

### Net Tender Story:

On March 22, 1944 I was assigned to USS Anaqua AN-40. This was one of 10 new wooden net tenders (AN-38 thru AN-47) that had been built and were being built by Everett-Pacific Shipbuilding & Drydock Co at Everett, Washington.

I was recently out of radio operators service school and was 1 of 3 radio operators assigned to the ship

Our skipper was Lt. James Tighe, an experienced officer, who previously had served as skipper on USS Holly AN-19. Three of our officers were Lt. Cliff Williams, Lt (jg) Lawrence Young and Lt (jg) John Kirigin. I believe this was their first ship assignment. The other officer was Warrant Officer William Curle. He was a retired veteran navy man who was called back in-to service. He was a former Chief Boatswain Mate with a lot of experience, which was necessary to lead the deck force on a work ship like ours..

About half of our crew were recently out of boot camp or service schools. However it wasn't long before the chiefs and older rated men got us adjusted to life aboard ship.

After undergoing more work on the ship at Lake Union Drydock and Machine Works in Seattle, a shakedown cruise and temporary duty repairing nets between Seattle and Bremerton, we received our orders for Alaskan duty. We were tied up to the dock at Pier 91 in Seattle.

On May 18, 1944 Lt. Cliff Williams the officer of the deck, made the following entry in ships deck log: "1310 Underway from Pier 91, Smith Cove, Seattle, Washington enroute to Dutch Harbor Alaska on various courses and speeds."

Captain Tighe came on the speaker and informed us that we would be spending the next 5 days sailing up the beautiful Inside Passage. Most of us had never heard of the Inside Passage. This is one of the most scenic water routes in the world extending from Seattle to Skagway. The route uses channels and straits between islands and the mainland that afford protection from the storms and open waters of the Pacific Ocean. Snow capped mountains, forests, waterfalls, glaciers and deep narrow channels (like rivers) give the Inside Passage great scenic beauty. We would enjoy a thousand mile trip on this waterway. Many tourists

now ride cruise ships or ferries to see this wonder of nature. Very likely some of you have done so.

We entered Puget Sound, passed the city of Edmonds and entered the wider body of water in Juan de Fuca Straits near Whidbey Island. Crossing the straits we went past Victoria, B.C. Another 25 or 30 miles brought us to Saturna Island. Lt (jg) Young's log entry reads "Anchored off east point, Saturna Island, B.C. in 20 fathoms of water, 50 fathoms of chain out to water's edge on starboard anchor

Being a boy from the prairies of North Dakota I was captivated by the beautiful scenery. I had the midnight to 4 radio room watch so turned in early. In stating time I will use the 24 hour clock as used aboard ship.

At 0325 on May 19th Lt. Williams log entry reads: 0325 Anchor Aweigh. 0330 Anchor at Short Stay. 0335 Underway on various courses and speeds.

Until 1415 we were sailing through the wide Strait of Georgia. We then entered Discovery Narrows in Johnstone Straits. It was like going down a river with splendid scenery on both sides. About 1600 we had to wind around some floating logs.

We were approaching the end of the channel in narrow Johnstone Straits. Lt (jg) Kirigin's log entry reads: Anchored in forward Bay, Cracraft Island, B.C. in 34 fathoms of water with 45 fathoms of chain out on starboard anchor. When not on duty in the radio room I spent time with other shipmates on deck looking at the scenery, observing sea birds and other large birds including bald eagles

On May 20th Lt (jg) Young's log entry reads: "0330 Anchor Aweigh. 0327 Underway on various courses and speeds conforming to channel. Soon we are in the wider body of water in Queen Charlotte Strait. Later we come to a break between the islands entering Queen Charlotte Sound, where we get a glimpse of open ocean. We can feel the gentle rolling motion of the ship until we enter Fitz Hugh Sound, where we have islands on our port side. At 1815 we enter Tolomic Channel. Here again it's like traveling down a river with solid land on each side, Princess Royal Island being on the port side. At 2015 we enter Swanson Bay. Lt. (jg) Young's log entry reads: "Anchored in 18 fathoms of water. Riding at 45 Fathoms of chain." Boy, this is the life. Taking in all this beautiful scenery.

On May 21st Lt (jg) Kirigin's log entry reads: Anchor Aweigh and underway from anchorage in Swanson Bay. We have a short break of open water between islands then enter Greenville Channel, another river like passage before we enter Malacca Passage to Chatham Sound. This is close to Prince Rupert. Here we get a glimpse of the ocean. The rolling of the ship gives us a little baptism to sea sickness before we again get into the protection of islands. As we come to Ketchikan all engines are stopped and an immigration officer comes aboard at 1920, makes a 5 minute inspection and leaves the ship at 1925. A couple hours later we enter Lyman Bay. Lt (jg) Young's log entry reads: " 2148 Anchored in Lyman Bay, Clarence Strait Alaska in 18 fathoms of water with 40 fathoms of chain out on starboard anchor.

On May 22nd Lt Young's log entry reads: "0320 preparations are made for getting underway. 0355 Anchor housed. On various courses and speeds clearing Lyman Bay. We do some westward zig zagging before we go by the Cape Decision light at 1313 and enter Chatham Strait. Lt Williams log entry reads. " 2040 Anchored in Whitewater Bay, Chatham Strait, Alaska in 14 fathoms of water with 35 fathoms of chain out to the starboard anchor.

On May 23rd Lt (jg) Kirigin's log entry reads: "0330 Underway from Whitewater Bay anchorage." Upon leaving Chatham Strait and going into Icy Strait we are only about 20 miles from Juneau. At 0955 we layed to at the Pleasant Island station vessel. We exchanged signals and received permission to pass. We were coming to the end of our pleasant journey. At 1445 we leave Cape Spencer.

We were leaving behind the tranquil, peaceful and scenic Inside Passage. Ahead of us was a 4 day trip across the wild and rough North Pacific ocean. As the slang expression goes

"Soon the manure will hit the fan." Our little Net Tender will be rolling and pitching all the way to the bare and foggy Aleutian's

Lt (jg) Kirigin's log entry reads: "1445 took departure from Cape Spencer light on starboard quarter, distance 2 miles and set course to 268 degrees T (true-gyro compass reading) 244 degrees psc (magnetic compass reading) speed 12 knots.

It isn't long before sea sickness took over, especially for us younger sailors including me. It was horrible. Many of us were holding on-to and leaning on the port and starboard gunwales, emptying our stomachs to feed the fish. When we could no longer to this we headed for our bunks. When they called me for my radio watch I put some water in my small scrub bucket and went up to the radio shack. It wasn't much fun listening to morse code and being miserably seasick.

In the weeks and months ahead however we became used to the rough seas and didn't mind it too much. I will admit however that I never did feel normal if it was real rough.

This part of the journey in the North Pacific was very boring. In the evening of May 25th we saw our first land. It was the tiny island of Chirikof. On the morning of May 26th we had to alter our course to avoid a school of whales. That same afternoon lookouts spotted a raft adrift off the starboard beam. After investigating and seeing that it was empty we proceeded onward.

On May 27th we entered Dutch Harbor. Lt (jg) Young's log entry reads: "1225 passed buoy on starboard beam at entrance to Dutch Harbor Alaska. Steering various courses and speeds to conform with harbor. 1245 moored port side to Ballyho Dock. What a relief to be in calm waters.

This dock would be our home in the months ahead when we were in port. Our first sea assignment was May 31st, but that's another story.

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