

## My “Hitch” in the Navy

I am grateful to have served a “hitch” in the U.S. Navy. In a recent issue of “The Aerograph” I noted that the ‘AGs’ are now part of the “Information Dominance Corps”. Also known as the “Intelligence Community”. When I read this, I was disappointed. Not only for the ‘AGs’, but for all the kids starting out in the Navy. The reason I feel this way is, I always considered myself a sailor first and an ‘AG’ second. Anyway, here is my story.

I started my “hatch” way back in 1960. I went to ‘A’ and ‘C’ school under the direction of men like Chief Marvin Berger and Chief Dave Greenberger. My first assignment was Radiosonde (Rawin) in Argentia, Newfoundland, working for Chief Dave. After one year, I was assigned to go to sea. I put in for cruisers and carriers. I drew the USS Lookout, a North Atlantic Ocean radar picket ship. Feeling somewhat sorry for myself (No carrier!), I went to Chief Dave and asked what am I getting into? He said, “You will learn more about the Navy in six months on the Lookout than you will learn on a big carrier in six years”. How right he was.

The USS Lookout had a 150 man crew with only one ‘AG’ billet. Carrying my sea bag I reported aboard alone. When I reached the quarter deck, I was met by a young seaman and a chief. The seaman looked over my orders and said something about me being a “Candy Ass Airedale”. The chief said, “That may be true, but he is ship’s company now”.

I made a couple of pickets with an ‘AG’ named Whitehall, then I was alone. I did all the regular ‘AG’ stuff: Rawin, Bathe thermo soundings and observations.

I was assigned to various other jobs. I was trained on, and learned how to launch and recover a whale boat. I was part of the gun crew that fired the 3” 50 cal. fantail deck gun. I was the trainer. I stood watches working behind the plotting board in ‘CIC’, where I learned to write backwards. I manned a Mark 17 radar scope. When our ship went into Brooklyn Navy Yards I was assigned to shore patrol.

Most important, I was trained and assigned the task of “engine room telegraph talker” on the bridge. I stood behind the captain, relaying all engine room orders. This assignment was for all “sea and anchor details”, all “high line transfers” and for “battle stations”. I could see everything. Wow! I made second class and I was “ship’s company”.

Years later, I found Chief Dave (via the Naval Weather Service Assn.) and called him frequently. When I was a kid in the Navy, Chief Dave was not my friend, he was my chief. He taught me to be accurate, on time and take pride in my work. It served me well. He was a great man. I am proud of my service and proud to be an Aerographer’s Mate. Thanks

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P.S. You know who the most important man on a picket ship is? The cook.