

Curious Comments by Visitors

By Docent Dale Berven

- 1) "Is this the Hornet that was sunk?"
Friday night working a HS Senior Prom there was a small group up on the bridge and one of the boys asked, "did this ship ever sink?"
After showing the Orientation movie about the Hornet, CV-8, being sunk at the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands, a visitor commented that he did not know that the Japanese got so close to CA.
Actually, some ships have been raised and returned to service. In addition, Japanese did attack both California and Oregon.
- 2) When asked at Orientation "who was the first man on the moon", a mother whispered in her daughter's ear and the daughter answered, "Teddy Roosevelt."
- 3) A visitor asked, "during WW II what was the purpose of this ship?"
- 4) After showing the foc'sle and talking about the weight of the anchor and chain links several have asked, "with all this weight why doesn't the ship sink?"
- 5) A visitor saw the coat hangers in the bomb elevator at one of the dances and asked--"is that the reason it is called the hangar deck"?
- 6) A group of teenagers from a noted tough area in Oakland asked-- "where do they keep the guns"?
- 7) A young girl, around 8 or 9 placed her arm on one of the bunks in the JOBR and asked, --"did they sleep on these"?
- 8) Leading a group of seniors on the hanger deck, a docent pointed out the painted footprints and explaining they were the first steps of Neil Armstrong back on earth after returning from the moon. One lady asked, "how were you able to get Neil Armstrong's shoe size?"
- 9) Young boy to his father: "What's Pearl Harbor?" Father replies: "That's when Vietnam attacked us and started the Vietnam War."
- 10) After explaining to a group of school kids that there is a plate above or near a door stating the purpose of that particular space or compartment overheard was one student telling another after reading Crews Berthing, "this is where they give births to babies."
- 11) At Orientation one visitor (back in the days of the earlier video) turn to his kids and identified JFK as the "head of NASA."
- 12) Right at the end of the Orientation video one day a rather average looking guy of about 35 years of age, came up to the lectern and asked the following question (obviously raised by his viewing the video): "Who were we fighting in World War II, anyway?"
- 13) After informing visitors that down here in the engine room you are below the water line. When asked if there were any questions one lady raised her hand and asked, "being down here don't you get scared that some terrorist is going to hijack this ship, tow it away, and then use it to attack us?"
- 14) Talking to a media person from one of the local TV stations was an experience. Gave the impression that he knew it all. He, this reporter, placed his hand up front and below the cockpit of the SH-3H Sky King helicopter and asked, "this hull doesn't look very firm. How does it land in water?"
It does have air bags and could land on water.
- 15) At the conclusion of the DVD, a lady around 60+ told us she was a Navy wife of 25 years and her husband had passed away. She then asked the following after she kind of shuffled in her chair and shuffled her feet on the deck she asked "Am I on the ship yet or am I still on the dock".
- 16) One guest asked, "what is the ship sitting on?" He was astonished to learn that it was floating.
- 17) Question from a boy on the Flight Deck: "How do the planes take off without hitting the fishing poles?" (referring to the antennas on the starboard side)
- 18)
- 19) A cute 8-year-old at Orientation asked, "is this ship a HE or a SHE?"
- 20) Upon entering Pri-Fly, and before the docent had a chance to talk about the space, many visitors have made the comment, "this must be where they steer the ship."
- 21) Two young adults were visiting sick bay and the woman was looking in the medical office and saw the Remington typewriter. She asked her male companion "what is that?" His response was, "I don't know what it is called but it looks like it must be an early word processor."
One of my early typewriters was called a word processor. It had a single line LCD where you could type a line of text. You could edit the text. Once you pressed enter, it printed that line on the page.

- 22) While on a guided tour a woman asked the docent, "what kind of a submarine is this ship?"
We do have an airplane that was a submarine for 50 years.
- 23) While leading a tour of visitors UP the ladder leading to the Captain/Admiral quarters a man arriving late asked the docent, "is this the Engine Room tour?"
- 24) A woman approaching on the pier asked a docent who was about to come on board, "which ship is the aircraft carrier?"
- 25) A young boy's birthday party was scheduled on the ship. The mother approached the docent who was to lead the kids on a tour and said, "since we are not at war do not show anything we use in war." Dah!
- 26) In the engine room a docent was explaining how the ship would turn into the wind and sped up to get about 30-35 knots of wind across the deck. A visitor said that when he was on the Ranger they didn't have to go into the wind as they could crank it up to about 50 knots. (yeah, sure).
- 27) While monitoring the number going up in to the Island a father told several anxious kids to, "be quiet and listen to what was said. If it wasn't for the men on these ships during WW II you would be eating sauerkraut with chopsticks."
There is actually some truth to this statement.
- 28) A woman, after peering at the landing area, asked the docent if this was the runway?
I think we call that a bolter.
- 29) Down in the Engine Room on the 6th deck a young lad asked while standing in front of the two steam throttles, "how does he see where we are going?"
- 30) A couple who are new volunteer applicants were sitting at Orientation and was asked by a docent, "why do you want to become a Hornet volunteer? The lady (with tattoos, and other weird jewelry) replied that she wants to see the ghosts."
- 31) During a large live aboard the tour leader was conducting a briefing in CIC. While explaining the Dead Reckoning Tracer, he commented that there was no digital-based computational equipment on the Hornet. When he said the DRT is actually a mechanical analog computer a lady in her 30's asked "What's analog?"
- 32) Standing in HB1 in front of Elevator 1, while it was in the up position, a lady walked forward and asked this question while pointed into the vacant space; "is this where they launch planes?"
- 33) On the flight deck a woman requested use of the escalator as she did not want to walk down the steps. She then proceeded to ask if the escalator would take her down to her car.
- 34) It is not unusual to hear a young student ask after seeing a rotary dial telephone, "how does this work." Or ask after seeing a typewriter in one of Sick Bay offices if that is "a computer?"
- 35) When explaining how decks are numbered on the ship, I asked a group of cub scouts (Live Aboard) if they knew what the "O2" level meant. One quickly answered, "oxygen." – sharp kid!
- 36) After showing the orientation video, a young man asked me, "what is the name of this ship?"
It was also the Kersarge.
- 37) During a major event on the ship (GOOGLE) an adult asked me how many pilots were on board. When I answered, "probably between 90 to 100" he then asked me how many sailors were on board? I informed him that the ship had a complement of around 3000. He thought it over then asked, "when the pilots were all flying, what were the others doing?"
- 38) While talking about history during WW II, a number of visitors cannot name two important Army generals.
- 39) Similar to #39, more adults could not name two navy admirals.
- 40) A visitor's wife's uncle was a pilot in VT-8. The pilot attacked the Battleship Yamato and after dropping his torpedo he was really close to the ship. The battleship was in the verge of sinking and the stern was up in the air. The pilot had only two choices - ram into the ship or fly UNDER the stern that was in the air. No way
- 41) Another docent led around the same guy who told him that either his 20-year-old father or uncle was drafted in WWII, went through basic training where, he said, the military discovered that he was a math genius, and sent him to some specialize school for radar training/weapons development in one of his early math classes, he said his instructor was Albert Einstein. (Maybe so, but hard to believe.)
- 42) Not said on the ship but shows how little adults know about the 20th century: Theodore " Dutch " J. Van Kirk was the navigator on the "Enola Gay" when it dropped the bomb at Hiroshima, Japan, and is the last surviving member of the crew. This really happened. Dutch was asked to speak at a grammar school recently. The young teacher introduced him by saying the speaker was a veteran of World War Eleven (as in WWII). Dutch stood up and walked out of the school without saying a word. End of story.
- 43) On a Live Aboard tour in Sick Bay a small boy after viewing the rotary dial phone on the bulkhead asked the docent," Where is the camera?"

- 44) In an Educational class the docent asked some high school students can you name 2 famous generals or two famous admirals that were in WW2? (hint: two freeways here in the Bay Area have their names) (most common would be Nimitz, Halsey, MacArthur, Eisenhower) Not one could name any.
- 45) In an Educational class for high school students the topic was the "Cold War." Asked if anyone could name "The Big Three" of the Allies? (none could: FDR, Churchill, Stalin)
- 46) In another educational class I asked who was the American president when Japan attacked the United States? None could name FDR. Furthermore, after the class the teacher confided in me that she did not know either.
- 47) While on the pier and a family asked me how far the ship sank in deep waters. I responded with "The ship is floating now." They accepted this, but wanted to know "How much deeper does it sink out in the middle of the ocean?" I struggled and said "It floats the same in deep water as it does in shallow water."

THIS IS NOT THE END. AS MORE OCCUR THE LIST WILL EXPAND. IF YOU ENCOUNTER ANY KINDLY SEND TO: Dale Berven
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