

## THE AVIATION BOATSWAIN'S MATE INSIGNIA

By –CW04 Douglas L. Chaney (AB Bos'n) (Retired)

Our insignia, bearing crossed anchors with wings, has stood for gallantry, productivity and dedication for nearly fifty years. Many excellent AB's have given their limbs and in too many cases their lives, performing the feats of the flight deck. Allow me to break the insignia down and put it into the right perspective for you.

The anchor is a heavy device used to secure a sea-going vessel or boat to a specific spot in a body of water. A single well-trained AB is an anchor. They secure their watch stations, whether it be securing aircraft on deck, fueling and defueling aircraft, directing aircraft around the deck, salvaging damaged aircraft, making aircraft settings on the arresting gear engine or hooking up and launching aircraft off our catapults.

Our insignia has two anchors. This signifies that we can't do our jobs alone. We must rely on each other and combine our knowledge and talents to fulfill our role on every flight and hangar deck. Just like a symphony orchestra in an amphitheater, we perform the marvelous spectacle of carrier air operations. We see each other at our worst and our best and we assist each other through the rough and dangerous times that are always present. We teach each other, we test each other and though it is never stated, we love and respect each other deeply. Like the identical crossed anchors, our souls are bonded in friendship forever.

Then there are the wings. To put wings on a set of anchors in itself is superfluous. In retrospect, it would take very powerful wings and a strong back to support them in flight. AB's have the strong backs and the determination to get the job done no matter what the sacrifice. Unfortunately, those sacrifices are many and I would hope that they don't go unrewarded.

Remember the old fable about whenever a bell chimes, an angel gets it wings? Well, whenever you hear ship's bell sound, more AB's have sacrificed their time and used their professionalism to earn their wings. Our wings should signify that we have earned and secured our place in heaven.