

XXVII. 1970 – Buried at Sea

1970: According to Frank Eason, USN retired, who had served as a RM2 aboard the Gyatt from 1961 through 1964 and who was serving aboard the USS John R. Pierce, DD-753 in 1970; the following occurred:

On the 11th day of June the ex-Gyatt, as the decommissioned hull was referred, was towed to her final resting-place in the Virginia Capes Operating Area. The ship rendezvoused with surface units under the command of Commander Naval Reserve Destroyer Division Third Naval District who was embarked in the USS John R. Pierce. The ex-Gyatt was the designated target ship for surface gunnery exercises for the division consisting of the Pierce and three other destroyers. After several hours of five-inch salvos the Gyatt was listing badly, but still afloat. Air units from the Oceana Naval Air Station joined the exercise with air to surface missiles and shortly thereafter the Gyatt slid beneath the surface to her final resting-place at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. The coordinates of the USS Gyatt's final resting-place are as follows: Latitude, 37 Degrees 20 Minutes North and Longitude, 73 Degrees 52 Minutes West.

Other news in 1970 was the shooting and killing of four students, at Kent State University in Ohio, by the National Guard during an anti Vietnam demonstration. The Dow-Jones was at 631. Hospital care was \$81 per patient per day. The United States had 231 million television sets in use.

Academy Award movie was "Patton." Other movies were; "Ryan's Daughter, Women in Love, Topaz, Catch-22 and Paint Your Wagon." Top songs for 1970 were; "Ain't No Mountain High Enough, I'll Be There, I Think I Love You and a Rainy Night in Georgia."

Cyclones and floods kill 500,000 people in East Pakistan; earthquakes, floods and landslides kill 30,000 in Peru. The world population reaches 3.8 billion with 203 million in the United States. It is interesting to note that in 1900 the world population was almost 1.6 billion and the United States population was slightly more than 76 million. In December of 1999 the world population is in excess of 6.2 billion and the United States population just short of 285 million.

In sports the Baltimore Orioles beat the Cincinnati Reds in five games to win the World Series. The Kansas City Chiefs beat the Minnesota Vikings to win Super Bowl IV and the New York Knicks beat the Los Angeles Lakers to win the NBA championship.

Prologue: *The Gyatt, a destroyer of the United States Navy, invariably worked alone; first, as a radio counter measure group; secondly, as the first missile destroyer and finally, as an evaluator of what was proposed for future naval ships. The Gyatt, commissioned DD-712, DDG-712, DDG-1 and again DD-712, was a ship operated by young men and directed by older men who led them in the performance of their numerous duties aboard the ship. The older men trained well; for the younger men became businessmen, doctors, engineers, family men and a large number leaders in their own right. The Gyatt is the men who served aboard her and the men who remember her. The Gyatt is one ship – many men. The Gyatt is our ship and we - her men.*

When putting these recollections together one realizes that the Gyatt was in all probability the “transition ship” for the United States Navy in the Twentieth Century. When it was originally commissioned in 1945 the crew, at full complement, was in excess of 360 men. This size crew was required to load and fire the depth charges, torpedoes, 20-millimeter, 40-millimeter and five-inch guns that were her principal weapons. When the ship was decommissioned in 1955 and recommissioned in 1956 as a guided missile destroyer, without its after five-inch battery, without its torpedoes, without its three quad 40-millimeters guns and two twin 40-millimeter guns that were replaced by two three-inch mounts and already without its multitude of 20-millimeter, the full complement was in the 240 range. The Gyatt was the ultimate museum ship.

The Gyatt had a life of twenty-four years, three months and twenty days and was commanded by seventeen Commanders. The average tenure of each Commander was slightly more than seventeen months, with the shortest period by Commander E. G. Miller in 1955 at three months and nine days. The longest command was by Commander E. C. Elliott at twenty-seven months and nine days.

The Gyatt was a ship like no other - born to the Atlantic - worked in the Atlantic - died in the Atlantic and subsequently buried in the Atlantic. The Gyatt DD-712 started as a conventional destroyer, the third in the Gearing class; became the first of the missile destroyers - designated DDG-1 and finally returned to its DD-712 designation as an operational and experimental ship. As ships go the Gyatt had a fairly short life, less than twenty-five years - but a full one.