

## ***XXIV. The Gasparilla Festival***

**1967:** *The official log for the first day of 1967 was written by Richard D. Greenamyer, USN and reads as follows:*

00-04

*'Twas the night of the New Year and no sign of trouble,  
Moored port side to the Furse, standard mooring lines double.  
This time of the season is filled with good cheer,  
At the Naval Station Destroyer – Submarine pier.  
We float here so silent not touching the earth,  
At Norfolk, Virginia in Two – Three – Two Berth.  
By name I did call them, each back from some trip,  
The USS Borie, Furse, and also this ship.  
We welcome all services with such a sincere heart,  
From the pier they all come, and not only in part.  
Throughout the ship, “Yoke” is the material condition,  
Being ready for action is truly our main ambition.  
Readiness condition five is also in effect,  
To get underway if our seniors elect.  
Though iron be cold, our foes best not try it,  
For the “Speedy Greyhound” mounts the sides of Gyatt.  
As I stood the watch and looked fore and aft,  
I beheld various yard and district craft.  
Throughout the whole harbor it was such a treat,  
To see many units of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.  
And now what is needed to make this complete,  
The most regal SOPA is ComSecondFleet.  
Then I exclaimed with all of my might,  
Please! Not this watch a year from tonight.*

*Signed/Richard D. Greenamayer, Ensign, USN*

*January found the Gyatt operating between Norfolk and Narragansett Bay. In February the ship headed from Norfolk to the ports of Mayport, Tampa and Miami, Florida and later to San Juan, Puerto Rico and St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. During this period, while the Gyatt was out testing new radars and potential cloaking devices and cloaking methods, a major portion of Destroyer Squadron Two was in the Mediterranean Theater with the Sixth Fleet. The Gyatt, because of its responsibility to the “operational testing program” was kept close to home and as a result missed stops in the various ports of Spain, France, Italy and Malta. But back to the Gyatt operations.*

*While in St. Thomas the Gyatt anchored in the inner harbor, Charlotte Amalie, after an all night operation. With daylight those that had knowledge and interest were surprised to find the yacht*

*“Christina” anchored nearby. The “Christina” was the private yacht of Aristotle Onassis, Greek shipping magnate and future husband of Jacqueline Kennedy. The Captain, Commander Edwards, and his XO, LCDR Sachs had the whaleboat lowered and visited the yacht, toured it and met cordially with Mr. Onassis and his companion, opera star, Maria Callas. While in port the Gyatt loaned several movies to the “Christina” which was a converted Canadian Destroyer Escort with a 45-man crew and its own amphibious airplane.*

*In Tampa the ship took part in the annual Gasparilla Festival and was the ship assigned to defend the city from the pirates. In the end, the pirates always won and overran the defending ship. The pirates were normally civic leaders or civic minded individuals from the city; but in this case the pirates turned out to be about seventy young and beautiful women, most of them college coeds, who clambered aboard the Gyatt from their pirate ship. Immediately upon sighting these supple young beauties the word was passed to the Master of Arms that they were not allowed below decks under any circumstances. But alas, even the best intentions fail at times and more than five hours passed before the last of the pirates could be found, removed from the ship and placed in the hands of the festival authorities. It was a question of whether the capturers became the captives or vice-versa. It was said that many tears were shed by the comely pirates who were standing on the pier when the Gyatt departed Tampa.*

*It was a night or so later that a few of the Gyatt crew, who had more than their fair share of liquid fire, wanted to board the invading pirate ship. However, the pirates standing guard thwarted the efforts of the inebriated sailors. Well – in retaliation these sailors, whose efforts to board had been repelled, became angry and cast off the pirate ship’s forward mooring lines. This maneuver set the pirate ship partially adrift in Tampa Bay and only the after mooring lines kept the ship from floating out into the bay. Almost immediately the local constabulary were in pursuit of inebriated sailors and in short order they were placed in the local jail. The Captain was a little more than upset with two of his crew being arrested and then was handed the local newspaper. The paper depicted, in cartoon fashion, angry pirates – cutlasses in hand warding off two sailors casting off the forward mooring lines of the pirate ship. The headline, in large bold letters read: **“US NAVY TAKES REVENGE ON PIRATES.”** As the Captain read the accompanying article his face softened and he smiled when he read that the two sailors had been released without charges.*

*The Gyatt was scheduled to make the short trip to Miami but the trip was deferred when the ship was directed to assist the Coast Guard to find a boat in trouble. It was a day or less when the Gyatt reached Miami for four more days of liberty and many of the crew were pleased to see the smiling faces of numerous lady pirates from Tampa waiting on the pier as the ship moored. The run on “Out-Of-Area” liberty chits was phenomenal - as many of the crew requested permission to return to Tampa for liberty with the pirates.*

*It was in Miami or Tampa that four white hats returned to the ship – a little on the happy side and carrying a brown paper bag with liquid refreshments that they hoped would make them happier. After they saluted and received permission to come aboard they were queried, by the OOD, about the contents of the brown paper bag. At first there was no reply and then one of the white hats replied that they “just had a couple of bottles of refreshments.” The OOD then said to the white hats; “I am going to turn my back and when I hear two plops you may report to your*

station.” The OOD and his staff turned their backs, the sailor with the brown bag handed it to a shipmate and bent over and removed his shoes and dropped them in the water; one by one, as he and his shipmates went forward to their station.

The ship returned to Norfolk and the shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia in late March. After leaving the shipyard in April the Gyatt operated in the Virginia Capes before heading north to New York City, Newport, Rhode Island, Boston and St. John New Brunswick in late May and early June. It was at one of these ports that Joe Viafora the “Water King” received some duty that he didn’t really want. The Captain was preparing to go ashore and meet with some of the local dignitaries and was taking a shower when water from the showerhead ceased flowing. The Captain was lathered from head to foot and as his right called the quarterdeck to find out what was going on and to have the water king report to his stateroom on the double. Viafora unaware of the problem knocked on the stateroom door and as directed – entered to find his Captain clad in a towel and coated with soap. The Captain wanted to know “where the hell the water was” and Viafora had no answer – but as directed Viafora began searching for the problem and within ten minutes found the valves handling the water to the Captain’s cabin was turned off. Viafora returned to the Captain’s cabin, as directed, and advised that the problem was corrected. The Captain advised Viafora that until further notice he was to stand guard at the valve and assure that it would not be turned off.

It was in Saint John that the crew was awed by the tides. While moored to the pier the ship encountered a tide differential of thirty-three feet a substantial variation in a water level in just one-day. However, Saint John is also in the Bay of Fundy and for over fifty years engineers have been trying to figure out a method to harness the energy created by these extremely large tidal variations.

It was in June that the XO, Harold B. Sachs, was promoted to Commander. Commander Sachs made the voyage with the Gyatt to the Canary Islands and Bermuda and three weeks after returning to Norfolk walked across the pier to take command of the USS Steinaker (DD-863). Commander Sachs received a Presidential Unit Citation and a Bronze Star for service in the Vietnam Theater before boarding the Gyatt and a second Bronze Star while commanding the Steinaker in the Vietnam Theater. The Steinaker at the time, along with the Gyatt, was attached to DesRon Two. Both were original members of the East coast DesRon Four group.

In mid June the ship returned to Norfolk before setting a course for Bermuda and later the Canary Islands and Santa Cruz de Tenerife at the end of the month. While on station near the Canary Islands the Gyatt worked with a missile cruiser, a missile destroyer and a missile submarine. During the exercise the submarine fired Polaris missiles while under water and at one period fired six at fifteen-second intervals. Another part of the exercise was for the missile cruiser and the missile destroyer to shoot a submarine missile out of the sky after it cleared the water and according to one observer the Gyatt was in more danger than the missile that left the sub. The Gyatt in its role as evaluator was placed in a very precarious position – sort of in between the surface vessels and the submarine. The position of the Gyatt was necessitated by the military and civilian photographers attempting to record the events. During these events the crew of the Gyatt was at General Quarters. Although all of this was classified, but photographs appeared in stateside newspapers. It was late June, early July and the Gyatt returned to

*Bermuda, in the British West Indies and Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands conducting additional tests and then returning to Norfolk.*

*When the ship returned to Norfolk they found the pier laden with family and friends and the men lined the rail with anticipation awaiting liberty. But liberty was not to be. While the ship was in the Canary Islands the Captain had gone ashore and returned with a quantity of flavorful cheeses produced on the island and returned to the ship with his tasty treasures. When the Captain entered the wardroom he appropriately marked his packages containing his purchases and turned it over the appropriate officer for proper storage. The officer in turn saw that the packages were properly stored in the ship's food lockers. When the ship finished docking the Captain sent a member of the wardroom staff to retrieve his packages and was most chagrined when the staff member reported that there were no packages identified "Captain." The Captain distressed at thievery on his ship cancelled all liberties and a saddened crew returned to their quarters and stations, while an even sadder group of families and friends, along with the band left the pier. A number of hours later the cheese appeared to be found and liberty for the crew was granted. It appears two officers, with a knowledge of Norfolk and a knowledge of the cheese varieties were able to leave the ship and return with similar if not identical cheeses. The question to this day is still "who stole the Captain's cheeses."*

*DesRon Two consisted of nine ships in two divisions Division Twenty-one and Division Twenty-two. Division Twenty-one consisted of the USS Blandy (DD-943) Squadron Flagship, USS Borie (DD-704), USS Rich (DD-820), USS Steinaker (DD-863) and the USS Gyatt (DD-712). Division Twenty-two consisted of the USS Furse (DD-882), USS W. L. Lind (DD-703), USS R. A. Owens (DD-827) and the USS Beatty (DD-756). This group was part of Unitas VIII and was scheduled to circumnavigate South America – departing the 12<sup>th</sup> day of August 1967. The Gyatt for the first time was to be in Pacific waters – the waters she was originally scheduled for – way back in 1945. After going through the Canal the Gyatt, along with other ships of DesRon Two, was to visit the ports of Manta, Salinas and Quayaquil in Ecuador; Paita, Callao and Ilo in Peru; Majillones, Valparaiso and Punta Arenas in Chile and Puerto Belgrano and Buenos Aries in Argentina. After going around the southern most tip of South America to Rio de Janeiro (last visited by the Gyatt in 1947) and Salvador in Brazil; Port of Spain in Trinidad; LaGuaira, Venezuela, San Juan, Puerto Rico and the squadron was to be home before Christmas. It seemed that the ships of DesRon Two never completed this circumnavigation of South America being redirected to Vietnam.*

*The start of Unitas VIII found the Gyatt completing the initial stages of the voyage with visits to San Juan, Puerto Rico and Cartagena, Columbia. While in Cartagena the duty fire party was mustered on the fantail and were volunteered to assist the local fire department in fighting a fire in a downtown shoe store that had apartments above and it seems to be the case in such happenings – the efforts of U.S. servicemen reduced the potential for disaster.*

*It was the 29<sup>th</sup> day of August and the Gyatt was proceeding through the Panama Canal when it experienced both a shaft and generator failure. The Gyatt spent the next six weeks at the Rodman Naval Station in Panama while parts were being located and repairs were being made. The destroyer, USS Mullinnix (DD-944), relieved the Gyatt and continued the journey with*

*DesRon Two. It was on this same exercise, while refueling at sea, that the Gyatt had an emergency breakaway from the mother ship and diesel fuel was spilled everywhere.*

*The crew enjoyed their liberty time in Panama but were very happy when the ship headed to Guantanamo Bay and subsequently to Norfolk in early October. When the Gyatt reached Norfolk they found their squadron was in Vietnam. The year ended with the Gyatt continuing to test equipment while operating between its homeport of Norfolk and the Virginia Capes.*

*In 1967, race riots marred the scene throughout the United States with major riots in Cleveland, Ohio; Newark, New Jersey and Detroit, Michigan. The United States placed the 100<sup>th</sup> million telephone in operation. Montreal hosted Expo 67. After 274 days at sea Sir Francis Chichester returned to Plymouth, England as he completed his solo trip around the world in a sailboat. The Concorde, a supersonic jet plane made its inaugural flight in early December. Doctor Christian Barnard made the first human heart transplant on the 23rd day of December and the patient lived for additional 18 days.*

*“In the Heat of the Night” won the Academy Award for best picture with “Guess Whose Coming to Dinner, Cool Hand Luke and Bonnie & Clyde” taking awards in other categories. Hit songs were; “Ode to Billy Joe, Up Up and Away and By the Time I Get to Phoenix.”*

*The Saint Louis Cardinals beat the Boston Red Sox in seven games to win the World Series. The National Football League and the American Football League combined to play the first Super Bowl, which was won by the Green Bay Packers when they beat the Kansas City Chiefs 35 to 10. The Philadelphia 76ers beat the Boston Celtics to win the NBA championship, displacing the Celtics for the first time in nine seasons.*