

XXVI. 1969 – A Final Decision

1969: *The 1st day of January 1969 and for the first time in twenty-two years the first Deck Log of the year was not written in rhyme and as it would turn out – it was only the second time in the life of the ship that this happened.*

Commander Alan J. Personette, USN (30 January 1969 to 22 October 1969) took command of the Gyatt on the 30th day of January 1969, relieving Commander Ronald A. Campbell, who was transferred to an original member of the Gyatt's old squadron, DesRon Four, the USS Vogelsang (DD-862). Commander Personette had previously served on the carrier USS Hornet (CVA 12), the cruisers USS Eldorado (AGC 11), USS Long Beach (CG 9) and USS Columbus (CG 12) and the destroyers Henderson (DD 785), Brownson (DD 868) and USS Camp (DER 251).

The Gyatt, now a reserve ship, spent most of the year operating out of the Washington Naval Shipyard at Washington, DC and the Navy facilities in Norfolk, Virginia. While in Norfolk, in May, the Gyatt was moored next to two old DesRon Four members, the USS Greene, DD 711 and the USS Vogelsang, DD 862. These three ships were part of the group of eight that made up DesRon Four in 1945 and for the first ten years of their existence were on the same exercises. In June the Gyatt departed Washington, DC for San Juan and Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico and operated from that area until July. The trip to Puerto Rico was the only diversion in the Washington, DC – Norfolk schedule.

During its tenure as a reserve ship the Gyatt operated with a permanent crew ranging in size from 120 to 130 hands – including officers. This crew was well below the standard complement of a fully manned destroyer of this period and because of its location (Washington Naval Shipyard) the crew stood a port – starboard watch schedule.

As a reserve ship the Gyatt would depart for two-week periods with a group of reservists. The reserves came aboard in-groups of twenty to forty and even with the additional personnel the Gyatt had to crew stand port and starboard watches. The last nine months of the Gyatt's existence was one of continuous activity – both in port and at sea. A small bonus for this duty - operating out of the Washington DC – was that those aboard had the opportunity to see first run movies. A major setback was the constant group of visitors with dignitaries arriving any day and any time. The crew and the ship were always “shipshape.”

It was the 7th day of September, Defenders Day, and the Gyatt was in Baltimore, Maryland participating in the reenactment of the firing on Fort McHenry. It was the third time in twenty-one years the Gyatt took the part of a British ship bombarding the fort. Little did the crew of the ship realize that it would be the last participation of the Gyatt in a public event when it departed Baltimore.

On the 15th of September 1969 a letter was written to the Secretary of the Navy, via the Chief of Naval Operations, by the President of the Navy Board of Inspection and Survey as a result of a material inspection held on the 25th, 26th and 27th of March. The Board of Inspection and Survey recommended the Gyatt be stricken from the Naval Vessel Register, that all useable equipment be removed prior to disposal and that the ship be disposed of in accordance with the laws and regulations prescribed for disposal of Naval ships. The Board of Inspection and Survey noted the following costs:

<i>a. Acquisition</i>	<i>\$ 8,947,809</i>
<i>b. Replacement</i>	<i>\$ 23,000,000</i>
<i>c. Modernization</i>	<i>\$ 9,800,000</i>
<i>d. Repairs</i>	<i>\$ 3,700,000</i>
<i>e. Scrap Value</i>	<i>\$ 105,000</i>

On the 22nd day of September the Chief of Naval Operations recommends the Secretary of the Navy approves striking the Gyatt from the Naval Vessel Register on the 22nd day of October. The Secretary of the Navy approved the recommendations on the 26th day of September 1969.

The final entries for the Gyatt Deck Log were made by LT. M. W. Bordy, USN and reads as follows:

“08-12 Moored as before.

0950 Rear Admiral J. P. Chase USN, ComCruDesFlot Four arrived with full honors.

1000 Commenced decommission ceremony.

1017 Hauled down colors, jack and commissioning pennant. USS Gyatt DD 712 is decommissioned.

1020 Captain C. J. Beers USN, Commanding Officer of Ship Inactivation Facility, Portsmouth, Virginia accepted custody of the ship.

1021 Rear Admiral Chase departed.

1022 Secured the Watch.”

Joseph C. Kea, MMI, having had the longest time aboard ship when it was decommissioned was presented with the ship’s colors as they were taken down for the last time.

Apollo 11 landed on the moon on the 20th day of July 1969 and Astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk its surface. After 148 years the Saturday Evening Post discontinued operations. Hundreds of thousands marched and protested the Vietnam War and radicals bombed buildings within the limits of our country. Trouser outfits became acceptable

everyday wear for women. Of the 225 million telephones in the world – 115 million are in the United States.

The movie “Midnight Cowboy” won the Academy Award for best picture. Other top movies included; “They Shoot Horses – Don’t They, True Grit, Cactus Flower, Bullitt, Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid, Easy Rider, McKenna’s Gold and Women in Love.” Top songs were; “Leaving on a Jet Plane, A Boy Named Sue, Aquarius, Come Together, Rain Drops Keep Fallin’ on My Head, These Eyes, Good Morning Sunshine and Put a Little Love in Your Heart.”

The New York “Miracle” Mets beat the Baltimore Orioles to win the World Series, the New York Jets beat the Baltimore Colts to win Super Bowl III and the Boston Celtics beat the Los Angeles Lakers to win the NBA.