

XVI. 1959 ~ A Change of Squadrons

1959: The official log for the first day of 1959 was written by Ensign J. D. Wylie, USNR and reads as follows:

00-04

*Moored port side to berth 234
In a nest for two who could ask for more.
We're at Des-Sub Piers in Norfolk, VA
Using typical moor and trusty spring lay.*

*The Owens, J.C.'s alongside to the right
The Krause and the Bigelow are also in sight.
We're receiving most our needs from the pier
I've underlined "most" 'cause we're lacking cold beer.*

*Condition YOKE's set, we have a dead plant
And SOPA, as usual, is ComNavAirLant.
The night is quite calm, no danger's in sight
Happy New Year to all and to all a good night.*

Signed/J. D. Wylie, Ensign, USN

The Gyatt spent the first two months of the New Year at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on training exercises. On the return to Norfolk heavy weather evaluations were conducted on the Denny-Brown Stabilization System. In March and April the Gyatt spent the time in typical training exercises in the Virginia Capes area. May found the ship in Washington, DC for Armed Forces Day celebrations and public visiting. After leaving the nation's capital the ship participated in a series of exercises that culminated on a trip to Baltimore over the 4th of July holiday period. The Gyatt participated in the reenactment of the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British, firing five-inch blanks, as the flag honoring the 49th State, Alaska, was raised over the old fort. In a little more than a month a 50th star would be added to the flag with the addition of Hawaii to the Union. It was this bombardment, during the War of 1812, that inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner" which eventually became our National Anthem.

On the 25th day of July the Gyatt and other destroyers of Destroyer Squadron Four (DesRon Four) participated in the Destroyer Forces "Grand Entry" into Charleston, South Carolina; the city which became the ship's home port.

Somewhere during this period Admiral Arleigh Burke came aboard the Gyatt for a firing demonstration of the "Terrier Missile." The Admiral was in CIC to observe what the various

monitors displayed and all went well for the first seven-seconds then nothing. It seemed all telemetry was gone and no one could give the Admiral an answer.

On the way to Charleston in preparation for inspection the engine room gang were in a total cleanup mode. Tommy Gardner, a fireman apprentice, who hadn't been aboard for any period of time, spilled the coffee he was drinking onto the aluminum deck scuppers in his work area. At about the same time the Chief in charge of the cleanup detail happened by and was somewhat aggravated by the mess created by the spilled coffee and ordered the fireman apprentice to get a Kiyi brush and scrub the scuppers using his remaining coffee as the liquid. The scuppers actually gleamed and from that day forward coffee and coffee grounds were used to clean aluminum surfaces.

On another occasion, Gardner was directed to make coffee on his watch and had not paid attention to those who made coffee previously. So when he was directed to brew a pot he filled the pot with water from the ship's boilers – not realizing that the boiler compound used in the water would make the crew sick. An apprentice needs direction – even when making a pot of coffee. A similar situation had occurred twelve years earlier when the apprentice was too lazy to tap the fresh water source and tapped the boiler lines, which were closer.

It may have been a result of this inspection or a later inspection that Gardner realized that his dungarees would not get the grease and oil stains, generated by the cleaning of the bilges, removed by the ship's laundry. Sitting on the fantail, taking in the rays, Gardner observed the ship's wake as it moved through the water and figured that the agitation and salt water would surely get his dungarees clean. Gardner was scheduled to go on watch at 1600 hours but before doing so he got his dungarees, snaked a line through one of the legs, secured the line to a stanchion, threw the dungarees over the side and went on watch. During the watch the ship approached flank speed (plus 30 knots) on a number of occasions; however, Gardner being a neophyte aboard ship was not concerned or aware of potential consequences. When Gardner's watch was secured went aft to the fantail and could see his dungarees bouncing atop the ship's wake; so he proceeded to haul them aboard ship. One look at his dungarees and Gardner cut the line connected to the stanchion and let what was left of the shredded dungarees and the line get lost in the ship's wake. The young sailor was not aware that a high-speed agitator could shred dungaree material so quickly as realized he would be spending two dollars for a new pair.

At about this same time there was a storekeeper petty officer aboard ship who wanted to see if he could get a "chit" to the Navy Supply Center approved for a water cooled 50 caliber machine gun and was in shock when it arrived six weeks later. It seems that it had been approved on up the line without question. Shades of "Radar O'Reilly" and Colonel Henry Blake of "Mash."

It was shortly before the ship got under way for Charleston, South Carolina and the "Grand Entry" that Ensigns Snyder and Freckman reported aboard for duty. Both gentlemen were called to the office of the XO, LCDR Lessman, and were handed the Deslant Destroyer Indoctrination Course, which had at least ten lengthy assignments and were told that all assignments would be completed by the time the ship reached Charleston or they would not be going ashore. The XO also advised that both men would have the port and starboard Junior Officer of the Day watches on the bridge while the ship was underway. Both Ensigns were

newlyweds. Needless to say, neither Ensign got much sleep enroute to their new homeport – but they finished their assignments.

There was another officer aboard the Gyatt who had recently married, LTJG Googe. It wasn't even a month that Mr. Googe and his wife Linda said, "I DO" that the ship had been assigned to the Navy Base in Charleston, South Carolina. It was the 28th day of July and the ship had just completed her third day in port when Mr. Googe returned to his quarters to find his young bride to be somewhat upset and unhappy. As usual moving created its normal amount of problems – but as usual they expand with conditions. For example: moving south in the middle of summer with no air conditioning and still not knowing your kindred spirits, having your newly acquired spouse restricted to his ship overnight and the list goes on. Well – Mr. Googe had the OOD (Officer of the Deck) watch on the 29th day of July and was somewhat morose as he stood the watch on the quarterdeck from noon until 1600. While standing watch and chatting with his peers a florist truck stops on the pier and a young man extracts a dozen long stemmed red roses, walks along the pier – up the gangway and asks for "Mr. Googe." Mr. Googe identifies himself and is presented with the roses. According to those who observed this happening a somber OOD became all smiles as he read the card that accompanied the dozen long stemmed red roses.

The "Grand Entry" was Destroyer Atlantic Fleet's (DesLant) way of showing destroyer fleet readiness in the Atlantic as DesRon 4 was moved from its homeport in Norfolk, Virginia to a homeport in Charleston, South Carolina. It was the Gyatt's last cruise with the expanded DesRon 4. Only the Gearing, Greene, Gyatt, Vogelesang and Ellison remained from the original DesRon 4 group. Desron 4 now consisted of thirteen destroyers and ten made the trip to Charleston. The USS Manley (DD-940) was the flagship of the squadron and Destroyer Division (DesDiv) 41 and The USS E. A. Greene (DDR-711) was the flagship of DesDiv 42. The Gyatt joined the Manley s the only two ships to moor in downtown Charleston. The squadron shortly before the Gyatt's departure was as follows:

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| <i>Destroyer Squadron 41</i> | <i>Destroyer Squadron 42</i> |
| <i>USS Manley (DD 940)</i> | <i>USS E. A. Greene (DDR 711)</i> |
| <i>USS Gyatt (DDG-1)</i> | <i>USS Johnston (DD 821)</i> |
| <i>USS Gearing (DD 710)</i> | <i>USS Dyess (DDR 880)</i> |
| <i>USS McCard (DD 722)</i> | <i>USS Bordelon (DDR 881)</i> |
| <i>USS Vogelgesang (DD 862)</i> | <i>USS Furse (DDR 882)**</i> |
| <i>USS Ellison (DD 864)**</i> | <i>USS N. K. Perry (DD 883)</i> |
| <i>USS Cone (DD 866)**</i> | <i>** Not part of Grand Entry</i> |

In September, the Gyatt was assigned to Destroyer Squadron Six and participated in various training exercises with other destroyers, the carrier USS Independence (CVA-62) and the cruiser USS Huntington for the remainder of the year. On its way to Fort-de-France on the Island of Martinique the Gyatt hove to in the calm waters of the Caribbean Sea and painted everything above the waterline. The Gyatt, the latest ship in the squadron, was the last ship to enter port. As the Gyatt approached Fort-de-France the crew manned the rails in whites, while the officers and chief petty officers wore their tropicals with white shorts. As the Gyatt came alongside the outboard ship, USS Strong DD-758, those manning the mooring lines of the Gyatt were looked upon with disdain. All went pretty well until liberty and members of the Gyatt and the Strong

imbibed at the same watering hole in Fort-de-France. One of the sailors from the Strong was commenting on the Gyatt coming alongside in whites with the officers and chiefs in shorts and referred to them as a “bunch of pussies” – well that did it. All hell broke loose and a torpedoman from the Strong – all six-foot four and 300 plus pounds – really started cleaning house when a six-foot two, 210 pound seaman from the Gyatt wrapped a metal chair around his head. This did not seem to deter the torpedoman and he kept moving forward and the seaman who just hit him with the chair took off. The torpedoman was moving forward and in his path stood a Gunners Mate Third, who might have weighed 150 pounds, who hauled off and planted one on the chin of the 300-pounder. The 300-pound torpedoman took one step forward and collapsed. As always the Shore Patrol appeared and brought order from chaos. The Captain of the Gyatt and the Strong apologized to the local government and the American Embassy, damages were paid and the men involved received Captain’s Mast. After explanations were given at mast the Captain deemed that the men would spend the next week aboard ship – which was spent at sea.

The Gyatt spent the remainder of September operating near Puerto Rico and in October, during the fleet exercises, fired a number of Terrier Missiles. Members of Gyatt’s new squadron Destroyer Squadron Six (DesRon 6) were as follows:

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| <i>Destroyer Division 61</i> | <i>Destroyer Division 62</i> |
| <i>USS N. K. Perry (DDR-883)**</i> | <i>USS E. A. Greene (DDR-711)*</i> |
| <i>USS Vesole (DDR-878)</i> | <i>USS Gyatt (DDG-1)</i> |
| <i>** Squadron Flagship</i> | <i>USS Bordelon (DDR-881)</i> |
| <i>* Division Flagship</i> | <i>USS Furse (DDR-882)</i> |

In 1959 - on the 3rd day of January - Alaska became the 49th State in the United States and on the 25th day of August Hawaii became the 50th state in the union. In April the Saint Lawrence Seaway was opened, after five years of construction, connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes. In May the United States sent into space and subsequently retrieved two monkeys successfully. The “Edsel” as a car of the future was discontinued after just two years. The first seven astronauts were chosen in anticipation of manned space travel in 1961. The first “Barbie-Doll” was sold at a cost to the consumer of \$2.50 each.

The Los Angeles Dodgers won the World Series from the Chicago White Sox in six games. The Baltimore Colts won their second consecutive championship in the NFL and the Boston Celtics beat the Minneapolis Lakers, later to be the Los Angeles Lakers, for their second NBA championship and their first of eight consecutive championships. Ingemar Johansson became the first non-American in twenty-five years to wear boxing’s heavyweight championship belt when he knocked out Floyd Patterson in three rounds. “Ben Hur” was the movie of the year. Other good movies were: “Room at the Top, The Diary of Anne Frank, Anatomy of a Murder and La Dolce Vita.” The top vocalists and their songs in 1959 were: The Platters “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,” Johnny Mathis “Misty,” Guy Mitchell “Heartache by the Numbers,” Brook Benton “It’s Just a Matter of Time” and Johnny Horton “The Battle of New Orleans.”