

Story #50 "Nufie" the dog

Recently Troy Cole told a story about the Silverbell's mouse. Glenn Paulson told another story about their pet cat. These stories, plus Charlie Bernhardt's account of his experiences about the YNG 28 a gate vessel, triggered some of my memories while aboard the USS Palm. At the time we were doing a stint in Argentia, Newfoundland, as a gate vessel there.

By the time the net was fabricated and then laid across the entrance of Argentia Bay, there were three net tenders stationed at Argentia, but unfortunately (for the Palm) no gate vessels had arrived yet. So it became necessary for the net tenders to rotate this very boring and monotonous duty. I cannot recall a single event that made that assignment memorable or pleasant.

We were moored fore and aft to mooring buoys anchored to the nets. It was much worse than riding at anchor because, being moored as we were, we could not yaw with the wind or the current. It was a rough ride as only net tenders could ride! We had a 2-1/2 striper as a skipper, and since he hated his assignment, he made sure the crew (and officers, especially me) did not get lazy or too comfortable.

The bay froze up so we couldn't send liberty parties to the beach for any kind of relief. And on top of all this "Selly" Selmont, the CBM, got the bright idea of switching fuel on the starboard side of the port, thus bringing the waterline on the starboard above the ice, about waist high. Then he had the deck force chip and repaint this side, using the ice as the base. This might not have been quite so bad, but the engine room black gang would stand along the rail and offer their "expert advice" to the deck force below, who were freezing their fingers and

toes from the ice and the frigid winds they were encountering.

Another demoralizing event occurred while moored out on the ice. During our normal net laying efforts the crew somehow acquired a Newfoundland puppy. I never knew how or where they got it, but the crew loved and idolized this pup, and he responded. When one watch would go on liberty (to the movies, there wasn't anything else to do) "Nufie", as the pup was called, went with them. So Nufie had liberty every night.

Well, when we drew the assignment as gate vessel for a month, the restriction to the ship for a whole month apparently turned out to be too much for Nufie. So while Chief Selmont was having the fuel transferred from one side to the other, thus raising, one side of the ship, in the still of the night, he jumped ship and ran ashore on the ice. Nufie was AWOL, and when the ship finished its 30 days at the gate, he had not returned. He was still AWOL when the Palm left Argentia bound for Boston several months later. Is there a dog brig someplace for AWOL dogs?

Tom Fike USS Palm AN-28