

XVII. 1960 ~ A Princess Comes Aboard

1960: *The official log for the first day of 1960 was written by Ensign J. P. Laschenski, USN and reads as follows:*

00-04

*Pier Delta berth six to the starboard this morning
Shelters the Gyatt as New Year's a-borning.
Six mooring lines doubled, destroyerman way
And forward and aft a fine wrought spring lay
Keep current and tides and such troubles at bay.
From the pier in the shipyard at Charleston, S. C.
We're receiving all services; great, small and wee.
For the engineer's plant is quite cold, indeed polar
As the watch that's been set tells us, seeking heat solar.
Condition YOKE's set in a modified manner
And Navy Yard, Charleston, boasts COMINLANT's banner
Which to Parsons and Berry and Affray and us
Signifies SOPA. And oh do I cuss
That from New Year's gay parties my shipmates take booty
While forlorn and, yes, junior, I stand the duty.*

Signed/J. P. Laschenski, Ensign, USN

In January after almost seven years the Gyatt left the East Coast of the United States to join the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. On the 15th of January, almost two weeks prior to departure, Commander C. B. Wall, USN (15 January 1960 to 8 April 1961) relieved Commander C. M. Lee, USN. The ship left Charleston, South Carolina on the 28th day of January with Destroyer Squadron Six (DESRON 6) to join the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean in early February. Departing Charleston the Gyatt joined the Second Fleet for the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean and participation in fleet exercises, including "Big Deal II" an air defense exercise. The trip across the Atlantic was smooth and many of the "old salts" reported it was the easiest and most comfortable crossing they had ever made. On the morning of February 10th the Gyatt entered the Mediterranean and passed the Rock of Gibraltar abeam to port.

The first stop the 13th day of February was Pollensa Bay on the Island of Mallorca. Here the Gyatt officially joined the Sixth Fleet and became the first guided missile destroyer in our nation's fleet to be deployed with an overseas fleet. The next stop for the ship was Golfo di Palmas, Sardinia for meetings with the bulk of the fleet. The ship departed the Golfo di Palmas on the evening of February 16th to participate in fleet exercises with Task Force Sixty in the eastern Mediterranean. The third week of February found the ship anchored at the world famous Principality of Monaco, on the southern coast of France: better known as the French

Riviera. Monaco is ruled by Prince Rainier III, whose wife Princess Grace was the former American movie star Grace Kelly. Monaco is also the home of the famous Monte Carlo Casino. Probably the most notable singular event of this cruise occurred on the second day at Monaco.

Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco escorted by Vice Admiral G. W. Anderson, Jr. Commander of the Sixth Fleet and Captain E. E. Grimm, Commander of DESRON 6 came aboard for a demonstration and explanation of the missile loading cycle. This group was on board for more than a hour and the Gyatt "shutter bugs" had a field day.

Departing Monaco the end of February the ship made its way through the Straits of Messina between Italy and Sicily and got a bird's eye view of the Isle of Stromboli.

The Gyatt spent almost the whole month of March in Greece with twelve days spent along side the destroyer tender Yellowstone at Salamis, Greece; for repairs and routine maintenance. After leaving the Yellowstone the ship spent one day at sea and returned to Greece anchoring at Phaleron Bay, which is near Piraeus the Port of Athens. While anchored at Phaleron Bay, the crew, as had the crews on previous visits to the area took advantage of the tours through the ancient ruins of Athens and viewed the remains of the many structures some at least 500 years older than the birth of Christ. Late in March the Gyatt, along with the carrier Forrestal, the cruiser Des Moines and other destroyers headed southeast for Lebanon and Beirut.

The Gyatt spent six days in Beirut (March 28th to April 2nd) and many of the officers and crew took advantage of the two-day tours to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Beirut has justifiably been called the "Paris of the East" and proved to be a continual source of interest. Departing Beirut the ship spent the next two weeks, in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean with Task Force Sixty, on fleet exercises. The ship returned to the Riviera on the 15th day of April and spent the crew spent the next two weeks seeing the sites and visiting the ports of Cannes, Nice, Golfe Juan, Antibes, Villafranche and Monaco. During this period in port the Gyatt received a bevy of good news. First, there were 42 promotions, including five to Chief Petty Officer; second, the quarterly squadron competition grades were in and the Gyatt was first in four of the five categories, which covered Engineering, Communications, Electronics, Anti-Submarine Warfare and Smartness. This ranked the ship first in the squadron and the One painted on the bow was right in style for the DDG-1.

On the 30th day of April the Gyatt again joined Task Force Sixty for air defense exercises in the Central Mediterranean. On the May 4th the ship became part of NATO Task Force 239 and participated with the group air defense exercise "REGEX 1" which finished on the 11th day of May. The ship departed the exercise and along with the Forrestal sailed to Split, Yugoslavia; arriving the 14th day of May and departing the 16th day of May. For many aboard ship it was the first trip to a country whose people lived and worked under Communist Rule and we were most apprehensive as to how we would be received. The people gathered in such large numbers at the pier, to view the two ships, that the police had to block that streets that provided access to the pier. The bay filled with small boats, carrying paying customers, who wanted to see the super carrier and the "World's First".

The idea that we would not be at ease when we reached shore was soon put aside by the Yugoslavian children who spoke to us in English, which we were to discover was part of their school curriculum. The children's' friendly smiles and shouts in English of, "Good Day – How are you and thank you very much" opened the door to many friendly conversations and much laughter as the parties endeavored to converse. All appearing to ignore the giant communist symbol of the hammer and sickle which stood on the sea wall at the harbor's entrance.

The two ships departed Split and proceeded to Naples, Italy arriving on the 19th day of May for a four-day stay. Several busloads of the crew took a two-day trip to Rome. Many felt that the most impressive sights in Rome were Vatican City and Saint Peter's Basilica, which has been the home of the popes and the heart of Catholicism since 1377 AD. Some members of the Gyatt crew were part of a group granted an audience with Pope John XXII on Saturday, the 21st day of May 1961.

During the two days it took the Gyatt to get to La Spezia, Italy it replenished at sea and participated in anti-submarine warfare exercises. At La Spezia the ship moored alongside the destroyer tender Tidewater for another period of routine maintenance and repairs and remained alongside until the 7th day of June. While alongside the Tidewater many of the Gyatt crew, who had not been to Rome made the trip and also took advantage of tours to Florence and Pisa (the home of the leaning tower).

Three days after leaving La Spezia the Gyatt made her first stop in Spain at Valencia. The largest drawing card at this port was the bullfights. While many of the crew browsed the beautiful plazas and colorful sidewalk cafes in the center of town; the townspeople walked to the docks to view the blue and gold missiles poised on the launcher. The crowds included many children who were given kites and the opportunity to learn the game of baseball from the crew.

From the 15th to the 17th day of June the Gyatt participated, with the British, in a combined air defense exercise, called "Royal Flush". For the next two weeks the ship continued with air defense and anti-submarine warfare exercises and completed the third replenishment at sea from the ships of the service force. The ship stopped just long enough to meet the Anti-Submarine Task Force and pickup ten First Class (Senior) Midshipman. The midshipmen were from the Naval Academy and the college NROTC programs and were coming aboard for four weeks of "on the job" training prior to returning to the United States for their final year of schooling.

On the 2nd day of July the Gyatt accompanied the Sixth Fleet Flagship, Des Moines, for a nine-day visit in flagship's homeport. On the 12th day of July the Gyatt visited the Spanish port of Barcelona and moored alongside the destroyer tender Tidewater for the installation of a new radar antenna and for the replacement of a blade in one of the turbines.

A replacement blade could not be found and nothing the ship's crew or the tender's crew to correct the problem could be done. During the wait in Barcelona, as in Valencia, bullfights were the major attraction for the ship's personnel. But back to the blade problem; BuShips directed the Gyatt depart for the shipyard located at Toulon, France immediately. The next day, July 18th the ship departed Barcelona with one engine and one screw and traveling at 13 knots per hour arrived at Toulon, France one day later. Prior to entering the bay at Toulon the ship

was required to take on a pilot (who spoke only French) to guide us to mooring location. The Executive Officer (XO), Lieutenant Commander Lessmann, was doing his best to communicate with the pilot and have our ship respond as required. The Commanding Officer, Commander Wall, had the conn (control) and in addition was very busy rendering honors to the French vessels encountered along our course. The Gyatt was within 300 yards of our temporary station, a concrete pier, still moving at 13 knots when the conn was transferred to the XO. A frantic "All Back Full" was given, but alas, the Gyatt could not respond smartly enough on one screw and consequently hit the pier and dinged the prow – but had arrived in Toulon.

The Chief Machinist Mate tells a story about the Chief Engineer that occurred during this stay in Toulon. It appears that the Vice Admiral, stationed in the Mediterranean, at the time was to come aboard for a review of the ship and an all hands inspection, including all department heads. However when early morning muster was held the Chief Engineer was not aboard to respond to roll call. One of the staff advised the Captain that he had overnight liberty and was not scheduled to be aboard until later in the day. The Chief Engineer was aboard a yacht, not more than a few thousand yards away, enjoying the company of a few movie starlets to be. The Captain was most unhappy as he advised the Master-at-Arms to bring the Chief Engineer back – NOW – voluntarily or involuntarily. The same chief relates that this same officer came back one evening, while the Gyatt was tied in a nest of destroyers at the CE Piers, marched past the quarterdeck of the Gyatt on to the outboard ship and ordered the engine room personnel to secure all boilers.

The ship remained in Toulon for almost one month, departing the 13th day of August when it met with Task Force Sixty. The ship joined in operations in the Eastern Mediterranean before departing via the Straits of Gibraltar on the standard ten day Atlantic crossing to the United States. The DDG-1 made the crossing under the Commander of the Second Fleet and entered Charleston, South Carolina on the 31st day of August.

On the 31st day of August, the Captain, Commander C. B. Wall wrote the following message:

"This afternoon we enter port and thus ends the first deployment of a Guided Missile Destroyer with an overseas fleet. This is an outstanding accomplishment.

We had a long and profitable cruise – good times and some bad moments. We can justly be proud of our many accomplishments.

We have learned a lot. Those who are leaving for new duty carry with them a wealth of experience to share with others. Those who remain are well equipped to keep the first team first.

God bless you all."

Signed/C. B. Wall, Commander, USN

The Gyatt had worn her "E" for Excellence proudly throughout the cruise and was to do the same the following year.

For the next two months the Gyatt participated in operations in the Virginia Capes and the Jacksonville, Florida operating areas working with the carrier Shangri-La (CV-38) and other destroyers on air and anti-submarine warfare operations.

From November 5th through 10th the Gyatt was part of the recovery team for Project Mercury and in mid December the ship went to the Charleston Naval Shipyard for repairs. While returning to Norfolk that November the radio room, during mid-watch, received a high level dispatch. Danny Hutchison a Radioman Seaman on duty typed the dispatch and was designated to deliver the message to the bridge. When Hutchison arrived on the bridge he presented the dispatch to the Officer of the Deck, who read the message and told Hutchison to deliver it to the Captain, who was sleeping in his port stateroom located directly behind mount two. That particular night the sea was heavy and the ship pitched and rolled as it moved north. As was the custom, while at sea, the radioman tapped on the door and immediately stepped inside the cabin – when he heard a resounding yell as he placed his foot squarely in the middle of the Captain’s stomach. When the captain yelled – Hutchison also yelled – as he fought to get his balance with the soft underfooting and the heavy seas creating havoc with his balance. As the lights went on radio messages were floating to the floor and Hutchison was apologizing as he and the Captain went to their knees in an effort to retrieve the messages. The young radioman was shaking so badly he couldn’t seem to get the messages back on the clipboard. The Captain, a big man, explained that he didn’t like to sleep in his bunk during rough weather - for fear of falling out. Hutchison said the Captain told him not to worry – but every time he was near him his knees started shaking. Hutchinson made it a point to check the sleeping habits of the new Captain who came aboard a few months after the incident.

In the election of 1960 John F. Kennedy barely defeated Richard M. Nixon to become the 35th President of the United States. The nuclear submarine, Triton, circumnavigated the globe under water. A Navy Lieutenant, Donald Walsh, accompanied Jacques Picard in the bathyscaph “Trieste” to a depth of 35,800 feet below sea level in the Pacific Ocean near the island of Guam. The United States flew a rocket-powered airplane at speeds just short of 2200 miles per hour. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the over the counter sale of birth control pills.

In 1960 the population of the world passed the three billion mark and the population of the United States exceeded 179 million. There were at least 85 million television sets in the United States. The “Zip Code” was introduced by the United States Postal Service and with this improvement in postal efficiency fleet mail went from a delivery time of five days or less to a delivery time of two weeks or more.

The Pittsburgh Pirates beat the New York Yankees in seven games to win the World Series. The Philadelphia Eagles won the NFL championship and the Boston Celtics won the NBA championship for the second consecutive year. The Olympics produced the first sub four-minute metric mile. Floyd Patterson regained the heavyweight boxing championship from Ingemar Johansson.

The “Apartment” was the movie of the year and Otto Preminger directed the movie “Exodus” while Alfred Hitchcock had the thriller “Psycho.” Other entertaining movies included: “Elmer

Gantry, Spartacus and Butterfield Eight.” Top songs for 1960 included: “Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini, Let’s Do the Twist, Never on Sunday and Calcutta.”