



Joe Gamache (AGR-4) 1956-1957

True Story

This is a true Navy experience. In 1957 I was at home in Nashua, NH on a week-end liberty. My ship, the USS Searcher YAGR 4 (at that time), was in the Boston Navy shipyard. The ship was due to leave for some type of sea trials at 0800 for 10 days. I got up a little later that Monday morning, left NH at 0600 with what I believed to be enough time to make the ship (normally 40 minutes back then). I had driven into Boston several times knowing a few short cuts. But this morning I got stuck in traffic. Approaching the road to the shipyard, it was now 0800. I felt lucky to find a parking place under an overpass. I ran as fast as I could to the gate about 500 feet, showed my pass and ran toward the pier. A large building was blocking my view of the ship but as I rounded the building there was my ship about 50 feet away from the pier. I ran down the pier not knowing what to do. Some of my so-called buddies were yelling (a little late Joe). A dock worker asked me, is that your ship? YES. He said are you willing to stand on that ball attach to that crane? We can swing you out and drop you on that first cargo cover. I got on the ball holding my diddy bag and they lifted me up not sure how high (I didn't care) and swung me out and dropped me on #1 cargo hatch cover. The captain said, now I've seen everything.

I proceeded to my station, Combat Information Center as I was a Radarman. All my shipmates asked me the same question. What are you doing in dressed blues? I just came aboard on a crane. SURE!!! The next problem I had was I still had my Liberty card. Back then you gave your liberty card to the OOD on the Quarter Deck when you came aboard or drop it in a box. I asked my watch supervisor what to do with it? He say's you should have given it to the OOD. I know but there was no OOD. Ask your Division officer. Same question, same answer. Try to return it to the supply office. Same problem. They would not take it.

Anyway had fun with the crane thing all that time out to sea. Returning to Boston shipyard I went on liberty. When I got to my yellow Mercury convertible with a dark green top, I found out why nobody parked there. My car was covered with 1 inch of seagull droppings. My green top was never the same. I really enjoy telling my 9 grandkids some of my sea stories. My kids say, dad I heard that one several times. If any shipmates witnessed this crane thing, please e-mail me at bsp.joe@comcast.net