

III. 1946 ~ Shakedown Cruises

1946: The official log for the first day of 1946 was written by Lieutenant V. R. King, USN and reads as follows:

00-04

*Here we start this year of hard won peace,
Well moored between the Greene and the Gearing,
Our grand pledge fulfilled to never cease,
While still unbowed the foe is living.*

*The Gearing's moored to the Finger pier,
With steam and power from Gyatt's mains,
And boiler two with assorted gear,
Provides the steam to prevent chilblaine.*

*In Guadacanal is our SOPUS,
At the NAS, Pensacola,
Present with us are ships various,
Celebrating with Coca Cola.*

Signed/V. R. King, LT., USNR

The year found the Gyatt continuing on shakedown cruises and visiting the ports of Newark, New Jersey; Baltimore, Maryland and Corpus Christi, Texas. The Gyatt joined the USS Gearing (DD-710), USS Greene (DD-711) and USS Bailey (DD-713) to form Destroyer Squadron Four known as DESRON 4. Other ships that were later assigned to DESRON 4 were the USS Vogelsang (DD-862), USS Steinaker (DD-863), USS Ellison (DD-864) and the USS Ware (DD-865). It appears that these ships may have remained together as DESRON 4 until the Gyatt was converted to a missile destroyer. The squadron emblem was a bare chested sailor, who looked like he was on steroids, with a bulldog face, a large number four tattooed on his chest, wearing a white hat and dungarees pants, holding a five-inch projectile in his right hand and another projectile under his left arm.

On an early February morning, while operating in the Gulf of Mexico and out of Pensacola, Florida, the Gyatt came upon a sailing boat, the "Carrie R," riding the swells and four men waving wildly trying to catch the ships attention. The Gyatt heeded the distress signal of the four men and went alongside the sailing ship, extended a line and took the sailboat in tow. Discussion with the four men of the sailboat indicated that they had been adrift for four days before being rescued by the Gyatt.

It wasn't more than six weeks later, when the Gyatt moored to the portside of the Gearing, that the Greene attempting to moor to the portside of the Gyatt rammed into the area of the twin

40mm gun mount. The first hit put a nine-foot gash in the magazine directly below the gun mount, knocked out the magazine sprinkling system and knocked the gun mount out of line. The second hit tore up a three-foot by nine-foot section of the portside deck, destroyed three support frames and knocked the forward boat davit out of line. It was almost thirty minutes before the Greene was able to moor alongside the Gyatt – but the damage was thorough.

On the 6th day of June Commander Carl R. Tellefsen, USN (6 June 1946 to 23 May 1948) took command of the Gyatt. It must be noted that the homeport for the 712 was Philadelphia but the ship was not destined to dock there during that period.

The year found the Gyatt making two trips to the Marine Corps School at Quantico, Virginia for instruction of Marine Officers in shore bombardment procedures. The ship also went through intensive training with units of the Eighth Fleet. The ship operated with various carriers off Cape Henry before heading to the waters of Cuba and Trinidad for participation in simulated landing and shore bombardment exercises before heading north to New York City.

The year also found the 712 going in and out of Charleston, South Carolina to off load and on load ammunition before and after her time in the Boston Naval Shipyard for overhaul. Charleston was to become the homeport for the Gyatt from 1959 to 1962.

In 1946 a postage stamp, for first class mail, was three cents, a loaf of bread was a dime and a quart of milk fifteen cents. A new house was \$12,638; a new car was \$1,649 and minimum wage was forty cents an hour, slated to go sixty-five cents an hour at the end of the year (I find this hard to believe for I was working an average of twenty hours a week in a union plant in 1948 and was receiving twenty-five cents an hour with a raise in mid 1949 to forty cents an hour). The average salary in 1946 was \$2,349 per year. A Timex wristwatch was \$6.95; a bottle of gins \$3.12 and a room at the Hotel Richmond in Richmond, Virginia was \$3.75 a night.

The average hospital stay in for a mother giving birth was five days, in 1995 they got it down to one and in 1998 back to two whole days. The first computer, ENIAC for Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, was developed by IBM; it was ten feet tall, weighed 60,000 pounds and had 18,000 vacuum tubes. This was also the year of the first Bikini bathing suit.

The Cardinals beat the Red Sox in seven games to win the World Series. The Chicago Bears beat the New York Giants to win the NFL championship. The American Football League started and was won by the Cleveland Browns who remained winners in that league until the NFL absorbed the financially sound teams in 1950. The NBA began in the fall of 1946. “The Best Years of Our Life” won an Oscar, movie tickets in the cities were \$1.20 and in my small town thirty-five cents. Other movies enjoyed in 1946 included: “The Razor’s Edge, Gilda, Great Expectations, The Beauty and the Beast, Notorious and To Each His Own.” The Christmas favorite “It’s A Wonderful Life” with Jimmy Stewart was shown for the first time.

Top songs in 1946 were: “To Each His Own and The Gypsy” by the Ink Spots, “Ole Buttermilk Sky” by Kay Starr, and “They Say It’s Wonderful” by Perry Como. Some other memorable songs: “How Are Things in Gloccamorra, Tenderly, Come Rain or Come Shine, Shoo-Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy and Doin’ What Comes Naturally.”

