Strange Stories About the USS Hornet

By Toni M.

The USS Hornet is renowned not only for its service during World War II but also for its reputation as one of the most haunted ships in the United States. Visitors and staff alike have reported a variety of ghostly encounters, ranging from unexplained footsteps echoing down empty corridors to sudden cold spots in the ship's medical bay.

One of the most famous stories involves sightings of a sailor dressed in World War II-era attire, believed to be the ghost of a crew member who tragically lost his life aboard the ship. Some claim to have seen shadowy figures darting into rooms, only to find them empty moments later. Others have reported hearing muffled voices, alarms, and machinery sounds in the dead of night—long after the ship's engines were silenced forever. Some visitors report being touched by invisible hands - a tap on the shoulder, a brush against the arm, or a firm grip that holds them in place before releasing them. These contacts are rarely frightening, but they leave no doubt that something unseen is present.

Perhaps the strangest story is about a sailor who, convinced the ship was haunted, attempted to conduct a séance in the mess hall. Legend has it that the lights flickered and a chilling breeze swept through, sending everyone running for cover. Whether it was paranormal activity or just a draft, it's a tale that continues to amuse those who hear it.

Electronic equipment, particularly cameras and recording devices, frequently malfunctions aboard the Hornet. Batteries drain unexpectedly, cameras fail to capture images, and audio recorders pick up sounds that weren't audible at the time of recording.

The USS Hornet is not haunted by a single ghost or even a handful of spirits. She is haunted by what feels like an entire crew - dozens, perhaps hundreds, of spectral sailors who continue to walk her passageways, stand their watches, and carry out the duties they performed in life. Dark, humanoid shapes are seen throughout the ship, moving through passageways or standing in corners. These shadows are often seen in peripheral vision and disappear when looked at directly.

One of the most frequently reported apparitions on the Hornet is a naval officer in dress whites. He appears throughout the ship but is most often seen on the bridge and in the officers' quarters. Witnesses describe a man of medium height and build, wearing the formal white uniform of a commissioned officer. His rank is difficult to make out, but his bearing and manner suggest someone accustomed to command. The officer never speaks, but he acknowledges witnesses with a nod before walking away and disappearing around corners or through bulkheads.

Paranormal investigators have also visited the USS Hornet, capturing unusual audio recordings and thermal images that suggest supernatural activity. Many believe that the spirits of those who served on the Hornet remain aboard, forever part of the vessel's history. The USS Hornet continues to intrigue and unsettle guests, making it a compelling destination.