Memories of the Best and Worst of Times Aboard the USCGC Southwind (WAGB-280)
From 1944 to 1974

Updated 18 January 2015
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Editor's Note

A short while ago former Southwind Engineering Officer Captain Bob Yuhas, USCG (Ret.) suggested that the Southwind Association look into collecting and publishing shipmates' -best of times- and -worst of times- memories of tours of duty aboard Southwind. The original idea was to collect the stories, publish them in pamphlet format, and distribute them free of charge at the 2010 Baltimore Reunion. The Association thought this concept was an outstanding idea, the 2010 Baltimore Reunion Planning Committee agreed, and I volunteered to collect, edit, and publish the submitted recollections, anecdotes, short stories, sea stories, and other good or bad memories of Southwind. However, instead of publishing the recollections in pamphlet format the Association decided to publish them on our website as the publication will become a living document, with new stories added as they are received.

I am positive that you have verbally shared those stories with your wives, children, grandchildren, friends, and others since you departed Southwind many years ago, and this is the perfect opportunity for you to write and share those stories with everyone. Since the publication will be posted on our website, think of the contributed anecdotes as lasting memories for loved ones, friends, and the many shipmates who served on Southwind during her 40-years of distinguished service to the Coast Guard, the Navy, and even for a short while, the Soviet Union.

Each recollection is posted as it is received, and the first story - Grounding of the Southwind - by RM1 Ralph Breschini, USCG (Ret.), is an example of a -worst of times- experience that occurred many years ago. Ralph’s story was previously posted on our website for several years, and is a first-hand account of Southwind’s 1968 grounding in the Antarctic. A short while after Ralph’s story was posted former SN Patrick Newman contributed his additional observations, entitled Additional Memories, about the grounding. Each is a good example of the kind of story that captures the essence of what I believe was one of the -worst of times- experiences on Southwind. Since I was aboard at the time I can attest to the accuracy, and I vividly remember all the details of the grounding like they occurred yesterday. However, not all good or bad memories that you have experienced have to be written with such minute detail.

Instead, your story could be a few paragraphs explaining the who, what, where, when, and why of some event that occurred aboard that you remember so well. It could represent the -best of times-, or the -worst of times-, or both. More importantly it is significant because it was an event that took place on a ship you served on many, many years ago, and the recollection of that event has remained permanently etched in your memory. This is a significant occurrence, and I request that you share your story or stories. If you have any photographs that you believe would enhance the story please send them to me in JPEG or other similar format, and I along with our Webmaster, Jim Tidwell, will include them in the publication.

As I indicated previously, I will edit the stories before they are published on our website, but any changes will be made only with your permission. Only you can tell it correctly, and I have only one request that you consider while writing of your experiences -- please do not embarrass other shipmates. Dig deep into your memory banks to find the perfect story or stories - good or bad - about Southwind, translate those memories into written words, and share the end result with all of us. I am positive there are many more outstanding stories that will be forthcoming.
Ed Clancy (SNQM to QM1, January 1967 to January 1970)
CWO-4 (BOSN) USCG (Ret.)
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# Commanding Officers

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Service Branch</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>20 July 1942</td>
<td>Keel laid in San Pedro, California by the Western Pipe &amp; Steel Company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commander Richard M. Hoyle</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>8 March 1943</td>
<td>Launched and christened by Mrs. Ona Jones.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>15 July 1944</td>
<td>Commissioned as USCGC <em>Southwind</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commander A. M. Khokhlov</td>
<td>USSRN</td>
<td>25 March 1945 to 28 December 1949</td>
<td>Decommissioned, transferred to USSR as part of Lend-Lease Program, renamed <em>Admiral Markarov</em>, operated in Soviet Merchant Marine for 4-11/2 years, and returned to U.S. in Yokosuka, Japan on 28 December 1949.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander Robert Bolling</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>28 December 1949</td>
<td>Returned by USSR to U.S. in Yokosuka, Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>28 December 1949 to 28 April 1950</td>
<td>Repaired in Yokosuka, Japan, and renamed <em>USS Atka</em> on 28 April 1950.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander Joseph H. Judith</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>January 1953 to 1956</td>
<td>Commissioned at Yokosuka, Japan as <em>USS Atka</em> on 1 October 1950.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander William J. Martin</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1956 to 1958</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander William H. Reinhardt</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1958 to 1 September 1959</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander Buster E. Toon</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1 September 1959 to 1960</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander Jack E. Mansfield</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1960 to 1961</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commander Murray E. Draper</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1961 to 1963</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commander Norval E. Nickerson</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1963 to 1965</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commander John S. Blake</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>1965 to 31 October 1966</td>
<td><em>USS Atka</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Sumner R. Dolber</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>31 October 1966 to 6 June 1969</td>
<td>Commissioned as USCGC <em>Atka</em>, and changed name to USCGC <em>Southwind</em> in January 1967.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Edward D. Cassidy</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>6 June 1969 to December 1970</td>
<td><em>USCGC Southwind</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain William S. Schwob</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>December 1970 to July 1972</td>
<td><em>USCGC Southwind</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Richard J. Knapp</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>July 1972 to December 1972</td>
<td><em>USCGC Southwind</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Adrian L. Lonsdale</td>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>December 1972 to 31 May 1974</td>
<td>Last Commanding Officer. Decommissioned on 31 May 1974, and sold for scrap on 17 March 1976 for $231,079.00 to Union Mineral and Alloy Corporation of New York.</td>
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Grounding of the Southwind

by RM2 Ralph Breschini (July 1967 to July 1968)

25,000 miles from home the ship hit a pinnacle and started taking on water ......

SOUTHWIND departed the Coast Guard Yard, Baltimore, Maryland for "Operation Deep Freeze 68" on 16 November, 1968 with CAPT S. R. Dolber, Commanding Officer. The radio gang of "NMBT" Southwind’s international call sign] was: ENS Hipkiss, Communications Officer; RMC Roesing, RM-in-Charge; RM1 Wedge; RM1 Ritchie; RM2 Breschini; RM2 Alberly; RM3 Banke; RM3 Dolazal; and one other RM3 whose name escapes me at this time.

I had an additional duty, Postal Clerk, with a fully commissioned post office on board.

SOUTHWIND was loaded with tons of food, 3.2 beer for "Happy Hour," a ship’s store full of smokes, goodies and movies for many hours of good entertainment. What else could one need for a cruise to the bottom of the world?

Our first stop was the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown, Virginia where cargo and ammunition were loaded aboard. Then, on to Craney Island in the Elizabeth River for fuel to the tune of 420,700 gallons, with an additional 11,858 gallons of JP-5 fuel. One more stop at Norfolk, where two HU-2B Navy helicopters were flown aboard and made ready for sea in the hangar on the flight deck.
We departed Norfolk on the 19th of November with stops in the Panama Canal Zone, Valparaiso and Punta Arenas, Chile, where a Navy SeaBee Detachment came aboard.

On November 30, SOUTHWIND crossed the equator and the usual hype and physical activity took place. We who had never crossed the equator before were initiated "to the fullest." We never did find the "golden rivet." One ensign locked himself in his stateroom; when he finally emerged, he really got the works. I felt sorry for him.

Southwind Operating in the Ice

We arrived at Palmer Station, Antarctica on 21 December 1967. Our mission was to provide support for the Sea Bees while they constructed Palmer Station II. One SeaBee fell from scaffolding and was injured quite seriously. Our doctor and corpsman did a great job, but we finally had to take him to Argentina for medical treatment. He ended up going back stateside a short time later.

During the entire cruise, we drilled constantly. GQ, man overboard, fire, everything. We always moaned and groaned, especially if you had just gotten in the sack, but weekends brought Happy Hour, pizza and two cans of beer for each man. One could amass a number of cans if you had the right stuff to trade.

Every couple of weeks, SOUTHWIND would cross Drake Passage and head for Punta Arena, Chile for liberty, some fresh fruit, meat and mail. During one of the visits, "crabs" were brought aboard by some unsuspecting sailors and they spread throughout the berthing area like wildfire. During the day our mattresses and bedding hung out all over the ship. What a sight!

Boxing and wrestling matches were often held in the hangar, so if you had a problem with a shipmate, you could settle it on the mat—rank meant nothing there. The X.O. was invited into the ring by a Chief who had a little more respect for the X.O. when it was all over.

On 21 March 1968, Palmer Station II was finished and a dedication ceremony was planned. All the Sea Bees and two duty sections put on dress uniforms and went ashore for the event. USCGC GLACIER, which was on another ice operation in the area, arrived at our location in time to take part in the dedication.

SOUTHWIND was underway soon after the ceremony was completed and heading north for home when she struck an uncharted rock pinnacle, becoming hard aground. I had just gotten off watch and was in the sack when General Quarters sounded. We had heard and felt the sickening sound of something ripping out the bottom of the vessel. My GQ station was CW operator on 500 KHz, the international maritime mobile distress and calling frequency. Half-dressed, with life jacket on, the order was given to send an SOS on 500 KHz. The text, as I remember it, was: "SOS SOS SOS DE NMBT NMBT NMBT USCGC SOUTHWIND (time) (position) TAKING ON WATER AND ARE AGROUND." Well, needless to say, no one responded to the distress call from the bottom of the world. While I was doing my job, the call to the GLACIER from the bridge using 157.1 FM was made to "stop your forward progress, we are aground and taking on water."

The ship's company performed their assigned tasks flawlessly. Enginemen and damage control personnel knew what had to be done. Our forward dry stores compartment and an area in an engine room was flooded, but water tight integrity was held because of our professionals.

After crossing Drake Passage for the final time with GLACIER as our escort, a thorough inspection
was made. It was determined we could make it home. With pumps going on deck keeping the water level down, we pulled into Maryland Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., Baltimore on 27 April after traveling more than 25,000 miles during Deep Freeze, completing our mission.

Hats off to a great crew!

*Postscript: I was temporarily sitting at the Ice Breaker type desk, Naval Engineering Division in Headquarters when the dispatch came in. The entire maintenance section of ENE went to GQ to assist as much as we could. I am pleased that this story is being told by a crew member thirty years later - Jack

*From Coast Guard Stories by Don Gardner.
Additional Memories

by SN Patrick Newman (June 1967 to June 1970)

The damage occurred to the bow section and flooded the shaft alley that was formerly the home of the bow motor. We had amongst other things toilet paper stored there.

We made a stop I believe off the coast of Valparaiso, Chile. We did not want to dry dock in Chile because since we left, the country was now run by the Salvador Allende administration, and was now a communist country. It was at the height of the anti Vietnam War sentiment.

We sent one or both LVCP's to get supplies, namely plywood and cement. We sent divers down to the site of the hole and using mattresses and plywood, along with a hawser and capstan, made a series of dives and closed the hole enough to lower the submersible pumps and dry the area enough so the hole could be cemented to allow us to limp back to Baltimore, MD where we went into dry dock.

While in dry dock, the civilian crew had the job of jack hammering out the cement. It was a loud process and it went on 24/7. Some crew members would disconnect the air hoses when coming back liberty. The workers would have to come back on deck and reconnect the hoses. I recall that we posted a hose watch to prevent that from happening. "GOOD DUTY."
(Blank)
I and ET2 Lionel Booker had been stationed on the CGC Westwind together for Deep Freeze 68 to Antarctica (9 month cruise) and then Arctic East to Greenland for several months. A few weeks after our return to the CG Yard at Baltimore we heard the CGC Southwind needed a Radioman and an Electronics Technician for their next cruise which was scheduled to circumnavigate the world.

Actually, I was standing the Quarterdeck Watch when the Comms Officer from the Southwind was visiting with ours and I overheard their need for an RM. Being single, under 21 and stationed on a ship in the yards, I immediately volunteered to go.

Lionel was on leave in Ohio and I wanted to visit some friends in Philadelphia in a week, so it was arranged that he and I would fly out of BWI and meet the ship at Rodman Naval Base in the Panama Canal.

We met up when he returned from leave and caught a flight to Miami and then transferred to some South American airline and flew all over Central America, landing at the Panama Canal around midnight. We were wearing our wool dress blues because that was the required travel uniform at the time and getting off the plane in that heat and humidity even at midnight made us wish we could have worn civilian clothes. Lightweight civilian clothes.

Our next discovery, evidenced by really big fires in the distance and extremely well armed military personnel at the airport was that there was a coup d’etat in progress.

Our third discovery was that the airlines had lost our seabags somewhere in one the many Central American stops we had made enroute.

Our fourth discovery was that it was going to cost fifty 1968 dollars for a cab to take us to the Navy station. Enroute we were stopped twice by military jeeps with .50 cal machine guns mounted in the back and questioned about our being in the middle of a jungle road at 0200.

At the Navy station the OOD first informed us that an order had gone out that no personnel were to arrive utilizing the civilian airport. He also advised us he did not have the Southwind on his roster of ships transiting the Canal.

The Navy quartered us in an open bay barracks with the old big veranda and giant screened windows. For the next few days we just lived waiting for the club to open up so we could get into an air conditioned space, at least for a few hours.

After several days of this the Southwind did indeed arrive and we reported aboard. Three days later we departed but just before we pulled in the brow a QM from the Navy OOD office showed up with our seabags, having worked with the airline to track them down. Man w were we glad to see them and get some clean skivvies!

After leaving the Canal we were underway for approximately one month and then arrived at Wellington, N.Z. I had gotten settled into Operations Berthing, in the aft end of the ship, below the Engineers Berthing area, and was standing the Radio Watch with a partner. Having had some sea
time by now, I didn’t have to go through the initiation for crossing the Dateline or the Equator, which I didn’t mind missing at all.

On the Westwind we had stopped at Christchurch N.Z. and I never got past the Navy support base there. Visiting Wellington was just a fantastic experience. The people were very nice, the bars and restaurants very pleasant to go to and I made several friends. I remember us staying there for approximately one week and I truly think that was one of many highlights of the trip.

Then we left for the ice and the routine was pretty much the same as my previous trip on the Westwind. Rendezvous with a cargo ship, escort it through the outer ice pack, break a channel into Winter Quarters Bay, ramming ice day in and day out. I seem to recall some good storms when we were in open water, also.

One night after getting off the 8-midnight watch I was spending some time in the AG (Aerographer, or Weather) Shop and around 2AM or so we heard one heck of a mechanical crunch and the ship came to a dead stop. My friends and I looked at each other and knew “this can’t be good”. Turns out the thick ice had broken one of the three blades of one of our props. It was on my watch the next day that we sent out the message saying we needed to go to drydock and it would take 3 days to repair if I remember correctly.

We made our way slowly back to Wellington (!) and got put into drydock and commenced life in port. I was allowed several days leave so headed in to the city and stayed with my friends. What an enjoyable time that broken prop provided us. Oh, we were there slightly longer than 3 days.

After repairs had been completed we headed back to the ice and resumed our icebreaking, ship escorting duties.

After several months of that our duties came to an end and it was time to head home. Except that we received a call for help to aid in resupplying the Australian research station as the M/V Thala Dan could not make it through the ice to them. There was no way an airplane could land to pull the people out and no way the Thala Dan could make it any further in, so the situation was pretty critical. We headed around the continent and in the Radio Room we had one heck of a time trying to keep our local clocks accurate for the right time zone! It was interesting to me that we were helping the Thala Dan because the previous year on the Westwind we had helped the M/V Magda Dan, a tourist ship that had run aground.

In any event, we, with the use of our LCVP landing craft and our helicopter, managed to get all the supplies off the ship and delivered to the research station and then escort the ship out of the icepack. The accomplishments of these tasks provided a great feeling, in that we were doing what the Coast Guard does – aid and assist folks in trouble.

Our next job involved building a satellite tracking station on Heard Island and we stayed there a few days doing that. The one memory I have was our attempt to take on fresh water using our fire hoses running from the ship to island streams. But giant sea lions chewing through the hoses put an end to that, so we continued with our fresh water shortages. (No laundry, sea showers of 2 minutes or less, etc.) Some of the guys tied their clothes into the cotton ditty bags we all had and towed them behind the ship, to show us how it was done in the “Old Guard”. One nameless RD1 had the rope part and he lost all his clothes – ending that little experiment.

After leaving Heard Island we went to Perth, on the east side of Australia, on the Indian Ocean, for what I believe was 7 days. One of the chronic issues on the ship was the lack of freshwater for
laundry (it was needed more elsewhere, for cooking and so forth). So getting to Perth proved fantastic if only for being able to take our laundry to a cleaner and get it taken care of. Another great benefit was getting out to restaurants. Chow on this ship was great compared to what I had experienced on the Westwind, but getting fresh food and different meals, and fresh salads sure do improve a person’s morale. In Perth we held an open house for the public and had lots of people come aboard and look us over, which was nice as this provided a chance to meet them too. Our crew made many acquaintances and the folks proved more than happy to help show us around the town. I don’t recall getting very much sleep for that in-port period and have many fond memories of our stay there.

Next we headed across the Indian Ocean to Port Louis, Mauritius for a 3 day stay. Here the skipper hired local workers to paint the exterior of the ship and I thought that was really something. On the Westwind we came out of the ice in Greenland and stayed 3 days in St. Johns, New Foundland and our crew painted the hull, while the weather misted and rained the whole time. Two guys would be over the side, one guy wiping an area with a cloth, the other guy putting down some paint. At Port Louis we anchored out in the harbor and took “bum boats” in to the city, small boats run by the local folks. Several of us hired a cabby for the day and he took us around the island sightseeing and shopping. The shopping experience proved an eye-opener. For example, I saw a thick silk ladies floor length night gown with cloth loops for the buttons, elaborate Chinese decorations, dragons and such, which I wanted to buy. The shopkeeper stated a price and I haggled just a little, then agreed. The cab driver stopped me and said “no no, you pay too much” and made me haggle some more. The shopkeeper was OK with that so around we went again. I got it for twelve bucks.

This was my first experience in Africa and I was surprised at how many Chinese people were there and with the friendliness of everyone. We had a great time there.

Now, the reason for the whole trip in the first place, which had been kept quiet from most of the crew for the whole cruise and was also the reason we had been trailed by a Russian vessel ever since we left Perth: We were going to be the first U.S. vessel to visit Dar Es Salaam (Port of Peace), Tanzania, in 12 years, since the y had revolted and thrown everybody out.

No one knew what to expect or how it would go, but we had high hopes for a good visit. Which is exactly what we had. The folks there were great and glad to see us visit. One of my radio partners spent most of his money on souvenirs and then came back to get stuff on credit from the ship’s store so he could go trade for more. Our pewter ashtrays with the engraved ships silhouette were highly valued by the local folks as were cigarette lighters with the ship’s emblem, and I came home with some very nice wood carvings of animals.

The only downside to this visit was that out of concern for the safety of the crew we could only have Cinderella Liberty. Everyone had to be back on the ship by midnight. But based on my experiences, this port was no worse than some others I’d seen and actually quite a bit nicer as far as dealing the people was concerned.

This counted as a real highlight because of the uniqueness of the experience, for me.

Finally we stopped in Lorenco Marques, Mozambique towards the tip of Africa for a couple of days. Because of the political turmoil going on at the time I elected not to go ashore except to visit the Radio Officer of a cargo ship tied up next to us. He had come aboard for a visit our first night and invited me to dinner with him and his wife. His company allowed officers to have their wives accompany them during their at-sea time. The officers ate in a dining room (not a galley) and had
waiters serve them and that lifestyle sure looked tempting to me as a possible career move if I left the CG.

Finally we rounded the Horn and were in the Atlantic, headed home. Because of some engine and lubrication issues it looked as if we might have to stop and take on more oil before reaching home, but in true CG fashion (“more with less”), a different solution appeared.

We had a cargo handling crane on each side of the ship and the boom was horizontal with cables running from the tip back up to a pivot, then down to the engine and pulleys, which formed a triangle. Inside this triangle the crew stretched cut to fit canvas and swiveled the cranes to the outboard of the ship. Thus creating the last of the wind-powered icebreakers! The CG hadn’t seen something like that since the Bear.

We finally arrived back in Curtis Bay and I stepped off the ship with orders to CG Group Coos Bay, in Oregon.

To me, the whole trip was a highlight. The CO allowed us to keep civilian clothes on board, the galley served good food, the ports we visited, the job we accomplished, the crew I served with. Everything counts as a grade A plus to me.
First off, I want to recognize the excellent recalling of the Arctic East ’70 deployment provided by Michael Stronski. It brought back some nice memories. I’d like to add, if I may, some personal additions of that deployment.

**Rodney The Polar Bear**

A funny tidbit of our encounter with Rodney was that afternoon, one of the cooks (Augie), cooked up some Cornish Game Hens. They weren't very good and the majority of the crew razzed Augie about quite a bit. When we spotted Rodney and saw how curious he was with us, we stopped to see what Rodney would do. To our delight, Rodney walked right up to the ship (evident of the photos). As we all took pictures and called out to Rodney (I, and others were on the fantail), Augie came rushing out with a huge platter of the Cornish Game hens nobody ate and yelled as he tossed them over the side, "...if none of you will eat these, I might as well give them to somebody who will (in his Filipino accent). Rodney came over to the game hens laying on the ice, sniffed them, pawed them, and then walked away. We laughed and stated, “See, Augie, not even Rodney likes them”. Augie huffed and mumbled some in Filipino as he stormed off the fantail. Needless to say, that joke carried through for many weeks.
Murmansk

One of the highlights of our Murmansk visit was a party thrown for us at The People's Center. The party was very nice and I was surprised at how many Soviet's spoke and understood English. Capitan Cassidy mentioned to one of the Political Officers that the Southwind had a rock group (I was a guitarist and singer in the group called "The Common People" (photo attached) to which the Political Officer requested we play at the party. And play we did. We were doing OK until one of us in the group (not sure who) suggested we play Back In The USSR" by The Beatles. Probably not the best song pick for as soon as we got to the first chorus, a couple of the Political Officers yanked the plug and rushed us off the stage. We first thought the crowd was booing us but afterwards, everyone was patting us on the back. Seems like even then there were some discontented souls in the USSR. On another evening, some Soviet Sailors invited some of us to their Servicemen's Club. What an amazing experience. Everyone was so nice and there was no language barrier. It was amazing how little (and selective) the Soviets knew of life in the United States (and how little we knew of them). We talked for hours with the Soviet Sailors buying shot after shot of Vodka (the likes of which cars could run off). Laughing, singing, playing games, swapping stories with no sense there was a Cold War. I don't remember returning the Southwind, but I woke up the next morning in my rack. After numerous cups of coffee, a LTJG came up to me on the messdeck and stated, "...boy, you had one hell of a night". I inquired. He stated he was the Officer of the Deck and that about 1AM, two Soviet sailors "assisted" me to the gangplank. Apparently, I was 14 sheets to the wind. The LTJG stated the Soviet's were very nice and waited with me on the dock until a couple of Southwind crew members came down, fetched me, and tossed me in my rack. When I woke up, everything was in tack, nothing missing. I even had a pocket full of Soviet currency (apparently, I did OK at poker). Bottom line was that we found the Soviets we encountered very friendly, curious, and entertaining - not at all what we expected.
83.01 Degrees North

One interesting note on this venture was that the Southwind actually got stuck. Ice froze around the ship. Preparations were underway to winter-over the ship. As the IC Electrician, my billet was to stay with the winter-over crew. But thanks to the persistence of Captain Cassidy, shifting the fuel oil between the port and starboard tanks, rocking the ship while maneuvering the ship around, we got free (to the cheers of those of us picked to winter-over). Thank you Capitan Cassidy (who I see is a shipmate on the site).

Thule, Greenland

Speaking of the ship's rock band, after escorting the Wynedot (I believe that's the correct name) into Thule, Captain Cassidy got "The Common People" a gig at the Air Force's NCO Club. Come to find out, SAS Airlines flew into Thule (I believe delivering Scientists, etc.). One day (or night as it was daylight all the time), "The Common People" were playing at the NCO Club when to our surprise (and delight), one of the SAS Flight Attendants got up on stage and started dancing (picture attached). Now, for a bunch of sailors and airmen away from civilization it was a treat (the officers were so jealous when they heard).
Best and Worst of Times

by Lt. Robert Yuhas, Engineering Officer (November 1967 to June 1970)

Best

1. Getting home to see a daughter who was born while we were in Antarctica.

2. Party time in Punta Arenas, and the great hotel with the extra great dinners. Ordered a Chateau Brieon for two along with a bottle of wine & appetizers and ate the whole thing.

3. Beer and pizza nights. (Can’t do that anymore)

4. Diving in New Zealand (after a night of drinking) and coming back with lobster, fish and about 100# of abalone.

5. Having a CO and XO that would put up me!!

6. A crew that was the “best” I served with in 30 years. – Fought like heck among ourselves, never let anyone else pick on ANY other crew member, and pulled together when the chips were down; and accomplished seemingly impossible tasks.

Worst

1. Helping to pull the diving officer (Lt. R.) out of the water, at night, after his hose got caught in the broken wreckage after the grounding in Antarctica. He ended up with diver’s pneumonia.
2. Helping to reset the dislocated hip of the DCA (LTJG Heavilin) after getting caught between a LARK and the ship at Heard Island.

3. Trying to talk to my wife by shortwave from the Antarctic and having the nurse at Bethesda say “no way”, call back during normal hours. (Our first child was just born, and they wouldn’t tell me anything!!) SW only worked at certain times of the day!!

4. Sitting in the Dry Dock in Wellington (between Christmas and New Year) to change the propellers after breaking one in the ice, while the rest of the crew was having a party ashore.

5. Groundings in the Antarctic & Thule, broken propeller in the Antarctic, evaporator breakdowns, stack fires and OOD never pulling up the pit sword before it got torn off in the first ice we hit.
Southwind’s Best and Worst of Times

by Captain Sumner (“Bud”) R. Dolber, Commanding Officer, USCGC Southwind
(September 1966 to July 1969)

Southwind Precom Detail in Boston

On first reporting to the Base Boston precommissioning detail in 1966, I was given a list of crewmembers who had been selected and were on their way. I noted that there was a Kennedy (BMC) and an Oswald (QM1). I mentioned this curious fact to Personnel and they said we could have a Ruby, too, but not right then for he was in detention. I declined.

The Name Change from Atka to Southwind

In 1967 in the shipyard in Baltimore, the crew of the yet uncommissioned ship imprudently requested that the name be changed from Atka to Southwind, the original name of the vessel, in the face of a similar request by another icebreaker which was turned down. Word came back from the other vessel that Atka’s request was doomed to failure. “Who the heck do they think they are?” Super crew, that’s who, proved many time over in the months to come. The requested name change was approved.

Armed Forces Day Weekend (May 1967)

Let’s go back to May, 1967, when we were released from the shipyard after our overhaul. Armed Forces Day weekend coming up and we had a chance to show off. We first got permission from the city to tie up Saturday and Sunday to unused Pier One, Pratt St. We dispatched our motor lifeboat whose crew was to sound a route from the shipyard to Pier One, determining safe depths and marking the course with life jackets anchored with shackles or something. Saturday morning the ship, newly painted and beautiful, was moved to the west side of Pier One, just across from Sam Smith Park on Light St. You could say that for a person driving north on Light St., Southwind dominated the waterfront. Our first coup! More than 2,000 folks toured the ship that weekend accompanied by proud crewmembers as hosts.

Shakedown Cruise to Bermuda

Most drills and exercises cancelled in view of the view of the request by COMEASTAREA that we look for a pleasure boat in the North Atlantic Ocean. Not quite as impossible as it sounds. We knew the boat left Newport for Bermuda and had a pretty good idea of its position when last heard from sometime earlier following its radio and engine failure. With a half a dozen boats on the horizon at any one time, the best we could do was to look at the name of every boat on its stern. We ultimately found our target, lost it overnight, found it again employing two CG aircraft in a shirt directed creeping line ahead search and towed it to Bermuda. First assignment successful (of many.)
**Southwind’s Gunnery Exercise**

The senior ship directed *Southwind* to conduct annual gunnery exercises. Given area to South, picked target-sized iceberg, commenced one of four runs at various ranges - six rounds each range. First round creamed iceberg. Crew ecstatic. Noisy cheers not just for gunnery department or fire control teams, but for the whole ship’s crew. Of 24 rounds fired, 21 hit target. Exercise a failure on paper because rounds should have bracketed target, not hit it. Didn’t take away from our jubilation and pride. Listening for senior ship participation, we heard one, just one, round fired, then nothing, thus ending their annual gunnery exercise. *Southwind* rides again.

**Southwind’s Arrival in Thule, Greenland**

This could have come under “bad” time, but I may have been the only person to have taken it to heart. Arctic East. Arrived at North Star Bay on the 4th of July in a snowstorm. Instructions from senior ship: *Southwind* to follow *Edisto*, clearing channel of ice as far as position off Thule Air Base when *Edisto* will break off, proceed to Base and receive arrival honors. *Southwind* to stay off, continue to clear channel until called in later after ceremony at the dock. Why I didn’t voice immediate objection, I don’t know, but anyway, it was moot. As *Edisto* made its turn, it suffered a complete blackout. *Southwind* ran and reran the channel with a shit-eating grin.

**Wild Ride in Godthaab, Greenland**

(Here's another on the good side.) Many remember the bad night and wild ride we had in Godhaab. Greenland, in September 1967. We were safely (we thought) moored on two anchors with the towing cable, 2 1/2-inch plow steel wire rope passed to a shore fitting. A 180-ft. buoy tender - I forget the name - was tied along our port side. Relaxing after dinner, a loud bang was heard with accompanying jolt and we all knew the worst had happened. GQ was sounded. On the bridge we felt the ship swing over the anchors as the stern headed downwind towards reefs. As one engine came to life, we miraculously missed the rock wall on what became our starboard side. With one engine we stopped the swing just as the 180's CO said "We're going aground." They didn't. We didn't. But we spent several hours "sailing" the ship to keep it headed into the wind which had reached 90 mph. Several minutes after the swing, which seemed like hours, the bridge received - by squawk box from the fantail - the most welcome news possible. as reported by BMC Kennedy: "the towing cable's aboard." Somebody gave a huge sigh of relief. Don’t try to imagine what it would be like to have that cable wrapped around the screw. Nightmare time.

**Southwind’s New Scullery**

Someone else told of our raid on excess items stored at Camp Tuto, Thule, Greenland. Among the many useful items acquired was a scullery. Later, returning to Baltimore for a short Yard availability, our esteemed Engineering Officer (LT George Saunders) requested that a new scullery be installed on *Southwind*. He was told in no uncertain terms that his request could not be granted due to insufficient funds for a new scullery. Mr. Saunders said, "Hell, you don't have to buy a scullery for us. We already have a new one. We just want it installed." Which was done.
“All Hands Take Stations for Mooring Instructions”

After each cruise, there is usually a big turnover of personnel, many incoming are non-rated or inexperienced. Recognizing that mooring and unmooring, a ship is often done under the eyes of the public, plus the fact that an icebreaker may make few dockside landings during the course of a cruise, it was deemed wise to carry out some indoctrination in this task so that we may always look good. At the Yard one day, for drills and instruction, the order was passed by the PA system: "All hands take stations for mooring instruction." The cutter tied up across the dock thought this was a great joke and called out many friendly taunts. But that's the way of Coast Guardsmen everywhere.

**Antarctic Peninsula**

Playing around old Palmer Station, we came upon a stash of beer in original cartons behind the building. Sampling it, it turned out to be fine except for what we called "goobers" in the bottom of each can. We didn’t eat the “goobers,” but we cut into the supply of beer. Maybe that same day, we noted a sheet of corrugated roofing material about 15 feet long and 3 feet wide. It was obvious that if one end were bent up, the sheet would make an excellent toboggan, the corrugations making it steer straight. This done, the toboggan was towed up the glacier, about 10 of us piled on and with one man designated to yell “ROLL!” we started down, gathering speed each second. Yes, we rolled off in time and the toboggan continued down to the rocks where it became airborne. I don’t remember if we salvaged the sled for another run or not but I know that DCC Pierce has a photographic record of the event.

**Southwind’s Return to Puntas Arenas, Chile**

Going back to the Antarctic Peninsula and one of our returns from Punta Arenas when we learned that a SeaBee had fallen on the rocks and severely damaged his shoulder. Got him on board without delay and started North once more. We requested a destination to put off the injured man and heard discussions between the Navy and State Department but no advice for us. Approaching the junction of the Beagle Channel and the route to Punta Arenas, we (that is, I) elected to proceed to Ushuaia (Argentina). On arrival at anchor we were boarded by an Argentine Naval officer who said he had intercepted our messages and knew our problem. He said that if we put the man ashore, he would be taken to the hospital, stabilized, and put on a plan at 0600 the next morning for a flight to Buenos Aires. The hospital there would undertake to take care of the injured man. We later heard from Argentine authorities that the injured man was satisfactorily mended and on his way. We had a nice musical evening at the inn in Ushuaia.

**Southwind’s Twenty-Two Day Power Run from the Canal Zone to New Zealand**

Held full power trial on the way. Trial consists of having all machinery in top-notch condition, bringing all up to “red line” and holding it there for 1 hour (I think). Engineering Officer George Saunders reported that everything was operating well and asked if we could hold the trial for a while longer. We did - for 24 hours - cutting our arrival time at New Zealand considerably. Of course, we sent a revised ETA and arrived off Wellington to a great silence. Requesting a pilot, we were asked what we were doing there at that time. Well of course we got a pilot and were tied up in town where we learned that the Embassy had noted the new arrival time, but not the new arrival date. A good time was had by all in Wellington.
Best and Worst of Times

by Commander Bob Getman, Executive Officer (August 1968 to August 1970)

Best of Times (Humorous)

Lourenco Marques in Mozambique was our last port call of our around the world cruise. It was also a port call with no official functions so we were able to grant plenty of liberty. I believe a good time was had by all. When it was time to get underway, all hands were back on board with the exception of one seaman (whose name I do not remember). We advised the U.S. Consulate of a missing person and headed back to Baltimore. The next day we received a call from the consulate. He advised us that the missing seaman turned himself into the consulate because he was afraid to return to the ship. It seems (according to him) that a homosexual ring of SW personal were preying on young seamen and he feared for his life. We advised the consulate to ask the seaman why he did not report this activity to the XO or CO. His response was that if would have been to no avail because the CO was leader of the group.

Editor’s Note:
I think that the individual’s name was SN Morgan, and I seem to remember the Mess Deck Intelligence indicated he reported to the U.S. Consulate with no money, no shoes, and no socks!
(Blank)
The Chain Locker Detail

by SNBM A. Wes “Bull” Durham (October 1967 to October 1968)

Like most of you who are older by some 40 years or more, (can that be right?), I have many memories of those days on the Southwind as a seaman on the deck force. Some of you share these memories with me. Little did we realize or care in those days that we would be the last of an era that is gone with the winds so to speak. I heard, as many of you did, the Commander of the Charleston Coast Guard Station say at our reunion, “A 30 day deployment at sea is a long one now days,” and “Cruises of the length we were out on in those days are nonexistent now.”

I reported on board the Southwind right out of boot camp in October 1967. I was a 19 year old from Georgia, as green to Sea duty as they get. Most of the deck crew had reported onboard about a year earlier at about the same time and they all knew each other pretty well. Further, many were Outer Bankers and were much at home on a ship. Needless to say, I was told all the standard boot initiation stuff like: “get a can of steam from the Galley”, or “A sky hook from the boson locker.” All the standard boot tricks were attempted on me mostly in good spirit. There were not many boots reporting on that year, so a few in my boot camp company and I, as I recall, got a real work out. I learned a lot fast and some realized pay back can be hell for you as well. Most of it was good fun. After a short while I felt like I was part of the crew and my memories of those days are good. We had our fun; we stuck together and on shore heaven help the outsider who messed around with the crew.

I think the first time we dropped anchor may have been stateside before we departed in 1967, but the memory of where is gone. I was told along with another boot that the chain locker detail was the responsibility that fell on the boots. I had no idea what the chain locker detail meant but I had been acquainted with the location of the chain locker. As you may recall there were two chain lockers: a Port and a Starboard. They were forward about the 02 deck and aft of the forward winches. A pipe about 20 inches in diameter, (all this is as I recall and any corrections for the record are welcome), led down from the main deck aft of the winch into a steel box or compartment (the chain locker). As I recall the chain lockers were about 8’ by 8’ by 8’ or something like that definitely not a large space to be in with a lot of large anchor chain. Keep in mind here I was 6’ 4” and about 195 pounds which made the chain locker seem even smaller to me. At the top of one of the chain locker bulkheads was a small hatch barely large enough for me to squeeze through into the locker. In order to get into the locker you had to lift a leg through the hatch, stick your head through the hatch, and then pull your body and the other leg into the locker with your arms. A large steel hook with a wood handle hung on the bulkhead close by the hatch. The hook was the kind I had seen used to move large bundles of cotton around by hooking the cotton bale and lifting the hook. In this case the hook was used to fake the chain down when it came in from above so it would not bunch up when the anchor was dropped. When the anchor was dropped hundreds of feet of the large anchor chain ripped out of the chain locker fast and free in seconds. The noise it made, even some distance away, sounded like a train wreck. If a person was unfortunate enough to be inside the locker when the anchor was dropped your funeral service would only be a memorial service with no body as your remaining small pieces would be sprayed out the hawse pipe and devoured by the fish leaving nothing for the bereaved family and friends to bury.

Although I cannot remember which one of the Boson Mates it was, I remember asking the one who indoctrinated me what it was I was going to do at the chain locker. He explained to me that I would go inside the chain locker and fake the chain out as the chain came down the hawse pipe from the...
deck above. I remember thinking this is another joke, it has to be, a boot initiation thing. No one could be expected to go in that small dark locker while that huge chain was coming back down that hawse pipe. I wondered how far this joke would go. When we got to the hatch and I was told to get in. Reality began to dawn on me as I realized this might be for real. Besides, it was beginning to feel too well orchestrated for a joke and it had held together much too well. Maybe it was the best joke yet, I remember thinking? I wasn’t scared, but I was starting to get scared I might get scared. After a lengthy involved conversation which might be called a prayer meeting with the boson, whoever he was, we must have taken a field trip up to see the mechanism on deck that prevented the chain from paying out and chewing me into little pieces if the brake failed. I remember the safety catch to this day. Finally I remember being resigned to the fate before me.

I remember as I entered the hatch to the chain locker the boson or whoever it was at the hatch door explaining my job. He told me if the brake failed and the chain started to pay out at any time I should immediately dive out the small hatch or I would be killed. His final word was something like, “it was nice knowing you,” and then he was gone. The only light in the damp dark was from the open hatch and the little bit of light that filtered down through the hawse pipe from the deck above. I remember the pipe acted as a conduit for sound from above and I soon found I could communicate with the anchor detail on deck by yelling into the pipe, which I did. I lived through the day as you guessed. The chain came down the pipe that day and every day there after without an incident. I faked out the chain, as we all did, so it would run out without fouling. We must have done OK it never did.

Like I said, I was one of a handful of boots on that 67, 68 cruise and the chain locker duty filtered down to us most of the time. We were pretty meticulous about taking our turn in order. There were no volunteers for the chain locker detail. It was just par for the course, like garbage runs in the LCVP and Boat watch and other details that had to be done, but the chain locker detail made me thank God I was not a boot forever.

Wes (Bull) Durham
The Loss of Bow Motor, Liberty and Other Extravagances

by SNBM A. Wes “Bull” Durham (October 1967 October 1968)

Few of us seriously calculated our chances for survival in the Antarctic without our ship the Southwind until our mission was completed and we headed for home. Although the entire crew of the Southwind was well schooled on survival in the Antarctic the calculations began in a fever for all aboard when we grounded March 21, 1968. That day’s events over 40 years ago are somewhat hazy to me but these are the facts as I recall them. There had been a dedication ceremony for Palmer Station that day and a minor celebration of moderate proportions for those who chose to partake afterward. After a few setbacks we had assisted the CBs in completing the new research station and winter in the Antarctic was setting in. Later, with all back on board we pulled up the anchor, secured the ship for sea and headed out of the cove for the last time. This was a much anticipated event since it meant we were finally homeward bound. We also had been promised outstanding liberty on the East Coast of South America as a reward for work well done. That day’s events had the usual results on me and other deck force shipmates. Most, like me, were tired and were asleep at about the time their head hit the pillow in the forward berthing area it had been a long day.

There were 120 people in forward berthing when everyone was “Home”. Enlisted E-5 and below deck force or bosons, the Gunners, the Yeomen, the Storekeepers, the stewards, the corpsmen and the navy Airedales all called forward berthing Home. Home boiled down to a single foam mattress about four inches thick. The small foam mattress lay horizontally on top of your personal locker which was about 12” deep. The locker opened by raising the mattress and door to access the locker. You slept on your locker which held your stuff. The locker was a real space saver. The racks were in rows three beds high and two beds across which meant your head was next to the feet of the person who slept next to you. My preference was a location directly under an air supply vent which I found a real sleep aid. The aisles were about shoulder width. This meant that if everyone got up at the same time there could be 18 people in an aisle three feet wide and twenty feet long. This makes for a very interesting situation at high traffic times like reveille, muster, liberty and of course, general quarters after lights out. Most of the time necessity dictated that you take turns getting in and out of your rack. I was later on an 82’, the Point Brown. The berthing area on the Brown was smaller and I missed my large personal locker in case you thought I was complaining. On this particular night things were different than they ever had been or ever would be again in my experience in forward berthing.

We were underway and moving along pretty good when we hit the rocks. I woke up to the long steadily increasing grinding sound that became loud enough to let everyone know all was not well. During the noise there was a jerk strong enough to dislodge some people and then a tilt in the berthing area violent enough to eject and or partially ejected some shipmates who were vulnerable to the sudden movement. Once again I was not scared at this point but had suddenly become scared that I might get scared. A brief silence was quickly broken by expletives that I had not heard uttered together in one sentence. Mixed in with the highly creative language was just a very few cases of full on stark panic. Now I need to say the panic which can spread was dealt with very effectively and quickly by cooler heads and the idea was asserted with a touch of physical emphasis that no more of that type stuff or it would be dealt with severely. Somewhere amid all this General Quarters was sounded which underscored to all the urgency of the situation. I do not remember getting dressed or fighting the crowd but I I remember later thinking about the crowd of people moving as fast as I had ever seen anything the like in my life and getting up and out of there to a man. I was on the flight deck and at the sound powered phone plug in personal best time as most were that night. As I recall
we were not told anything about the situation in the beginning but it was painfully obvious we were hard aground.

My General Quarters billet that night was the job of phone talker, which in most cases is a pretty easy one. You simply report everyone present to the bridge and repeat what you are told to do to the Officer in charge. I put the phones on as everyone began to show up. Once again I realized immediately as I began to hear reports that things were different than they ever had been. My job had put me in a different position than I had anticipated it was for real this time. I was immediately barraged with questions about our situation by the shipmates at my station around me who were dependant on me for news. The reports I heard on the phones when the other stations began to give status reports to the bridge still stand out in my mind all these years later. I was ordered by someone not to repeat what I heard on the phones. The information was classified and I could repeat only what I was told to. The thing I heard was at least two of the three engine rooms were taking on water and were steamed up. I remember thinking we are in deep do-do here. My mind was racing and I was thinking we have major hull damage here. I and many others that night thought the ship was in bad trouble and maybe the worst was yet to come. I guess the look on my face must have betrayed me and those around me figured by looking at me things did not look good. Things seemed pretty bleak to me for sometime. I remember thinking about my lifeboat station but mostly I remember that feeling of not knowing for a while and it was not warm and fuzzy by any means. I was somewhat relieved when I heard the explanation that the flooding in the engine rooms was a result of valves on the void tanks being open at the time and the tanks were flooded by the grounding. This allowed the sea water that rushed into the void tanks to spew out into the engine rooms until the valves were located and closed. I recently confirmed this at our Charleston reunion by speaking with our Engineering Officer then, Lt. Saunders. He told me the valves were open into the tank voids between the double hulls to allow for ventilation and no one put it together at first until they were found and closed. When the outer hull was ruptured the connected tank voids flooded with sea water. The guys in the engine rooms were not sure what was up at first but figured it out pretty quick. Later the damage control teams found the bow thruster compartment was flooded and the compartments abutting them had to be secured. Soon the flooding was under control. No life boat needed for now.

My memory says that next we got rid of all weight we could forward by pumping off water and I think we put the two VPs (landing craft) and the Captains launch in the water in anticipation of backing off the rocks. I believe we waited for the tide and then the Captain had us all go stand on the fantail in a calculated area to shift the crew’s weight aft. The next reality check came right after we backed off the rocks. The kind of noises we heard as we backed off is not what you wanted to hear from your ship in Antarctica. I ran through my life boat drill in my mind again but we were okay and once off the rocks we headed back to Palmer.

The decision was made to put the divers over to evaluate the hull damage. I had at that time an interest in becoming a diver. I had expressed my interest to some of the divers and volunteered to help them suit up since I was interested. This gave me access to what I wanted: first hand information. I remember after they came up from the brief cold water dive that I realized from their grim looks the news was not good. There was also a close call when the diving officer became so cold he almost drowned. The report was the hole was large enough to drive a truck through. Another thing about your ship in Antarctica you were n ot up for hearing. In dry dock later, the report was confirmed: a semi- truck maybe?

The decision was made to take our chances and head for warmer water. I have since learned that cold water is the enemy of a cracked up hull. The metal becomes brittle and the likelihood of disaster increases in the temperatures we were in. Another factor was the stretch of water we faced is the
most unpredictable and inhospitable in the world. We were lucky. The last crossing was the calmest yet and we found warm water soon.

The losses were not as bad as my worst fears but there were losses. We lost the bow motor. Since we did not have a bow thruster we were not out anything, right? Wrong. The toilet paper was in that compartment. And the water we pumped out no big deal, right? Wrong again. Sea showers for a while. For you land lovers, a sea shower is taken like this: first you get wet, then turn off the water, next you soap up and finally rinse quickly. The full hot shower is called a Hollywood. That would have to wait until we built up enough water. Still we had great liberty ports on the way, right? Negative. Back up the west coast and home at nine knots with limited liberty stops. All and all it was one of those experiences in life you always remember. The consequences were minor and soon forgotten. In the Antarctic uncharted rocks were a risk you had to take. I am thankful it was not a real big event for very long.

Wes (Bull) Durham
I reported aboard Southwind as a LTJG on 24 June 1969 at Curtis Bay, MD with LT (later RADM) Rudy Peschel, LTJG John Carroll, ENS Ray McFadden, and the 10 enlisted members of the aviation detachment. I was assigned a forward stateroom with ENS Eckhard (Ed) Magsig. I was thrilled to be an HH-52A Aircraft Commander flying all around the Arctic at the age of 24, and getting paid for it! I kept a daily log of the flights of HH-52A’s CGNR 1379 and 1360, the aviation detachment activities, and the ship’s itinerary. 12 July was Arctic Circle crossing initiation day. On 31 July, we flew both helos up a long fjord about 60 miles to Sondestrom Air Force Base to pick up mail. We had a 40 knot tailwind flying up the fjord and that’s the fastest ground speed I’ve ever experienced in an HH-52, 130 knots! Before we departed Southwind, we filled a mailbag full of newspaper. We returned with six pounds of three-week old mail. As I flew by Southwind to show the crew the bag of mail, it suddenly fell from my crewman’s hands into the water! The crew was aghast! Fortunately, it was the bag filled with newspapers, and the crew fell for the little trick that we played on them. Since we also had some real mail, the crew wasn’t too unhappy with us.

One of the most eventful things that happened on the cruise was the grounding on 15 August. We were doing depth soundings of uncharted waters in position 75°56’N, 61°15’W off the west coast of Greenland with ENS Bob Glynn as OOD. We drew 28 feet and we found the top of a pinnacle 25 feet under water at 1945Q. The noise along the bow sounded at first like we were passing over a large chunk of ice. We were in 200 fathoms until 20 minutes before grounding. The depth decreased to 160 feet and the last recorded depth was 85 feet before we struck. There were no other shoals or reefs in the area. We were pitched up 12 degrees. We flooded two compartments in bow motor shaft alley and tore a 32 foot hole in the hull. We also flooded all of our toilet paper. The helicopters immediately took off from athwartship to lighten the load. That didn’t work. We secured from General Quarters at 0120Q. Northwind arrived the following morning and lent us four cases of toilet paper. We finally worked ourselves free at 0030Q on 17 August and continued normal operations before arriving at Thule Air Force Base on 29 August. Southwind’s divers surveyed the hull damage and drew a sketch of it. The engineers built a wooden patch on the flight deck, lowered it over the port side, secured it with lines around the hull, and then pumped out the two flooded compartments. When the compartments were dry, the engineers filled them with concrete. After the concrete dried and the divers did an inspection, we departed Thule and continued normal operations for two more months. Since we were in uncharted waters at the time of the grounding, there was no disciplinary action against any of the crew. The ship’s Engineering department won a Coast Guard Engineering award for their innovative solution to repair the hole in the hull and permit Southwind to continue its mission. The only unhappy people involved in this whole evolution were the workers at Curtis Bay who had to remove the hull plates and the concrete when Southwind returned.

I learned how to play Bridge on this trip by watching other people play in the Wardroom. On the way home in the open ocean, we found out that the bell on Southwind’s bridge would ring by itself at 52° of roll! That was quite an experience. Luckily, she was designed to roll to 80° and back. The two helicopters departed Southwind on 29 September and returned to Mobile, AL.

I traded icebreaker trips with a friend of mine in Mobile, and passed up an opportunity for a trip to Antarctica, so I could sail on Southwind to Europe in 1970 with the same great CO, Ed Cassidy, that I served with the previous summer. Our XO on Arctic East 1970, LCDR Bob Nelson, was a future Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard!
I reported aboard Southwind on about 11 June 1970 with LCDR Ralph Giffin, LT George Ellis, LTJG Fred Kent, and the enlisted members of the aviation detachment. My roommate was LTJG Mike Macie. I kept a daily log of the flights of HH-52A’s CGNR 1356 and 1395, etc. as I did the previous summer. We visited Goose Bay, Labrador Air Force Base on 24 June and made an abrupt departure the next day. We were asked to leave after some dubious behavior by one of Southwind’s crew. We struck bottom as we were leaving Melville Bay on 25 June but didn’t run aground. GQ wasn’t even sounded!

On 9 July, I almost spent an unplanned night ashore with CAPT Cassidy. We flew him to do an ice reconnaissance in the vicinity of Kap Seddon, Greenland. We were about 10 miles northeast of Southwind when we noticed a fog bank approaching Southwind from the south as she was steaming south through the ice. We decided to return to Southwind before she entered the fog bank. The fog bank won the race to the ship. We had Southwind come to all stop. We then made an approach to the edge of the fog bank in Southwind’s wake through the ice. We air taxied about 500 yards into the fog bank in about 125 yards visibility while following the wake and were glad to finally sight the stern. We then made an uneventful landing on the flight deck.

I was promoted to LT on 29 July. I held my “wetting down” promotion party at the Thule AFB Officer’s Club. Mixed drinks at Happy Hour were 10 cents! I brought an electric blanket with me on my first Southwind trip, but I didn’t need to use it. I left it home for my second trip to save some space in my footlocker for other things. Of course, both of our boilers broke down at once on the second trip and we had no hot water or heat for a week. It was 40°F in our living spaces! During that same week, we lost excitement to the starboard shaft, cracked two cylinder casings on #1 main engine, and burnt up the generator on #4 main engine. Our longest time at sea on this trip was 31 days straight.

On 15 August, exactly one year after our grounding off Greenland, we reached 83° 01’N, then a record for northernmost penetration of the Arctic Basin. A few of the hearty souls aboard went swimming, in wet suits, to commemorate the occasion. The water temperature was 31.9°F. We also lowered a Nun buoy in place that LTJG Ken Riordon had found earlier in the Barents Sea. It said “8/15/70 CGC Southwind 83° North.” Attached to it was a watertight container with our sailing list and a Coast Guard pennant. One of the crew tried to attach a Confederate flag to it but the Captain declined and told him to save it for when he had to blow his nose.

While we were operating north of Russia in the Barents and Kara Seas, we were ‘escorted’ for quite a while by a Russian icebreaker ‘Vladimir Kavraysky.’ On 22 August at 0355, she collided with us! She drifted down on us dented and our hull on the port side where it joins the main deck and also bent two railing stanchions with her bow. There was no internal damage. We secured from GQ after one hour and 15 minutes. One of the aviators had donned his wetsuit; he was ready for anything. I never heard of any news coverage or formal complaints between countries about that event.

On 5 September, we began one of the most amazing experiences a person could ever have, a visit to Murmansk, Russia for two nights in the middle of the Cold War! CAPT Cassidy had requested permission from the U.S. State Department for the port call. The request was granted because it was a homecoming for Southwind! How can that be? After World War II, the U.S. had a ‘lend lease’ program with our ally, Russia. Southwind, then U.S.S. Atka, was lent to the Russians as part of that program and homeported in Murmansk. It was returned to the U.S. several years later and eventually given to the Coast Guard. Following are excerpts from my log of that visit:
Monday 5 September

0740 Russian pilot aboard. No more pictures allowed until arrival Murmansk. Two Russian ‘liaison’ officers aboard who will be aboard almost all of the time, 0900-2400. We must station a few guards, without guns, at the gangway. Manned the rail and passed a Russian naval and seaplane base on the way in the channel. There were burlap screens erected to prevent us from seeing their submarines. We had to wear our uniforms on liberty.

1050 Arrived Murmansk. Very quiet city; lots of people on the dock. Docked at coal pier just forward of a ship from London.

1400 Departed on a bus tour of the city. Only 34 of us went in two buses; the Russians expected five busloads. The city is mostly old apartment buildings and many outlying slums. There was no restriction on taking pictures/movies in town. Toured a museum. A young student approached us in the museum and was very inquisitive about our activities here. He seemed very interested in us and said he was happy to be talking to Americans. During evening chow, Bob Glynn said he was walking along a street this afternoon when a drunk guy approached him and said in broken English that he had been to America and was glad to see Americans here. He wanted to shake Bob’s hand and then a policeman came along and pulled him away from Bob. Bob said he’s convinced that the Russian people are friendly, but that they live in a police state.

1900 Went by bus to the Seaman’s Club party. Saw movies on Russian life, collected some free propaganda books, enjoyed the dance band and master of ceremonies. Had a sing-along and there was much camaraderie evident. The girls, mostly good looking, were mostly from the local institute where they are studying English. Some of them spoke very well; others not. Toured a museum. A young student approached us in the museum and was very inquisitive about our activities here. He seemed very interested in us and said he was happy to be talking to Americans. During evening chow, Bob Glynn said he was walking along a street this afternoon when a drunk guy approached him and said in broken English that he had been to America and was glad to see Americans here. He wanted to shake Bob’s hand and then a policeman came along and pulled him away from Bob. Bob said he’s convinced that the Russian people are friendly, but that they live in a police state.

2300 Returned to Southwind.

Sunday, 6 September

1110 Went on a walking tour of the town with some shipmates. Looked in shop windows. Shopped in souvenir store and bakery. Took pictures. Several kids approached us for chewing gum. Some other guys were approached for American dollars. The Russians were offering up to 10 Rubles for one dollar. One Ruble equals about $1.05.

1430 Returned to Southwind.

1900 Departed for party at House of Culture. Same type of affair as last night. Lots of girls there; some with the same dresses they had on the night before. Some of the girls were dancing together and holding hands; not too unusual, but some of the Russian guys were doing it too! Watched movie of a Russian singer performing. Left at 2100 and went to a hotel bar. When we first walked in, they thought we wanted to use the head, but we finally conveyed that we wanted a table. We got that; the next problem was how to order. We were pondering that when a guy at the next table said hello to us in Russian. Since we didn’t speak Russian, we finally found German as a common language. He ordered for us. He was a seaman who was leaving the next day for...
Capetown. He gave us each a round of vodka and cognac and also bought us a bottle of champagne! The bar was very nicely decorated and had a band playing. Arrived at Southwind at 2355, five minutes before liberty expired, after a great evening.

1800 We took aboard a practice NASA space capsule that the Russians had found somewhere. It looked like a dummy Gemini capsule. The Russian TV news had said that one of our reasons for coming here was to pick up the capsule.

**Monday, 7 September**

1245 Walked downtown with some shipmates to shop and mail post cards.

1808 Underway with all hands on board.

The two helicopters departed Southwind on 15 November and returned to Mobile, AL. I believe that Arctic East 1970 on Southwind was one of the best cruises an icebreaker ever had! Besides the usual Greenland re-supply escort duties to Thule and Sondestrom Air Force bases, Southwind set a latitude record, searched for a missing Russian aircraft bringing earthquake relief supplies to Chile, and got to visit Copenhagen, Denmark, Tromso, Norway, Murmansk, Russia, and spent a week in Portsmouth, England! My wife met me on the dock when we arrived in Copenhagen. She was the only girl on the dock, and all of my friends were kidding me for bringing a sandwich to a banquet. However, it was a fabulous sandwich, and we’re still married after 41 years (as of 2010).

Sometime in the late ’70’s when I was stationed at Air Station, Brooklyn, NY, I was flying a Port Security Patrol around New York harbor and vicinity looking for oil spills. While flying in Newark Bay, I looked down at a shipyard and saw two Coast Guard icebreakers being cut up for scrap metal. A few weeks later, I drove over there and found out that the breakers were Eastwind and Southwind. Southwind was too far gone to go aboard and the superstructure of Eastwind was gone. I got aboard Eastwind and retrieved many items of memorabilia including two hammock clues, silverware, a battle lantern, a telephone directory sign, and numerous other signs identifying fittings and spaces. I now have them posted around my house: Officer’s Toilet and Shower, Dry or General Stores, Stateroom One, Stateroom Two, Stateroom Three, and Watchstanders. I was really lucky to get them before it was too late, and I’m really lucky to have a wife who appreciates Coast Guard memorabilia almost as much as I do.

I retired from the Coast Guard in 1996 as a Captain after 31 years.
Personal Log of
EN2 Mahlon L. Sumrell, Jr. (366-634) USCG Aboard the

**USCGC Southwind’s (WAGB-280) During**

“Operation Deep Freeze 1969”

(From 13 October 1968 to 7 May 1969)
## Important Dates of My Time Aboard the USCGC Southwind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 October 1966</td>
<td><em>USS Atka (AGB-3)</em> decommissioned by U.S. Navy in Boston, Massachusetts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 October 1966</td>
<td><em>USCGC Atka (WAGB-280)</em> commissioned in U.S. Coast Guard in Boston, Massachusetts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1966 to May 1967</td>
<td>Completed retrofit at the Bethlehem Steel Key Highway Shipyard in Baltimore, Maryland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1967</td>
<td>Officially changed name from <em>USCGC Atka</em> to <em>USCGC Southwind</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 May 1967</td>
<td>Completed shakedown training enroute to Bermuda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 October 1967 to 16 November 1967</td>
<td>Underwent pierside repair availability at the USCG Yard in Curtis Bay, Maryland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 April 1968 to 10 June 1968</td>
<td>Repaired at Maryland Dry Dock, Baltimore, Maryland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 June 1968 to 13 October 1968</td>
<td>Underwent pierside availability at the USCG Yard, Curtis Bay, Maryland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 May 1969</td>
<td>Departed permanent change of station from <em>USCGC Southwind</em>, Baltimore, Maryland to <em>USCGC Chokeberry</em>, Hatteras, North Carolina.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Deepfreeze 1969 Summary of Operation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Departure Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 October 1968</td>
<td>Norfolk, Virginia</td>
<td>14 October 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 October 1968</td>
<td>Rodman Naval Station, Panama Canal Zone</td>
<td>23 October 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 November 1968</td>
<td>Wellington, New Zealand</td>
<td>23 November 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 November 1968</td>
<td>Breaking ice into and out of U.S. Naval Base, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica</td>
<td>19 December 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December 1968</td>
<td>Wellington, New Zealand</td>
<td>9 January 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 January 1969</td>
<td>Breaking ice into and out of U.S. Naval Base, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica</td>
<td>7 February 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February 1969</td>
<td>Hallett Station, Antarctica</td>
<td>11 February 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 February 1969</td>
<td>Wilkes Station, Antarctica</td>
<td>20 February 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 February 1969</td>
<td>Freemantle (Perth), Western Australia</td>
<td>4 March 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March 1969</td>
<td>Heard Island, Southwest Indian Ocean</td>
<td>17 March 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March 1969</td>
<td>Port Louis, Mauritius</td>
<td>28 March 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 April 1969</td>
<td>Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</td>
<td>2 April 1969</td>
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<td>3 April 1969</td>
<td>Zanzibar, Tanzania</td>
<td>3 April 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 April 1969</td>
<td>Lourenco Marques, Mozambique</td>
<td>11 April 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May 1969</td>
<td>Bermuda Islands</td>
<td>4 May 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 May 1969</td>
<td>Naval Operations Base, Norfolk, Virginia</td>
<td>6 May 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May 1969</td>
<td>U.S. Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, Baltimore, Maryland</td>
<td>7 May 1969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 October to 14 October 1968
Baltimore, Maryland to Norfolk, Virginia

Southwind left the ESSO Fueling Dock, Baltimore, Maryland at 1000, Sunday, 13 October 1968 bound for McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. We had trouble getting out of the harbor because the gyro compass kept kicking off, but we finally started down the Chesapeake Bay.

We anchored off Naval Operations Base, Norfolk, Virginia the morning of the 14th of October, and started loading on what little munitions we were taking on board. Since they took off our 5-inch gun in the yard, we had very little to load.

In the latter part of the day the two HC-4 helos from U. S. Naval Air Station Lakehurst, New Jersey arrived. There were a few of the helo crew that made the last trip back again. I reckon an icebreaker is a racket for them.

A few “40” boats from Group Norfolk came out, and also a VP for us. Some of the old engineers off here that got transferred were on them as boat engineers.

14 October to 23 October 1968
Norfolk, Virginia to U.S. Naval Station Rodman, Panama Canal Zone

We left Norfolk that night and headed out to sea. The seas weren’t too bad until we left Cape Hatteras, then we hit a bad storm, and this old pig started acting up with its rocking and rolling.

I had to stand Throttleman watch in B-1 (Engine Room) until we got to Panama to break in two new guys. One from Jersey, the other from New York, and both dumb as rain. B-3 was secured, but ready to run, which made me mad because I would like for my engineroom to run all the time, and I hate to stand watch in a different engineroom. Each engine has a different time, and I never did get used to them in B-1.

When we got into the Caribbean it was still rough, which is unusual for the Caribbean, at least it was the last two times we went through it, slick as glass and hot.

When we passed between Cuba and Haiti, our old friends in the Cuban gunboat followed us as usual. When we started transiting the Canal, all of the new crew was out with their cameras. It was nothing new to the “old salts,” having been through twice before.

We pulled in Rodman Naval Station the afternoon of the 21st of October and Section II ended up with the duty (my Section). It was no big deal anyway because we couldn’t leave the base because of the civil war going on in town. I spent my duty night cleaning fresh water coolers and the main engine in B-3.

23 October to 13 November 1968
U.S. Naval Station Rodman, Panama Canal Zone to Wellington, New Zealand

We left Panama on the 23rd and headed out across the Pacific for Wellington, New Zealand. The Pacific really disappointed me this year because it was rough all the way across, and most of the time cloudy.
We left Panama with B-3, for which I was happy, so I switched from B-1 to B-3, and I was right at home.

Crossing the Pacific was uneventful, and the last day, before we reached Wellington, we had a full power run with all six on the line and wide open.

We fan full power for two hours and found out we’re putting out 11,010 shaft horsepower (we’re only supposed to have 10,000), and pulled 17 knots against the seas. We just finished overhauling #5 in the yards, so I figure B-3 was carrying the load as usual. We call it “the home of the Original Load Runner.” The ship was vibrating and shaking so bad under full power, I thought it would shake to pieces. It was like running a solid axle truck over a dirt road.

We pulled into Wellington the evening of the 13th, and liberty was granted to Section II, my Section.

Wellington from a distance looked like any other foreign country to me. Built on a series of hills, overlooking the harbor. From the dock it reminded me a lot of Valparaiso, Chile.

Wellington turned out to be a civilized town, which was nothing like the ones in South America we visited last year. And the people could actually speak English, or they called it English. The thing that amazed me most was the mini-skirts. Every girl or woman between the ages of 5 to 50 had one on. Every one of them.

The money exchange rate was high, about 83 cents New Zealand equals one American dollar. It’s the first place I’ve ever been where the American dollar wasn’t worth more.

The following Saturday and Sunday we held open house, and on Saturday some clown called the ship and said there was a bomb on board. After a thorough search no bomb was found,

About Tuesday, the aircraft carrier USS America pulled in from Viet Nam, and poured 3,500 men ashore for liberty. We had about 100 ashore.

By the time the second week rolled around everyone was tired of Wellington, so we went across the harbor to Point Howard, topped off our fuel tanks, and got underway for Campbell Island, enroute to the Antarctic.

23 November to 25 November 1968
Wellington, New Zealand to Campbell Island, New Zealand

After we left Wellington, I came down with pneumonia so I got racked into Sickbay, and started getting penicillin every 12 hours.

Campbell Island is a New Zealand weather station in the Sub-Antarctic, about two days from New Zealand. The men were glad to see us because they hadn’t had any mail or supplies for a long, long time. And only two days from New Zealand. It reminded me of Deception Island, the one we went to last year.

25 November to 30 November 1968
Campbell Island, New Zealand to McMurdo Sound, Antarctica
We left Campbell Island and headed south for the ice. By this time I was up and about, but only to go to the mess deck to eat, and then back to Sickbay.

These dates might not be accurate, but I’ll use them as if they were. On Thanksgiving Day we sighted the first of the thin ice, and also met up with the USCGC Burton Island, another icebreaker from Long Beach. She had been in Auckland, New Zealand for liberty, and the USCGC Glacier, the largest of all the icebreakers, was in Christchurch, New Zealand.

We proceeded behind the Burton Island, and also had our Thanksgiving Day dinner. I was homesick all day, and on top of that, the meal stunk!

By the time we reached McMurdo Sound the Glacier had joined us, and we all split up to start breaking.

A little comparison of the Glacier and regular icebreakers is necessary. Glacier is 310 feet long, has 10 main engines, 12 cylinders each. The rest of the breakers are 269 feet long, have 6 main engines, 10 cylinders apiece. From the work I’ve seen the Glacier perform this year and last, I’ll stick to the 269-footer

30 November to 19 December 1968
McMurdo Sound, Antarctica

We made pretty good progress for the next few days, then we hit the thick ice (Fast Ice, 42 miles from McMurdo Station, 3 to 10 feet thick), and it was a slow go. Wes stopped once and everyone went over the side and walked around on the ice. You know, like you see in the books. I’d been on here for two cruises, and this was my third, and this was the first time I’ve done it.

When we really started hitting the thick ice the best we could do was 5 miles in 24 hours. The thicker it got, the less we would go.

The Burton Island and Southwind broke in pairs, with Glacier bringing up the rear. And most of the time she was doing good to keep from getting stuck.

We spaced ourselves 100 yards apart, Burton Island making a charge, while we waited behind, then she would back down and we made our charge, backed down, and the process repeats itself. We’d make about 200 yards to start with, then 100, then 50. It got so bad we couldn’t get over a mile some days - 8 to 10 feet, 1 to 2 miles per day.

We kept this pace up and on the 18th we were only about 5 miles from McMurdo Station. Then Main Engine #6 gave up. Up until now we had no trouble with #5 or #6. The last two cruises pulling the upper crank and changing cracked liners was almost a weekly routine, or rebuilding the front end flexible drive assembly.

Well, since Main Engine #5 was completely rebuilt in the yards, including the front end, I had no worries about that. Main Engine #6 had all new liners and an overhaul last cruise after we threw a piston out the side. But the front end on Main Engine #6 hadn’t been touched since it collapsed on the northern cruise.
The gear off the fresh water pump had worked back, and chewed off some cap screws on the flexible drive gear. So out it came and while working on it at 2:00 a.m., December 19th, we broke a blade off the starboard (that’s the right side) screw.

We had been breaking ice on 5 main engines and after we backed down after a charge the blade hit a chunk of ice (the ice that broke the screw was 9 feet thick) and that was that, back to Wellington and drydock.

**19 December to 31 December 1968**  
**McMurdo Sound, Antarctica to Wellington, New Zealand**

The morning of the 19th Glacier left ahead of us to break the channel out, and Burton Island took us in tow. As we neared the edge of the ice we all bunched together, and we began to give Burton Island and Glacier fuel and lube oil.

We headed out to sea on one shaft and started for Wellington. On the way we completed a 500 hour check on Main Engine #5 since the shaft it is on was OOC (Out of Commission).

The trip from McMurdo sound to Wellington was uneventful but a little on the rough side since we had very little fuel and running on one shaft.

We arrived in Wellington on the morning of the 31st, and tied up at Queens Wharf to await entrance into dry dock. That afternoon we proceeded to the dry dock and went in, and liberty was granted about 5:00 o’clock.

**31December1968 to 9 January 1969**  
**Wellington, New Zealand**

Wellington was the same as before and I was sick of it. The same old smell, the same noises, and the same weather.

New Zealanders are a little calm on New Year’s. No noise and drinking, like goes on in the States. Maybe they don’t celebrate it. They don’t celebrate Thanksgiving or Valentine’s Day either. But then Thanksgiving is an American holiday. I tried buying a Valentine’s Day card in 3 or 4 different stores but they didn’t know what it was.

The Navy had another ship in when we first got there. The *USS Providence*, a missile launcher or something like that, just back from Vietnam. About 4 days after they left a couple of Navy guys came aboard and reported in because they had jumped ship. A few more were still out.

While in dry-dock we had all six propeller blades replaced. We had stainless steel blades, but the replacements were standard nickel alloy. We managed to complete a 500-hour check on #4 Ship’s Service Generator.

The dry-dock is right next to a ferry slip, the ferry running from the North Island to the South Island. The *Wahine* (excuse the spelling) was the sister ship to the ferry there now. The *Wahine* sank in Wellington Harbor last year in a storm with the loss of many lives. The news here televised the whole sinking and showed people jumping off the ferry, swimming and drowning, and nobody could do a thing about it.
On the morning of the 8\textsuperscript{th} (January), they started flooding the dry-dock and put us back in the water again. The only problem we had was the packing on the starboard shaft was leaking bad, and it continued to do so ever since.

We proceeded across the harbor to Point Howard for refueling, and left on the morning of the 9\textsuperscript{th} (January). On the way out we had General Quarters because of a stack fire in B-1 Engine Room. Also, one of the helos flew Bob Webb in to go on emergency leave because his wife was sick. He’s now stationed at Fort Macon, TAD from the Southwind.

\begin{center}
\textbf{9 January to 20 January 1969}
\textbf{Wellington, New Zealand to McMurdo Sound, Antarctica}
\end{center}

The trip back down to the ice was routine. By routine I mean rocking and rolling on the ship’s part, and the usual watches and work.

Sunday the 12\textsuperscript{th} watches were dogged and I went on the mid-watch. January 14\textsuperscript{th} I went down to relieve the watch and noticed a different sound in #6 Main Engine, coming from the front end. About 0005 (5 minutes after midnight) the engines were slowed down to an idle, and I could plainly hear the noise then. I call Main Motor and got permission to secure #6 Main Engine to check it out. I removed the inspection cover on the front end and discovered two bolts holding the vertical drive bracket for the governor had sheared off. So then we started to work, not at once because the brass couldn’t decide what to do. Finally about 4:00 a.m. they decided and we started pulling out the front end.

The flexible drive gear was also damaged, but we had none in stock, so we just dressed up the teeth with a file. Repairs were completed January 16\textsuperscript{th}, and #6 Main Engine tested out okay.

\begin{center}
\textbf{20 January to 7 February 1969}
\textbf{McMurdo Sound, Antarctica}
\end{center}

When we arrived in the Sound we found the channel to be broken all the way to McMurdo Station, and saw it for the first time. During our stay at McMurdo Sound and vicinity we escorted ships in and out to resupply McMurdo Station, and kept the channel open.

We made a run to Hallett Station, about 500-miles North Northwest. Hallett Station is a station for the purpose of penguin research. We took them supplies and left our Education Officer, Ensign Riordon, there to administer servicewide exams and Institute courses.

Our first liberty at McMurdo ended in chaos, so no more liberty for awhile. Too many fights. Well, I didn’t go ashore that night so I was in good shape.

The following weekend I had liberty, and that night too ended up with fights. I was in on that. It wouldn’t be so bad if we had fought the Navy or Kiwis (New Zealanders) but we always fight among ourselves. The biggest feud going is Deck Force against Engineers.

We also had a ship’s party that weekend. It lasted from 6 at night until 4 the next morning and involved 75 odd cases of beer. I left around 12 because I fell off a table and hurt my back. The next morning it took me about a half hour to get out of my rack, I hurt so bad. I don’t know how I
managed to get in it. I found a middle rack that was empty, and with a bit of careful maneuvering I could get in and out.

The day of the party I went ashore to take some pictures and look the place over. The main drag that ran from the base to the airstrip reminded me of back roads I’ve seen in Texas.

McMurdo is really a big base, and it has a nuclear power plant. I reckon the men there have most of the conveniences, but I wouldn’t care to winter over there, or any place else down here.

The best way I can describe the Antarctic and icebreakers and everything that goes with them is Mind Benders

About the last two weeks at McMurdo we were left alone. The Glacier had gone to the Weddell Sea to do some oceanography work and the Burton Island had gone to Wellington for liberty and would be back 4 or 5 days after we left.

Finally the day came, February 7th, for us to leave McMurdo. We had to stop by Hallett Station to pick up Mr. Riordon and then make it to Perth to load supplies for Heard Island, and for some liberty.

11 February 1969
Hallett Station

Hallett looked the same, well to tell the truth, I don’t even remember seeing it the second time. We just stopped long enough to pick up Mr. Riordon and then left for Perth.

While at Hallett, the Seabees taught Mr. Riordon how to run their machinery and qualified him as a heavy equipment operator. After the Seabees got through with him, he hit the rack and slept for 24-hours.

11 February to 15 February 1969
Hallett Station Antarctica to Wilkes Station, Antarctica

After we left Hallett all morale was up because we were going to civilization. Then came the message that the Danish cargo ship Thala Dan, leased to the Australian Government, was stuck in the ice trying to get into Wilkes Station, run by the Aussies. The men at the station were down to emergency rations and needed the supplies badly.

We changed course and started across the 1,800 mile stretch to reach Thala Dan. On the way we crossed into the Indian Ocean, and was it ever rough.

We started into the ice, and on the afternoon of the 14th we sighted Thala Dan and commenced to break them out. It was a real sight. The whole crew was on the weather decks, waving and taking pictures of us, and looked dumber than hell. They had to be to be running a ship like that in the ice this late in the season.

Thala Dan is about 200 to 225 feet long and has one 1,200 horsepower main diesel engine. No wonder they were stuck. I figured the Aussies had it planned for us to come get them out. Nobody in their right mind would take a ship like than down to the Antarctic.
We got to Wilkes Station that night and anchored out. It reminded me a lot of Palmer Station where we were last year. I was hoping we’d hit another rock so we could go home early.

The normal unloading of the *Thala Dan* was suppose to take 21-days, but we had to leave by the 20\(^{\text{th}}\), so we had to help.

**15 February to 20 February 1969**  
*Wilkes Station, Antarctica*

We commenced unloading and down into the dungeons, fell into the normal routing of watches and keeping the mains warmed up.

The only casualty we had was YN2 Odom. He was ashore helping to unload some heavy timbers when the whole works fell on him and crushed his chest. For awhile the Doc didn’t know it he’d make it or not, but the dude is from N.C. so he pulled through okay. A couple days before we reached the *Thala Dan* one of their men was killed. They put him in their reefers until they got to a port.

The last day we were there they had a dedication of a new station, and had a big beer and wine party afterwards. I just stayed on the ship.

**20 February to 27 February 1969**  
*Wilkes Station, Antarctica to Perth, Australia*

We left Wilkes the night of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\), and I mean it was night. The land of the midnight sun had ceased to be, and it was pitch dark outside, plus it was snowing and foggy.

The electricians manned the 24-inch search lights on the Flying Bridge, and we started through the ice with the *Thala Dan* behind us.

For some reason we didn’t go out the way we came in. I recon the Captain wanted to find a quicker way out. I was on the 4-8 (watch) the morning of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\), and we came so close to running smack into the biggest iceberg I’ve ever seen since I’ve been on here. The visibility was about 50 yards, and the OOD saw it at the last minute.

I saw it the next morning, and with the visibility it looked like it stood 150 feet out of the ice. We stayed around it all day, with the *Thala Dan* getting stuck and we getting stuck ourselves.

We made about 1,200 yards in 12-hours. About 8 that night it cleared up, and the ice we just came through looked like a range of mountains. It’s a wonder we didn’t hit any icebergs.

Finally that night we found a lead in the ice, and the next morning we were in open water waving bye-bye to the *Thala Dan*. On coming out of the ice #2 Main Engine ran away, lost lube oil pressure, and wiped out the bearings.

The trip to Perth was routine underway with everyone welcoming the warm weather. Even the seas seemed to get calm. We pulled into Fremantle, the seaport for Perth, on the morning of the 27\(^{\text{th}}\) and tied up in front of an Australian Navy aircraft carrier. Mail was brought onboard and liberty was granted.
I forgot to mention this about taking the *Thala Dan* into Wilkes. They were right behind us, and we had to back down for some ice, but they kept coming and the top of *Thala Dan*’s bow plowed into our flight deck and crumpled it. Out came the duty D.C.s.

**27 February to 4 March 1969**

**Perth, Australia**

Perth was nice and hot the day we pulled in. About 100 degrees. It was really welcome to me after being in all that ice for so long. I don’t mind cold weather, matter of fact, I like it, that is, if I’m in the swamps and marshes back home, not at the South Pole.

Perth is the nearest thing to the States so far as being a foreign country that I have seen in the 2-1/2 years I’ve been on here. It wasn’t some rinky-dink honcharican country like South America or even Wellington. It was a regular, civilized place.

I went shopping the first day and got the general layout of the place. I went to a place called London Court. It was a narrow street, filled with 17th Century shops. I reckon like London was supposed to have had. It was very quaint anyway.

Saturday, myself and 4 other guys went to the beach at Cottlesloe. They had a big shark come in a couple days before, but we didn’t see it when we went. It was really nice just to lay on the beach and go swimming. The water seemed a little on the cold side, considering the atmospheric temperature. We stayed all afternoon and got good and burnt, then went back to the ship.

Sunday I went on a bus tour, myself and 32 other guys off the ship. We went to a park about 30 miles from the ship. It was country all the way. They do a lot of truck farming around here, at least on the way to the park. All the farms I saw had irrigation systems, because they can’t rely on the rain.

The countryside reminded me of Texas with all the brush country and scrub woods. And kangaroos are suppose to be as thick as jack rabbits are in Texas, although I didn’t see any.

We went to two caves at the park, like the Carlsbad Caverns, only much smaller. We had dinner in a restaurant and I found the answer to something I’d been wondering about. And that is why most of the people are lean. Well, when our food came I found out. They don’t eat anything. When I finished my dinner I was still starved, I don’t see what keeps the people dying from starvation.

That afternoon we went to see the zoo - part of the park - the main attraction being the Koala Bears and Kangaroos. We even got to go in the cages with the bears and take close up pictures of them. On the way back we went through Perth, and saw all the sights from the bus windows.

The last day in Perth the duty section spent all day, and part of the night, cleaning out the anti-roll tanks so we could take on more water because the evaporator was all in pieces. Somebody forgot to fill the tanks, and it was discovered about an hour before we sailed. Rather than spend another 4 or 5 hours topping off the tanks we left, and for the next two weeks we ate off paper plates and couldn’t take a shower, or have our clothes washed.
4 March to 11 March 1969
Perth, Australia to Heard Island, Antarctic Ocean

We left Perth on the morning of the 4th with the fantail and the flight deck loaded down with supplies for Heard Island where we were going to help the Army build the satellite tracking station.

It was warm and calm the first two or three days out, and I even slept on the fantail at night.

When it started to get rough the flight deck had to be shored up because it was swaying with all that weight on it.

Every cruise we’re always suppose to be in the roughest waters in the world. On the Northern cruise it was the North Atlantic, last cruise it was Cape Horn and Drakes Passage off the tip of South America, but I think the Indian Ocean has them all beat. I mean I’m no seadog, but comparing this ocean with the rest I’ve been in, this has them beat.

B-1 blew a piston and busted the liner in half before we got to Heard Island. They just finished wiping out the main bearings and getting the engine back together.

11 March to 17 March 1969
Heard Island, Antarctic Ocean

Heard Island is located in the sub-Antarctic, south southeast of Africa. It is stormy just about the year around, and the first day was no exception. One of our LCVPs had a nice hole put in the side of it trying to put it over the side, and the men going ashore barely made it.

The Army had two LARC’s there already so they broke them out and started running them. They are half boat and half truck, using the front tires to steer in the water. The LARC’s were needed to haul cargo because (1) the water is shallow a considerable distance from shore, too shallow for our VPs, (2) the LARC’s can carry more weight than a VP.

The first day was just too rough to do any unloading so we stood by until tomorrow. That night the Captain decided to go back out to sea because the anchor was dragging, and he didn’t want a repeat of last year when we ran aground at Palmer Station.

We had a nice pleasant night at sea. The winds were blowing 70 knots with 30-foot seas. It was real good sleeping.

The next morning we went back in, and this day turned out beautiful, so unloading and building commenced.

During chow that day there were some dudes out fishing off the stern, so I went out and watched them. The day was like a nice winter day back home with the sun out and the air warm. Well, I took my shoes off (didn’t have any socks on) and grabbed myself a fishing pole, and commenced to fish.

I wasn’t there more than ten minutes when I got a bite and started reeling him in. As I was just pulling him out of the water the reel came apart, and ran all the line out. Well, I got the reel back together, and tried it again, then the same thing happened. It happened three times so I figured the fish was tired of me fooling with him, so I pulled him in by hand. I just got him on the stern when
the hook came out, but I grabbed him before he got away. He was about 15-inches long and 3 to 4 pounds. I don’t know what kind it was, but it sure tasted good.

While we were at Heard Island we had to fill our water tanks because they were just about empty. We found a waterfall, and dammed it up and used a P-250 fire pump to pump the water in rubber lifeboats. The lifeboats were then towed to the ship and the water was pumped into the water tanks. It was a slow process, but we got our water.

The progress of the station continued, and our departure date was March 17th. This station is only going to be used for a year then everything torn down and hauled away.

There were a lot of injuries during the time we were at Heard Island. The worst one was suffered by our Damage Control Officer, LTJG Heavilin. It was on the last day, and the water was rough so that the men had to be hoisted on the ship out of the small boats by a harness. Mr. Heavilin had just begun to be raised up when a swell came up and raised the small boat and Mr. Heavilin got caught between the small boat and ship. He suffered a severe dislocated left hip, but he’s well on his way to recovery thanks to our Public Health Service physician, Lt. Tarrant. I reckon Mr. Heavilin will be flown back to the states when we get to Mauritius, but what a way to go.

About the second or third day we received a message from the Thala Dan saying she was in trouble again trying to resupply the French Station Dumont d’Urville. We were all tensed up about this because if we had to, it would put us back in the states around June 1st, and we were the only icebreaker left that hadn’t gone home. So we waited and cursed the French and cursed the Australians. The part that gets me the most is that the Captain sent a message to the Commandant saying we were ready to go. Everything in engineering was in top shape and we had plenty of fuel and water. Everything in engineering wasn’t in top shape. We only had 5 engines, the evaporator wasn’t working and we had enough fuel to get down there, but not enough to get back. As for the water, nobody had taken a shower since we left Perth, and no clothes had been washed.

We left Heard Island on the night of the 17th. Since we had filled some of our water tanks a Hollywood Shower was to be had before we left. We set our course for Mauritius, not knowing if we would get there, or be called to help the Thala Dan.

17 March to 25 March 1969
Heard Island to Mauritius

It was rough as usual at sea, and we all stood by for heavy rolls. That night, Ray Soler, an FNDC was thrown right out of his rack on his face when the ship took a heavy roll. In a way it was comical. I remember hearing him yell, and then a big thud. He’s one of those Maine lobstermen, and weighs 240 so I don’t reckon it was a soft landing.

The next day we got the message we’d all been waiting for. The Thala Dan didn’t need us after all because her sister ship the Nella Dan was going to her assistance. There was a big sigh of relief all over the ship and morale rose again.

The weather started getting warmer, and so did the Engine Room. Three days out of Mauritius it was about 125 degrees in my Engine Room, B-3. B-2 was not running because they blew a hole in a piston, and B-1 was barely running. They tried to take our engines off the line so we could do a
1,500 hour check on them, but B-1 couldn’t turn up fast enough to hold the load. So my “Load-Runners” still have the load as usual.

The weekend of the 22nd and 23rd there was no holiday routine because the deck apes had to paint. I had the 12 to 4 watch so it didn’t matter, but every time the deck apes have to do something (which is very seldom) they cry that the engineers have work too.

There’s been so many times when we’ve had to get an engine running or get late liberty, but the deck apes had holiday routine or early liberty. I don’t see how they figure the deck rates are senior to an engineer. Any pudding head jerk can be a deck ape and stay the same for four years. I mean it really takes a lot of smarts to push a broom or clean a thunder-jug. An engineering rate, I don’t care if its FA or an E-9 Chief, takes far more mentality and common sense than the equal deck rank, or even higher. I can just see a 4 year seaman going for a job: “Well, I pushed a broom for 4 years.” And they you can see a fireman go for a job: “I worked on diesel engines, gasoline engines, took care of small boats, ran a lathe, etc. etc…” This might not have much to do with the story I’m telling, but this jazz rubs me the wrong way. The trouble with the Coast Guard is tradition. Back in the 1790s, I could see a Boatswain Mate be head honcho, but then they didn’t have any engines then either. An engineman is the most versatile of all rates because he cares for the job or machinery he’s working on. So much for that.

The evening of the 23rd we finally took #5 and #6 off the line and started the 1,500 hour check on #6 Main Engine. I had the 8 to 12 that night so my oiler, Donnie Wayne Wingate (Georgia) and myself pulled all the covers off and tested the injectors.

The rings were checked on the mid-watch and we found rings missing on #4 upper piston and broken on #4 lower piston.

The next morning when I went down on watch they had both pistons out, and found a big gouge in the liner. Since we had one new liner on board I knew what that meant, so we started taking down the engine. These engines have an upper crank and lower crank, so in order to change liners the upper crank has to be pulled.

At 3:30 the Chief told me to knock off and he would call me when the crank was ready to be pulled out because I am the only one in B-3 who has ever done it. As a matter of fact, I held the record so far as the engineman left on board goes for tearing down engines and pulling cranks because we were always doing it in B-3 on the Northern cruise and the last Southern cruise.

We had the crank out at 5:30, pulled the old liner, put in the new one and had the crank back in at 2:30. That is pretty good considering none of them had ever done it before.

The next morning, the 25th, we arrived in Mauritius and liberty was granted to Section 2 at 1200.

25 March to 28 March 1969
Mauritius

Mauritius has a beautiful seaport, Port Louis, and this is where we were anchored. There is hardly any dock space, so the ships are lined up in the harbor, and loading and unloading is done by barge.
There were two Russian ships next to us, and a whole fleet of fishing boats from Japan, Taiwan, Madagascar, etc, and ships from Holland, England, and all over.

Rick Toms (Jersey), Vernon Ricker (Virginia), D.W., and myself hired a hack and went shopping and riding around the countryside. We crossed a bridge and saw all the women doing their laundry by beating it on the rocks in the river. I thought the only place you saw that was in books, but here I was seeing it for real.

It really wasn’t nothing to Mauritius, and I was glad to leave. The last day I had duty and the night before Toms, Soler, and I left some packages in a hack so Toms and I put in a special to go ashore and look for them.

We found the hack and got the packages, then went to the Market and bought some watermelons and oranges, then back to the ship. D.W. and myself were the only ones who had duty that day so we finished up #6 and had it running by midnight.

While we were in Mauritius the deck apes were suppose to paint the ship to get it ready for Port X, our classified project, but instead, some honchoricans were hired to do the job for $140.00.

We left the morning of the 28th, but didn’t know where we were headed for. That afternoon at quarters the Captain told us we were going to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Zanzibar, an island of Tanzania. We were being sent by the State Department as good-will ambassadors of the U.S. because our relations with Tanzania were a little shaky. We were to be the first U.S. naval ship to go there in six years.

28 March to 1 April 1969
Mauritius to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

We were running on all six mains on the way. I didn’t know why, but we were. On the way, all hands held field day everyday to get the ship looking good.

The weather was beautiful and the seas calm, and B-3 was running 130 degrees. B-1 and B-2 were about 100 degrees.

We got ahead of schedule, so B-2 and B-3 were taken off, and we trolled along on B-1. We started a 1,500-hour check on #4 Ship’s Service Generator.

We arrived in Dar es Salaam the morning of the 1st. It was a quaint looking town, and its harbor is suppose to be one of the prettiest in the world, but I didn’t think so. I thought Mauritius had the prettiest I’d ever seen.

We were constantly being warned about the anti-Americanism that would be ashore and for us to look out and avoid trouble. The only basis I could see for this was that the Chicoms (Chinese Communists) built the people a 15-million dollar textile factory.

We went ashore and discovered the people to be very friendly. We all went around souvenir shopping and bargaining. They really had some nice wood carvings and such.
We held open house both days and the people really turned out for it. We only had one section on liberty because only 50 men were allowed on shore at a time.

The morning of the 3rd, about 4 a.m. we left for Zanzibar, and island about 40-miles out belonging to Tanzania.

3 April 1969
Zanzibar, Tanzania

We arrived in Zanzibar about 7 that morning. I had duty that day, but this was the place I would have liked to have gone. It looked like a town out of the storybooks, with its narrow streets, sandstone buildings, and veiled women. We left about 10 p.m. and headed for Lourenco Marques, Mozambique, our last stop before Norfolk.

3 April 8 April 1969
Zanzibar, Tanzania to Lourenco Marques, Mozambique

Our trip to Lourenco Marques, Mozambique was nice and calm the first two days, then got choppy the last two.

We left Zanzibar on 4 main engines, with B-3 secured because we were doing 1,500-hour checks on them.

I was on the 4-8 watch and the first two mornings I came up and watched the sun rise. It was really beautiful. It looked like solid gold with low black clouds mingled in with it. It’s something you would imagine seeing off the African coast.

As usual we got ahead of schedule, and just poked along on two Main Engines. We were supposed to pull in at 8, but somehow we got messed up and didn’t get in until 11:30.

Liberty was granted to everyone except engineers because we were taking on fuel.

8 April to 11 April 1969
Lourenco Marques, Mozambique

Engineers were finally granted liberty so we went ashore and looked around. We expected to find everyone black, but it seemed like the blacks were in the minority.

Lourenco Marques and the whole of Mozambique for that matter is a colony of Portugal. It was a real modern town and the people seemed to live in modern houses.

The second day a whole gang of us went to the beach and just lounged around all afternoon. The swimming was bad because you had to wade out 15-miles to get over your waist. I gave up after the first 5 miles. Just kidding, but you do have to go out a long, long way, and I didn’t do it. One guy with us had a spear-fishing outfit and he couldn’t get in water over his waist so he gave up too.

Lourenco Marques turned out to be the most “Anti-Gringo” (“Anti-American”) town I’ve ever been in since I’ve been on this ship, and this includes South America.
Every night we were out everyone got into a big riot with the local honcharicans and the police. And our SPs were fighting right alongside of our guys with their night sticks. The worst night was the last one, in a bar a big free-for-all broke out.

The honcharicans were using lead balls tied to a piece of line, and swinging it around their heads. One of our SPs, Scotty Casper, a Navy Airdale from Hinston, NC, got a couple of teeth knocked out, but not before he went to work on some heads with his stick.

Our Supply Officer, Mr. Quinliven from Texas took a nightstick away from a cop and went to work. In all, about 5 or 6 of our guys got their heads staved in, a few with broken noses, broken teeth, or just plain beat up by bouncers during the 3 days we were there.

The funniest part of it all was Mr. Bowman, a new boot Ensign. Any bar he went in he would go around and place everyone ready for attack. It was like he had a battlefield problem. He should have gone in the Army.

The whole time we were there we had one guy who never came back from liberty. The last day we had two guys AWOL and we were sailing at 10:00.

Seaman Morgan had been missing for 3 days, but our 2nd class cook - Robinson - just missed coming back. He’d gotten orders the day before, so he went out celebrating and never made it back.

We ended up getting underway about 11:00 and headed for Baltimore, via Norfolk to unload what little ammunition we had.

11 April 7 May 1969
Lourenco Marques, Mozambique to Baltimore, Maryland Via Norfolk, Virginia

11 April to 27 April 1969

We headed out to sea, and it was nice and calm. About 2 hours out we got a message from the American Embassy in Lourenco Marques saying Robinson was there but still no Morgan.

One of our Navy HC-4 helicopters went in and got Robinson, and we were on our way again.

We left with all six engines on the line and the ship was shaking and shuddering. As we neared Cape Horn it started getting rough, and continued until we got around it and well into the Atlantic. It took three days to make the turn.

My orders came in during all this time, and I’m going to the Chokeberry at Cape Hatteras. It’s real good duty, I’ll get subsistence pay, pro-pay for being Engineering Officer, and still get sea pay. Chokeberry is a 65-foot harbor tug. Its job is to perform search and rescue, and work small aids to navigation. It’s only 5-years old. It’s going to take some getting used to after being on here for 2-1/2 years.

We’ve been making pretty good time and our arrival in Baltimore was set at May 4th. Well that lasted about 3 or 4 days. We’ve been running low on L/O (lube oil) and had to secure two engines.
On April 21st #5 Main Engine started smoking a lot and had high exhaust temperatures. We secured it, pulled a ring check, and found rings missing off of #4, #5, and #6 lower pistons. We had completely overhauled it this summer and I hadn’t expected any trouble out of it this cruise, but there it was. We pulled the pistons and found #5 liner gouged out beyond all use, so #5 Main Engine was placed OOC (Out of Commission). On April 21st of last year it was also placed OOC.

We are now running on two main engines, and our arrival in Baltimore is changed to May 7. We’re also using sails that the deck force rigged up.

The helos are flying into Bermuda May 4th to get lube oil and mail, and we’re supposed to get to Norfolk May 6.

28 April 1969

Today we started running #6 Main Engine and also started tearing down #5. I don’t know why they waited this long to do it. We should have done it last week when it was calm and #6 wasn’t running. I reckon it’s just for general harassment.

We are now running with the forward gyro and the after gyro OOC. We lost the after gyro after we left Zanzibar, and the forward gyro about 3-days ago, so all we have now is magnetic compass, and we can only go up the Bay in the daytime.

29 April 1969

Today we are due east of San Juan, Puerto Rico. We’re due to arrive off the coast of Bermuda early Sunday morning.

We’re still tearing #5 Main Engine down, and should be ready to pull the crank tomorrow. After we pull the old liner out there won’t be anything else we can do on it until we get in and get a new one. I should be gone by then, I hope.

30 April 1969

Today was payday so now I have some money in my pocket for when we pull in. We’ve been in the Sea of Sargasso today. I always saw it on maps at school, but never thought I’d be in it.

Each day that goes by seems slower and slower. Yesterday seems like it was a week ago. The whole cruise has been slow. We must have been out at least 2 years, instead of 7 months.

The flu bug has been going around the last couple of days. It finally hit Engineering. We’re out of a lot of watch-standers. I haven’t got it yet, but had a cold and just about to get over it. The guy that sleeps next to me has it, and the one underneath me.

1 May 1969

Not much happening today. They decided to secure #6 Main Engine after we’ve got most of the work done on #5. That was real nice of them.

May 7 seems a long way off, but I reckon it will gradually get here. It will be hard to get used to the States again. Everything will be new.
We’re off the East coast of Florida now and still are due in Bermuda Sunday the 4th. We’ve been running 3 engines and getting about 13 knots, but now are back to two engines at 11 knots.

We make our last time change tonight at midnight. This will put us on Baltimore time.

2 May 1969

Nothing new today. Our holiday routine in the afternoon has been stopped, but it didn’t affect me because I’m on the mid-watch this week. Today was overcast anyway.

We pulled the upper crank out of #5 Main Engine this morning and pulled the bad liner, then set the crank back in. We’ve just been taking our time on it because there is no rush on it for once.

I got two radio stations in the States tonight, Miami and New York. It sure was nice to hear stateside voices again on the radio.

3 May 1969

This morning we received a message from a tanker requesting medical assistance for one of her crewmembers. We met them this afternoon and one of the helos flew our PHS (Public Hospital Service) physician over to them. He’ll stay on until we reach Bermuda.

This afternoon we had skeet shooting. I’ve never done it before, although we’ve had it before on here, so I went up and tried. I got about half and half. The main thing was getting used to the roll of the ship. We were using 12 gauge pump shotguns, and that was the first time I’ve ever shot a pump. It weighed about half as much as my old 12 gauge single barrel.

4 May 1969

We arrived just outside of Bermuda around 6:00 a.m. and started the helos flying in lube oil. We also got mail. We left at 11:30 and are due to arrive in Norfolk at noon Tuesday.

We got the parts for the gyro compass, so as soon as we finish unloading our ammo in Norfolk we’ll head up the bay, day or night.

The seas have been real calm all day, just like glass. We’re doing between 15.5 and 16 knots on four Main Engines. We’re supposed to be in Norfolk by noon Tuesday. Tonight on the radio I got WGH in Newport-News. It sure sounded good to hear it again.

5 May 1969

Since we left Bermuda the seas have been just like glass, and we’re making good time. Our arrival in Norfolk has been moved up to 6:00 a.m. tomorrow. It’s hard to believe we’re going home, but I reckon we are.

This afternoon in B-3 we almost had a catastrophe. Somebody in Main Motor energized the generator on #5 Main Engine, and the crankshaft almost jumped out of the engine. If anyone had been working on it at the time it would have been all over but the flowers.
This is a good point of how safety-minded the Coast Guard is. There is a big red sign on each main engine saying, “WARNING, DISCONNECT GENERATOR BEFORE WORKING IN CRANKCASE.” As long as I’ve been on here, and as many times as we’ve torn these engines down, this has never been done. Luckily the only damage done was that about half the main and conrod (connecting rod) bearings were heated up.

6 May 1969

This morning we’re running on two engines waiting to go into Norfolk. We only have one engine left on the starboard shaft because #1 Main Engine lost some rings last night. Seems like all our engine casualties have been after we left the ice, when the going is easy.

At 0915 we set the Special Sea Detail off of Thimble Shoals Light. The fog that was so thick earlier has lifted a little. At 1000 the Special Sea Detail was secured after dropping the hook off of NOB (Naval Operations Base) Norfolk. We’re about 1,000 yards from the carrier USS Forrestal.

This is my 6th time anchored off NOB, and my last. I’m glad I’m getting off, but I’m going to miss the ole “Wind”. This has been my life for the last two-and-a-half years, and with it came all the heartaches, joys, disappointments, and hard work. I’ve learned a lot since I’ve been on here about engines, people, and just how hard life can really be. Four years ago I didn’t have a worry in the world, but I reckon everyone has to grow up sometimes and face life as it really is. This is the best experience for anyone to go through the way I did, and my fellow engineers. I say engineers because we get the biggest share of the letdowns and disappointments more than anyone on here. The rest are just along for the ride.

The Customs official came on and did his business, and the Navy’s ammunition boat came and unloaded our ammo. All we had were 50 caliber ammo, hand grenades, blasting charges, etc.

At 1330 about 25 deck apes left to go on leave. They wouldn’t let engineers off (the brass wouldn’t). The Special Sea Detail was set and at 1430 we pulled the hook and started on our last leg of our voyage up the bay.

I’m on watch now, and we have #6 Main Engine running. We’re pretty well up the Bay, now running on 4 mains, 3 on the port shaft, and one on the starboard shaft.

7 May 1969

We made good time going up the bay, about 2100 we were off Patuxent Naval Station. At 0400 we dropped the hook in Baltimore Harbor.

It’s 0800 now, and we’re at Special Sea Detail, and are due in at 0900. They even have a band waiting for us. Big deal. All I want is to get off of here for a couple of days.
USCGC Southwind: The Good and the Bad!

By EN2 Ronald A. Henderson, CWO2 (ENG) USCG (Ret.) (October 1966 to June 1968)

Note: The two trips that I made on the USCGC Southwind (Arctic East 67 and Deepfreeze 68) were fantastic adventures for me. I have expressed the good and bad as I remember and most of it centers on my personal happenings and the people I had experiences with. I’m not sure everything is factual but I will stand by every single word. I have told these stories too many times to change them now. I have always said: Show them red and go ahead!

Deep Freeze 1968, the Uncharted Pinnacle!

We were underway and heading home. We had just secured from special sea detail and had set the watch. I just relieved myself as my duty station for special sea detail was in B-2 and I also had the first watch as throttleman along with my fireman as oiler. As I recall we had B-1 and B-2 engineroom’s on the line and B-3 was on standby. I was an EN2 at the time and B-2 was my regular assignment under ENC Duckworth.

I had my headset on and was sitting in a metal arm chair in between the two main engines and was watching the main gauge board when we hit. I remember the impact as three distinct hits with a lurching motion and a lot of intermingling loud crunching and grinding noise. The first hit made my chair slide and the second impact almost threw me as the chair hit the metal framing at the edge of the deck plates. I remember momentarily thinking that we must have entered the ice but quickly dismissed that. I had grabbed a hand rail and was out of the now flipped over chair and crouched for the third impact which I would describe as more of a heavy thud and a more severe grinding, crunching noise. Simultaneously we had huge gushers shooting up from the rear of the engineroom. Over the headset I thought I heard “fire and flooding B-1 engine room” and I reported “flooding B-2 engine room”. I was between the main engines holding onto the hand rail with one hand and operating the headset with the other. I was facing the rear of the engineroom observing the two huge gushers that were shooting from the lower deck plate level to the overhead on the upper level.

Sometime during this same period the GQ alarm was sounded. My oiler went running back to the flooding and I watched as his legs flew into the air as he hit the slick wet deck plates. He landed on his back with one heck of an impact. It had knocked the breath out of him and he just laid there; I don’t think I reported him down. I started back and my feet began to slide out from under me. The like ice slippery deck with the sudden realization of a heavy fuel oil smell, made me realize that it was fuel and not entirely water flooding. I helped the fireman up and together we secured the two open fuel oil sounding tubes.

Other reports of flooding had started coming in but the one I remember most was B-1 reporting that they “did not” have a fire. I don’t know if that was in response to being asked from main motor or the bridge. I’m not sure what generated the original fire report from B-1. It could have been some sparking from water hitting the main generators or a “steam off” smoke look from water hitting hot spots. It may have also just been a false report in the excitement of reporting the original flooding. I do know we had a vapor mist from atomization of the under force liquid hitting the overhead in B-2 but it did not have an appearance of smoke.

I had reported my flooding was fuel and not water and that we had it secured. I have read another report on this stating it was all water and can tell you for certain that we had fuel oil coming into B-2
from one or both sounding tubes. The fuel oil king had just made rounds. I’m told the flooding in B-1 was water.

I can still remember the distinct and eerie sounds of all the hatches above us being slammed shut and dogged down. Engines were at an idle and forward motion stopped. I had definite feeling that something was terribly wrong in the hull area under my engineroom. The hull was still making a loud grinding crunching noise and the ship was no longer underway. You could feel the vibration from the grinding in the engineroom decking. Later, I found out we were pivoting on the pinnacle and it was directly under me. I felt we had B-2 secure but took comfort as EN2 Shue made “under control” reports from B-1.

Sometime during this same period Captain Dolber announced over the PA exactly what had happened and that the flooding was controlled. His manner had a real calming effect. After that I’m not sure what came first but I remember watching the tank tops under the main engines as we were attempting to back off. Once we did, we used divers to estimate the damage and related the damage by frames to the location under the hull. We estimated the big hole to be under the main bulkhead between B-1 and B-2. Later at the ship yard we found out that the sea chest to B-2 was totally mangled as seen in the pictures already contributed. We could not run B-2 for fear the vibrations would crack the tank tops. The only thing between us and major flooding of the ship was the double bottom tank/void tops. For the entire return trip we maintained a live watch in B-1 and B-2 for leaks or cracking.

Ironically I believe we made the entire run back on B-3 engineroom. We use to kid the snipes in B-3 about their cold iron engineroom but had to eat our words after that. I also remember that we were delayed several days at the Panama Canal while they evaluated the ship for safe passage through the canal.

Notes: I faintly recall having some discussion later about the main propulsion generators on the back of the engines in B-1 getting some water into them from the flooding spray. The old inspection plates on the generators fit poorly and were not sealed. Water and generators don’t mix. They looked at why B-2 did not have the same problem. The electricians had sealed ours with duct tape and a rubberized gray paint as a preventative measure. I believe they did so because the evaporator was on the upper level of B-2 over the main generator and the BT’s would start filling the expansion tank and frequently would let it run over.

My oiler/fireman had gotten the breath knocked out of him when he fell. To this day I can’t picture his face or remember who he was but he certainly headed for the source of the flooding without delay.

Boston 1966

I was actually relieved to get orders for the CGC Atka. I was the class leader in Engineman school and had choice of duty and took a little buoy depot in Owensboro, Ky. Shortly thereafter the warrant officer captain on the river tender there (CGC Lantana) pulled strings and got me transferred on his boat just because I could spray paint. This guy was a little dictator. After about two months onboard I had developed a bad hernia and the doctor had to force him to send me to the Public Health Hospital in Detroit Michigan for an operation. He wanted the doctor to issue me a jockey support strap. When I arrived in Detroit they were having a change of staff and actually put me out on 30 days sick leave to return there. When I reported back in they operated, kept me a week and then gave me
another 30 days sick leave. The dictator was furious and told me I would have “pay back” when I returned.

He was serious and was on me like stink on poop! I was only back on board five days when the orders came in. The orders were to leave right away and they allowed for fifteen days leave in route. The CWO4 blew a gasket and I could only look at him and smile. His face was so red that I thought he would have a heart attack.

I arrived at Boston and they had a barracks set up for us. All I remember about Boston was thinking that this was perhaps the oddest collection of people I had ever met. I reconsidered after we met the Atka Navy crew. I remember going out one evening with EN2 Whitehead and a couple of others. I barely remember the first view of the Atka but recall one event on the run to Baltimore. (EM3 Hereck on far left, unknown in middle background, EM3 Parker in middle foreground and DC3 Kytte on the right)

We were on the mess deck sitting near the coffee machine. The bulkheads were covered with cork insulation. The ship was old and filthy. We had seen a couple of cock roaches running in and out of a hole in the cork behind the coffee machine. One of our guys had an olive drab can of GI issue bug killer and walked over and started spraying it in the hole just as a Navy guy screamed “no” but it was too late. The bulkhead turned dark as a flood of roaches came out.

Bethlehem Steel

We had an okay set up in Beth Steel. The enlisted had a second floor barracks area. We had a recreation room and the basics. We had a set of boxing gloves and I use to love to spar with FN Tom Niksich. He was a strong as an ox country boy from Ironwood, Michigan in the Upper Peninsular. I was small and lightning fast and fancied myself as the little Louisville Lip. I could dance all around him and would pepper him with light jabs. He would miss with most of his punches but every once in awhile he would connect. I knew that I never wanted him mad at me.
I remembered the name of the town he was from and was able to locate him just before our last reunion. He is on our list. I remember Niksich as hard working and a very dependable crew member. He was in B-2 with me. (Tom is in blue shirt)

One fun thing in Baltimore was making the LCVP practice runs. Because I had some early SAR station experience I would get to play coxswain from time to time. Reluctantly BMCS Kennedy let me qualify as a coxswain later but I would only get to do minor runs because I was a snipe type. Later in my career the experience helped served as a springboard for me to be a SAR certified coxswain running 41 footers in Ft. Pierce, Fl.

**Thule Greenland**

I was told there was a girl behind every tree. You know the rest of that story. When we finally arrived at Thule they were loading surplus things on I believe a Danish ship. Our little band of salvage pirates started exploring what might be of value for the ship. We got side tracked when the command found out there was an Army facility that was being closed down and they had supply storage buildings and we were welcome to anything we wanted. We were able the get a stake truck and made about a dozen trips. We really got some great things. They had a supply of heavy foul weather gear. The jackets were much better than the ones we had on board. We were also able to get a load of white Arctic boots, white skis etc. We got a ton of paper products, galley supplies like pots and pans, silverware and just about something for every department.

Then we spotted the truck. The Air Force had a surplus truck that really looked good. Somehow we pulled strings and got it. We loaded it into the hanger deck for the return to Baltimore. The crew painted it white with a stripe and make it the ship’s vehicle. Somehow that turned out bad and we had to get rid of it. As I recall we deep sixed her.
We were in Baltimore and I was an EN3 working in the machine shop for ENCM Kelly. Master Chief Kelly had sent me and EN3 Hebert on a parts run with a government vehicle. It was something that was needed and it had been shipped in to the supplier. We left the ship at about 1030 to make the parts run and the direction took us past the Baltimore City Zoo. Being from Kentucky I had never been to a Zoo in my life. I mentioned that to Hebert and he said he had always wanted to visit one as well. So we turned around and went back. We were in dungarees and in a government vehicle but we were only going to stay a few minutes. It was wonderful! I was seeing stuff that I had only seen in books.

How it got to 1600 so fast I will never know! I think we panicked somewhat but we made it to the suppliers warehouse just before closing. We were able to pick up the crate but it was after our normal working hours when we got back. Now those of you that remember Master Chief Kelly will also remember that he can chew butt really good. He was waiting for us and I remember his red face, flat top style haircut and a cigar. He dressed us down really good and demanded to know where we had been. I told him the truth. “Master Chief we went to the zoo and just forgot the time”. For some reason he refused to believe the story. We suffered some sort of minor punishment and for months after that the Master Chief would press me for where we really went that day.

I communicated the story to him last year and he emailed back. “Did you guys really stop at the zoo?”

Arthur (Artie) Kelly ENCM 82 lost his wife Anne in September of 2008 and said that he lives alone now with his dog and plays golf five days a week. He retired from the CG after 24 years and then retired again in 1989 from the City of Newport, R.I.

Another experience that I had under ENCM Kelly was right after our arrival in Baltimore we had some kind of special ship party. The wives were invited and it was a dress up affair. I was young and single at the time and perhaps a little wild. The Master Chief told us that this was a semi-formal party and that we had to try and dress up. He specifically turned to me and said “Henderson” don’t bring any of your girl friends off of The Block. Try and get a nice girl. Now I did not really know any girls from “The Block” at the time but I caught the jest of it.

I had just met a sweet attractive Italian girl by the name of Marie and invited her to go. Marie was a quiet shy girl and she made sure that I was properly introduced to her parents before we could date. They were the true Italian first generation family and quizzed me pretty good. Now, I’m thinking that I’m going to be “looking good” with Marie. When I told her we had to dress up she said she did not own a real nice dress. We went shopping and I helped her pick out a really sharp blue dress and new shoes.

The night of the ships party I was one proud sailor with this cute well built black haired beauty on my arm. It was great to be there with a “nice girl” and I made it a point to make sure that the Master Chief met her.

Things went down hill after that. We had had a few drinks and I could tell they were having an effect on Marie as her words were a little slurred and she was getting real talkative. Marie also seemed to undergo a definite character change. She would look at other women and say “look at that” or
comment on what they were wearing. Our table was starting to get a few looks from some of the officers. We were dancing and was near where the Captain was seated and suddenly she stepped back on the dance floor and loudly announced; "Semi-formal party my blickity-blank a__" Then followed it up with something like: If I had known they were going to dress like this I would have worn my #@%$^&**$# jeans. I got her back to our table and the couple that I came with helped me hustle her out the door. She didn't go quietly. She used words that would have the girls from "The Block" cringe.

I don’t remember what Master Chief Kelly’s exact words were the next day but he let me know “everyone noticed” and he didn’t seem too pleased with my nice girl selection. Come to think of it, perhaps that is why he did not believe my “Zoo” story.

**Bermuda**

Nearly everyone in the liberty party had rented little motor bikes to get from where the ship was moored to the town center. We were told that we had to return them back to the same area at the ship by the next morning. I was running around with EN3 Hebert and we toured the island and late in the evening or early morning we started back to the ship. The headlight went out on my bike and the London looking Bobbies at a little police station had stopped me and said I could not operate my motor bike any further. They did not seem to care that I had to get it back to the pick up point as directed. They said that I could not ride double with Hebert and they would not help me get the bike back. We were in a little sub-station and were several miles from the ship. This was my first foreign port and I was not real pleased with the hospitality! All I knew was that if I was late I would miss movement. (EN3 Hebert with helmet)

In a little fit I expressed to them that they were holding me hostage and pulled off my dog tags and flipped both dog tags and ID card on the counter as I announced “under the articles of the Geneva
Convention I am turning myself over to you. You are forcing me to miss my ship so I’m your prisoner.”

EN3 Hebert had this shocked look on his face. I didn’t have a clue as to what I was doing. The two police officers moved off and had a quick conference and came back to the counter and said take your stuff and get on the motor bikes and leave. He directed me to follow Hebert as he had a headlight. I’m glad they didn’t keep me.

Shake Down: Salty Dog!

We were on the shake-down cruise after the dry dock in Baltimore and had taken on a good number of new crew members including a bunch right out of boot camp. We had been diverted on a SAR mission to rescue a sail boat in distress. It was in a tropical disturbance area with near hurricane winds. The ship was really rolling and you see green water out the port holes with each roll. I had the engineering lower deck security watch and was making my rounds. As I approached the mess deck it was truly a mess. Seems half the crew was heads down on the tables. Most had coffee cans etc. It stunk to the high heaven. The mess cook had lost control of one of the milk jugs and milk was sloshing back and forth across the mess deck. I was “over four” and original commissioning crew, so thought of myself as an old salt. My experience with search and rescue boats on the rough Lake Michigan had me feeling pretty good about this ocean thing. With my Dixie cup cocked down over my eyes I strolled through the mess deck and started singing “Oh I wish I was a Salty Dog, a Salty Dog, a Salty Dog.” I was laying it on the sick boots real heavy.

My next stop was to check the sewage pump station a couple of decks below the galley. It was about a 5X10 enclosed compartment and someone had painted a picture of a wilted rose on the doorway. We called this pumping station “Rosy” for a reason. This sewage station serviced the galley and collected some of the galley waste including grease. It also collected other normal waste and would clog frequently. She was a real stinker at times. When it clogged you would have to change the valve setup to back flush Rosy to get her working again. When I got to her on my rounds Rosy was clogged and flooding over with about four inches of water on the deck. I put down my clip board in the passageway and hooked back the hatch style door for ventilation and climbed in over the pipes to do the back flush.

We were taking heavy rolls and the hatch came unhooked and slammed shut. No worry I got this baby! Rosy however was not willing to work with me and I had to manually pump and flush it several times. The sweat began pouring off of me. It was really hot and the water just kept sloshing around. It may have only been 15 minutes or so but by the time I got out of Rosy I was one sick puppy. I could barely crawl up the ladder to the mess deck. When I finally made it to the mess deck no one was sicker than me and I assure you I didn’t come out singing. Just before the last reunion I found an old hand written copy of a poem stored in an old shoe box that I penned about Rosy.

That Beast of December

by Ron Henderson

I still remember that cold day in sixty-six
When fate was up to her old tricks…
We took over Atka from the Navy
And they got rid of their baby
Rosy
The paint was thick and needed chipped
And cleaning details had long been skipped.
The whole ship was one big wreck
And the only fresh air was out on deck.
   Rosy

In the galley the roaches were so thick
To get our chow we had to be quick.
Just when you thought you had a break,
About five would grab your steak.
   Rosy

Around chow time is when it came,
Now days it ain’t the same…
The commissioning crew had it worst,
It made their lungs almost burst.
   Rosy

Only a few of us left to remember,
the beast of that December…..
You new men have it cozy,
Cause you never met old Rosy!

**Vietnam Orders 1968**

We were underway on Deepfreeze 68 and about to enter the Panama Canal. I was called to the ships office and the XO told me to pack my bags as I had orders to Vietnam and would be dispatched at the Panama Canal for some sort of special training.

I had not put in for Vietnam so I was somewhat in shock. I could only deduct that it was because I had been sent to Parris Island for special weapons training for three weeks in 1962 and again in 1963. The same 60 CG personnel were sent both years for full weapons training with the Marines.

Went I got back to the berthing area I ran into EN2 McKnight. I believe his first name was Charles and we called him Chuck. McKnight and I were very competitive but friends. He blew a gasket when I told him about the orders since he had submitted several requests for Vietnam. He stormed out and went directly to the XO and expressed his displeasure. I was about half packed when I was called back to the ships office. I believe we both were taken to the Wardroom for audience with Captain Dolber. The Captain told me that McKnight wanted my orders and he asked if I had any objections. He said he was not sure he could get the orders changed since they had come in my name but he would try. I weighted it for about two seconds and give it my blessing.

The XO told us both to get completely packed just in case. Chuck and I owned an old Cushman Motor Scooter together back in Baltimore. We made the agreement that whoever went to Vietnam would get his half bought out for $200. The Captain was successful and EN2 McKnight got the orders. I gave Chuck the $200 and bid him farewell. I already had the bill of sale in my name.

I was surprised that the Captain would consider the swap. I believe I was the better Engineman and I was one of the only snipe type boat coxswains. However McKnight was one of the ships scuba divers
and a certified hard hat diver. It was probably a hard decision for the Captain to let him go. But that was the fairness of Captain Dolber and he showed it to me more than once.

Note: When we returned to Baltimore the motor scooter was nowhere to be found. I was told that McKnight needed it to get home on leave. It was a well spent $200. I have searched for McKnight many times but never found or heard of him again. I even searched the Vietnam Wall register of names just to be sure. CW McKnight was a short fellow with a butch cut. He famous saying when confronted was: If you feel froggy, leap!

There is a picture of McKnight in the Arctic East Cruise Book at the bottom of the page marked Kulusuk refueling. He is the diver on the right hand side.

**Kulusuk Refueling (Refer to the Arctic East Cruise Book)**

Boy what a nightmare that was. I was on one of the LCVP’s that was trying to run the fuel line through the ice flow and get it hooked up and fuel flowing so it would sink before the ice shifted again. I’m pictured on the page marked “deployment” (#10) throwing the hook. We were trying to hook the ice and move it so the other boat could run the fuel hose. They had the hose lashed to the back of the LCVP and the ice started shifting and was pulling their stern down. They had an axe and were trying to chop the line that had the large hose tied it to the boat. At the same time a BM3 on our boat fell into the water. We always laughed about how he came out so fast that his armpits under his foul weather jacket were still dry. He is pictured under the Kulusuk Refueling page.

Note: I am the snipe pictured on the full page marked “complement” in the 67 Cruise Book.

**Sad Satisfaction**

I took some kind of personal pleasure when my two instructors from Engineman School received orders to the ship. (EN1 Edwards and EN1 Boyer)

**Palmer Station Sled Race**
I read the Captain’s writing on the 15’ piece of corrugated metal roofing that we bent the end up to make a toboggan. We actually did it to race the deck force that came up with a real toboggan. It was kind of dangerous game. We would climb up the slope and set up with about 4-5 people on each and blast off towards the rocks at the bottom of the run. Our plan was the guy in front (me on one run) would yell now and the last guy would bail and each one in order with the front man last. All timed to be off before the rocks. The metal outran the sled. The plan worked great until I got hurt which made it the last run. I was the last man off and my foot hooked the sharp point of the rolled up front. The metal cut through my boot laces and leather tongue and cut the top of my foot. Doc had to take care of it. We also had a cardboard sled. See added pictures.

**The Penguin!**

We were walking on the rocks out in front of the new Palmer Station construction. This penguin just popped right out of the water in front of us and scooted across a small patch of snow. We easily caught it and I held it for pictures. It calmed down as I stroked its back. When we finished I carried it over to the water and safely tossed him in. The penguin made a quick circle and popped right out in front of me again. It was like magic. This time he let me pick him up. Turned out there was a bunch of what I think we called leopard seals in the water in front of us. He was picking the lesser of two evils I guess.

![Image of a penguin]

**Deliver the Admiral**

We were taking the Captain and the Admiral in to the new Palmer Station on the LCVP. We had his flag mounted on the boat. Of course this was too big of a deal for a snipe to be the coxswain. The selected BM that was running the boat was moving at a pretty good clip as we approached the bulkhead landing area. He shifted the single lever handle for reverse and the linkage broke and had no control. The Admiral and Captain were standing by the bow ramp talking. We were still moving.
pretty fast and the impact was going to be hard. “Hold on Sirs!” was about all I could get out a split second before we hit. They both hit the loading ramp and nearly went down. I don’t think the Captain was very pleased with our taxi service. The Captain is not shown in the below picture.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Not so good times!**

We were in Punta Arenas and I was with EM3 Larry Parker. We were on the way back to the ship and had just hit the entrance area to the pier. I don’t remember his name but we ran into a short V-built BM3. He was in a foul mood and started in on Parker pretty heavy. He popped off to me but focused on Larry for reason. Larry was from Tennessee and he was just one of those really laid back nice guys and didn’t have a mean bone in his body. Larry was kind of a clown and really funny. Boats had punched him on the arm and shoved him a few times. Larry would just laugh and try to walk around him. Finally I said; Why don’t you lay off we don’t want trouble.

He was fairly stout and reached over and grabbed the left sleeve of my black silk “Greenland” jacket and twisted it in his hand as he yanked me towards him. He drew his fist back and said: You want some of this? Now I was raised on the streets of Louisville and fighting to me was a means of survival. I was not as big as he was but I was fairly fast. Some of you guys called me Popeye and I thought I had a real punch. I let him have a quick short right in the snot locker. His hands dropped and I let him have two more fast hard rights. He looked stunned but I’m thinking this is not working he is still standing there.

Suddenly the dock guard, a Chilean soldier with a rifle stepped in between us and said something. He then pointed to the ship. We all three understood and complied. I was relieved he had stopped the fight. As we were going up the gangway the BM3 said; Henderson you tell anybody about this and I’m going to beat your ass. He looked serious so I believed him.
Where Is the Ship?

One of the real embarrassing low points in my life occurred I believe in Punta Arenas. We had run there to take on fuel. I was out on the town with a bunch of the crew drinking. This time I must have drank too much and when I woke up and stepped out the door it was daylight. Somebody had blackened the windows on the club. I had that sudden fear that I was late for the early muster that had been set. I ran all the way back to the fuel pier. As I rounded the corner and looked down the pier the ship was not there. My God! I thought, I have missed ships movement. I ran all the way to the end of the pier and out on the horizon I could see a white blob.

My watch said it was just now 0700 the muster time but I was the only one there. My heart sank and I could imagine all sorts of things happening. There goes my good conduct, my whole career. I don’t have any money how will I survive here. This can’t be happening. It was the single emptiest feeling that I have ever experienced. On top of that I was feeling really hung-over and sick. The only other people on the pier were two soldiers.

There was a Chilean Naval vessel there. They would not let me board the vessel to talk with them but with hand signals and pointing at the Southwind I was able to get them to try and call the ship and tell them I was there. I was thinking the ship must have fueled during the night and was already on the way back to Palmer Station. One of the Chilean Navy crew members spoke broken English and he told me a boat was coming in for me.

The boat was not actually returning for me. As the boat neared I could see the Captain on it. They threw a mooring line up to me. Captain Dolber was in a dress uniform and handed me his brief case as he climbed onto the dock. I handed the briefcase back to him and his only words to me were “Henderson, you had best take my boat back.” I was so relieved I didn’t care if they put me in the brig. The boat approached the ship and they had dropped a Jacob’s ladder for me to climb aboard. The boat returned to the dock to wait on the Captain. This was an embarrassing and humiliating ladder to climb. As I was climbing up one of the young officers leaned over the rail and yelled down “Henderson you are on report” and I snapped back something stupid like “No Crap”. (Not quite what I said) He then told me that would get me another report.

I may not have this accurate: Turns out there had been an incident that was considered an act of war. It was January 23, 1968 and the USS Pueblo and crew had been seized by North Korea and our ship was ordered out to sea early. The Captain had come back in to negotiate with the Chilean government to get the necessary fuel we needed. The Chilean government was I believe leaning communist and there was a reported Russian sub off the coast.

The ship had got underway as soon as they had the majority of the crew (minus one) on board.
I was later called to the ships office to meet with the XO. He had two report chits in his hand. He reviewed the charges, chewed me out some and said: Henderson you have almost seven years with good conduct and you are due to reenlist. Are you going to make a career out of the Coast Guard? I said yes and he tore both reports up and said dismissed. The yeoman told me later on that the Captain and the XO had discussed it and had decided to let me off. I have been forever grateful and maintained an unblemished and wonderful career after that.

Note: I had been having stomach problems the entire trip with severe heart burn at times. When we got back to Baltimore I was put in the Public Health hospital for evaluation. Turned out I had a bad hiatus hernia and it was classified as a service connected injury. In those days they didn’t have Nexium. My enlistment expired while in the hospital and I went ahead and took a regular honorable discharge. I never took the VA disability offered. Three years later after working river boats, running 63’ AVR’s for RCA on AUTEC and working on a top yacht, I tried to rejoin and was accepted rate for rate. They said had I taken the VA disability, I would not have been able to come back in. I continued to be one of the few snipes certified as a boat coxswain. I retired in 1984 in Charleston SC.

**Smoker**

I don’t recall the XO actually fighting anyone one at our first smoker. There was a challenge and it was promoted with big hype and then he showed up in his long johns acting silly. He really faked everyone out and it was a great laugh. It was not what anyone expected of our XO. See cruise book picture.

**First Reunion**

We had an earlier CGC Southwind reunion in Grand Haven Michigan back in 1990 at the 200th birthday of the Coast Guard. It was announced in the retirement publications. We only had about ten members show up. ENCM McMains was at that one. He was in from Australia.

The reunion in Charleston was the First “Official” Southwind Reunion.
I was an EN1 stationed on the CGC Planetree in Honolulu, Hawaii. I was due to rotate and as usual, the Coast Guard found a way to rob me of my plans for a cross country return trip. They were doing a complete rehab of the buoy tender fleet. They brought in the CGC Mallow from Guam to relieve the CGC Planetree. The crews swapped and the entire old Mallow crew was to take the Planetree to Juneau, Alaska and swap for the CGC Sweetbriar to be delivered to Baltimore. I was one of only two Planetree crewmembers (a BMC and myself) that stayed with her to Juneau so we could train the Sweetbriar crew on her. We spent two weeks in Juneau cross training and then we departed on the Sweetbriar to carry her on around to the shipyard in Baltimore. It was sometime in the evening in 1974 that we pulled into the shipyard. After we secured I walked out on deck and there she was.

I had heard the CGC Southwind was decommissioned but it still was a sad sight. I found the OOD and asked if I could board her and he let me. I had hoped to find some sort of souvenir and he expressed doubt that I would find anything. Hell I was trained on the Southwind to locate salvage items. After about two hours of looking I found what must have been a deck force storage area. Rolled up and tucked in one of the outer frame I-beams was a full canvas painted gangway dodger. It was huge when rolled out and I could not carry it home on the plane. So I cut out the painted picture of the ship in the ice and still have it today. I had someone make a nautical looking frame for it. It was on display at our last reunion. (Pictured below).
Artic Sailors (Baltimore Sun, 18 November 1970, Staff Writer) - Three bearded junior officers of the Southwind, a Coast Guard icebreaker, strike a rakish pose after returning from the Far North. Left to right, they are: Lt. jg Bob Glynn, communications officer; Lt. (jg) Ken Riordan, navigator, and Lt. (jg) Larry Grant, assistant engineering officer. Neatly trimmed beards at sea or in port are now allowed as part of a top-level plan to abolish much-resented “chicken” rules.

Southwind had just completed five weeks of oceanographic research operations in the Barents Sea and a visit to Tromso, Norway. It was during these oceanographic operations that Southwind penetrated into the Arctic ice pack northeast of the Franz Joseph Islands to a latitude of 83 degrees 01 minutes North. This is the most northerly penetration into the Artic Basin by any U.S. icebreaker. Southwind has a crew of 200 officers and men and is commanded by Captain Edward D. Cassidy.
During the Murmansk visit *Southwind* was officially hosted by the Deputy Commander of Soviet Northern Fleet, Rear Admiral Garkusha and the mayor of the city, V. V. Sotnikov. Admiral Garkusha held a luncheon at his headquarters for Captain Cassidy and representatives of the American Embassy in Moscow. A highlight of the visit was a wreath laying ceremony honoring Soviet and American men killed during World War II. Three American Merchant marines were killed near Murmansk during the German bombing of the city in April 1942. They are buried in a cemetery along with a number of English sailors also killed during that period. Captain Cassidy placed a wreath at the grave site of Soviet World War II dead and then placed another wreath at the nearby grave site of the Americans. *Southwind* departed Murmansk to conduct additional oceanographic research operations in the Kara Sea off the Siberian coast. Following this, a port visit to Portsmouth, England was scheduled. She will then cross the Atlantic Ocean to perform her final oceanographic survey of the season in the Baffin Bay area off Greenland.
Icebreaker Southwind Returns from Artic (Baltimore Sun, 22 November 1970, Jon Franklin) - After smashing her way farther north into the Arctic ice pack than any other icebreaker, USCGC Southwind came home to Baltimore yesterday.

The ship moored at the Coast Guard Yard’s pier one, her ice-crushing bow scraped clean of paint near the water line and showing a fine sheen of rust. During her five-month mission, Southwind penetrated the northern ice to within 419 miles of the pole. She also paid a port call to Murmansk, the first United States Naval vessel to enter that northern Russian city since it was the terminus of the dangerous Murmansk run in the early part of World War II.

Closet to Pole - Captain Edward D. Cassidy, Southwind’s skipper, said that on August 15 the ship penetrated the Arctic ice pack to a latitude of 83 degrees, 1 minute north, the closest any surface vessel under power has approached the pole. He said exploration surface vessels approached much closer to the pole, but not under power. Unable to penetrate the thick ice, those ships were deliberately jammed in the ice and allowed to drift with the pack. Once trapped by the ice, they had to remain until freed by natural forces - one ship was trapped for three years.

North of Siberia - Captain Cassidy said Southwind’s northernmost penetration occurred at a point, north of Siberia and to the east of the barren Franz-Joseph Islands. “We could have gone farther,” he said, but added that a deeper penetration would not have added anything to the ship’s scientific assignment. At the time the ship was carrying a team of scientists from the University of Alaska. The researchers were taking water samples at various depths in an investigation of the mixing of cold Arctic Basin water with the comparatively warmer water of the North Atlantic. That intermixture is suspected of playing a part in meteorological process.
Once Under the Russian Flag - Captain Cassidy said he asked that Murmansk be made a port of call because “we had to stop somewhere” and because the *Southwind* had once sailed under the Russian flag. That was between 1945 and 1950 when, under the provisions of the lend-lease program, she sailed as the Admiral Markarov. Murmansk, the world’s largest city north of the Arctic Circle, is Russia’s major northern port. During World War II massive aid was funneled into Russia through that port by convoys out of England. Sailors assigned to the Murmansk run braved submarines on the southern leg of the route and bitter cold on the northern leg.

While in the Russian port, *Southwind* crewmen laid wreaths at a Soviet military cemetery and at a cemetery for allied soldiers and sailors. During the cruise the ship also paid a visit to Copenhagen, broke the year’s first sea channel to Thule, Greenland, and helped search for survivors from a Russian aircraft that was lost en route to Peru.
During Artic East 1967, while we were on the east coast of Greenland, we were called upon to conduct a search on the ice cap for a downed aircraft. I believe that the ship received a message while we were making a port call at Ammassalik, or so my recollection goes. Mick Houck and I were in one helicopter and Ben Nelson and Dave Whelan were in the other and we searched for the wreckage
but never found anything, probably due to lack of navigation aids to fix our position up on the ice cap.

In any event, the story I received at the time from Mick Houck was that an Aero Commander aircraft had flown into the ice cap and through some very fortunate circumstances at least one person had been rescued by a ski-equipped C-130 and flown to Sondrestom AFB. Through the years I thought of the event and occasionally related the story to the extent that I knew and recalled it. Then, in January 2009 I decided to see if I could locate any information about the crash via the internet. The only possibility to get information that I found was a website titled Firebird which seemed to cater to ex-USAF C-130 pilots.

I left a message on that site describing what I was trying to do. About 6 months later I received an e-mail from a person describing himself as a navigator aboard the C-130 that made a rescue similar to that which I described. Through several correspondences we confirmed that it was the same event. The gentleman (Major, USAF, Ret.) even had pictures he had taken of the crash site. Then, last week, AFTER our reunion in September 2010, I received another e-mail from a person (Colonel, USAF, Ret.) who had also seen my inquiry. He stated that he was the command pilot on the rescue. He informed me that the son of one of the survivors (turns out there were 2 survivors, 1 fatality), an Englishman, was writing a book or some sort of written account of the event. I e-mailed him yesterday and he responded overnight thanking me for the information I supplied about the icebreaker’s involvement and asking if I had any other details.

That’s the story. The reason I am sending this message is to inquire if you have any recollection of the event. The English gentleman stated that he has routine contact with the family of the pilot who was killed and that they appreciate any information he supplies to them relative to the events surrounding the crash.

Also I am writing to say how good it was to see you and many of the other crew members at the reunion. I sat with the Coast Guard pilots who followed us in supporting the ship’s operation and had a very enjoyable time. From talking to them I think I may be safe in assuming that I had the longest
assignment of any pilot on the *Southwind*. That year of my life was one of my absolute highlights.

Jay Doering aka Jake

**Editor’s Note:** The preceding story resulted from email correspondence between LTJG “Jake” Doering (U.S. Navy HC-4 Squadron Detachment pilot from NAS Lakehurst, NJ who was part of *Southwind’s* crew during two deployment, Artic East 1967 and Deepfreeze 1968) and Captain Sumner R. (“Bud”) Dolber (Commanding Officer, *USCGC Southwind* from October 1966 through June 1969).
Arctic East 1967 Random Photographs by LTJG “Jake” Doering

LTJG George Heavilin (*Southwind*) and visitor from Goose Bay Air Force Base (Labrador) (Artic East 1967)

Air Force family from Goose Bay Air Force Base (Labrador) visiting *Southwind* (Artic East 1967)

USAF F-101 Voodoo making pass off *Southwind* near Goose Bay Air Force Base (Labrador) (Artic East 1967)

Green Deck to land on *Southwind* (Artic East 1967)
Aerial photograph of Southwind (lower left off center) underway in the Sondrestrom Fjord, Greenland
(Artic East 1967)
No matter how you slice it, a life at sea is a life of deprivation. (cruise ships excepted, of course) The Southwind was like any other vessel of her period and not a whole lot better than those of centuries before in some respects. We had refrigeration but when a naval architect is drawing plans for an icebreaker and every square inch will have to be constructed of steel, cut, burned and welded, he dedicates little space for amenities, and cold storage of food is no exception. So when it comes to provisioning for extended periods at sea, foods of choice require no refrigeration. It may not surprise you then, that after two or three weeks at sea, our creative cooks would be including beans and cabbage in all three meals; and then only when food preparation was an option, which it frequently was NOT in the Roaring Forties, that oceanic insanity betwixt South America and Antarctica.

Now sailors are probably thinking, get off it Jake, you were in the wardroom while we suffered on the mess deck. Not so fast, Matey!!! A well-kept secret is that the Officer’s Mess was a private affair with an elected Mess Treasurer, a despised position to be avoided at all cost. That means, as any military man could tell you, that only the most junior of junior officers need apply, since you were going to get stuck with the job anyhow. The Mess Treasurer had to plan the menu and supervise the purchase of the food when in port, skill sets upon which four years of college had little bearing! Another secret was that officers had to pay for their food, even while at sea. Yeah, that’s right, we got an allowance for it … $47.50 a month; worth more back then, but not enough to translate into steak every night by any means. So don’t tell me that officers ate high on the hog.

And yes, I did my time as mess treasurer. I may have been the most successful mess treasurer in Southwind history. I even declared a dividend at the end of one month, instead of the usual mess bill. I did it through legal extortion and shameless cumshaw (a skill I acquired from my Coast Guard brethren). But that’s a whole ‘nother story!

So as I say, it was a life of deprivations, food quality being only one of many. There was the issue of no showers, 10 year old “B” rated movies, two month old mail, periodicals from a different period, drinking water heavily flavored with fuel oil and salt, and, of course, prolonged lack of female companionship. (This being the stone age when lack of progressive thinking consigned all females to shore billets!) It’s no wonder, then, that seaports are unique places having the near impossible task to “catch up” a ship load of sailors in the few short days allotted before lines were cast off and we were out to sea again! Now I’m not going to titillate my readers with the details of how seaports get the job done. Watch prime time TV if you’re looking for that kind of fix. What I am going to tell you about is a homey little tavern in a little seaport at the bottom of the world.

Let’s start with Punta Arenas (Sandy Point for you Gringos). It’s on the Straits of Magellan in some of the most God forsaken but beautiful geography in all the world. Punta Arenas saw its seaport heyday during a narrow niche in seafaring history beginning with steam ships sailing from east to west coasts and ending with the Panama Canal. The niche was defined by the need for these coal fired vessels to refill their coal bunkers prior to heading north again along the South American coast line. Punta Arenas was a coaling station, a need long gone. So to call this port “sleepy” is to bless it; and the weather at that end of the world did little to buff up the reputation. Even the gales had gales. Perhaps its most outstanding feature was an old clipper ship, still carrying its mast and spars, anchored in the harbor and reputedly serving as the town lock-up. But Punta Arenas had not
completely forgotten its hospitality role, offering good food at one end of the needs spectrum to the prurient at the other.

But perhaps the biggest void of all in the sailor’s life, especially those of us who were not career seamen, was the lack of “home”, so now the story turns towards the Club Jupiter.

In English we have a defining term for certain small businesses; “Mom and Pop”. I am totally handicapped when it comes to speaking the language of the Americas, Spanish, but I’ll bet they have a similar expression. It denotes far more than size and ownership. It speaks of warmth, meeting needs, and may I even add (in the purest sense), love. Club Jupiter was such an establishment. Sure it was a bar, but it was a decent one and “Mom and Pop” were decent people. I don’t recall how some of us found our way to this friendly door since walking there took us past the more ribald establishments, but drop anchor there we did.
**Mom and Pop.** whose names have been permanently erased from my memory in the intervening 43 years, immediately blessed us with warmth, and frequently, live music as Pop would pull a well-worn guitar from behind the counter strumming and singing quietly in Spanish. Then, when Mom finished serving up the goods and giving the bar an extra wipe for good measure, a duet would follow with Mom’s strong vocal cords carrying the day. It was obviously Chilean ‘country and western’ and while we couldn’t understand a word, we got the full meaning from the Latin expressiveness of our entertainer/hosts.

Then there was Jilda. She seemed to be Mom and Pop’s niece from somewhere further north in Chile. (Come to think of it, everything was further north from Punta Arenas.) That’s all I recall of her background, but my principal memory of her was that she somehow exuded virtue. There was also a little girl, round faced and pleasant; perhaps ten years old who would come and go. That’s it, an extended family of four, full of love for one another, a love that spilled over on to some forlorn sea farers.

We would camp out at the Club Jupiter during each port call which perhaps totaled three or four during “Operation Deepfreeze ‘68” as we shuttled people and materials down to Palmer Station on the Antarctic Peninsula. Each time we were welcomed back like family. I know the mercenary among the readers would assign a financial motive to the welcome but I categorically reject the notion as I would similarly reject the thought that my own mother’s warm welcome at Thanksgiving was the result of the apple pies in my arms. This was a real and genuine welcome.

There came a day, of course, when we knew there would be no more port calls to Punta Arenas. I may be stretching it, but I think I recall “Mom” crying as we prepared to leave. What I am sure of was that in a totally unexpected and magnanimous gesture, Pop through open the top of the old, well-worn jukebox in the corner, the source of much of our entertainment when our live musicians were serving up refreshment, and signaled for us to take any records (45s, you remember, the ones with the
big holes) that our heart desired. There were two which had become my favorites, one in particular entitled “El Bottlero”, a lively number played out on class ware of some sort.

El Bottlero and its mates have now travelled with me through the intervening decades through no particular fault of their own. Obviously, as vinyl gave way to laser discs and then to bits and bytes, my plastic memory faded just like the real one. But last year I acquired the capacity to convert vinyl to bytes and I now carry with me, at all times, via my iPhone, a little piece of Club Jupiter. On long, lonely car trips I plug in my miracle phone and for a few brief moments I am transported back through time and space to a split second of my past when an adventuresome kid was vicariously discovering what really counts in life, the love of a family.
Aviation on a Coast Guard Cutter

By AMM 1/C Gerald H. Nudson, USCGR
(Submitted by Mr. Nudson’s son, ex-AD2 Larry Nudson)

I was assigned to the USCG Cutter Southwind, W-280, as Plane Captain with a J2F-6 airplane. This cutter had a crew of 300. The Aviation Department consisted of Ensign Max H. Webb, AMM 2/c (Aviation Machinist Mate Second Class) John S. Kuykendal, ARM 2/c (Aviation Radioman Second Class) Winfred Williams, Aerographer 2/c Stuart. A total of five, including myself, Gerald H. Nudson, AMM 1/c.

We came aboard the Southwind when commissioned 15 July 1944. Her maiden voyage was from Long Beach, California to Brooklyn, New York, and her first mission was to join the USCGC Eastwind in search of a German ship setting up weather stations on the Northwest coast of Greenland.

USCGC Southwind (W-280) during WWII
When we arrived on station we spend two days patching several holes in the upper and lower wings of the airplane. They were put there when signal flags were hoisted and they broke loose a barrage of icicles from the rigging.

This was the second “patch job” we experienced. The first was when passing through the Panama Canal locks and cinders from the ship’s stack burned seventy-five holes through the upper wings. We thought it was rough duty patching these holes while underway on the Caribbean Sea, but it was nothing compared to doing it at fifty degrees below zero in the Arctic Ocean.

The *Eastwind* had captured two weather stations and was searching for the ship supporting them when the *Southwind* arrived. Both of the cutters’ airplanes searched on alternative days during the two to three hours of daylight.

On 16 October 1944 the *Eastwind* aircrew located the ship (German Naval Auxiliary Vessel *Externsteine*) disguised as an iceberg. The ship had been covered with canvas and cloth sprayed with water. It was not visible because it did not reflect the setting sun like all the other icebergs.

Both cutters began in chasing the ship on converging courses, breaking through fifteen to twenty foot of pack ice (the *Southwind* and *Eastwind* were the most modern icebreakers of World War II). The
Germans had to find their way through breaks in the ice field and around icebergs. After several hours into the chase they became stuck in a narrow passage.

During this chase “my” J2F was badly damaged and it was located adjacent to the aft 5-inch gun turret that was firing star shells and HE (High Explosive) shells until the Germans surrendered their ship and crew of twenty. This battle took place about 500 miles from the North Pole, about 77 degrees North latitude, in total darkness. The Southwind escorted this ship, a 180-foot armed German trawler - The Externsteine - back to Boston Harbor, manned by a U.S. Coast Guard crew. This was the first German ship to be brought to the U.S. during the World War II.
Notes on my Coast Guard Service During WWII

By Former RD 2/c (Radarman, Second Class) Ed Easlick, USCGR (During WWII)
CWO (Chief Warrant Officer) USAF (Ret.)

The Southwind was launched on 8 March 1943 by Mrs. Ona Jones (I don’t have a clue as to her connections). We had two Russian merchant mariners who came on board the Southwind in Boston, shortly after our return from Greenland. They sailed with us for orientation in preparation for turning over the ship to Russia in Seattle on 25 March 1945.

**Commissioning of USCGC Southwind**

Speaking on leaving Greenland, we picked up a passenger at Base Blue One for Boston delivery. One Commodore, USCG - I don’t recall his name - and who was confined to his quarters the entire voyage. Real deep-water sailor! He was sea sick! After Southwind I was assigned to the new Northwind and served until she was also “Lend-Leased” to Russia in Seattle, Washington. I was discharged in San Francisco, California on 22 April 1946 with the grade of RD 2/c.

My youthful introduction to military service began in 1943. I was not yet seventeen - having registered for the draft when sixteen - and was inducted into the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve in San Francisco and thence sent to the Alameda Coast Guard Training Center for boot camp.
On 29 November 1943 I was an AS (Apprentice Seaman), and one of my first contacts was with one of “Hollywood’s Own” (a Movie Star) - HM3/c (Hospital Corpsman Third Class) Gig Young. He had the chore of suctioning my infected sinuses and which should have been a painless procedure. It was a good that he returned to a career in acting!

Also in Alameda was CPO (Chief Petty Officer) Victor Mature (also one of “Hollywood’s Own”) who was well liked and who, good naturedly, suffered a lot of good-natured abuse - “Oh yoo hoo, Vicky!” - and other less endearing remarks and cat-calls.

Another was Apprentice Seaman Richard Quine, a bit player who became a director after the war, and “Doodles” Weaver of Spike Jones fame. This zany guy was his own USO show. I recall that one day - during the noon mess break, when most military activities were in abeyance - somebody yelled that there was a girl yelling for help at one of the barracks windows. It was “Doodles” with one bare leg hanging out of the window and who, by then, had amassed a crowd with his ludicrous blonde wig and attendant falsetto cries for help.
Months later, on Catalina Island, while awaiting for our ship (Southwind) to be finished at the Wilmington Shipyards, we were entertained by Errol (and Nora Eddington) Flynn and William (“Big Bill”) Tilden on the tennis court at the Isthmus, and by small USO acts featuring lesser knowns (to include starlets) from the entertainment industry. What was the attraction of Catalina for Errol? He got to hunt wild goats with the Base Commander!

Transportation to and from Catalina was by power boats loaned to the USCG for the duration (of the war). These boats - some could have been construed as yachts - were captained by their owners and who had received Reserve USCG commissions in consideration of their nautical skills and for volunteering equipment useful to the War Effort.

There were none of the above pictured sailboats moored there following the U.S. Coast Guard’s 1942 lease of many of the surrounding acres, and during the time many of the designated crew of Southwind awaited there the commissioning in California in the Spring of 1944.

Months later, while on patrol gunboat duty in the North Atlantic and the Northeast Greenland Sea, I was wont to favorably recall my early and limited exposure to these few Hollywood celebrities, and I would remember the many volunteers - on both coasts - who gave their time and talent to staging the “Stage Door Canteen” and other similar activities that provided food and lodging and conversation and entertainment for GIs of all descriptions.

To this date I maintain a nostalgic regard and respect for the members of the entertainment industry who had participated in the WWII effort. So, even if those that were untrained prior to being commissioned (with all of its attendant gloriously superficial façade) and were never exposed to hazardous (or even mundane) duty, so what?
Only a small percentage of the total armed forces actually experienced combat conditions - but the performance and worth of the others should not be minimized. We all contributed in some way, in direct or indirect support. You only had to be there to know, at times, just how inhumane, cruel, and insane it could all be - even if not on the front line or otherwise directly subject to harm’s way.
You asked for good and worst events associated with the *USCGC Southwind*, and to the best of my recollections I cannot recall many good events. I will give them to you as they occurred.

The first was when after we got past the Panama Canal; the Captain wanted to see if the little sea plane would fly and it did.

![J2F-6 Airplane in flight and stowed aboard Southwind](image)

Next was to check that the big guns worked, and they did also, but the projectile was set on zero and it exploded out of the end of the barrel and split the Captain’s gig lengthwise.

After that was when we encountered a hurricane on 15 September 1944 while off the coast of Portland, Maine. We were assigned an area known as Area “Dog,” and the seas were close to 50-feet high. Every coffee mug was broken, and one of the 5” powder cans came out of the rack, exploded in the magazine, and caused a fire under the cork insulation. We were listing so bad that the bubble in the heeling gauge lost its bubble. The wind gauge only checked winds at 112-miles per hour and the needle was over as far as it could go. Afterwards we had to go to the Navy Yard to put everything back together.

![USCGC Southwind (W-280) during WWII](image)

Third was when we rescued a German ship. I think they were glad to see us as their ship only drew a 12-foot
draft and they were in 15-feet of ice and were completely frozen up. Captain Thomas of the Eastwind was Senior Officer and took charge. They were unloading about 300 cases of whiskey, and they got it all except for one case!

The German Naval Auxiliary Externsteine, trapped in the ice off Greenland

Fourth was when we stopped at the Navy Base in Argentia, Newfoundland and we rammed their pier. This was more of an embarrassment as our ship bent their pier. Also, I have to comment on the food. Everything was mostly powered except we had more liver than anything else. I would say it seemed like they had about 20-tons of the stuff!

The only good thing that I remember were the two trips we made through the Panama Canal - very nice.