

John McCain

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This article was written by JJ Paul McCartney who says:



For anyone who doesn't know the real John McCain let me help you get to know him.

And remember this doesn't even mention [his traitorous acts while he was a POW.](#)

Okay, people...before John McCain dies and the ridiculous "tributes" to the man make me vomit, let's remember what McCain's real legacy is: His father was the Admiral in charge of the Pacific fleet prosecuting the war in Vietnam Nam.

Because of this McCain got preferential treatment in the Navy. He was allowed to become a Navy pilot. But he was a terrible pilot.

McCain crashed two Navy Jets in his early career. Then while aboard the Aircraft Carrier USS Forrestal, McCain got angry because he had to wait in line to take off on a bombing run.

He shut off his engines, opened the cockpit, and in his haste to exit the aircraft to chew someone out about his having to "wait", he hit the button that released his live bombs onto the deck of the Forrestal.

He took off running, as the bombs exploded, which set off a chain reaction of bombs from adjacent aircraft, and the ensuing explosions and fires killed 133 sailors aboard the Forrestal.

While his fellow sailors were fighting the fire, McCain went to the pilot's lounge below decks and watched the men fight the fire on closed circuit TV.

Hours later, McCain took off with a New York Times reporter buddy of his, and went on to say that after seeing the effects of those bombs on the Forrestal, he was beginning to question the morality of dropping those bombs on the Viet Cong.

McCain was the direct cause of 133 deaths on his own ship, and was never reprimanded. He was nowhere to be found as the Forrestal had to limp to the Philippines for months of repair work.

McCain was married then. His wife was stricken with debilitating injuries in an automobile accident. And was hospitalized for more than 5 months. McCain was off gallivanting with anything in a skirt.

Upon returning from Vietnam Nam, McCain found his wife was disfigured by her injuries, which included a shattered pelvis, arm, and legs. In order to save her legs, doctors performed 23 surgeries on her, and had to remove significant portions of the bones in her legs, which left her shorter, and unable to walk, and in a wheelchair, she had to use a catheter.

McCain was disinterested in his first wife's predicament. She had to go through grueling physical therapy to learn to walk again.

After McCain left the Navy, he was intent on a career in politics. He and His wife Carol had gotten to know Ronald and Nancy Reagan, and McCain was eager to jump into politics. But he decided he needed a more visually pleasing young woman by his side. He callously divorced Carol, the mother of his three children, and immediately jumped into the sack with new wife Cindy, who was 18 years younger.

Upon learning of this, the Reagans were shocked and angered by how he had treated Carol.

While campaigning for congress, McCain used pictures of himself posing with Mr. And Mrs. Reagan, but there was no hearty endorsement offered by the Reagans.

McCain's new young wife was also an heiress to an Arizona Brewing fortune.

And let us not forget McCain was one of the Keating 5, who had helped swindle life savings from countless Americans in the Savings and Loan scandal of the 1980's. McCain was in it up to his eyeballs.

Yet McCain was well-connected in Washington, and parlayed his connections into a seat in the United States Senate.

So before the tearful tributes to John McCain, be sure you remember the facts about this self-proclaimed Maverick. The facts do not agree with that portrait of a heroic patriot and great American.

With due respect to his family, John McCain was never the great man so many portray.

<http://www.factcheck.org/2008/09/mccains-plane-crashes/>

McCain's Plane Crashes

By [Brooks Jackson](#) Posted on September 5, 2008 | Updated on October 12, 2008

McCain did lose two Navy aircraft while piloting them. One crash was found to be McCain's fault, the other due to an engine failure of undetermined cause.. A third was destroyed on the deck of the carrier USS Forrestal when a missile fired accidentally from another plane hit either the plane next to McCain's or, less likely, his own aircraft, triggering a disastrous fire that killed 134 sailors and nearly killed McCain. A fourth plane was lost when he was shot down over North Vietnam on a bombing mission over Hanoi.

A fifth alleged "crash" turns out to be a misinterpretation of a flight accident that did not result in the loss of the aircraft. **McCain admitted to causing that incident through "daredevil clowning"** but returned safely.

'Superb Airmanship' ??

None of these incidents prevented McCain from winning regular promotions and being assigned additional flight duty. The Navy praised his "aggressiveness and skillful airmanship" when awarding him the Navy Commendation Medal for an attack Oct. 18, 1967, on a shipyard in Haiphong, North Vietnam, prior to his capture. The Navy also commended his "superb airmanship" in awarding him the Distinguished Flying Cross for a bombing attack on a Hanoi power plant Oct. 26, 1967. His plane was hit by a surface-to-air missile on that mission, but he "continued his bomb delivery pass and released his bombs over the target" before being forced to eject, according to the official citation.

The Navy has released and posted copies of McCain's several [medal citations and commendations](#). We have not seen any similar release of official reports of his accidents, or of his fitness reports as a young officer. However, we do have accounts of the incidents both from McCain himself and from his biographer, Robert Timberg, a former White House correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*, and now editor of the U.S. Naval Institute's magazine, *Proceedings*. Timberg's award-winning book, "The Nightingale's Song," tells the story of McCain and four members of his Naval Academy class who later rose to prominence. It was published in 1995. McCain's book "Faith of my Fathers" was published in 1999.

Two Crashes, and 'Daredevil Clowning'

First Crash, March 12, 1960: This took place while McCain, a young, unmarried officer not long out of the Naval Academy, was in advanced flight training at Corpus Christi, Texas. Timberg and McCain both give the cause as engine failure, but a Navy investigation blamed McCain's inattention to altitude.

McCain, 1999 (pp155-156): I crashed a plane in Corpus Christi Bay one Saturday morning. The engine quit while I was practicing landings. ... I barely managed to get the canopy open and swim to the surface. ... I took a few painkillers and hit the sack to rest my aching back for a few hours. ... I was out carousing, injured back and all, later that evening.

Timberg's account agrees, but Navy records do not. According to a Naval Aviation Safety Center report, [obtained by the *Los Angeles Times*](#), investigators determined that the engine did not quit, and McCain was to blame:

Los Angeles Times, Oct. 6, 2008: Cockpit instruments that froze on impact showed the engine was still producing power. When water quenched the exhaust stack, it preserved a bright blue color, showing that the engine was still hot. And an aviator behind McCain reported that the engine was producing the black smoke characteristic of Skyraiders.

Investigators determined that McCain was watching instruments in his cockpit that indicated the position of his landing gear and had lost track of his altitude and speed.

The report concluded: "In the opinion of the board, the pilot's preoccupation in the cockpit ... coupled with the use of a power setting too low to maintain level flight in a turn were the primary causes of this accident."

"Clowning" in Spain, about December 1961: Those who claim McCain lost five planes – when they bother to give specific citations at all – point to an incident described by McCain, and also in Timberg's book, as happening on one of McCain's deployments to the Mediterranean. The [L.A. Times](#) put the date of the incident as "around December 1961," while McCain was on a training mission flying from the USS *Intrepid*.

Timberg, 1995 (p. 94): His professional growth, though reasonably steady, had its troubled moments. Flying low over the Iberian Peninsula, he took out some power lines, which led to a spate of newspaper stories in which he was predictably identified as the son of an admiral. The tale has gotten better with age. These days they talk about the day McCain turned the lights out in Spain.

McCain described it this way in "Faith of My Fathers," which was published four years after Timberg's account:

McCain, 1999 (p. 159): There were occasional setbacks in my efforts to round out my Navy profile. My reputation was certainly not enhanced when I knocked down some power lines while flying too low over southern Spain. My daredevil clowning had cut off electricity to a great many Spanish homes and created a small international incident.

The *L.A. Times*, which interviewed others who were in McCain's squadron at the time, reports that he returned to the carrier with 10 feet of power line trailing from his plane, and with a severed oil line. But while McCain himself admits this incident was caused by his own "daredevil clowning," he landed safely and did not lose the aircraft. McCain's detractors should scratch that "crash" off their list.

Despite the incident in Spain, and the earlier finding that McCain was to blame for the Corpus Christi crash, McCain was promoted to full lieutenant on June 1, 1962.

Second crash, Nov. 28 1965: By this time Lt. McCain was stationed at Meridian, Mississippi, and was newly married to his first wife, Carol. McCain had flown to Philadelphia to attend an Army-Navy football game with his parents and was bringing back Christmas presents for the family in the baggage compartment of his plane. His jet engine quit over the Chesapeake Bay.

McCain, 1999 (p. 172): Somewhere between the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Norfolk, Virginia, as I was preparing to come in and refuel, my engine flamed out, and I had to eject at a thousand feet. The Christmas gifts were lost with my airplane.

Biographer Timberg gives additional details:

Timberg, 1995 (pp 95-96): [He] had just begun his descent over unpopulated tidal terrain when the engine died. "I've got a flame-out," he radioed. He went through the standard relight procedures three times. At one thousand feet, he ejected, landing on the deserted beach moments before the plane slammed into a clump of trees. ... The Navy classified it as a "routine ejection."

The [*L.A. Times* obtained records](#) of the investigation of this crash, giving a somewhat different picture but ultimately blaming engine failure:

Los Angeles Times, Oct. 8, 2008: In a report dated Jan. 18, 1966, the Naval Aviation Safety Center said it could not determine the cause of the accident or corroborate McCain's account of an explosion in the engine. A close examination of the engine found "no discrepancies which would have caused or contributed to engine failure or malfunction." . . . About two weeks after issuing its report, the safety center revised its findings and said the accident resulted from the failure or malfunction of an "undetermined component of the engine."

A little more than a year later McCain was promoted to lieutenant commander on Jan. 1, 1967.

The Forrestal Disaster, July 29, 1967

At the time of this incident Lt. Cdr. McCain already had flown several bombing missions over North Vietnam from the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal. As he was in his A-4 Skyhawk, loaded with two, 1,000-pound bombs and waiting on the carrier deck for his turn to launch, a Zuni missile accidentally fired from another aircraft, swooshed across the carrier deck and struck either McCain's plane or one next to it.

That triggered a fire and a series of bomb and missile explosions that killed 134 sailors. McCain himself barely escaped alive. He quickly leaped from his plane into the pool of burning jet fuel that immediately surrounded him. About 90 seconds later he was blown 15 feet back when the first bomb “cooked off” and exploded, killing several nearby firefighters.

James M. Caiella has written a scholarly article about the disaster, which appeared in the Fall 2003 issue of *Foundation* magazine, a publication of the National Naval Aviation Museum, located in Pensacola, Fla. Caiella, who is now associate editor of *Proceedings* and *Naval History* magazines, published by the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis, generously shared with us copies of some key documents which he obtained from the Navy under the Freedom of Information Act. They include a typed transcript of the sworn testimony that McCain gave less than two weeks after the disaster, on Aug. 5, 1967, and also a written statement he submitted prior to his testimony, describing the first moments of the disaster:

McCain, 1967 statement: I heard a loud explosion and immediate fire all around the airplane . . . Smoke and flame were around the cockpit so I unstrapped . . . and unplugged my oxygen hose, keeping my visor down. I looked to the aft of the airplane and saw nothing but flame and I could see burning fuel in front and around the airplane but it did not look too bad to the forward. I opened the canopy and walked out on the refueling probe and jumped from the end of it, landing just on the edge of the fire and rolled clear.

McCain said that he rushed to help another pilot who had gotten out of his plane and had jumped into the flames and rolled clear, but was still on fire.

McCain, 1967 statement: I started running over towards him and I was near a group of men with a fire hose. As I was about 10 feet from him the first bomb exploded and blew me back about 15 feet. I sat up and saw a lot of bodies near me (some who had been on the hose) and I ran and jumped over the starboard cat walk [under the flight deck].

That first bomb explosion was 90 seconds into the fire. Soon it ignited other bombs and other missiles. Later, on the hangar deck below the main flight deck, McCain said he and another officer, along with “a lot of fine enlisted men,” pushed several bomb carts overboard to keep them away from flaming fuel that was curling down from above. He later “noticed that I had a hole below my left knee with some metal in it, and two small shrapnel cuts in my thigh and shoulder.”

The Forrestal was badly damaged and put out of action for two years. A little more than a month after the disaster, McCain was flying missions from another carrier, the USS Oriskany.

Whose Plane?

McCain has said for years that the missile struck his own plane, and this has been widely accepted. But official documents don't support that. We now judge it more likely that the missile first struck a plane next to McCain's and that his own memory of the event has changed in the years since.

In his 1999 book "Faith of My Fathers," McCain writes:

McCain, 1999 (p. 177): I took my helmet back ... and shut the plane's canopy. In the next instant, a Zuni missile struck the belly fuel tank of my plane, tearing it open, igniting two hundred gallons of fuel that spilled onto the deck, and knocking two of my bombs to the deck.

Author Gregory A. Freeman, in his 2002 book about the disaster, "Sailors to the End," accepts that it was McCain's plane that was hit:

Freeman, 2002 (pp 104-105): McCain felt a huge impact as the Zuni rocket tore through his plane on the right side and exited on the left side, ripping open his fuel tank with four hundred gallons of JP5 jet fuel.

The more recent account by James Caiella, however, comes to a different conclusion. Writing in 2003, Caiella points out, correctly, that the official Navy investigation into the disaster – the Manual of the Judge Advocate General Basic Final Investigative Report Concerning the Fire on Board the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) – concluded that the missile struck plane number 405, the A-4 piloted by Lt. Cdr. Fred White, who was among those killed in the incident. McCain's plane was number 416, and was next to White's, one plane forward toward the ship's bow. Caiella has kindly provided us with official Navy summaries of the investigation documenting this finding. He has also allowed us to reproduce here a portion of a drawing he created, based on the Navy report, to illustrate his article. It shows the positions of the aircraft on deck at the time the fire began.

Rear Admiral Forsyth Massey, commander in chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, headed the Navy's post-disaster investigation, and wrote in a summary that he sent up the chain of command on Sept. 19, 1967:

Rear Adm Massey, Sept. 19, 1967: A review of the voluminous material contained in the Report of Investigation establishes the central fact that a ZUNI rocket was inadvertently fired from an F-4 aircraft (#110) and struck the external fuel tank of an A-4 aircraft (#405) which was clustered in a pack along with other aircraft on the deck of the USS FORRESTAL. This inadvertent firing of the rocket resulted in a raging fire.

Massey makes no reference to McCain or plane number 416. Another summary, written by the Navy's Judge Advocate General as he forwarded the report to the Chief of Naval Operations, also said the missile "struck A-4 #405" and set off the fire. That summary also says that "A fragment punctured the centerline external fuel tank of another A-4 just aft of the jet blast deflector of catapult #3" That second plane isn't identified specifically, but McCain's plane was fifth in line behind the catapults. Caiella says he believes it was plane #310.

We also note that immediately after the disaster, when McCain's recollection was still fresh, he was by no means certain whose plane had been hit. He said in his typed statement,

McCain, 1967 statement: I was just ready to commence the aileron trim check... when I heard a loud explosion and immediate fire all around the airplane, at first I thought LCDR White's airplane had exploded or the explosion had occurred beneath my starboard wing due to the proximity of the explosion. I now think that it might have been one aircraft further aft but I am not sure.

McCain also expressed considerable uncertainty when investigators questioned him on Aug. 5 1967, just a week after the fire:

Q: Did you think in your own mind at this point that something had hit your airplane or not?

McCain: Yes, sir. The reason, looking back on it, I think I felt... I would like to add about my testimony, after seeing the bomb go off and the injuries involved, I was a little bit emotionally upset and some of the things that I may remember, I may not remember exactly. But when I saw LCDR Hope on the hangar deck, and I believe you can ask him about this, the first thing I said to him was, 'Herb, I thought I had killed you.' So I must have

believed that it was from my aircraft at that time. Then I heard so many other stories as to what happened, I didn't believe it was my aircraft. But at the time, I think, I believed that it was my aircraft or the one right next to it.

We can't resolve with perfect certainty which version is correct. Film of the disaster taken by a Navy camera cannot decide the matter because it was pointed away from the point of impact at the time the missile fired. By the time the camera swung quickly aft both McCain and White's planes were enveloped in the spreading flames. (A narrated version has been [posted on YouTube](#).)

Much physical evidence was of course destroyed by the series of bomb explosions that began 90 seconds after the first impact. It is possible that the missile hit White's plane and that fragments of it also hit McCain's.

We judge that the missile most likely hit White's plane, not McCain's. We base this on the unequivocal finding of the official investigation and the uncertainty that McCain expressed just a week after the event. His memory 32 years later, at the time he published the book, we consider less reliable. In fact, his 1999 version departs from the official report in other respects as well. He writes in his book that his plane carried 200 gallons of fuel, but the official report says the A-4s carried 400 gallons. McCain writes that "two of my bombs" were knocked to the deck, but the Judge Advocate General's summary mentions only one bomb, a 1000-pounder that "fell onto the deck from A-4 #405," White's plane. McCain doesn't mention bombs falling from his own plane in the testimony and statement he gave immediately after the disaster.

No 'Wet Start'

A special note is in order here. We have seen some baseless claims that McCain was somehow responsible for the Forrestal disaster. One incorrect but widely quoted theory has him triggering the Zuni missile with the exhaust of his own plane by "wet-starting" – deliberately dumping fuel into the afterburner before starting in order to shoot a large flame from the tail of the aircraft. This is a preposterous notion. For one thing, A-4 jets flew at subsonic speeds and were not equipped with afterburners. According to the Military Analysis Network site maintained by the Federation of American Scientists, the A-4 was powered by a "Single, Pratt & Whitney, J-52-P-408A [non-afterburning, turbojet engine](#)." The manufacturer's description of the aircraft also describes the powerplant as "One 11,187-pound-thrust P&W J52-P408 engine," with [no mention of an afterburner](#).

And while pilots tell us that a "wet start" is possible even without an afterburner, the theory fails for another reason. The tail of McCain's plane was pointed over the side of the carrier and away from other planes at the time, and the F4 Phantom fighter that fired the missile was facing McCain's plane from the opposite side of the deck, as shown in Caiella's diagram, in other diagrams, and in Navy film of the fire.

This bogus theory appears to have gotten its start from [a report by New York Times reporter R. W. Apple, Jr.](#), who reported on July 31, 1967 – two days after the fire – that the Forrestal's captain, John K. Beling, believed an "extreme wet start" had created "a thick tongue of flame" that set off the Zuni. Beling did not identify McCain's plane as the source, however, and said only that the aircraft was "parked near the carrier's island," which would have put it far forward and on the opposite side of the flight deck from where McCain's plane was getting ready to launch. Not usually noted by the conspiracy theorists is that Capt. Beling "repeatedly said that he had been unable fully to sort out the conflicting reports" that circulated on the 5,000-man vessel in the hours after the fire, according to Apple, who also called the wet-start theory "tentative." In any case, Beling's early theory was soon dismissed by Navy investigators, who found that the Zuni had been touched off by a stray electrical charge, not by a jet exhaust. Author Freeman summarizes the findings succinctly in "Sailors to the End:"

Freeman, 2002 (p. 250): The investigation revealed that the rocket (fired) because a freak surge of electricity jumped through the plane's system at the moment the pilot switched from the outside electrical generator to the plane's internal power system.

And as Caiella also notes in his account, the investigation found that in the wartime pressure to get planes launched quickly crews had not observed two key safety precautions that could have prevented the stray spike of electricity from firing the rocket. The "pigtail" that connects the plane's wiring to the missile had been plugged in prematurely, before the plane was on the catapult, and a safety pin that also would have prevented the firing also had been removed.

Freeman has posted an item on his own Web site flatly [stating that McCain was in no way responsible](#) for the accident. "McCain was never suspected of causing the fire because investigators determined immediately that the rocket misfired from the other side of the flight deck," writes Freeman.

Caiella agrees. He told us: "There is no possible way John McCain could have caused the fire on board the Forrestal. ... McCain's only connection with the investigation was as a witness, in both a written deposition shortly after the fire and later in sworn testimony to the board."

Shot Down

The fourth plane McCain lost was of course the Skyhawk shot down over North Vietnam on Oct. 26, 1967. The previously mentioned official citation describes 15 enemy surface-to-air missiles fired at the attacking U.S. planes and "extremely heavy and accurate anti-aircraft fire." Far from blaming McCain for the loss of his plane, the Navy awarded him, in addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star for his "conspicuous gallantry" while imprisoned by the North Vietnamese for the nearly five-and-a-half years that followed. Shortly after his release he was promoted again, to full commander.

—*Brooks Jackson*

Sources

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