



John Wrafter (AGR-1, 1957-58)

What Did They See?

"They joined the Navy to see the world;" but other than the Boston Shipyard, the men of the Guardian saw only one "foreign" port in 1958. Guardian and a Coast Guard Cutter were asked to visit Portland, Maine, to conduct an Open House of the ships and to each provide a group to march in the Memorial Day parade. The officers and men in their dress uniforms manned the Guardian's rail as she moved into her designated spot on the pier behind the cutter. It was an impressive sight. Guardian almost resembled a man-o-war except that she didn't render a gun salute. She couldn't because she didn't have a saluting battery. To prepare for the parade, Guardian's deck crew had made several "U.S.S. Guardian" banners and pennants. It was reported that the Guardian contingent performed admirably in the parade.

Mistaken Identity

Before leaving Davisville, RI. for Portland, a new recruit, Seaman Holmes, had reported for duty. He seemed to be shorter than what the Navy would have allowed and he had a babyface to go along with his short stature. During Guardian's stay in Portland a couple of events involving Seaman Holmes occurred.

On one of the days a group of about 30 or 40 Sea Scouts, dressed in uniforms almost identical to what the crew was wearing, was touring the ship. Ens. Max Privette, the OOD, spotted a small figure climbing high up on Guardian's mast. Thinking that it was one of the sea scouts and fearing an

injury, Ens. Privette shouted "You up there, come down at once." The figure slowly descended and he was quickly identified as Seaman Holmes.

Neither Rain nor Sleet nor Foe Will Stay This Courier from His Appointed Task

LTJG Wrafter was OOD when a call was received that one bag of mail was received for Guardian and it was available at the end of the dock. The petty officer passed the word for the Deck Dept. to have one of its men report to the quarterdeck. Within a minute or two, Seaman Holmes dutifully reported. In a twisted version of the old "Hang this pail on the skyhook" gambit, Mr. Wrafter ordered Holmes "Go to the end of the dock, and pick up the two bags of mail for Guardian." About five minutes later, Holmes returned bearing, as was to be expected, the one bag of mail. Mr. Wrafter asked "Where is the other bag of mail?" Holmes replied, "There was only one bag of mail, sir." Mr. Wrafter replied, rather sternly "I said there were two bags. Now, go back down there and get the other bag." Holmes protested "But sir" as he began his walk back down to the end of the dock.

About 15 minutes later, a lone slight figure could be seen trudging up the dock toward Guardian with what appeared to be a mailbag. Upon delivering the bag to the quarterdeck, Holmes reported "Here's the other bag, sir." It turned out the bag was addressed to the Coast Guard Cutter.