

In the Radar-Age Navy, a Swashbuckler Thrives

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ABOARD U.S.S. COLLETT,
off North Vietnam, April 27—

In the modern Navy, with its missiles, computers, jets and nuclear reactors, it comes as a shock to find someone who fits the swashbuckling tradition of 50 years ago.

Such a man is Frank J. Madden, chief radarman on this Seventh Fleet destroyer cruising in the Gulf of Tonkin.

When a visitor arrived in the officers' mess one night this week, he found the captain munching on a hamburger. Informed that the visitor had had an entertaining evening, the captain dropped his midnight snack and said:

"You didn't meet—not Madden!"

Chief Madden has spent 24 years in the Navy—most of them afloat, because, he says, "sailors belong at sea."

"I think you ought to let people go to port for one week—and every couple of months to spend their money. Then you've got to get them back out to sea where they belong. I didn't join the Navy to spend 20 years looking at that damned skyline in Norfolk."

Talking Man to Man

"People like me should be at sea," he added, "and they should be on destroyers. What else?"

Wrapping his hands around a cup of coffee, Chief Madden warmed to his subject.

"Aircraft carriers are pretty fancy, but you don't get to know anyone. On destroyers, the captain knows who you are, and he knows what your abilities are. You can talk to him man to man. Who ever heard of that on a really big ship? Besides, I like to hear them big guns talk."

Who was the best captain he had served?

"The present one," he said. "Always the present one. The Navy doesn't put burns in charge of their destroyers."

Chief Madden reserves his



Radiophoto of The New York Times (by R. W. Apple Jr.)

STORYBOOK SAILOR: Chief Petty Officer Frank J. Madden of New York, beside radar antenna, aboard the destroyer Collett, cruising off the North Vietnam coast.

greatest scorn for "sand crabs"—people who like shore duty—out," he said. "They're not sailors, they're temporaries." Born in the Bronx, "four lunches on board ship."

"I'm not one of those guys

who stays in 20 years and gets out," he said. "They're not sailors, they're temporaries."

Born in the Bronx, "four blocks from the Zoo," Chief Madden enlisted in the Navy

when he was 16 years old. He said the recruiting officers had promised his parents that "I wouldn't be sent out of the United States until I was 18, and they lied."

Since then, he has served on five destroyers, a light cruiser, a landing ship, a personnel transport and an amphibious command vessel.

The best liberty port "Shanghai, Shanghai, you could get drunk, find women, smoke a pot of opium and eat dogs. What more do you want?"

Chief Madden has all the attributes of the storybook sailor—the ability to stand a wet deck, spin a sea story, quaff endless pots of rum—except one: tattoos. Asked why, he said, "I was always busy in the bar."

His fondness for bars also kept him, during more than two decades in the Navy, from promotion to chief petty officer. He reached that exalted rank only nine days ago at the age of 40, and he reached it because he had finally decided that it was worthwhile to stay sober for a year or so.

Memorized 10 Movies

He failed of promotion in the past, he said, because he was "busy being demoted."

"I decided to make a career of it a couple of weeks ago," the chief said, "when I went to sign up for another six years. Maybe I'll last 55 years. Anyway, I want to stay in at least until I die."

In 24 years, Chief Madden's most momentous experience came in the winter of 1954 aboard the Lindenwald, a landing ship, dock.

"We were stuck in the ice off Thule, Greenland, for 54 days," he said. "We were down to crackers and rice at the end."

We only had 10 movies aboard, and I memorized the dialogue of every one of them.