

## ***XII. 1955 ~ The End of the 712***

***1955:*** The official log for the first day of 1955 was written by Ensign L. E. Snare USNR and reads as follows:

00-04

*The standard mooring lines for mooring  
Our place in berth number seven securing  
Made strong by a wire from stern to shore  
The more secure our ship to moor.  
The pier our starboard side is facing  
A nest of two lines embracing,  
With the USS Gyatt hard by the land  
And the USS Gearing upon our port hand.  
Our ship rides near one of the slips  
In the Norfolk Naval Yard for ships.  
Virginia is the state and Portsmouth the town  
A naval base of great renown.  
The services coming from the pier  
Are power and water for all of us here.  
Fires 'neath boiler four are burning;  
Number two auxiliary's turning.  
Present are units of various size  
Of the Atlantic Fleet and also Com Five.  
The Senior Officer Present Afloat,  
According to the word SOPA ADMIN wrote,  
Is Commander of Battleship Division Two  
In New Jersey, hull number six two.*

*Signed/L. E. Snare, Ensign, USNR*

*During refresher training the months of January and February the Gyatt operated out of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and took time to visit the ports of Santiago, Cuba; Kingston, Jamaica and San Juan, Puerto Rico. On the way to Guantanamo Bay the Gyatt encountered severe storms off of Cape Hatteras, which was a frequent occurrence for that location, when the officers in the wardroom heard a loud noise and a continuing rumble from the O-1 level. The O-1 level is the deck directly above the wardroom. A young Ensign was the first on the scene and stared, somewhat perplexed, at a warhead from one of the five 21-inch torpedoes that was rolling across the deck of the O-1 level some fifty feet aft of the wardroom. The young officer was still staring at the rolling warhead when Merl Tennant, the Chief Boatswain Mate, grabbed a piece of line, ran it through the bullnose of the warhead and secured it to some nearby stanchions. Although the warhead was not armed a sigh of relief was expelled by those on the scene, after the warhead was secured*

*The Gyatt returned to Norfolk and resumed exercises in local areas until the end of July. This is the crew that needed to learn how to come in to the dock; after countless tries the line gun was used, the hawser taken to the pier and the ship winched to the dock with the midship winch.*

*Then there was the ship's secretary who ran out of the form required to order the forms needed for the daily operation of the ship and so the ship's paperwork coming to a grinding halt.*

*The end of July and Commander E. G. Miller (22 July 1955 to 31 October 1955) replaced Commander Benjamin B. Picket as Captain of the Gyatt. Shortly after the exchange of command the Gyatt headed for the Mediterranean Sea and Piraeus, Greece the Port of Athens. This was the Gyatt's seventh trip to Europe. For the next two months the Gyatt operated with the Italian Navy while participating in ASW exercises. During this two-month period the ship spent twelve days in Rapallo, Italy and three days in Palma, Majorca. After a brief stop in Gibraltar the ship departed for Boston, Massachusetts, arriving the second week of October.*

*It was in August, while operating out of Rapallo the Gyatt was directed to lend assistance to the Greek Tanker "Helko" adrift and low on supplies in the Mediterranean. The Gyatt arrived at the "Helko" at about 1600 hours and put her whaleboat in the water and immediately began taking supplies to the tanker. The Gyatt continued assisting the tanker until relieved by the Greek Destroyer Escort "Altis" shortly after 2200 (10:00 PM). It seemed that the Gyatt was always around when a distress signal went up and was always there to lend a hand.*

*The ship entered the Boston Naval Shipyard in mid October and on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of October was decommissioned while it was being prepared for modification to become the first guided missile destroyer. During the next year, one month and three days the Gyatt was without a captain.*

*The "Fifties" saw a major battle between the Air Force and the Navy for military dollars and the Air Force under General Curtis LeMay was winning but Admiral Arleigh Burke was leading the charge for the Navy and was not to be denied. Reasoning that missiles were the scourge of an aircraft, Admiral Burke decided that the Navy needed a missile ship and the Gyatt was elected. The change to a missile ship was "minimally" successful and the Gyatt did all that was asked of her as a platform for what was eventually shown to be an oversized weapon.*

*The Air Force Academy opened, modeled after West point and the Naval Academy. The AFL and the CIO merged. An artificial diamond was manufactured at 2700 degrees Centigrade.*

*In 1955 the Dodgers finally beat the Yankees, although it took all seven games. The first Disneyland was opened in Florida and a child's clay, "Play-Doh," came into being.*

*"Marty" with Ernest Borgnine was the movie of the year. Other attention getting movies were: "The Seven Year Itch" with Marilyn Monroe, The Rose Tattoo, Mister Roberts and East of Eden. East of Eden was the first of three pictures starring James Dean who was killed when his Porsche "Spider" went out of control.*

*There were three great songs that are remembered from 1955 and they are: "Sincerely" by the McGuire Sisters; "Sixteen Tons" by Tennessee Ernie Ford and "The Yellow Rose of Texas" by*

*Mitch Miller and his group. Other songs that got our attention were: "Only You, Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White, Unchained Melody, Whatever Lola Wants and Sincerely." 1955 was the start of "Rock and Roll" and "Rock Around the Clock" was the prime mover.*