Ropeyarn Sunday “Sea Stories” and Open Trackbacks

Description

So, there I was, flat on my back at 20,000 feet…no kiddin’…oops…wrong story and me without the obligatory huge watch (to compensate, ya know), but…it’s open season on trackbacks, so link ’em up!

Last week, I left me “on station” at the gunfire support range at San Celmente, Island, by way of discussion the continualy noise that surrounds you while abaord a ship.

So as it was training, within minutes of checking in on the radio net after maneuvering into the assigned gunnery “box,” of course the observer ahsore had targets for us…”Fire Mission! Troops in the Open! Grid: ….” and so the formatted message went, telling us what, where and some other important details. The plotters surrounding me went to work locating the spot he was adressing, marking our position on the chart and “ded reckoning” (simple time/speed/distance calculation) to show our predicted path of the ship. Once we had the target location plotted, we’d measure the azimuth to the target from the ship’s track and compare that to where the gunfire control system (GFCS) had figured (with its own computer) where the target was. We had to be within a degree of difference, or we’d have to replot and check, which burned valuable time ashore and specifically in the target’s area.

On top of the comparison to the GFCS plot, we also checked with the Ship’s Navigator to make sure his plot tracked with ours. It’s all about accuracy and speed within that. The Gunnery Officer would order the guns loaded and I would announce “plot set!’ if all the navigation data (three separate plots) were within the allowed tolerances. Our readiness would be reported to the spotter, who would give us final clearance to shoot. Usually he would have us fire a single round to see where it landed, then he would pass directions to “adjust the spot, by his best reckoing, to make the next round land on target. Back then the “Mk 1 Mod 0” eyeball and the operator’s calibration were the means of doing this. Today we have fancy laser stuff to tell the observer the distances, accurate to very small distances.

So…when the radio told us to shoot, it was my responsibility to send a standard order to the Gunnery Officer, who would relay it to the gun crew and the gun control console (GCC) operator, who would step on a foot pedal to fire the gun.

In this sequence, I would come to learn the timing from the moment I gave the order to shoot to the time the round was on it’s way. The thumping of the electrohydraulic ammo hoists and the operation of the loader tray and ram, followed by the slamming shut of the large steel breech block became familiar to me, so when we got to exercises requiring rounds to arrive on a target at a specific time, I was able to time my order so the computed time of flight for the rounds was essentially what was measured from the actual shot leaving the barrel. The “latency” was all

As I meantioned last week, the operation of the guns, whether they be the forward or after gun mount, was detectable where I stood in CIC, in the darkened space with dungaree clad sailors and khaki clad chief petty officers and officers, while I learned a deadly trade.

Maybe more specifics next week…but…that's the short form and worthy of not interfering too muchwith essential afternoon shopping runs for those of us late present determiners….

Category

1. "Sea Stories"
2. History
3. Military
4. Navy
5. Open Trackbacks
6. Technology

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