

VI. 1949 ~ Crossing the Arctic Circle

1949: The official log for the first day of 1949 was written by Ensign R. D. Zelov, USN and reads as follows:

00-04

*The Old GYATT'S in her lair,
the first day of the New Year.
Alongside the Fox, Stormes and Ware
And the only watch is here.
Moored at Norfolk, NOB
In the nest of destroyers four,
To us a poor place to be
On this gay fun-loving hour.
Boiler three is on the line;
Standard mooring lines are on
Water from the dock's like wine;
Pier five at berth fifty-one.
SOPA is ComAirLant;
Ships present under CinC Lant.
In only three days from now
Northward we'll point our bow.
A happy crew are we,
Captain Wolfe and two four three.
The sea is rough, the sky is clear
To one and all, Happy New Year.*

Signed/R. D. Zelov, Ensign, USN

The Gyatt departed Norfolk on the 3rd day of January via the southern route to Plymouth, England and arrived ten days later. The ship moored at Plymouth for a week and a day and then headed for Cherbourg, France. On the 21st day of January the Gyatt arrived in Cherbourg, home of one of the most beautiful cathedrals ever built.

Liberty in Cherbourg was generally ten hours in length (1400 to 2400) and was under the watchful eye of five shore patrol personnel; which included one officer, one chief and three petty officers. The two fun places, as seen through the eyes of the crew were the Royal Bar and the Continental Bar; each had live music and more than their share of women and both were off limits before the Gyatt's stay was complete. The French generally had two price levels; one for visitors and one for locals and the spread was significant. A major advantages to being in Cherbourg were the tours to Utah and Omaha Beaches, which were two and three dollars respectively and/or a trip to Paris with a round trip railroad ticket cost of ten dollars and an overnight stay with three meals at twenty-five dollars.

After six days at Cherbourg the ship was called away to join the search for survivors of an ill-fated B-29 lost somewhere near the Iberian Peninsula. On the 4th day of February, after seven days of intensive searching, the ship headed to Casablanca, French Morocco for refueling. While the deck force was refueling many of the other disciplines went to the bridge and O-1 levels to stare at the piers. The piers were covered with American made cars – all big black Buicks. After eight hours, the time it took to tie-up, refuel and depart, the ship resumed the search, which was halted six days later. The ship traveled more than 1700 miles during the search for the downed plane and its crew.

The Gyatt returned to Plymouth on the 10th day of February and using this port as a home base spent the next five days at anchor before continuing operations in Northern Europe. On the 15th day of February the ship made the one-day trip to Saint Nazaire on the West Coast of France and spent a week enjoying the food, the wine and the sights.

Saint Nazaire has some of the finest shipbuilding and refitting facilities in the world and while the Gyatt was in port the liner “Liberte,” formerly the “Europa” and the liner “Ile de France” were being refitted for a return to the elegant passenger ships that crossed the oceans prior to World War II. The French were also working on the conversion of six German destroyers for use in their Navy. The Germans had used Saint Nazaire as a base for their submarines and the allied forces literally leveled the area trying to destroy the submarine pens cut into the rock at this natural harbor. In a series of speeches given by officials of Saint Nazaire and attended by approximately seventy members of the Gyatt’s crew, the Prefect of Saint Nazaire advised that his community was the landing place of the first American Expedition Force, in World War I, in 1917. The community, although showing the effects of heavy bombing by the allies during World War II, welcomed the Americans with open arms. La Baule located a few miles north of Saint Nazaire is where the crew spent their liberty time.

On the 23rd day of February the Gyatt headed south to Oporto, the second largest city in Portugal and moored at its port of Leixois located to the north of the city. The port is a large sardine fishing port and Oporto is the world’s principal producer of port wine.

There is a magnificent metal arch bridge called the Luis I Road Bridge, crossing the Duro River in Oporto. An assistant of Gustave Eiffel designed the bridge, which was completed in 1886. The bridge has a roadway built across the top of the arch and another roadway on what would have been the bottom chord tying the arch together. This bridge was built on similar lines of a bridge located upstream designed by Eiffel and completed nine years earlier. Gustave Eiffel is the same man who designed and built the Eiffel Tower, 1,051 feet high, in Paris France. The Eiffel Tower completed in 1889 was the world’s tallest structure until replaced by the Empire State Building in 1931. Oporto means port and the city was once a builder of ships.

It was in Oporto that the officers of the Gyatt were the luncheon guests of a group of British wine producers with holdings in Portugal. The officers attended the luncheon at a British businessman’s club and they were also participants in a wine tasting gathering. The wine they were tasting was “Port” (named after the region) which is both sweet and strong. Junior and senior officers from both the American and British Navies attended this event, that took more than a few hours as they sat and sipped with wine glasses that were never empty. One officer recalls that one of the younger Royal Navy officers, partaking of the refreshments, leaned back

in his chair and that the chair was on its way to the floor before one of the waiters caught it and with the help of a fellow waiter carried the chair along with its occupant out of the room without nary a disturbance. The officer also recalls one of the American senior officers saying: "Thank God it wasn't one of ours." It seems that during the stay in Oporto the Captain of the Gyatt and the Captain of the Ellison attended one banquet after another.

While in Oporto, the Gyatt was challenged to a game of basketball by the Portuguese Olympic Team. The Olympics had taken place the previous year in London, after a twelve-year hiatus. Considering that a destroyer has no facilities for basketball and no time for team members to do anything but talk about basketball the Gyatt team fared well. The final score of the game was Gyatt 33 – Portugal 57. After six days in Oporto, the ship made a two-day return trip to Plymouth – stayed two days and departed for Rotterdam, Holland.

The Gyatt arrived at Rotterdam, Holland on the 9th day of March and did not depart until the 15th day of March and the crew moved this city to the top of the liberty list. While here the crew visited the town of Vollendam, where Delft pottery is made. The town was as quaint in 1949 as it was at the turn of the century. The ship had visitors on a daily basis and many of the crew saw fit to join them in photographs. In Vollendam windmills were everywhere and in operation. Little girls were dressed in long skirts and wooden clogs and the boys were in short pants, knee high stockings and they also wore wooden clogs. In Holland, one could find pre World War II American made cars in use and in excellent condition. The ship's next stop was Bremerhaven, Germany, the port for the city of Bremen. Because it was so strategic to the Germans, during World War II, it was a badly damaged port and cleanup and repairs were part of the daily regimen as the citizens attempted to bring the city to its pre World War II days.

It seems that we weren't meant to stay too long in Germany for we departed the 18th day of March for Londonderry, Northern Ireland. We went by way of South Shields on the northeast coast of England, on through the Pentland Firth located between the north of Scotland and the Orkney Islands, through the Inner Hebrides to Moville, Donegal and Red Bay. Moville is located at the entrance to Lough Foyle and Londonderry is to the south of Lough Foyle. Londonderry is located in the north of the country of Northern Ireland and is a short distance from the county of Donegal. The ship anchored at Moville and used it as its port while conducting convoy exercises with a British ASW (Anti Submarine Warfare) Group. Initially, operations were a problem, for the English language proved a problem to both sides. CIC, which is the home for all voice transmissions between ships, had a tape recorder but taping transmissions and playing them back was for naught. The commanding officer of the British forces resolved the issue by transferring, by Breeches Buoy, a British Signaller Petty Officer to act as interpreter. In light of this incident the CIC group wondered how operations were coordinated during World War II. A cot was set up for the British Signaller in CIC and he spent every minute, except for meals, at his station for the next five days. The Brit was amazed at the quality of our food, the fact that we had unlimited coffee and the availability of cigarettes and candy. Those who had the opportunity to eat in the crew's mess on a British ship similar to a destroyer could understand the British sailor's feelings. When the British sailor left the Gyatt, Captain Wolfe presented him with five cartons of cigarettes, a couple of boxes of Hershey Chocolate Bars and a letter of commendation. It was typical of the Captain. After the exercises the ship spent four days in Londonderry, returning to Plymouth via the Irish Sea. While in

Londonderry the Gyatt was challenged to a game of soccer by a local soccer team. Soccer at this time was a very new sport to Americans and since it is a sport of endurance and teamwork the Gyatt team did not do well in this game of “no timeouts” and three twenty minute periods.

It was on the aforementioned exercise that some of the crew experienced the revised phonetic alphabet – Able, Baker, Charlie etc. etc. some changes that come to mind were William to Whiskey and Zebra to Zulu. The Gyatt set sail for Plymouth on the 29th day of March and arrived on 6th day of April. From the 6th day of April through the 14th day of April the Gyatt worked with the British Navy conducting training exercises. While on these exercises a heavy storm was encountered and the ship was continually engulfed in green water. The ship encountered winds that were generally in the 40-knot range with gusts to 55 knots. The storm severely damaged the ship’s starboard whaleboat and dislodged it from its moorings. The whaleboat sustained four holes: the largest was 24-inches by 24-inches and the smallest was eight inches by eight inches. Those topside for any reason wore life jackets and were secured to lifelines at all times. During this period the ship anchored briefly at Torbay, which confusingly is near the town of Torquay. As with many of the ports entered on this cruise the Captain of the USS Columbus, the Captain of the USS Ellison and the Captain of the USS Gyatt attended a banquet hosted by city and/or country visited.

Upon completing the exercise the Gyatt returned to Plymouth, but while returning was part of a towing exercise that almost ended with some major problems. The heavy cruiser, USS Columbus (CA-74), was to tow the Gyatt using the destroyer’s mooring line. The line was satisfactorily transferred from the Gyatt to the Columbus and the tow was moving along satisfactorily until the Gyatt took some revolutions on her shaft, to keep the running system cool, and moved forward toward the Columbus. The movement forward by the Gyatt, as a result of the few revolutions, placed excess slack in the mooring line and almost immediately the mooring line fouled the starboard side propeller shaft of the Columbus. Divers were over the side as soon as the problem was recognized and it was early evening before the propeller shaft was free. The Gyatt retrieved most of her mooring line, but it was twelve hours before the Columbus felt comfortable enough to go to full throttle. If there was damage to the propeller shaft it did not affect the ship’s operation. After completing the towing exercise and the Gyatt finding the Columbus was without operation problems it continued to Plymouth, where she remained until the 19th day of April.

After departing Plymouth and spending two days at sea the ship moored at Leith, Scotland, the port of Edinburgh. Leith tied Rotterdam as the number one liberty port on this cruise. While in Edinburgh the ship spent one day conducting ASW exercises in the Firth of Forth. Upon completion of the exercises the ship headed to Rosyth, which lay to the west and to the north of Edinburgh, on the other side of the bay.

It was shortly after mooring at Leith, one of the ports of Edinburgh, that Gordon Sanders a fireman aboard ship at the time met his wife – Cathy. Gordon went ashore in Edinburgh, Scotland with shipmates Jack Green and “Red” Fisher to celebrate his twenty-first birthday, which was just a few days away. On their way into town the three of them stopped at the Red Bull Tavern for a pint of beer. After refreshing themselves they left the tavern and were walking up the street toward the post office when they saw this beautiful young lady standing at the

corner with a friend. She was a beauty and Gordon decided she was for him, but “Red” thought otherwise and to be fair about it – they flipped a coin and “Red” lost his anticipated time with Cathy. Gordon in his most assured manner told “Red” that he was going to take the young lady home. After some conversation with Gordon the young lady who had just turned seventeen the previous month agreed to a date – even though she thought her father would kill her. After a few dates Gordon was so overcome with his feelings for Cathy he proposed and she accepted. While the ship went out on its one-day exercise Cathy had the banns of marriage posted at her church. Upon returning to Edinburgh and as mentioned earlier to the port at Rosyth, Gordon shipped over (re-enlisted) for four more years and requested a transfer to the USS Samuel B. Roberts. Gordon received the request for transfer and remained in the Edinburgh area. At the same time Gordon requested leave to get married but found that the minister was not available and as a result he did not accept his leave. On another occasion the minister was available but the ship departed early. In August Gordon was able to schedule a lengthy leave and returned to spend time in Edinburgh and again make arrangements to be married. While on leave Gordon and Cathy were walking down the main street of town and they passed the Registrars Office. Gordon asked Cathy what was the function of such an office? Cathy replied that people got married there. Gordon convinced Cathy that they should get married at the Registrars Office and found that he needed a special permit that cost ten pounds, which he paid immediately. He requested that they be married, while they were there and was told he needed a witness. So Gordon went in search of a witness and found a man working in the building, who was willing to act as a witness. Gordon went to the Registrar and presented his witness and was told he needed two witnesses. So Gordon dashed out of the building to find a second witness and spotted Cathy’s uncle coming out of a pub. Gordon explained his situation and the uncle agreed to assist but not before advising Gordon that Cathy’s father may kill him. So on that day – the 26th day of August 1949 – Gordon and Cathy became one and are still together after more than fifty years. In May of 1950, Cathy at the age of eighteen left her native Scotland and took a bus to London where she boarded the SS Washington and crossed the Atlantic for New York City. Gordon’s father met Cathy in New York City and they returned to Detroit, Michigan in the Sanders’ family vehicle.

Another Fireman who enjoyed Scotland was David McCulley, who also answers to the name “Scotty.” It seems that both of “Scotty’s” parents came from Scotland, his dad from Motherwill and his mother from Larke Hall also called “Larkey.” Looking forward to seeing kin he had never seen before “Scotty” took what was left of his annual leave and visited his parent’s home towns. “Scotty” also took the opportunity to visit other relatives who were living in the Scottish cities of Glasgow and Hamilton.

The Gyatt departed Edinburgh and got underway for Copenhagen, Denmark on the 30th day of April and arrived on the 2nd day of May. The ship stayed in Copenhagen until the 6th day of May and during that time had an open house for the Danish people. The ship returned to Plymouth via the Kiel Canal. The Kiel Canal reminds one of a wide creek through lush farm country in the Midwest, but the canal has castles and other interesting sites. When the ship left Copenhagen it took on a pilot, who guided the ship through the Baltic Sea and the Kiel Canal. It appeared the pilot did not sleep until the ship completed its voyage through the canal. While traversing the canal the crew was able to observe countless planes flying overhead. They were to learn that the planes were part of the Berlin Airlift, which in the space of a little less than two years made

277,264 flights, or almost 400 flights a day. The return trip through the Kiel Canal was probably prompted by mine activity in the North Sea where old mines were breaking loose during the frequent North Sea storms. The Gyatt's experience off the coast of Greece in 1948, where the USS Fox was badly damaged by a mine, probably aided the decision. The ship anchored at Plymouth on the 9th day of May and weighed anchor for the United States five days later. The ship crossed the Atlantic in the customary ten-day period and tied up in Norfolk on the 23rd day of May. The ship logged a little more than 18,600 miles on this cruise.

The Gyatt's call sign, this cruise, was Tackle Yoke, the flags which were with the ship from the original commissioning to the final decommissioning were Nan How Tare Zebra or NHTZ. Today Nan How Tare Zebra is November Hotel Tango Zulu. The radio call sign with DesRon Four was "Redtape" and on this cruise the Gyatt was known as "Politician." On most missions the call signs varied. This information came from those in the Combat Information Center (CIC), who claim that CIC stood for "Christ I'm Confused."

It should be mentioned that Gyatt was requested to bring waters from the many different seas it visited during this cruise. It appears that there is a container at the Naval Academy that contains waters from the seas of the world and that the Gyatt may have been a replenisher or a provider of waters for the container.

It was shortly after this operation was completed that Joe Landry, EN3, came aboard the Gyatt and heard this story. The Gyatt had pulled into the French port of Saint Nazaiere located on the West Coast of France with direct access to the Atlantic Ocean. The Gyatt was alone as she entered the harbor and approached the pier. As the Gyatt approached the pier it was pushed away by the current and so the ship reversed engines to try again and proceeded forward again and got a little closer. Again it was pushed away by the current and again it reversed engines to try again and experienced the same negative result. As the ship reversed itself for still another try the officer in charge of the forward sea detail asked if anyone spoke French and one of the rated Boatswain Mates stepped forward and said that he did. The officer had observed two men sitting on the pier watching what was happening and felt that they could assist. As the ship approached the pier for the third time the boatswain yelled to the two men assumed to be French, "put zee lines on zee bits" as he tossed the heaving lines attached to the mooring lines. The two men got up, hauled in "zee" lines and placed them on "zee" bits and the ship was finally tie to the pier. Joe has sent this story to Tin Can Sailors and it was printed in the fourth quarter 1999 issue.

The Gyatt spent the summer taking Naval Reservists on two-week cruises outside the twelve-mile limit and generally along the north coast of the United States and as far north as Nova Scotia. On one of these cruises took the ship to Bath, Maine where a traditional New England Independence Day celebration was in progress. Parades consisting of fire engines and their crews, antique hand pumpers from neighboring towns, community high school bands from the surrounding area and veteran organizations were joined by a landing force platoon off the 712 in marching down Main Street. The festivities were culminated by a contest between the fire companies and their antique hand pumpers seeing who could send a stream of water the farthest. The Gyatt's Landing Party marched in the local parade. Another of the cruises took the ship to Pictou, Nova Scotia; a small isolated Canadian community with friendly people.

The return to Norfolk brought the customary change of command and on the 10th of September the new Commanding Officer (CO) became Commander Wilbur C. Cheney, Jr. USN (10 September 1949 to 30 July 1951). It is interesting and noteworthy that Commander Cheney was the most decorated of the Gyatt Captains. During World War II Commander Cheney served aboard the USS Pruitt (DD 347) as Gunnery Officer and Executive Officer. The Pruitt was in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on the 7th day of December 1941. The Pruitt crew was among the first to fire at the Japanese and also assist in the fighting of the numerous fires. The Pruitt remained in the Pacific laying mines and escorting landing craft during invasions.

It was 1945 when Commander Cheney was given command of the USS Robert H. Smith (DD 735). In the few months remaining in World War II Commander Cheney brought both his ship and himself distinction. It was aboard the Robert H. Smith that Commander Cheney received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and a Navy Unit Commendation. The award for the Silver Star read as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the USS Robert H. Smith...during the Okinawa Campaign in the nights of May 27 – 28, 1945. With his ship patrolling a radar picket station when it was attacked by approximately thirty enemy aircraft using bombs, torpedoes and suicide tactics, (he) skillfully directed his ship and its guns in the destruction of three of the hostile planes and in the probable destruction of three more. By his leadership, fighting spirit and courageous devotion to duty, he averted the attacks without loss of personnel or material to his ship or any of the ships on his station..." Commander Cheney's award for the Bronze Star read as follows: "For meritorious service...during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Okinawa Area and in the East China Sea, from May 11 to August 18, 1945. Skillfully directing his ship through numerous hazardous operations while on patrol, support, radar picket and screen duty, Commander Cheney contributed materially to the success of his ship in destroying three hostile aircraft and assisting in the destruction of several others..." The final special commendation for Commander Cheney was the Navy Unit Commendation which read as follows: "For outstanding heroism in action while attached to an Amphibious Force during the seizure of enemy Japanese held Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, from March 24 to June 24, 1945...The USS Robert H. Smith provided effective cover for our minesweeper groups against hostile attack by air, surface, submarine and shore fire. Constantly vigilant and ready for battle, she made an outstanding record as fighter director ship and, by her expert control of combat air patrols, was directly instrumental in preventing damage to ships on picket station with her...A seaworthy, fighting ship, complemented by skilled courageous officers and men, the Robert H. Smith achieved a gallant combat record attesting to the teamwork of her entire company and enhancing the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service." When the war was over the Robert H. Smith was responsible for removal of mines in the East China Sea, Yellow Sea, Sasebo and numerous ex-Japanese Naval Bases. The Robert H. Smith was also responsible to travel the numerous channels that were rid of mines prior to their traversing by larger ships. In 1947, a year after the mines were removed, the Robert H. Smith returned to the United States and Commander Cheney was reassigned with one more stop prior to taking command of the Gyatt. Commander Cheney retired with the rank of Captain.

It was some time shortly after Commander Cheney reported aboard that the crew became aware of Commander's appreciation of country music. The Gyatt was coming along the USS Missouri

to refuel. As the Gyatt began refueling the Missouri band began to serenade. The Captain, who was aware that the Gyatt had a trio who, strummed away on the bridge during off-hours when the ship was in port suggested the serenade be returned. He asked one of the participants of the trio, Shelby Duke, a quartermaster striker, who was also his telephone talker to get the group together and return the serenade. The group consisting of Duke, another quartermaster striker named Ferguson and a gunners mate striker named Roberts manned two guitars and a banjo on the O-1 level just behind Mount Two and began returning the entertainment.

It was in October, in the early Cold War Era, the Navy concerned that its next major challenge would come in waters of extreme cold scheduled a major ASW training exercise "Operation Frostbite" in the frigid waters of the Davis Straits. Davis Strait is located to the south of Greenland and to the north of Baffin Island and straddles the Arctic Circle. The ships that took part in "Operation Frostbite" in addition to the Gyatt, included; the carriers Midway, Roosevelt, Phillipine Sea, Mindoro, Siboney and Wright; the cruisers Albany, Juneau, Newport News and Roanoke and the eight destroyers of DesRon Four and the 32 destroyers of DesRon Six, Eight, Twenty and Twenty-two, along with three destroyers of DesDiv 141. In addition to the carriers, cruisers and destroyers, there were nine mine sweepers, eighteen submarines, six oil tankers, ten other auxiliary ships and 20 aircraft units. Overall there were more than ninety ships in this ASW exercise. Special preparations were required for this exercise, including such things as replacing the water in the cooling jackets of the 40 millimeter guns with anti-freeze and storing provisions, other than fuel, for a minimum of sixty days. Supply crates were stored everywhere – the mess deck, the O-1 level, anywhere that would not impede the men from getting to their battle stations quickly. Getting to battle stations was also a problem, since everything that could be covered was covered and subsequently the stiff frozen covers had to be removed and then replaced.

On the 11th day of November the first iceberg was spotted and it was the 12th day of November, midway through the exercise that the Gyatt crossed Latitude 67 degrees 30 minutes North, the Arctic Circle. At the moment the ship crossed the Arctic Circle all hands became certified members of the "Royal Order of the Blue Nose." This special notice was not done with the pomp and circumstance affiliated with crossing the Equator and the crew had no regrets on not having any festivities. They were all just as happy with a notation in their records. In addition, a fireman apprentice, Edwin Thomas, received a "brown-noser" card.

This cruise made the topside sailors appreciate the below deck sailors and vice versa. The topside sailors showed their courage and fortitude for their efforts when working in the elements. The below deck sailors showed their courage and fortitude for their efforts in keeping everything running in extremely foul conditions. On a daily basis, those of the crew not on watch, chipped ice from the bulkheads, decks, ladders, gun mounts, fire control stations, torpedoes, depth charge K-Guns, depth charge racks and the whaleboat. The ice was generally four to six inches thick and on the day the ship set the course for home, it was estimated that the ship was covered with more than fifty tons (100,000 pounds) of ice. Many have heard the story that salt water did not freeze until sustained sub-zero temperatures were encountered. The Gyatt had achieved sustained sub-zero temperatures. The 54-day operation without supplies, except for fuel, set a record for the Gyatt. The crew was always looking for something hot to eat and

drink during this operation and when they heard of the below deck sailors “steam soup” the topside sailors found their way below decks.

The below deck sailors were very generous in sharing their “steam soup” during all hours. “Steam Soup” was a mixture of milk, potatoes, cabbage and onions or any combination of the milk and available vegetables made instantly by using the 45-pound steam line. “Steam Soup” was always hot and rich and every mouthful added warmth to a usually numb cold body.

Joseph Landry, the Water King during his stay on the Gyatt, submits this recipe for Steam Soup:

A member of the engine room gang is to procure out of the fresh vegetable locker while standing in the chow line on the portside of the ship, two medium sized potatoes and two medium sized onions – on this operation they dashed outside the closed hatch and dashed back in. During chow he is to procure at least one quarter pound stick of butter and after chow he needs to pickup one empty gallon can from the galley and return all he has procured to his engine room station.

*The can is to be filled to seventy-five percent of capacity.
Potatoes and onions cut into quarter-inch cubes.
Potatoes and onions placed in the can of water.
Add half of the quarter-pound stick of butter –
Add half can of condensed milk -
Add salt and pepper to taste and stir well.*

Take the can the to high and low pressure turbine pipes (located atop of the turbine gearbox) and place on top of steam pipes at connection where can would set in low spot between three pipes. Temperatures of the pipes at this location are approximately 700 degrees Fahrenheit. Let set for can one hour and serve in appropriate coffee mug. If served on mid-watch the soup eliminates the need to get up for breakfast.

On one of the many-assigned plane guard days an F4U carrier based fighter plane ran out of fuel during its approach to land on its assigned carrier. The Gyatt whaleboat and its crew were on hand to extract the pilot from the icy waters of Davis Strait (water temperature in this area leaves one with a life span of approximately four minutes when immersed). The “Water King” aboard the Gyatt advised that the temperature of the feed water was never above 26 degrees Fahrenheit during this operation.

On this exercise the winds ranged from 28 to 33 knots 65-percent of the time and 31-percent of the time the winds exceeded 34 knots. As a result of the winds the ships consistently battled waves ranging from 18 to 25 feet for almost 45-percent of the time. Based on the criteria for evaluating conditions on this exercise, it was deduced that good conditions existed less than three-percent of the time, average conditions existed at almost 24-percent of the time and that bad or undesirable conditions existed almost 74-percent of the time. This exercise was not for the faint of heart.

It was a happy crew that moored to the Convoy Escort Piers in Norfolk at the end of this Operation and many of the hands took advantage of the time available to enjoy the holidays with their families or friends. It should be noted that there are zero notations of this cruise on "Movement Report Cards" and only a modicum of information in the Deck Logs.

For the first time in aviation history a jet plane flew across the United States in less than four hours. An American B-52 bomber flew around the world non-stop; it was the first time in history that a plane accomplished such a feat. The B-52 was refueled four times while in the air and traveled 23,452 miles. An earthquake in Ecuador kills 4,600 and a flood in Guatemala kills 4,000. Mao Tse Tung creates The Peoples Republic of China (Communist China) and the free Chinese take over Formosa and form Nationalist China under Chiang Kai Shek. The minimum wage was raised to seventy-five cents per hour. All the necessities seemed cheap but as a percentage of earnings the costs were much higher than in the year 2000.

The New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in five games to win the World Series. The Philadelphia Eagles beat the Cleveland Rams for their second NFL title. The Minneapolis Lakers beat the Washington Capitols four games to two. Jake LaMotta became middleweight champion and held the crown for two years. Ezzard Charles beat Joe Louis to become heavyweight champion of the world. Sammy Snead won the Masters golf tournament.

The Academy Award was won by the movie "All the King's Men." Other interesting movies were: "The Third Man and The Winslow Boy; plus the Italian movie, "Mannon" and the French movie "Les Enfants Terribles."

Hit songs were: "That Lucky Old Sun" by Frankie Laine, "Lavender Blue" by Sammy Kaye "Bali Hai" by Perry Como, and "Baby, It's Cold Outside" by Margaret Whiting and Johnny Mercer. Other songs were: "Some Enchanted Evening, I'm in Love With a Wonderful Guy, So In Love, Riders in the Sky, I Love Those Dear Hearts and Gentle People, Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" and what became another Christmas favorite "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.