

# MY LIFE AS A SAILOR

BY

STEVE SHAW  
U.S. NAVAL RESERVE  
1970 - 1976



I, Steven Shaw, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God. October, 6, 1970.

**EDITED EXCERPTS ONLY  
RE: DUTY STATION CLG-5**



What you are about to read are the edited excerpts of a journal of my time in the Navy which was written for my family and children. It was completed from the perspective of a 17 year old enlistee who served aboard the USS Oklahoma City CLG-5 from 1971 to 1973. This document would not be possible without those who have gone before me and shared their own personal histories, documents and photographs freely and openly on the internet so that others that have walked in their shoes may remember and enjoy recollections of a common past.

One of my greatest regrets is that I took very few photographs of my time in the service. The naval enlisted man's uniform was never designed with generous pockets in mind and I was not about to wander the streets of foreign ports with an expensive camera hanging from a strap around my neck. I wasn't a tourist, but a sailor in search of a beer, and the pictures I kept are of poor quality or hand me downs of bad shots that others didn't want to keep. Many of the port or shore duty locations, including Yokosuka and Subic Bay, were photos taken from the internet and represent events as close to the same object or time period under discussion. My thanks to all the many contributors who shared their Navy photos and stories on the internet. I have attempted to give credit to these sources but this was a two year effort and some of the websites have changed or been lost and I apologize if I failed to give credit where credit is due.

Most of this journal is documented in a dated diary format punctuated by brief descriptions of cultural items of interest. Much of the writings have been pieced together by old military records, internet research, letters kept by myself and my family, and a weakened memory of past events. I have tried to describe these proceedings in light of some political and historical measures which occurred during my service time but please note that I restricted such background to just the times I served aboard a ship or station when and where these events occurred. There are many chronological gaps in the historical descriptions of the Vietnam War due to my numerous travels back and forth from the combat zone. This is a personal journal and is not intended for profit.

It is also with the greatest of thanks that I give credit to retired Lt. Phillip R. Hays, USNR for permission to use his copyrighted photographs and comments which can be found in greater detail at [www.okieboat.com](http://www.okieboat.com). Lt. Hays served as a Nuclear Weapons Officer aboard the Oklahoma City during the same time as I did and his historical and technical knowledge of the ship's operations were invaluable in researching many of my own experiences aboard the same ship. **His observations were so accurate that many of his writings have been included in their original form as highlighted in the blue text font.** We never met aboard ship but the Lieutenant's generosity in allowing me to use his material nearly forty years later, made me realize that I served with others who look back upon their naval days with the same sense of pride and accomplishment.

**And finally, you are about to view never before seen combat photos taken from the signal bridge of the USS Oklahoma City** which have been stored in a dusty old shoebox in the back of my closet for the last 38 years. I hope these excerpts bring back many of your long forgotten memories as it did for me.



## THE USS OKLAHOMA CITY CLG-5



**November 10, 1971** I boarded a bus in Bangkok and took the four hour ride to the Thai Royal Naval base in Sattahip, Thailand and reported aboard the light cruiser USS Oklahoma City (CLG -5).

The USS *Oklahoma City* (CL-91/CLG-5/CG-5) was one of 27 United States Navy *Cleveland*-class light cruisers completed during or shortly after World War II, and one of six to be converted to guided missile cruisers. She was the first US Navy ship to be named for Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Commissioned in late 1944, she participated in the latter part of the Pacific War in anti-aircraft screening and shore bombardment roles, for which she earned two battle stars. She then served a brief stint with the occupation force. Like all but one of her sister ships, she was retired in the post-war defense cutbacks, becoming part of the Pacific Reserve Fleet in 1947.

In the late 1950s she was converted to a *Galveston*-class guided missile cruiser, which involved removing all her aft guns and rebuilding her aft superstructure to accommodate the Talos missile system. Like most of the *Cleveland*-class ships converted to missile ships, she was also extensively modified forward to become a flagship. This involved removal of most of her forward armament to allow for a greatly enlarged superstructure. She was re-commissioned in 1960 as (CLG-5), and in 1975 re-designated (CG-5).

In her second career she served extensively in the Pacific, playing a prominent role in the Vietnam War, including participation in the evacuation of Saigon. She was decommissioned for the last time in 1979. At the time of her decommissioning she was the last *Cleveland*-class ship in service, and had served longer than any other ship of that class.

*Oklahoma City* was sunk in weapons testing in 1999.

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When I reported aboard, the ship was Commanded by Captain John Joseph Tice III and was under the Administrative control of the Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.



The USS Oklahoma City, CLG-5 also acted as a command ship for the 7<sup>th</sup> Pacific Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral W. P. Mack, USN and was designated as the Seventh Fleet Command Ship Group Oklahoma City (CLG-5), TG .The 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Commander was subordinate to the Commander of the Pacific Fleet headquartered in Hawaii. The ship regularly served as a unit of T.U 70.8.9 while involved in naval gunfire operations off the coast of Vietnam and as a unit of TG 70.0 while on AAW tasks in the Gulf of Tonkin. .



Vice Admiral William P. Mack,  
1937-1975

\*\*\*\*\*

The actual details of the Command Structure at the time I reported aboard were as

follows: The present Commanding Officer of the USS OKLAHOMA CITY (CLG5) was Captain John Joseph TICE III, U. S. Navy. He assumed command of the OKLAHOMA CITY on 26 February 1971. The ship's Executive Officer was Commander Rodney Lee STEWART, U. S. Navy.



OKLAHOMA CITY was under the Administrative control of Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. OKLAHOMA CITY was a Command Ship under the operational control of Commander SEVENTH FLEET. Also, while in the Western Pacific, OKLAHOMA CITY reported to

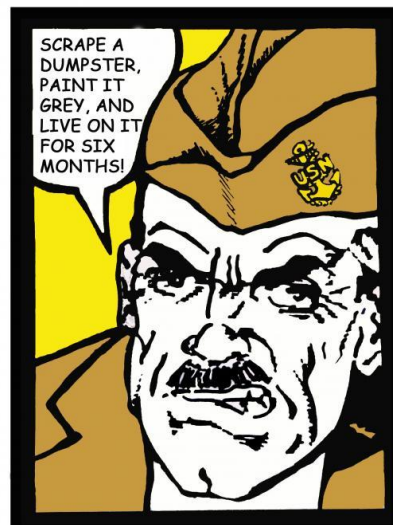
Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group SEVENTH Fleet for administrative purposes.

OKLAHOMA CITY was designated SEVENTHFLT COMMAND SHIP GROUP OKLAHOMA CITY CLG5, TG 70.1 The OKLAHOMA CITY regularly served as a unit of TU 70.8.9 while involved in Naval Gunfire Support Operations off the coast of Vietnam and as a unit of TG 70.0 while on AAW tasks in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Internally, OKLAHOMA CITY was organized into nine departments - Executive, Weapons, Supply, Operations, Engineering, Navigation, Medical, Dental and Communications. I would spend most of my first tour of duty assigned to the Weapons Department and my second tour assigned to the Executive Department.

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Later that afternoon I reported aboard by checking in at the Quarterdeck and getting a temporary rack for the night, (we slept on bunks in a shore barrack and racks when we were aboard a ship). I then wandered about the compartments for a while and ended up spending a few hours relaxing in the ship's library before a ship's master-at-arms found me and escorted me back up to the quarterdeck. It seems I had failed to complete the checking in process correctly and was formally put "on report" and received 4 hours extra labor as a disciplinary measure. My first day aboard and I was off to a good start! I was then sent below decks to the very bottom of the engine room where I was assigned to crawl even deeper into a near empty oil storage tank and finish draining and cleaning the tank in the dark, cramped, overheated, poorly ventilated compartment. I emerged several hours later, exhausted and covered in grease and oil.





My first day and I was already in trouble. What a way to start my new assignment ! I can barely find my way around the ship and I don't know a soul onboard. I have already gotten confused and missed a duty muster the day before we left port and was disciplined by being forced to clean out a set of dirty oil bilges located in a confined crawl space deep within the bowels of the ship. Since we put to sea I haven't slept much and am still trying to get used to the 12 hour work days and additional sea watches at night.

STEVEN SHAW SN  
FROM \_\_\_\_\_ RATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBJ: NEW PERSONNEL INDOCTRINATION OF

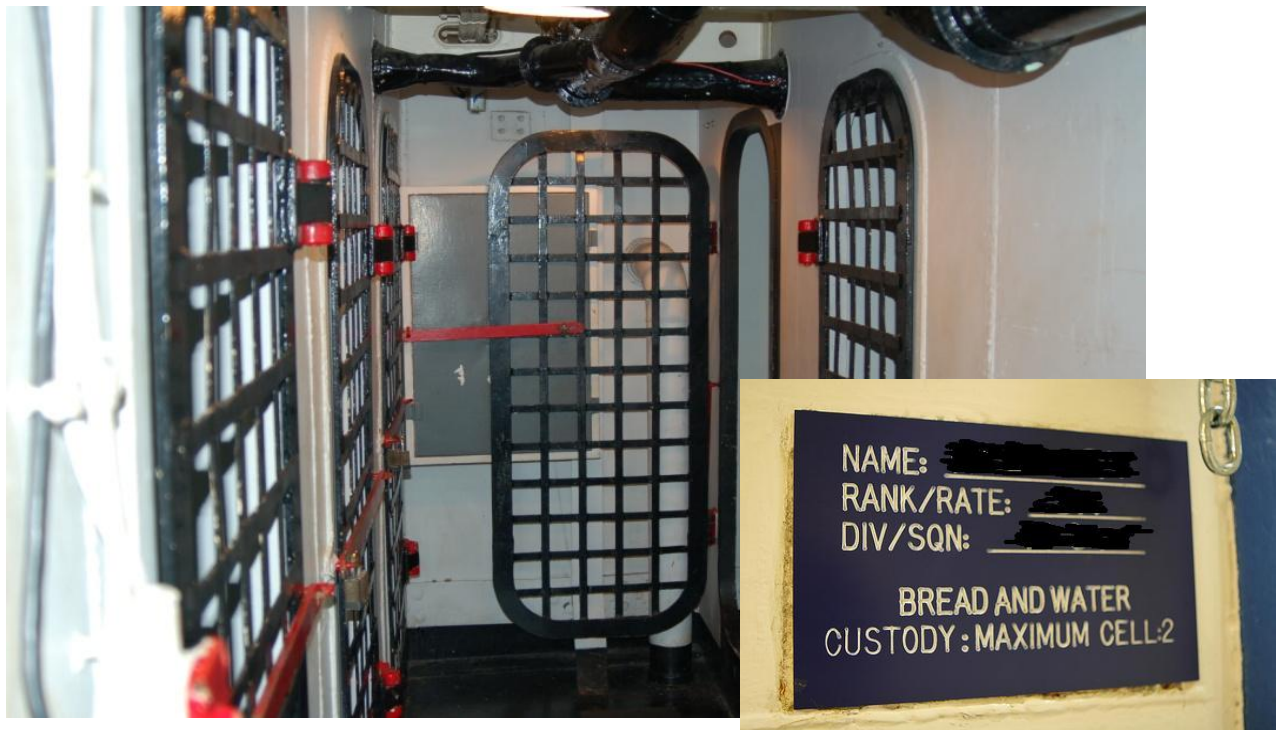
1. INTRODUCTION TO MAA FORCE
2. OK-CITYS ROLE AS 1ST AND 7TH FLEET FLAG SHIP
3. MILITARY COURTESY
4. CLEANLINESS OF SHIP
5. PAY DAY PROCEDURES
6. LIBERTY POLICEY
7. SAFTEY ABOARD SHIP
8. CONDUCT ASHORE IN A FOREIGN PORT
9. SHORE PATROLL PROCEDURE AN POLICES
10. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF EMERGENCIES ARISE WHILE ON LIBERTY
11. SAFE DRIVEING
12. GENERAL INFORMATION OF HOME PORT
13. VD LECTURE
14. DRUG LECTURE
15. CREDIT, USE AND MISUSE
16. SHIPS ORGANIZATION AND PERTAINT REGULATIONS
17. UCMJ AS REQUIRED BY ART. 137
18. CODE OF CONDUCT
19. MEETING WITH CHAPLAIN
20. MEETING WITH CAREER COUNSLER
21. DAMAGE CONTROLL LECTURE

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE BEEN INDOCTRINATED BY THE MAA IN THE ABOVE  
SUBJECTS  
NAME Steven Shaw RATE SN  
CMAA TJ Gorman Dme

The “Okie Boat” was unique in that it was permanently home ported, (officially known as “Forward Deployed”), in the country of Japan rather than quartered out of a U.S. seaport. Unlike other ships that deployed from U.S. ports for an assigned 6 to 8 month “cruise” to support 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet activities, (WESPAC) this was one of a few ships that remained in Asia on a permanent basis and was home ported in Yokosuka, Japan. The Oklahoma City was sought out by career Navy men who wanted to remain in Asia and/or had married into Asian families.

The line staff aboard this ship appeared to be very, “old Navy”. They were often protective of the old privileges and status that had been slipping since the new wave of one time enlistments and reserve commitments which had swelled to support increased manpower requirements for the Navy during the Vietnam War. This resulted in many changes of the older rules and regulations in order to attract new recruits. Even as the Navy tried to entice new blood, the Okie boat remained locked in to a more regulated operational approach that was steeped in tradition going back to World War II. This ship was old school Navy all the way...., a tough, salty atmosphere that brought out the best and worst in men.

AND YES...IN 1971, LARGER SHIPS MAINTAINED A BRIG WHERE YOU COULD STILL BE SENTENCED TO LIVE ON BREAD AND WATER ! (As evidenced by photos from the USS Midway).



**November 15, 1971** Departed port of Sattahip Thailand. Out to sea.

Nothing about the world is the same when comparing life on land to a ship at sea.

From the moment your ship first casts off from the pier you must begin to deal with the “motion of the ocean”. Everything about the way that you move must adapt to the constant sway of the ship. Whether its protected bays, calm waters, open sea, rough waters or major storms, you must quickly learn to adopt as you walk, run, climb, lift, work, eat and sleep in a constant pattern of motion. Much to my relief my sea legs developed early and I found that as long as I kept food in my stomach I had no problem with sea sickness. Even the familiar became the unfamiliar and had to be learned over again as rooms became *compartments*, halls became *passageways*, walls were *bulkheads*, stairs were *ladders*, beds were *racks* and bathrooms were *heads*. Directions changed from left to *Port* and right to *Starboard*, or front to *Fore* and *Bow* and rear was *Aft* or *Stern*. Kitchens were *galleys* and *Mid-rats* were midnight rations served to watchmen. And there were *pollywogs* and *shellbacks*, *getting short*, *gang-way*, *acting salty*, *swabbing* the decks and plenty of *scuttlebutt* and on and on it went, a strange new language to be learned.

Ships were designed for naval warfare and not for the comfort of its sailors. Weapons systems took priority throughout the ship and space was always at a premium. Living compartments were small, cramped and poorly lighted. Jail cells had more room and privacy than a sailor at sea. Our racks consisted of a square piece of canvas threaded with rope at the sides and then tied to rectangle shaped aluminum piping. Racks were stacked in columns of three or four depending on ceiling space and woe be to the poor sailor that had a heavy bunkmate over his rack as the canvas would sag with his weight. We were expected to store all of our worldly possessions into a 3X3 foot metal locker and became quite adept at the art of folding clothes. Ventilation was usually poor below decks, leaving one hot or cold at all times and water fountains tasted like Navy JP-5 fuel had leached into the drinking systems. A Navy shower was designed to save fresh water at sea and consisted of a 30 second wet down, soaping up without water and then a quick rinse. The showers smelled like toilets and the toilets smelled like...well, you don't want to know!!







Whether you were topside or below decks your time at sea was guided by the MC1, or shipboard public address system. This system provided a means of transmitting general information and orders to all internal ship spaces and topside areas, and is loud enough that all embarked personnel are able to hear it. The 1MC is also used for transmitting various alarm sounds to alert the crew of specific impending dangers such as an inbound anti-ship missile, chemical attack, collision, or a flight deck crash. Each day started with Reveille, "Reveille! Reveille! Reveille! All hands heave out and trice up.

Reveille!" and ended with Taps, "Taps! Taps! Lights out! All hands return to their racks and maintain silence about the decks. Taps." In-between was a constant litany of announcements related to cleaning, mail call, meal calls, training and safety drills such as,

- Sweepers - "Sweepers, Sweepers, man your brooms. Give the ship a clean sweep down both fore and aft! Sweep down all lower decks, ladder wells and passageways! Dump all garbage clear of the fantail! Sweepers." In port "Dump all garbage clear of the fantail" is replaced with "Dump all garbage in dumpsters provided for on the pier."
- Smoking – "The smoking lamp is now lit both fore and aft."
- Eight O'clock Reports - "Now lay before the mast (if the Captain is on board) all eight o'clock reports. Eight o'clock reports will be received in the wardroom by the Commanding Officer."
- Personnel Working Aloft - "There are personnel working aloft on board (ship), do not rotate, radiate, or energize any electric or electronic equipment, start gas turbines, or operate ship's whistle while personnel are working aloft on board (ship)." (Passed every fifteen minutes and by all adjacent ships)
- Divers Over the Side - "There are divers over the side, do not rotate screws, cycle rudders, take suction from or discharge to the sea or operate any underwater equipment without first contacting the Chief Engineer and the diving supervisor."
- Fire - "Fire, Fire, Fire, Class (A, B, C, or D) Fire in Compartment (Compartment Number and Nomenclature if known). Away the ships fire team number or IET, In-port Emergency Team.
- Security Alert - "Security Alert! Security Alert! Away the Security Alert team! Away the Back-up Alert force! All hands not involved in Security Alert stand fast!

- Flight Quarters - "Flight Quarters! Flight Quarters! Set condition 1-alpha for flight operations! Set condition 1-alpha for hoisting and lowering of boats, port boat davit! All personnel remove soft hats and refrain from throwing foreign objects over the side!

And the most notorious of all,

General Quarters - "General Quarters, General Quarters! All hands man your battle stations. Go up and forward on your starboard side, down and aft on your port side. General Quarters, General Quarters!" This is NOT a drill.

**November 15.1971** Assigned to the Supply Department, S-2 Division as a mess cook.



**A view of the Galley**

Regardless of whether you were a naval seaman, firemen, or airman, all enlisted rated E-3 or below had to serve 90 days as a mess cook in the ship's mess hall. It was a mandatory assignment for all E-1/E-3 enlisted men and turned out to be one of the worst jobs in the Navy. A mess cook was not usually involved in cooking like the rated cooks but was considered more of a waiter, server and janitor, used to assist the regular cooks. You were required to stand all of your assigned sea or port watches at any time 24 hours a day and still be up and working before breakfast is served. Mess monkeys have to set out the tables and prepare the drink, salad and condiment tray lines before morning chow starts. While the crew is dining you are washing dishes, removing bags of trash

or wiping up tables and spills. After the meal the tables must be cleaned, put away and the decks swabbed. Repeat the process three times a day and four at sea if you catch the Mid-Rats night watch meal assignment and finally your day is done. You can now grab a few hours of sleep and get ready to stand a freezing watch out in a storm for an additional four hours and if you are lucky you can grab a short nap before you start all over again. The work was menial and totally exhausting.. I don't recall my Navy recruiter ever telling me about this part of Navy life.



Each day food was prepared in the central cooking space and served cafeteria style to the men as they walked along the food line with a tray. Some of the food was prepared in neighboring spaces, like the bakery or salad locker.





Lines would form clear out of the chow hall and back up on to the main deck as sailors waited up to 45 minutes to get served. Woe to those who were near the end of the line as food would run out or get cold and unplanned food substitutes would be provided.

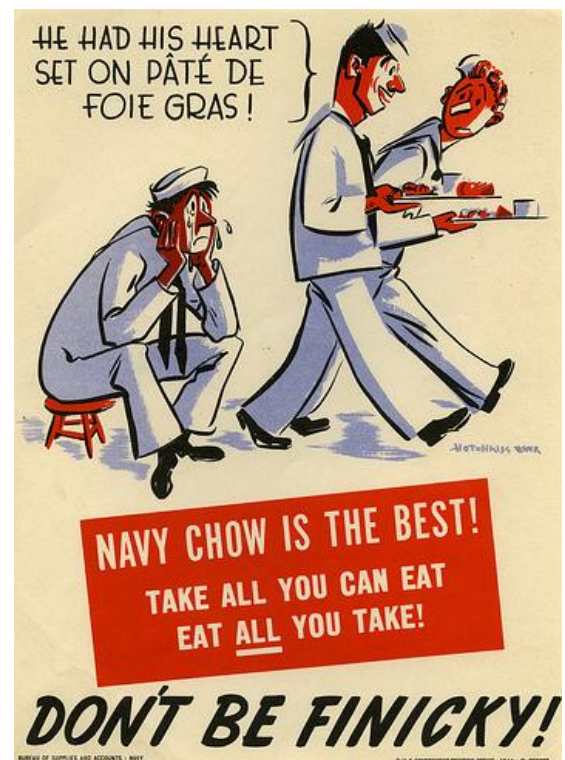
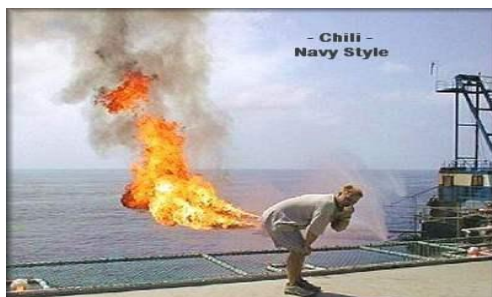
Meals had to be served in two different seating's so that the sailors on watch could be relieved and have a chance to eat.



While many complained about the food I always thought the cooks worked hard to provide a good hot cooked meal although it was always a fight to get seconds as you had to wait until both shifts had finished to find any leftovers. Food was strictly forbidden about the ship so you had to eat at the proscribed times or go hungry.

I spent my first 30 days in the mess hall before I was “promoted” to the two man salad locker assignment. This was an improvement in that you didn’t have some petty officer barking orders at you all day and you were responsible for your own private workspace and job duties.

Our job was to prepare from scratch all of the salads and condiment trays required for each meal. Using a daily menu card, we would chop, slice and dice a wide variety of meats, fruits and vegetables and mix and match them into large serving trays. It was always amazing that no matter how bad we made a certain salad it would become our most popular item with requests for more. We made some pretty unusual mystery meat and veggie combinations that’s for sure!!



On certain days the menu called for the real galley cooks to use potatoes or cook chicken. This required us to come back after a long day’s work and spend all evening peeling potatoes or separating frozen chicken pieces. By now the modern Navy had an automatic potato peeler which consisted of a huge barrel with a rough, grainy interior texture that would scrape the skin off of the potato as the barrel was rotated electronically. The longer and faster you left the spuds in the barrel the more they would wear down. It’s a good thing that no one was around late at night to observe the two man staff in the salad locker. As the time wore on and we got tired we found ourselves leaving the peeler on until the potatoes were the size of marbles and we could throw them at each other when the next food fight broke out.





Sooner or later one of us would drop a whole tray of food on the floor or forget to turn off the peeler and spin a bag of spuds down to nothing....and as the night wore on, many of those chicken pieces landed on the floor before ending up in the sorting trays. In our own juvenile way we felt like we were getting back at the Navy for all the misery it had caused us.



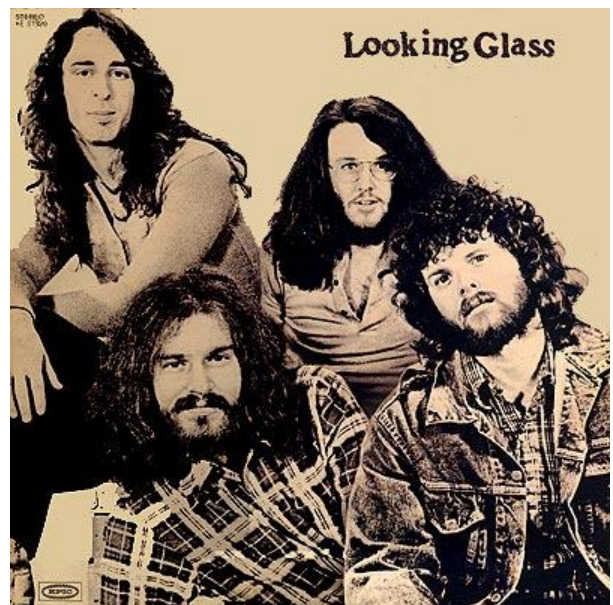
**The consumption of alcohol on board U.S. Navy vessels was prohibited by General Order 99, effective July 1, 1914, issued by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. The name "Joe" for Josephus became synonymous with the term, "Cup of Joe" which stood for coffee, the strongest drink aboard a navy ship.**

My last 30 days as a mess cook were almost enjoyable. I was appointed to be one of the breakfast short order cooks for the Chief Petty Officer mess. This was a small separate kitchen where I actually learned to fry dehydrated hash browns stored in a milk carton and scramble powered eggs on a grill. Each order for breakfast was independently cooked and served to a smaller group of 5 to 10 CPO's at a time. I personally served each dish in a nice quiet wardroom with silver utensils, and white linen tablecloths away from the rabble of the enlisted crew. I worked hard to serve my masters and was rewarded with shorter work hours and more time to rest. I can still recall like it was yesterday standing in front of the grill after a real cook had taught me how to crack eggs, fry bacon and burn toast, listening to the ship's radio play my one of my favorite songs each morning.....

### "Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)" by *THE LOOKING GLASS*

There's a port on a western bay  
And it serves a hundred ships a day  
Lonely sailors pass the time away  
And talk about their homes

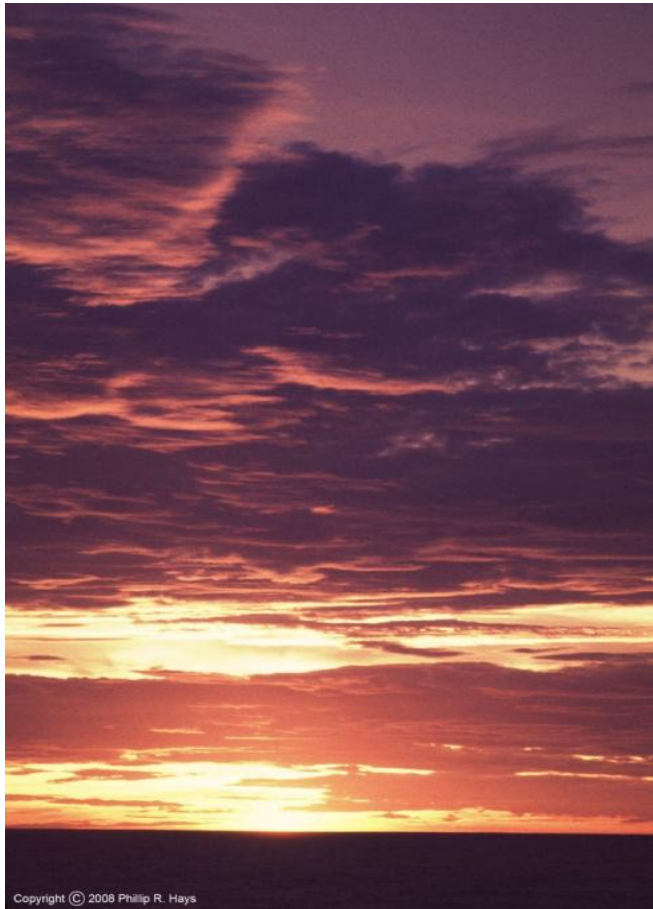
They say " Brandy, you're a fine girl"  
(you're a fine girl)  
"What a good wife you would be" (such a fine girl) "  
But my life, my lover, my lady is the sea"



# MY NEW HOME

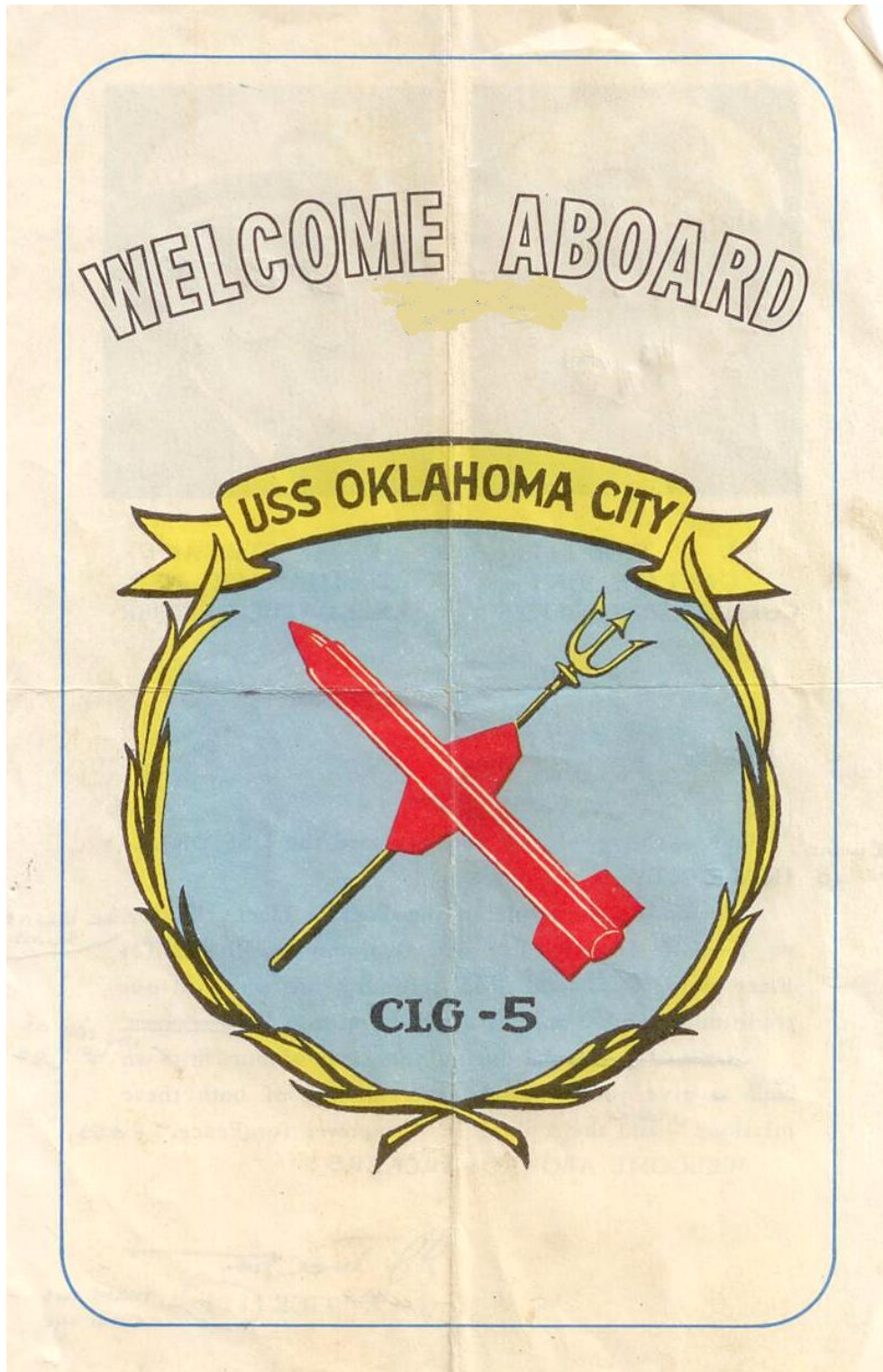


The *Okie Boat* was my home for almost a year. I was imprisoned at sea for weeks at a time with no private space or personal living quarters. One ate, slept and worked in the company of men and you soon longed for the simple things in life like a soft bed, a home cooked meal or a young girl's affection. A ship at sea was an adventure like no



other. It took you to far away places and let you experience the sights and sounds of foreign lands. It was a moment of spiritual reflection as you watched another beautiful sunset or stood the lonely midnight watch. It was a place of laughter and pranks or cruelty and conflict as you sailed with a crew of men and boys from every section of our nation. The ship could also be your worst nightmare. The work was an endless, tedious grind from sunup to sundown. When the workday was over the evening watches began and you never got a full night's sleep. The call to General Quarters as the loud speaker blared out, "This is Not a Drill !!" caused your heart to race and your blood to boil. Fear came with the sea and the realization that it was your master and there was no place to hide should it wish to claim you. Storms, typhoons, and high seas that rocked and shoved your 14,000 ton ship about like it was a

bathtub toy gave rise to your instant mortality and led to thoughts of drowning in a cold hostile ocean far from home. Such was life at sea during the Vietnam War in 1971-72 on the Flagship of the United States Seventh Fleet, the USS Oklahoma City.





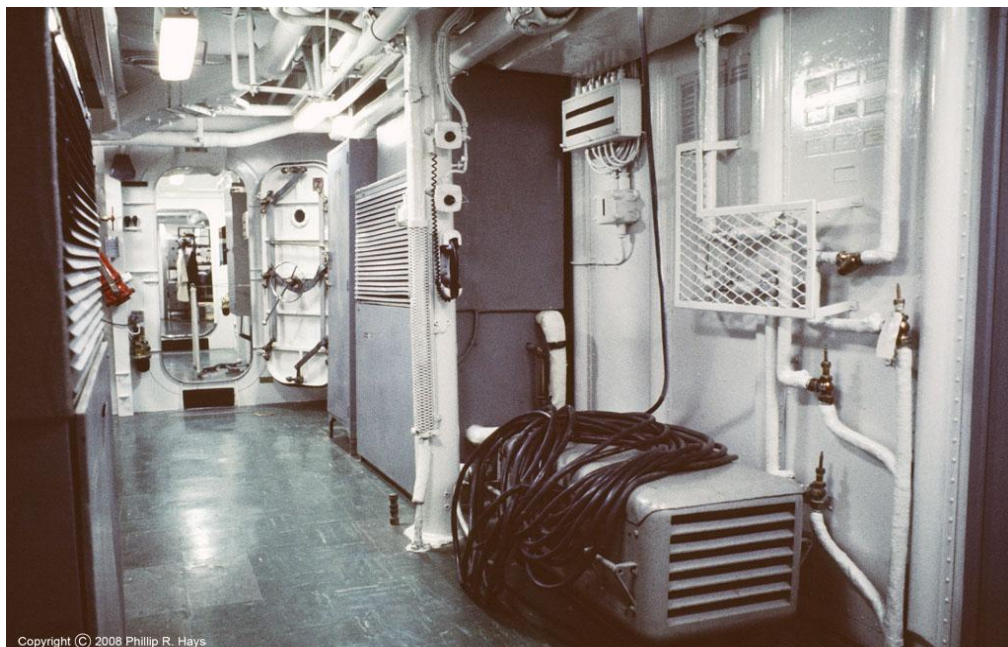


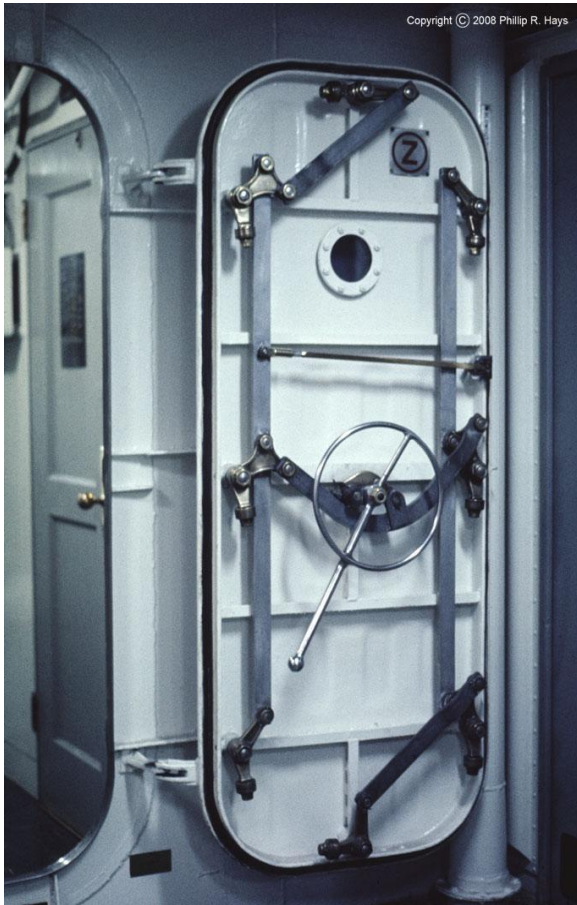
**The Oklahoma City, also known as, “The Grey Ghost of the Vietnam Coast”, was a 610 foot long, 63 foot wide box that floated 23 feet deep in the ocean. It was pointed on one end, blunt on the other, and in between were crammed boilers and engine rooms, gun and missile magazines, weapons control rooms, anchor handling equipment, air conditioning, heating and water purifications spaces, electric generators, workshops, food, fuel and water stowage, galleys and dining spaces, offices, radio rooms, toilets and berthing spaces for 1200 crewmen.**

**Like all ships, it was crowded - you don't have much private space aboard ship. We spent about two thirds of our time at sea, with all the pleasures and hardships that can bring. Shipboard life is very different from your nice comfortable home on shore. This was just life aboard a guided missile cruiser in 1971-72.**

**So let's take a tour of the inside of a naval fighting vessel. The Okie Boat was not designed for human comfort but for naval combat. Not a space is wasted and every area is designed to enhance the fighting mission. In other words, “*this ain't no cruise ship!*”**

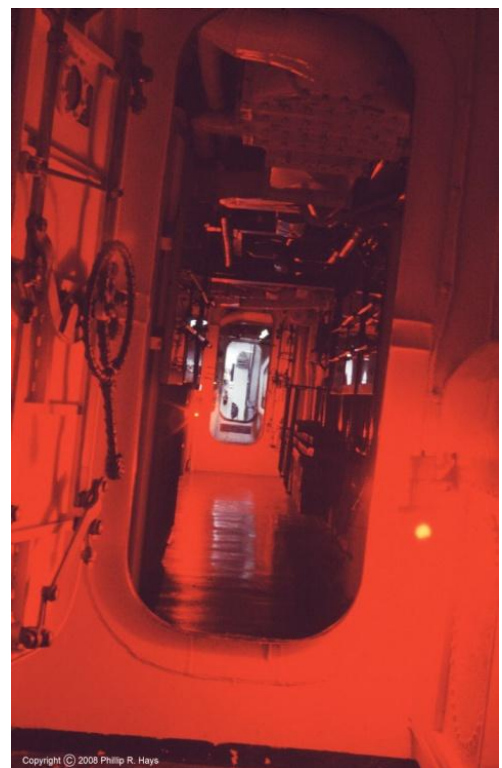
**Notice the piping and valves, and the portable electric welding unit at the side of the passageway. Classy accommodations, don't you think? This may have been living spaces, but they served as a damage control station in combat.**





Watertight bulkheads were penetrated with water tight doors. This picture shows a "quick acting" door. Turning the handle caused all eight dogs to operate, pulling the door tightly against the seals to achieve watertight integrity. During combat these doors were always closed unless it was urgent that someone pass through. The mechanism made it possible to open and close the door in a minimum amount of time. Most doors were not quick acting, so you had to manually open and close all eight dogs one at a time.

The interior of the ship was accessed by passageways running the length of the ship. In the superstructure the doors were only air tight, but below the main deck the ship was divided into water tight compartments. There were water tight doors between compartments only on the second and third decks. Below that there were no openings in the water tight bulkheads, and access to spaces was by vertical ladders. At night passageways were illuminated with red lights so our eyes would adjust to darkness. This made it safer to venture out on the open decks in the dark, as was often necessary to go to and from watch stations. Access between decks was through water tight hatches and inclined ladders, at least for primary routes.



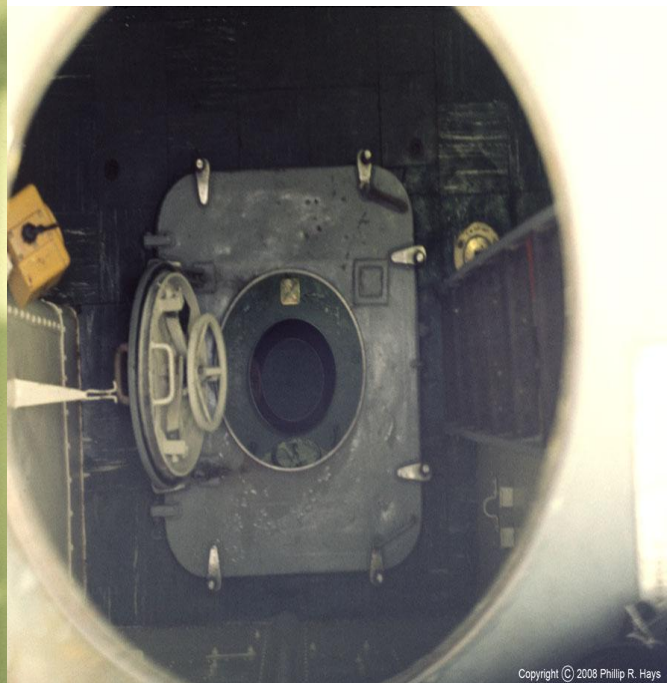


**Openings into less used spaces were through round eighteen inch diameter water tight scuttles. The view down through the circular scuttle shows five deck levels, from the main deck down to the second platform. Working spaces were just as crowded as living quarters, and sometimes even more so.**

Moving about in such confined spaces became quite a challenge, especially in a rolling sea. It was always amusing to see a guest civilian, airman or soldier aboard for a visit because after a few days they would inevitably be seen wearing a patch or bandage of some type. Most common injuries occurred when a “land lubber” would forget to “step and stoop” through a watertight hatch and knock himself out. More than one sprain or bruise was caused by falling down a steep ladder or hitting one’s head on a hatch.



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**The view down through the circular scuttle shows five deck levels, from the main deck down to the second platform.**



**This is an officers "head," complete with toilets, shower stalls, wash basins and mirrors - all the comforts of home.**

**Sewage was dumped over the side - actually through holes in the hull above the waterline. The plumbing was equipped with check valves to prevent water from flowing back in when the bow of the ship submerged in heavy weather.**

I wouldn't dare show you a picture of the enlisted men's "head," many of which were located several decks below in the bowels of a thirty year old ship where they often stank of diesel JP-5 fuel and human waste.

These foul smelling, overheated, airless compartments littered with paper towels, toilet paper and crusty magazines, often contained wet floors flooded with backed up showers or sewage and no manner of cleaning could keep the smell or heat from detracting from the luxury of a 2 minute cold water, "sailor's shower" at sea.

Most of the ship's officers shared four man staterooms which were pretty luxurious compared to the enlisted men's quarters. Rooms contained more storage, a writing table and a sink with two armchairs. Chief Petty Officers also had private quarters and a private mess hall separate from the lower rated sailors





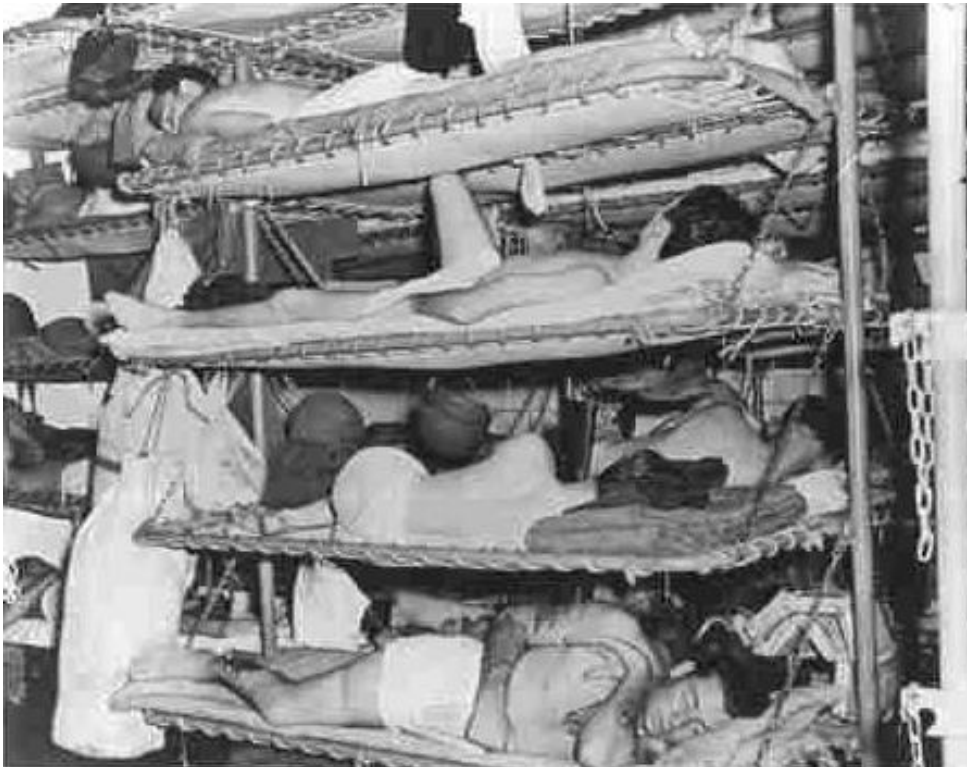
More senior officers were assigned to two man staterooms. Department heads had private rooms, as did the Captain and Executive Officer (XO - second in command of the ship). The Captain also had a smaller sea cabin located just aft of the navigation bridge where he lived when the ship was at sea. The Admiral



and the fleet Chief of Staff (second in command of the fleet) had relatively luxurious quarters, similar to a very small apartment on land. No matter what the rank, creature comforts were of secondary importance to the equipment necessary for the mission of the ship.



The enlisted men, such as myself were housed below deck in open crew compartments. Compared to an Officer's stateroom our sparse crew compartment looked like "slaves quarters" or an old turn of the century jail house.

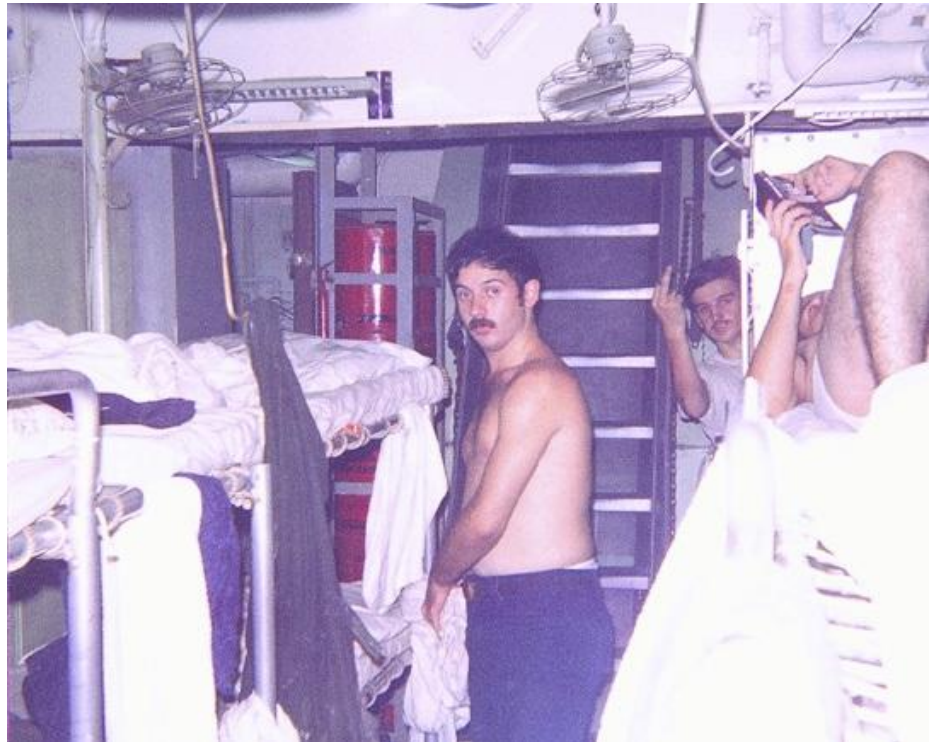


If you took a top rack you were more likely to get an extra foot of open space between yourself and the ceiling but these areas were hard to climb in and out of and were not suited for the many late night calls to battle or action

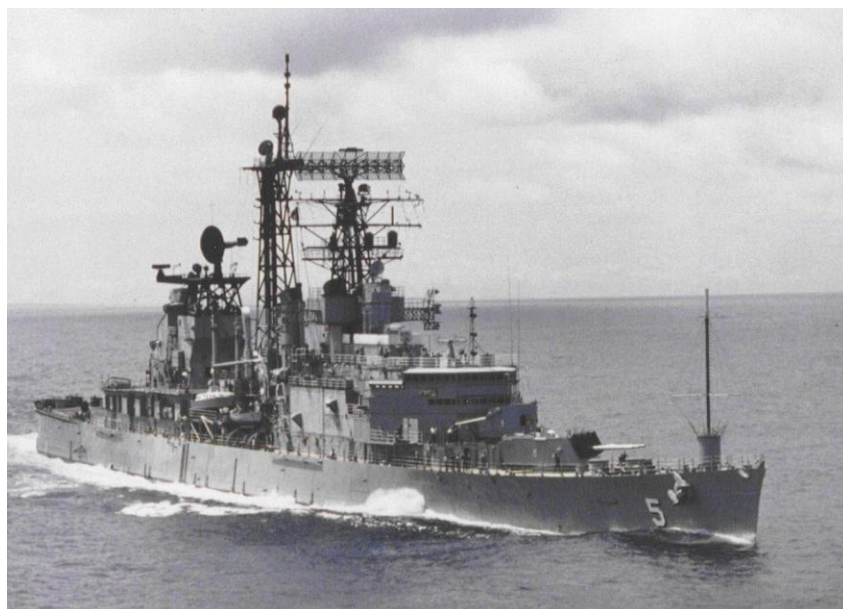


stations. While the lower bunks were more easily accessible, the canvas sails tied to the racks often sagged depending upon the weight of the sailor above you and left you with little room to turn over or maneuver during your sleep time. It was always amazing how well I slept in those racks. The hard work, fresh sea air and the rocking of the ship at sea was guaranteed to put you to sleep quickly.

**Privacy was not an option for enlisted men aboard the ship..**



The ship also had a laundry, barber shops, a ship's store, medical and dental spaces and several food galleys. All were squeezed in between powder magazines, generator rooms, document incinerators, radar rooms, and many other equipment spaces.





After my completion as a mess cook I was transferred to 1st Division, Weapons Department (Feb. 12, 1972). In addition to my daily duties involving deck and weapon maintenance, I also served as a *Port and Sea Watchman*. I stood *Ship, Weather, Deck* and *Combat Watches*. I was assigned to *Work Parties* for maintenance, refueling, supply replenishment and personnel transfer at sea. I worked *Shore Patrol* assignments in port and *Combat Action* assignments at sea. These *Battle Stations* included weapons and fire stations. and CIC, Combat Information Center. For the duration of my first tour aboard the ship I stayed in the Weapons department maintaining the bow area and later the mid-ships area after a short re-assignment to 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Weapons Department.



**While at sea the crew carried on routine business, like the Second Division men who were finishing the caulking of new deck boards and painting the bulkhead of a new compartment that was added during the last in-port period.**



**Second Division Deck Area**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was responsible for all cleaning and maintenance of the outside mid-ships, (middle of the ship) below the smoke stack line. All machinery was kept in operating order and any deck related operating functions such as winches, pulleys, lifeboats, etc. were cleaned, repaired and manned by 2<sup>nd</sup> Div. deck hands.



Most of our time aboard the ship we wore the blue denim working uniform for our work duties. This consisted of a white t-shirt or a blue, short sleeve denim shirt, navy bell bottom jeans, Boone Docker boots and the white canvas sailor hat or a blue garrison ball cap. This uniform was comfortable and well suited for crawling around the deck and working in dirty, tight spaces. In port we were required to change into our dress blue, tropic or dress white uniforms prior to certain work parties ashore or standing certain formal watches aboard ship.

My assignment with 1<sup>st</sup> Division primarily involved general cleaning and maintenance duties for the foc'sle and bow area from the front gun mounts forward. The work of a "deck ape" was dull, monotonous, boring and routine. Much of it was just designed to keep the sailor busy and lacked any real purpose or feeling of accomplishment. Our most prevalent assignment was to chip and paint and chip and paint and when were finished with that, we would chip and paint some more!

