

Twenty Years Before The Mast

My initial first ocean cruise commenced when I shipped out in 1925 with my Mother and I on the S. S. Stavangerfjord to Norway and back I was at the ripe old age of two years old and that is when I obtained my sea legs and never was sea sick then or there after. Now to travel a few years to 1942, 17 years later during WW 2 and I'm now in the US Navy in Boot Camp at USNTC, San Diego, Calif completing my 4 week training which consisted of shots, shots and shots, I then reported aboard the USS Pyro AE-1 as a Seaman 2/c. at NAD, Mare Island, Calif. There after we departed for Bremerton, Wash. and then to Alaska (with a large escort) where we off loaded our cargo of hundreds of mines and torpedoes on to various combat ships at several locations returning to the states after one month for minor ship repairs in the San Francisco, Calif. area shipyards.

Departing San Francisco 8, December 1942, stopping briefly to refuel in the Island of Bora Bora having crossed the equator and upon arrival Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides Islands 2, January 1943 [underway *26 days] became primary ammunition ship for various fleet units that were operating in the area. Departed for San Francisco 2, August 1943 and arriving 7, September 1943 [underway *35 days] after ten months in the Southwest Pacific.

Departing San Francisco 11, November 1943 crossing the equator again, transporting ammo and several hundred large aerial gas bombs and then reported Commander, Service Force, 7th Fleet 7, December 1943 [underway *26 days] Brisbane, Australia. From that date until 8, April 1944 transported ammunition from Australia, New Caledonia, and the New Hebrides to Milne Bay, New Guinea. From 13, April through to 12, July 1944 replenished combatant ships engaged in the Admiralty Islands [upon entering Manus Island Harbor passed the USS Mount Hood AE-11 and shortly there after as we dropped anchor at the other end of the harbor, the Mount Hood BLEW UP with a huge explosion all hands LOST.

Departed New Guinea for Australia. Arrived Sidney, Australia 18, July 1944. { celebrated my 21st Birthday } for 6 weeks of repairs, returning 9, September 1944 to Hollandia, where units of the fleet assembled for the invasion of Leyte, Philippine Islands. Remained at Hollandia until 3, November and departed for Seeadler Bay, Manus Island, Admiralty Islands for emergency repairs and reloading to Hollandia 1, December 1944. Departed for Leyte Gulf 19, December 1944 and remaining in the Philippine area. replenishing combat ships until 4, August 1945.

Departed the Admiralty Islands 17, October 1945 with a load of serviceable ammunition for transfer to the US. After embarking troops enroute at Eniwetok, Marshall Islands, arriving Seattle, Wash. 21, November 1945 [underway* 33 days] after 26 months over seas during the last WW2 assignment. And then anchored in Port Discovery Bay, Wash. as WW2 had ended. No CNN was not there to welcome us back home, in fact no one was PERIOD! [Things change !!]

Note: * Cruising speed averaging 10 knots with a good tail wind & with the exception of the Alaska Trip the USS Pyro AE-1 ALWAYS sailed without ANY ESCORT !! During WW 2 !! Unable to relate to the hundreds of times we went to General Quarters during WW 2 as our luck always held out. Transferred from the USS Pyro in early 1946 I reported aboard the USS Blue Ridge AGC 2 in Long Beach, Calif. Departing from San

Francisco, Calif. in mid 1946 we arrived in Pearl Harbor and then to Operations Crossroads in the Bikini Island (crossed the equator as a Shell Back) where the Able and Baker Atomic Bombing was accomplished arriving back to San Diego, Calif. all hands were transferred off due to the ship under going evaluation for radio active condition from the Bikini operation. Reporting aboard the USS Bronx APA 236 anchored off the Coronado Strand (San Diego) 1946..Required climbing a cargo net off the fantail in Dress Blues ship stopped briefly to enable us to board the ship. The ship departed for Army Troop amphibious boat landings off the Calif. coast Departing San Diego for Guam, Marianas Islands and then to Tsingtao, China and then to Shanghai, China where we evacuated the 4th Marines we then returned to Guam, Marianas Islands. Many trips during 1946-47 were involved between China and Guam transporting Marines and equipment as we were ceasing all operations in China with the exception of a Ship's Party in Hong Kong, China.

Returning to the states we resumed our amphibious operations transporting Army Troops from Fort Lewis, Wash. back and fourth off the Southern Calif. coast. In 1948 in order to get off the USS Bronx and as my 6 year cruise was up I reported aboard the Destroyer Base, San Diego for discharge and then shipped over for 2 years and reported to the Fargo Bldg, in Boston, Mass. for further assignment which turned out to be the nucleus commissioning crew of the USS Des Moines CA 134 which was commissioned in Dec. 1948 in Boston, Mass. Transferred off the USS Des Moines CA 134 in GITMO Guantanamo Bay, Cuba 1949 to Long Beach Naval Station, Calif. Pending further transfer late in 1950 to San Diego Destroyer Base and shipped over for 6 years and assigned to the recommissioning of the USS Fulton AS 11 in San Francisco, Calif. Departed San Francisco for New London, Conn. via the Panama Canal. To New London, Conn. Transferred from USS Fulton AS 11 during 1951 to Long Beach Naval Station, Calif. pending further transfer to Coronado, Calif. for duty with the CB's (Amphibious Construction Battalion One) for transfer assignment to Camp McGill, Japan and Korea.

Transferred from the CB's while in Japan during 1952 to the USS Talladega APA 208 Note: serving in the CB's we operated from shore to ship. thus when stationed on the USS Talladega assigned to the Heavy Salvage Boat (LCM) and operated from ship to shore with the CB outfit previously assigned. The USS Talladega continued to operate from Sasebo, Yokosuka and Yokohama, Japan and Korea transporting Marines to various beach landing operations during the remaining Korean War. Returning Marines to San Diego, Calif 1955 where the USS Talladega was featured in the Marine movie Battle Cry. Shortly afterwards, I was transferred to the US Naval Training Center assigned to "push boots" for three years. In the same barracks and grinders Boot Camp where my Navy indoctrination began in 1942 during WW 2. I then shipped over for my final 6 years in the Navy.

Transferred from USNTC 1958 to the USS Forest Sherman DD 931 at Newport, Rhode Island operated off the East Coast with DesRonTen and departed Norfolk, Virginia for Gibraltar and Naples, Italy and then to the Mediterranean Sea patrolling off Lebanon during that crisis in 1959 escorted the USS Essex via the Suez Canal around South Africa to the Pacific Ocean to with a brief stop in the Philippines and then patrolled up and down between China main land and Formosa in the Strait during the attempt take over by the main land China.

Mission accomplished we then departed for Pearl Harbor and San Diego, Calif. and then through the Panama Canal and returned to Newport, Rhode Island and then transferred to the USS Hunt DD 674 which was in the same Squadron, DesRonTen as the USS Forest Sherman DD 931 in which we had just recently traveled around the world. The USS Hunt assigned to chasing unknown submarines in the Newport – New York area from 1960–61 and then assigned as a Reserve Training ship out of Mayport, Florida. Transferred from the USS Hunt late in 1961 to the USS Yosemite AD 19 at Newport, Rhode Island.

Thus, on 2, April 1962 I ended my Naval career by retiring from the Navy as a Chief Shipfitter off the USS Yosemite AD 19 at Newport, Rhode Island after serving twenty Years In 1962 obtained a position with Lockheed in Sunnyvale, Calif. for ten years and then transferred to Pomflant in 1972 with Lockheed to Goose Creek, S.C. outside of Charleston, SC and then after eleven years back briefly to Sunnyvale, Calif and finally to Kings Bay Submarine Base Georgia 1985 and then finally retiring once again in 1988 as a Quality Control Specialist after twenty seven years with Lockheed and settling down at Weeki Wachee,{ Brooksville } Florida.

Last port of call having relocated from Florida to San Marcos, Texas in May 2006. I now consider myself a Twilight Sailor Survivor until my time expires.

GringoBob