

As an E-2C naval flight officer, I was selected to crossdeck to a cruiser in our battlegroup during work-ups off the coast of southern California. My assignment was to gather lessons learned and act as a liaison between the air wing and the air-warfare commander. I gathered a lot of lessons learned, but the most important one had little to do with air warfare.

I spent the first few days wandering around combat observing and asking questions, such as, “Hey, why do you guys do it that way?” and “What happens if I push this button?” I had begun to feel confident. Little did I know what life in CIC really entailed.

One night around 2100, I was in combat when the seas began to get rough. I had gone through an entire work-up cycle and a cruise, so I could remember a few times when the carrier had bounced around a bit. However, that experience hadn’t prepared me for the sight unfolding before me.

Sailors were struggling hand-over-hand just to get to the other side of the space. Coffee cups were rolling around on the deck, their contents having been splashed everywhere. Binders and papers were sliding from one side of the space to the other. I found the situation amusing, as I sat safely ensconced in the TAO’s chair. My amusement, however, came to a screeching halt when I looked up and saw a 300-pound equipment rack sliding toward an OS2. It was about to tip over on him.

The OS2 and shipmates noticed the problem in time to grab the rack before it could tip over. They lashed it to the deck with line, and you can bet the OS2 kept his eye on it for the rest of his watch.

As I later thought about this near-mishap, I realized how little attention I had paid to the dangers of high seas and lousy weather during work-ups. At most, I always had thought of the seas as a nuisance. As this incident showed, though, they have the potential of turning one’s workplace into a deadly environment. A valuable petty officer was nearly crushed to death.

I learned many lessons about how surface combatants operate in an air-warfare environment. These lessons, however, pale in comparison to what I learned about being prepared for anything. Make sure your work center, gym and berthing space is ready for high

By Lt. Armin Heravi,  
VAW-116

# The Day I Learned Heavy Seas Aren’t Funny



Navy photo by PHAN Joseph Strelvel

Life in CIC aboard a cruiser entails more than Sailors monitoring the movement of contacts like this operations specialist is doing. As a naval flight officer learned, there are hazards involved, especially during heavy seas.

seas. Look around and secure anything that may become a missile hazard. It’ll save you the task of cleaning up later, or more importantly, it may even save a life. ☺