

Shadowing a Russian Helicopter Carrier

By Wayne Dupree (69-72)

While on patrol in the Med on the last Med cruise of the Huey P (70-71), I was on the starboard bridge wing with my camera taking pictures of the Moscova and the Russian helicopters that were shadowing us while we were shadowing them. Me and one other crew member had cameras with large lenses so we were detailed with taking pictures for intel purposes. We made up what was known as the snoopy team and took pictures of what ever was on the water or in the air for the purpose of intelligence gathering. One of the helicopters (Harmone Alphas) came up our starboard side from astern of us and proceeded to match our speed and just hover there. The pilot and a crew member of the helo were looking at our aft end and pointing and taking pictures. I could see that we had quite a gathering of our crew standing on the fan tail. After about five minutes the XO comes up the ladder from the torpedo deck and the walk way just outside of Sonar and up to the bridge all the while shaking his head. As he approached I heard him say "I might have known that Dellaposta was involved." It turns out that Mike Dellaposta, GMG 2 had dropped "trou" and mooned the Russian helo. Now for those of you that didn't know Mike, he was not slim in the least and on each cheek of his rear he had a three bladed ships screw tattooed which were big enough for the crew of the helicopter to see. I guess you could say that the crew of the Russian helicopter got an eyeful that day.

Now let's fast forward about two years to the end of my time on the U.S.S. Courtney DE 1021. While on board the Courtney I came down with a case of hepatitis and spent a few months in the Naval Hospital in Naples Italy which was our home port. After I had made some progress in recovery who should wander in and get a bed in my ward but Mike Dellaposta. Mike had some medical issues and was being checked in and I have to say that it was great having such a good shipmate bunking in with me. All of you guys that knew him knew what a great guy he was and how funny he could be.

About 15 min later he is given a set of PJ's and a gown and then the charge nurse Lt JG Baxer comes in and tells Mike that she has to give him a shot. Mike starts to pull up his shirt sleeve but nurse Baxer motions for him to drop his pants. I started laughing and then she asked what was so funny. I informed her that she would soon see. Well when Mike pulls his pants down she got the shock of her life. She too had been twin screwed. She started to laugh too and then jabbed him in the butt and came back about 5 min later with another nurse and asked Mike to show this nurse. I could hear laughing and giggling clear down to the nurses station and Mike and I had a good laugh as well. That few weeks were the best I had in the hospital and was also the last time I ever saw Mike. Wish I knew where he was now. A wonderful ship mate for sure.