks I need, that and a hug."

Even though she was bundled up, her nose and cheeks were red from the cold and her finger tips and toes were numb, but according to her, it was all worth it. Nothing a cup of hot coffee couldn't thaw.

The ever faithful Yeoman Gover had gone back to the ship and returned for them at the appointed time. Sheffield had him drive them to a coffee shop where he and Paula took a booth and visited over a hot cup of coffee or two, which turned into a bite to eat. Morris waited at the counter where he had a some hot cocoa on his boss. Captain Brason bought a burger for Morris while he waited.

Morris felt that he had the best job in the Navy. His job was whatever the Captain needed him to do. He quite enjoyed being his chauffeur. It gave him a reason to get off the ship while in port and get out and about. Waiting while for the Captain to do his business, or in this case, his pleasure, had its perks. Right now he was enjoying a burger. The other night it at The Peacock Ballroom he got to listen to the orchestra and dance with a few young ladies. Other times he'd bring along something to read while waiting.

He was glad to have his own quarters in his office, it got him away from all of the nonsense that went on in the crew's quarters. He wasn't totally isolated from his shipmates as he ate with them in the mess hall. They were always trying to get him to let him in on what was going on, but he wouldn't tell what he had heard, not even his best friend, Simon Ballard. Morris was well aware of the trust that Captain Brason placed in him and he would never do anything to betray that trust.

He enjoyed his work, it sure beat swabbing decks and polishing brass. He knew that the Captain placed a great deal of trust in him. Some of the correspondence that he handled included some pretty sensitive information. He got a pretty good idea of the man that the Captain was from just being around him. Sometimes while driving him someplace the Captain would engage him in casual conversation. When he asked him something about himself, Captain Brason always listened with interest.

Morris knew all about what had happened to the Captain's family, everyone did. But he had told Morris things about them or he had been in his presence when he talked to others. He had witnessed a transformation in him in the weeks since he had been working for him. He was glad to see him getting out

and socializing now. Mrs. Drussell seemed like a nice lady. He wondered who the nurse in Hawaii was. He had noticed several letters coming and going between them. In fact, he had placed a letter from her on his desk when he went back to the ship while he took Mrs. Drussell up in the plane.

The Captain signaled that they were ready to leave. Morris went out ahead of them and was waiting in the car when they got in. Morris was impressed with the way the Captain treated her, the same way his father treated his mother. On the drive back to Mrs. Drussell's house, he could hear them as they visited and laughed together. When he took her to the door, he disappeared into the house. Morris pulled out the reading material that he had brought with him and waited patiently.

A few minutes later, the Captain came back out to the car and got in. "Where to now, sir?" Morris asked as he looked at him through the rear view mirror.

"Take me back to ship, Morris."

As he drove off, Captain Brason asked, "Do you have a girl waiting for you back home?"

Morris went on to explain that there was girl that he was writing to. The captain asked him about her.

Upon going aboard the ship, Sheffield went directly to his office. There on his desk was his mail, with a letter from Ramona on top of the pile.

February 15, 1943

Dear Sheffield

It has been pretty crazy around here the last little while. We got in a new batch of nurses and so I have been busy training them. You know how it is, they come fresh from school thinking they know everything there is to know. They're always surprised to learn how much more there still is to learn.

I do get a break now and I am going spend a whole week at my beach house. I haven't been able to spend much time there lately. I love it there. I can go there and just escape all the cares of the world.

So you're back in Norfolk. I bet it will be nice to go home again. You'll have to tell me all about your trip. I'd love to meet your family sometime and Geannie's too. They sound like the kind of families that I always wanted to be a part of. I don't know if you know how blessed you are to have them.

Good luck going through their things. That can be a bitter sweet experience, I'm sure. But I think that you're up to it now. I can't really think of anything I want, unless you come across something that you want me to have.

You better not have your secretary ask your lady friend out for you! That would certainly be bad form indeed. So by now, have you gone out with her?

What's her name? I'd love to hear all about how this turns out.

I have to admit, I'm very jealous! You're supposed to make good on your promise and take me out, remember? I know you haven't forgotten. It's pretty hard when we are so far apart. I'd love to spend some time with you, even if it was briefly. There for a few days, I thought it was actually going to happen.

As far as my mystery man, I have some things in the works that I hope will get his attention. I'm going to take your advice, I'll bake a pie for him and if that doesn't work, I'll hit him over the head with a club and knock some sense into him. What kind of pie do you think I should make?

I don't know what the weather is like in Norfolk, but here it simply lovely. You know what February is like in Hawaii. From what I understand, it must have been nice in Rio. Summer would have just been coming on while you were there. Which do you prefer, Hawaii or Rio?

After more than a year, things are returning to normal around here now. They have removed the barbed wire barricades from the beaches. That sure makes them much more enjoyable. They have refloated several of the ships that were sunk in the harbor and sent them back to States for repairs. Some of the more badly damaged ones are still here. They say the Arizona is beyond salvage. They're about ready to turn the Oklahoma right side up. They haven't done much with the Utah but the West Virginia has been raised and is in dry dock getting ready to sail back to the states in the next few months. It's amazing what they have been able to do. But I'm afraid it will never be the same in Paradise as there is a lot of construction going on every where I go.

I'm glad to know that you are doing so well. You have been through a lot. So much from that day has healed or is in the process of healing, whether it be ships made of steel or people's hearts. It is prof to me that God's hand is over all of us. Not very long ago I would not have realized that, but I do now. I'm not very eloquent at praying yet, but I don't let that stop me. In my every prayer, I ask God to keep you safe and protected. I don't know what I'd do if something were to happen to you too.

Love Ramona.

Once he finished reading her letter, he wrote back.

February 22, 1943

Norfolk, Virginia

Dear Harmona,

I know what you mean about training new people. When I first came to the Reprisal, nearly everyone was new. We had a lot of enlisted men right out of boot camp as well as new Ensigns right out of the Academy. I am pleased to say that with a lot of training and experience, they are now a seasoned crew. We just lost about two hundred of them to transfers and most of their replacements are, once again, brand new.

The biggest upset that came out of the transfers is that I lost Mace. My loss is certainly to his advantage. He received a promotion and a command of his own. Unfortunately it is on the West Coast and they have moved away. I'll really miss them. He was a good exec, but an even better friend. (His replacement hasn't arrived yet.)

That's the problem with having friends in the navy, they like everyone else, are always coming and going. I still keep in touch with Shorty and Wilma and Freddy and Susan. I haven't heard from Scoop for some time, but Cowboy is here with me. He just became the skipper of our fighter squadron. I'm sure you remember all of them from way back when we were all a lot younger.

I have certainly been blessed with good friends throughout the years. So many times the people you serve with are only temporary. They're part of your life for such a short while and then move on to never be heard from again. These have been lasting friendships, like yourself. It's too bad that life has a way of taking us all our separate ways.

Thank you for your friendship. I can't begin to tell you how much it means to me. When I told you that you were my best friend, I meant it. No one is as diligent in staying in touch with me as you are. I dare say that none of them has done as much for me as you have either. I certainly doubt that any of them are praying for me.

And then there's my family. Yes, I know how blessed I am to be part of them. I'm still count myself part of Geannie's family as well. There have been times when I have been separated from them for long periods of time and distance, particularly during the time that we were in Hawaii. I know it was hard on Geannie to be so far from home, but she was a real trooper. At least she had you.

As far as my preference to Hawaii or Rio, I'd probably choose Hawaii. At least they speak English. Having my own personal interpreter in Rio helped. I'd love to go back to Hawaii again someday. It sounds like it is changing a lot over there. Maybe I wouldn't recognize the place. I have been following some of the progress with the salvage work going on.

I know why you love it so much there. In just the few years that we were there we came to love Paradise too. Geannie loved it so much, she found it difficult to leave, even when it meant her own safety. Had we not hesitated so long she might... Well, there's no use going there.

I did make it home and spent an entire week there. Going through their belongings was like a trip down memory lane. I kept the things I will need again someday, like household items and a few special things. The rest I left the family pick from, what was left I gave to my brother to pass on to those in need. I'll tell you, it was very gratifying. Especially when I went to church and saw a

young lady wearing one of Sandy's dresses.

I always felt sorry for you not having a family. I know that your father died when you were really young and all you had was your mother, and that she has been gone for a long time now too. I never really ever heard you talk much about it. Evidently Geannie didn't know much more than that either, or she would have told me about it. It must be painful for you.

I did ask this lady out. Her name is Paula Drussell, she is a widow who's husband died about the same time that Geannie did. In fact I have seen her a quite a bit and plan to see her some more. We really enjoy each others company and are getting to know one another. However, there doesn't seem to a real solid connection between us. Maybe it will come with time and then again, maybe not. I don't know where things might go. It sure has been nice to have her to go and do things with. I have really missed having some female companionship. Perhaps that is all that it will be with her. I wouldn't mind if it became more than that. Goosing Geannie has made me realize how important a woman in my life is. Somewhere, sometime, there must be someone for me. Whoever it is, I hope she is someone like you.

Love Sheffield

P.S. Make your mystery man your pineapple coconut cream pie. That should do the trick. Good luck with that.

The next morning, Tuesday February 23rd the Reprisal got underway accompanied by the destroyers Nash and Gordon for a three day training cruise just about one hundred miles off the coast of Virginia and

North Carolina. With half of the crew still on leave, an adhoc crew was thrown together by binging aboard a large number of men from the Essex. Once at sea, the air group flew out and began coming aboard for carrier qualifications.

The Bat Team was trying out a new and improved air borne radar. The AN/APS-4 radar units developed at MIT and manufactured by Western Electric was mounted in a pod that was carried under the right wing. It replaced the existing radar sets in the Dauntlesses and Avengers which were identified with an E for electronic equipped, thus becoming SBD-4E and TBF-1E respectively. The Wildcats received nine specially equipped F4F-4Es that had been converted to test the feasibility of deploying the new radar system in a single seat fighter. To accommodate the extra one hundred eighty pounds, the wing folding mechanisms were removed.

The X-band radar was designed mainly for search and its simplified construction allowed it to be used in almost any type of aircraft. More importantly to the Bat Team, its secondary role for radar navigation, radar beacon homing and radar bombing, especially at night, was of particular interest. Since the Bat Team was already utilizing radar for night flying, they were naturally selected to try out the new radar system.

Well into the afternoon, the planes of the air group took off and landed aboard the carrier. Some of the pilots were fresh from their advanced training and needed all of the practice they could get. The only incident that day happened when one of the more experience pilots missed a wire and slammed into the crash barrier which brought the aircraft to an abrupt stop. The pilot was shaken but unhurt. The plane's propeller became bent and twisted as the barrier wound around it. In addition, the forward fuselage was crumpled. The damage could be repaired aboard the ship, but it would be out of operation for a few days.

Flight operations were suspended while the mobile crane was brought up on deck to clear away the wreckage. After the plane was towed to the aft elevator and taken down to the repair hangar, flight operations were resumed.

During the early afternoon, the last plane was brought aboard and the pilots and plane handlers were given a break until flight operations resumed at six o'clock, just after sunset. Under the direction of the Bat Team, the rest of the pilots practiced take offs, formation flying, landing approaches, and landings. Just after ten o'clock, the last plane was brought aboard and flight operations were concluded for the day.

At four the next morning the pilots were again called to their planes. Sheffield observed from the wing bridge as a waning full moon shone through partly cloudy skies. Soon the roar of engines drown out everything else. Fifteen minutes later, the first plane took off into the night sky. Launching took a little longer under these circumstances and eventually the entire air-group was airborne. After forming up, Commander Lovelace lead the air group west toward Norfolk. Only nine Dauntlesses from the Scouts of Scouting Eleven remained behind to fly anti-submarine patrol.

The naval base and the air station were expecting an air raid drill on Wednesday and the fact had been published in The Virginian-Pilot as not to alarm the public. The time of the drill was not made known and no one knew when it might take place, just to keep an element of surprise and realism. The timing was completely up to Captain Brason. Everyone was surprised alright, just before six o'clock the air group swept in just as twilight was beginning to show signs of faint hint of the approaching sunrise.

The fighters and torpedo bombers came in low over the city and commenced their run on the air station. Next the Dauntlesses of the Crusaders and Scouts were heard screaming down from ten thousand feet as they dove on their targets at the navy base.

With their mock attack complete, they sped on up the James River toward Newport News, gaining altitude as they went. Dawn was fast approaching as they circled around to the north over the Chesapeake Bay and lined up for their approach to the air station. It was still a few minutes before the sun breached the horizon when Commander Lovelace touched down. A half an hour later the last plane landed as the sun was climbing higher into the sky.

The drill was a complete success for the air group, but a dismal failure for the installations on the receiving end who were caught off guard and unable to respond. There were a lot of unhappy citizens in the community as well. Those who were not already awake were jolted from their beds by the commotion. The headline article of The Virginian-Pilot that morning praised the drill as an example of the capabilities of carrier aircraft. "If the citizens of Norfolk, who knew it was coming, were caught off guard, just think of the effect it would have on an unsuspecting enemy." the article said. The thing no one was aware of, is that it was a repeat of the tactics the air group used on Bordeaux, France back in November.

Later in the morning, and for the next two days, the Reprisal hosted squadrons from newly formed air groups as they flew out to the ship for carrier qualifications. All types of aircraft landed aboard. The venerable SBD Dauntlesses and new SB2C Helldivers, and F6F Hellcats and F4U Corsairs. There were even some older SB2U Vindicators and TBD Devastators from an advanced training unit that came aboard.

Flight operations continued all that day and the next. At one point there were some of each type aircraft spotted on the flight deck, including the Reprisal's own Dauntlesses. For a training cruise, there was no lack of excitement during the day.

A Helldiver came in too fast and hit the deck hard. The hook grabbed the arresting cable but the jolt caused the left landing gear to collapse. The forward momentum caused the plane to spin around to port and over the side, only being stopped from plunging into the sea by the tail hook and the arresting cable. The pilot and rearseatman found themselves in quite a precarious position. The mobile crane was brought into position and raised the plane up and back onto the flight deck where the crew were finally able to exit the aircraft. The plane was taken below to the repair hangar where it would remain until returning to port.

Once the flight deck was reopened, flight operations resumed. All went well until later in the day a Corsair had a landing mishap. The Corsair's long landing gear had a tendency to cause the plane bounce wildly during arrested landings. This particular aircraft was no different, except for the hook failed to engage and plane bounced up the flight deck once more before jumping the crash barrier and into some parked aircraft. That plane and two others were destroyed in the process. Even worse, one of plane handler was killed and the pilot and two other plane handlers were seriously injured. Again the wreckage had to cleared away before flight operations could resume.

An initial analysis of both crashes pointed to failure of the aircraft and not pilot error. Captain Brason didn't want either the Helldiver nor Corsair assigned to his ship, at least not until they had the problems worked out. In his opinion, as a dive bomber the Dauntless was better than the Helldiver and he was glad that they belonged to his ship. Now the new Hellcat was another story. He couldn't wait to replace the Wildcats with them.

Late in the afternoon, all of the planes were all sent back to the air station. All that remained aboard were the wrecked planes and the nine VS-11 Dauntlesses.

Amidst the problems of the day, there was one bright spot. Towards evening the anti-submarine patrol happened across a U-Boat on the surface stalking a lone tanker making its way down the coast. To make a long story short, another U-boat was added to the ships scoreboard.

The next morning before the planes arrived from the air station, Sheffield went through the personal effects of Seaman 1st Class Julius Landon and wrote another one of those dreaded letters to his family back home. At least this time there would not be a burial at sea, as the ship would be back in port later in the day and his body could be sent home.

The last day of the three day cruise went much smoother, with an occasional harried moment but no disasters. Flight operations were concluded three o'clock as the last plane was sent home. Two and half hours later, just before sunset, the Reprisal was back at Pier 7.

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The AN/APS-4 radar was never installed in F4F Wildcats or SBD-4 Dauntlesses but was otherwise as described. It made its combat debut in late 1943 or early 1944 and paved the way for more sophisticated air borne radar systems. It was however fitted to the later SDB-5.

The SB2C Helldivers and F4U Corsairs initially had serious problems when it came to carrier landings. At first they were declared as unfit for carrier operations. The problems were eventually solved and a they went on to be very capable aircraft.

