

The Navy Years 1970-1974

"Line up, god damn it. Shut your fucking mouths and get in line. Move it. I said line up. You goddamn maggots. Move up. Tighten up that fucking line. Nuts to butts. Tighten it up, I said. Make that man in front of you smile."

Translation: "Gentlemen: Welcome to the United States Navy." With these words of encouragement, my four-year tour of duty in the U. S. Navy was launched.

My trip to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center had been uneventful to this point. I checked in at the Newark, New Jersey induction center at the appointed time one fall day in 1970 and kissed my parents goodbye. When a busload of recruits was ready, we boarded a bus and headed to McGuire Air force Base for a flight to Chicago. On the plane, I met a thin hippie-type guy named Tom, and we quickly became traveling companions. In the Chicago airport, several enlisted men greeted us and herded us into another bus that drove directly to the Great Lakes recruit arrival area, which was a pathetic collection of dilapidated World War II barracks. It was late afternoon, and all of us were hungry, but we started a checking-in process that lasted through the supper hour and on through the night until about 3:00 A.M.

First we were told to strip to our underwear. We were handed a piece of paper with our clothing sizes on it, after being measured and sized by our hosts, and told to hold the paper in our mouths as we collected each clothing item. Two arms were not sufficient to carry all the items, but we were finally issued a duffle bag into which we could stuff everything. As we picked up the last item, the issuer ripped the paper out our mouths. I guess I was too tired to realize what was happening, for I had no time to wet my dry lips before the bastard tore the paper out of my mouth, taking most of the skin off of my lower lip.

I remember little else except being awakened by a black guy at 5:00 A.M. who switched on all the lights, and whose wakeup call was an empty Coca-Cola bottle rubbed forcefully around the inside of an empty, ribbed, metal garbage can. The sound was the most god-awful noise I have ever heard in my life, loud enough to wake the dead, and everyone was startled. Some leaped out of their bunks, but others just laid in bed startled out of their wits. I was somewhere in between, shocked out of a sound sleep, but too tired and fatigued to do much of anything.

The black guy introduced himself as our Service Week. We were to address him as "Service Week." Mr. Week proceeded to acquaint us with his limited vocabulary and with basic Boot Camp terminology, which he no doubt had learned from the likes of the bastards we met the night before. We quickly followed his shouted orders and got or "fucking sorry asses dressed," lined up "nuts to butts," and marched our "mother-fucking, cock-sucking, son-of-a-bitch, ugly asses" to breakfast.

To my great surprise, the galley food was very good. I am certain that being famished affected my taste, but I fondly recall this single experience as pleasant, even though I was so incredibly tired. "Take all you want, but eat all you take," read the signs in the galley. We stuffed ourselves, but hardly anyone said a word as we ate. Our Service Week was soon yelling at us to take our trays to the scullery and line up outside. We marched directly from breakfast to a building where we waited in line for haircuts. About half a dozen at a time, we lost the rest of our identity as human beings. This, more than anything else, changed me from Thomas Lawrence Mowbray to D402734. After the hair thing, we returned to our barrack, gathered all of our civilian clothing, put it into a box, and mailed it home. We were instructed to remove everything from our pockets and place it in a bucket. The bucket was then confiscated. All printed material was confiscated, and I reluctantly surrendered a paperback volume of Thoreau's writings. Obviously, we were in a situation not unlike prison, complete with uniforms, bald heads, ID numbers, sleep deprivation, and both verbal and physical abuse.

After lunch we spent all afternoon having physicals. By far the worst part of this ordeal was drawing our own blood. We were instructed to form several lines across a long room, stripped to our new boxer shorts. Orderlies came down the lines placing tourniquets on our right arms and telling us to make a fist. The next orderly stuck us with a syringe and told us to hold it. The next orderly removed the tourniquet, told us to relax our hand, drew the blood, and then put the vile full of blood in our hand and told us to invert it several times. As soon as his hand grasped the vile filled with his warm blood, my friend, Tom, who was next to me, turned ashen, and his legs started to collapse. Fainting was not allowed, and going into shock was not allowed, so the orderlies rushed to Tom and started slapping him and yelling at him to sit down on the floor. When he fell to the floor they all kicked him as hard as they could and then just left him there in a heap.

After supper we polished our new shoes and boots until "lights out."

The third day began as the first, with a Coca-Cola bottle in the empty garbage can. I was getting a sore throat, and by the end of the day everyone had a sore throat. The big event was meeting our Company Commander. He was a first class petty officer and seemed to be a decent man. He instructed us on how we were to address him and he marched us to supper. Perhaps his most distinctive characteristic was the quality of his profanity; he used only the mundane and occasional "damn" or "hell" and I never heard him use the "F bomb." By the time we hit the rack, almost everyone was feeling feverish and weak.

The next day was Sunday, and after breakfast we marched to the base chapel for worship. Most of the men slept through the service, exhausted and sick. Following the chapel service, I introduced myself to the organist and to a chaplain. I asked the chaplain if I could see him during the week, because I wanted to know if I could sing in the choir.

On Monday our CC figured out that we all were quite sick, so he marched all of us to the infirmary. We were issued salt tablets to mix with water for a gargle, and aspirin for fever. Then we packed up everything and took a bus to our new company quarters, quite a distance from the main base. The Boot Camp was surrounded by a high fence with

locked and guarded gates, and resembled a high security prison. All afternoon we became acquainted with our quarters and settled in, learning how correctly to fold each piece of clothing and how and where to place it in our lockers. This went on for days. Whole days were dedicated to laundry, cleaning the head, etc. We were required to hang all of our laundry in the enclosed courtyard in the frigid winter air, where it froze, instead of using the indoor heated drying room. In order to keep the head as clean as possible for inspections, the CC would allow us to use only two of the eight toilets, and we were forbidden to use the urinals. This did help us to pass inspections with high marks, but why taxpayers paid for all these fixtures only to have some jackass forbid us to use them, was ridiculous.

As the weeks wore on, we were able to adjust fairly well to the ridiculous and mindless daily routine of marching to meals and classes and drills and numerous training sessions. At one point the CC got after us to speed up showering and shaving in the morning. He wanted it done in half the time, and boasted that he could "shit, shower, shave and shine" in ten minutes. The only "amusement" during this period was the "boxing smoker," for which designated morons volunteered to represent their companies in a boxing ring. Nothing was done to match the boxers fairly, and some of the matches were quite brutal.

Inspections were a nightmare and took forever. One Lieutenant was a real prick when he encountered whoever was on guard duty. He had perfected the art of grabbing an M1 rifle out of a recruit's hand fast enough, and in such a way, that, if the guard did not let go of the rifle very quickly, the butt of the rifle would fly into the guard's crotch.

A few other incidents amused me. If we were moving as a company or as individuals, and colors or taps was played, we were ordered to stop and face the music, standing at attention. The problem was that the huge boot camp barracks buildings reflected the music from the many speakers in different directions. The result was numerous groups and portions of companies facing different directions when they stopped. Years later, when Jimmy Carter was president, I recall a press photograph showing the president with his hand over his heart and facing in a different direction than anyone else while the Star Spangled Banner was being played. This is understandable to anyone who served in the Navy.

Coinciding with the humorous moments were traumatic ones. A recruit in another company in our building committed suicide by slitting his throat while sitting on the toilet. No one knew where he got the knife. Every week recruits tried to break out of boot camp. If they were caught, they were taken to the brig and severely beaten. The slow moving roaches that crawled out of the cold floor drains in the head every night were especially annoying. The smoking lamp for the smokers was ridiculous. After I moved to a special company, I learned that one of my old rifle company members had crawled into a garbage dumpster, while emptying trash, to sneak a cigarette. The CC had not permitted the smoking light to be lit that day because he was angry about something. While inside the dumpster, a giant garbage truck emptied the recruit along with the contents of the dumpster into the garbage truck and turned on the compacter. R.I.P.

When classes started, we went through all kinds of testing to determine our training paths after Boot Camp. Our newest collective illness was diarrhea, and it took less than twenty-four hours for everyone to get it. Perhaps the worst medical problem we suffered was from the infamous Bicillin injection (Penicillin Benzathine): a super antibiotic given to everyone to cure venereal disease, whether we had it or not. The ice-cold injection was injected via a long needle deep into the hip. The pain was indescribable. Our CC coached us as best he could about the effects of the shot, and he marched us all over hell's half acre after we got it to keep us moving for a while so as to avoid the crippling effects of the drug. He warned everyone who slept on a top bunk to get down very carefully if he had to go to the head during the night, but one heavy member of our company forgot, and when he jumped out of his bunk in the middle of the night, he broke his hip. We never saw him again.

Snow removal was especially annoying. The base had plenty of equipment for snow removal, but each company was required to shovel the snow on the walks surrounding its quarters by hand. The huge barracks could house four companies, but our building had only two companies in it, so there was a great deal of shoveling to do. As soon as snow started to fall, we were assigned to rotating shifts, and we shoveled continuously day and night until the snow ended. The snow seemed to be continuous by Christmas, and several feet of it accumulated, with enormous drifts. Our Navy issue clothing was nowhere near adequate for such bitter sub-zero weather, especially during several severe blizzards.

I eventually managed to visit with a chaplain. I had requested this several times, but my CC kept preventing me from seeing a chaplain. I soon realized that the CC might be afraid that I would talk too much about boot camp stupidity and cruelty. I assured him that all I wanted to do was sing in the Blue Jacket Choir. That eased his mind, and he soon helped to arrange an appointment. After meeting the chaplain, I was immediately asked to play the organ for the boot camp Protestant worship services, which were held in a drill hall/field house. I soon met the Blue Jacket Choir director and he, along with the head chaplain, eventually arranged for me to join a special company made up of drill team, band, drum and bugle corps, and choir members. My rifle company CC was really upset. He called me to the quarterdeck to talk to me in front of the other rifle company CCs in our building and I thought I was in big trouble. I was surprised that he merely asked me if switching to a special company was my personal desire. He told me I had done a great job as our company Education Petty Officer and he would miss me. I had helped a number of our slower company members study for tests. I remember our slowest recruit, a short black guy from the islands off the coast of Georgia, who spoke mostly Gullah. He could not read very well, and I don't know how he got into the Navy. I spent a great deal of time with him trying to get him to pass the simplest tests.

One day, after I had spent part of the day rehearsing with the choir, and before I moved to the special unit company, my rifle company CC asked me to be the standard bearer on the way to supper. I hesitated, but he would not take "no" for an answer. Off we went, but I had no idea of what to do, and as we approached the first corner, I did not know to lift the standard as a signal to halt, as my company had practiced during my absence, so the whole company marched right out into the street without stopping at the curb. The CC

was furious, but he realized his mistake, stopped the company and handed the standard to someone else. It's a good thing the curb was not a cliff.

At long last, I was allowed to change companies. The men of the special unit were better educated than those of the rifle company, and my new CC let us organize and monitor much of our daily activities, instead of yelling orders at us all day. He was a short, fat old salt, from the deep south, with a fairly clean mouth. If and when we were disorderly, he would just growl, "quit jackin' your jaws." We used the drying room to dry our cloths instead of the outdoor cloths lines. And we used most of the facilities in the bathroom, cleaning them as well as we could before inspections, but not worrying too much whether or not we passed the inspections.

My cleaning assignment was maintaining the cleaning supplies closet in the laundry room. Everything was supposed to be spotless for inspections and perfectly arranged, even though the men used all the equipment continually. I did my best, but no one could possibly keep all that stuff clean enough for the lifers who did the inspections. During one inspection, a master chief, in spotless dress blues and spit-shined shoes, took down a large floor broom and tapped the end of the handle hard against the floor. Someone did not clean it before putting it back in the closet, which I did not notice, so a cloud of filth flew all over his jacket. "God damn," he yelled! "Look at that! Look at that!! All over my fucking blues."

I had all I could do to keep from bursting out in laughter, as I contemplated that he had a set of dress blues just for fucking, and envisioned the potbellied jackass performing the act so dressed.

On the day that I met the Blue Jacket Choir director, he asked me to be his assistant, and I immediately started directing the Boot Camp division of the Blue Jacket Choir. We rehearsed separately, and also took a bus to the main training center a couple of times a week to rehearse with the main choir. The bus rides were fun, especially if the main base choir members were riding with us. We had an hilarious repertoire of filthy songs. A favorite was the song about Loopy, the "hot fucking, cock sucking, Mexican whore." We always sang a hymn for the bus driver in four-part harmony: "Him. Him. Fuck him." I really enjoyed getting out of Boot Camp and over to the main training center. The winter was brutal. One day I had time to go to the main base Small Store where I bought a scarf, which I could wear on the main base, but not in Boot Camp.

The choir sang a number of special programs during the Christmas holidays. One evening we went to a radio station to make a recording for a broadcast. The choir director was an alcoholic who managed his days quite well, but he was so drunk at the radio station that we could not understand anything he was saying, and his conducting was impossible to follow. We simply sang things as we had rehearsed them and ignored him.

Most companies had Christmas leave, but ours was required to stay at Boot Camp for our Service Week duties. I was put in charge of the Chief Petty Officers Barracks, and supervised a group of other Service Weeks from rifle companies, who cleaned the place.

The chiefs who did not have Christmas leave, drank their way through the entire holiday. Many were still drinking and playing cards when I arrived in the morning after breakfast. The stench of the booze and cigarette butts was enough to make me sick. By the time my crew and I were leaving to join our companies for supper, the chiefs reappeared with a new supply of hard liquor to begin another night of holiday inebriation.

One of the chaplains invited me to his home for Christmas dinner. I was delighted, especially because I did not have to spend the entire day in the chiefs' barracks. It was quite late, and after curfew, when I returned to the quarterdeck at my barracks, so the chaplain, a Lieutenant, walked in with me. Anyone who violated the curfew was reported as AWOL. He simply told those on duty that I was a guest in his home that evening and he didn't expect me to be in trouble for being late. He then wished everyone a merry Christmas and that was that.

Other members of my company had less pleasant experiences during Service Week. My friend, Goke, was assigned to a painting crew in one of the drill halls. He was up on scaffolding one day, lost his balance, and fell about ten feet. He would have been OK, because he landed on his feet, but, unfortunately, his legs straddled a horizontal brace on the scaffolding that was about one inch higher than his crotch. He spent the rest of the day in the infirmary with an ice bag on his balls.

I directed the boot camp choir each week for graduations, and finally for my own company's graduation/brigade review on 05 February 1971. The band, drum and bugle corps and drill team did well, and the choir was at its peak for its swan song. Thank God we were done with Boot Camp.

Navy testing showed that I should be a sonar operator. With my near perfect pitch, I tested higher for sonar training than anything else. Therefore, I was sent to the electronics school at the main Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Our instructors were cut from better cloth than the Boot Camp morons, but they were rather boring. Most of them were recovering alcoholics. One of my instructors spent a number of years in the Caribbean, and described a typical Caribbean sailor's lunch: "Put four ice cubes in a tall glass. Add two shots of Coca-Cola and fill the glass with dark rum." Best of all, most of our weekends were free, except when we had duty. The movie theater had good movies, and the enlisted club was quite nice. I often went to Chicago by train to hear the Chicago Symphony, the opera, and several shows, and I could usually get free tickets at the Chicago USO, if I could get an early train. I sometimes went to Chicago with a friend, and we would have dinner before the concerts. Chicago's restaurants are tops. I especially enjoyed (and still do) The Berghoff and The Italian Village. We wore our dress uniforms and were always treated well. My favorite haunts were the Art Museum and Symphony Hall. I also made it to Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago for musical programs. I once wore civilian cloths to South Chicago and had a problem with a gang of young black guys as I walked from the elevated train to the campus. For the next trip I returned to wearing my uniform, and I had no more problems.

Concerts at Symphony Hall were wonderful. My friend Tom introduced me to the music of Andre Segovia, and I was thrilled to hear the great guitarist play a Bach prelude and fugue that I needed both hands and both feet to play on the organ. Unfortunately, we had to make sure that we had plenty of time to catch the last train back to Great Lakes, or we would certainly be AWOL. Therefore, I nearly always had to excuse myself past a row of concertgoers during the last selection of every concert. Of course, I was in uniform, so most people understood, but I was very embarrassed.

Going to Chicago on the weekend was a great improvement over drinking in the club every night. The entire social life of most Training Center personnel revolved around alcohol. If we walked out of the gates to the surrounding town, sidewalk salesmen, hawking rings and other jewelry, accosted us. The whole Training Center scene was extremely annoying.

By singing in the Blue Jacket Choir I became acquainted with other base staff. The base chapel organist invited me and several other choir members to her home once in a while. I especially recall meeting one of the organist's friends, a very talented pianist, who entertained us with a fantastic, improvised performance of "the three blind mice taking a trip around the world."

Between Boot Camp and Electronics School I went home on leave for a short visit. I had tried to describe my appearance to my parents, but they still did not know what to expect. The short hair really threw them and they didn't even recognize me at the airport. I saw them across the room and called to them. They looked my way, but just kept walking. By the time I finished Electronics School, I was beginning to look like a human being again, and I enjoyed another short leave at home before flying to Key West for Sonar School.

I arrived in Key West in the spring of 1971. Key West may not be heaven, but it is certainly a patch of Paradise, in spite of all its sleaze. Weather-wise, there is no place more pleasant in the USA. I loved the beach, and the sea food, especially the lobster and the shrimp. Our orientation included severe warnings about getting sunburned. "The first time you go to the beach, you may not stay in the sun for more than 10 minutes. That is a direct order. Anyone who disobeys this order and gets sunburned will spend time in the brig." Ten minutes was too much for me. I was really red, but plenty of lotion got me through the tanning process gracefully. By the time I left Key West in late summer, I was very dark, and my hair was very light, almost blond. (I was still very tan when I arrived in Iceland after a month of leave.)

My favorite pastime was sailing. The Navy recreation department had a bunch of Sunfish that were fun to sail in the shallows on the north side of the island. I enjoyed watching the sea-going loons swimming through the clear, shallow water; they seemed to fly underneath the boats. Snorkeling was fun. If we caught a lobster, actually a type of seagoing crayfish, the cooks at the club would cook it for us, or we could cook it ourselves in large outdoor steam-heated kettles in the picnic area. The food in the Galley was excellent, and of course Key West is famous for its restaurants, the best of which I made sure to visit.

I had one sailing misadventure that taught me to take blue water sailing more seriously. A friend of mine and I rented an old wooden sloop. After weeks of getting used to her, we planned a long sailing day, but we were surprisingly caught in a rip tide, caused by the tide going out over the shallow waters around Key West in combination with a strong wind that blew us away from the island. In spite of all our efforts, we lost sight of land, and had to work very hard to tack against the wind while trying to sail against the current. Our situation did not improve until the ebb tide. As the sun set, we tacked like mad, quite scared not only to be lost at sea without a radio, but also to be out in open water where Cuban gunboats liked to shoot at pleasure boats. As the sun sank, so did our hearts, but as darkness settled around us, the moon rose, and soon the lights of Key West glowed on the horizon. That was indeed a blessed sight, but we did not reach port until almost dawn.

Other orientation warnings included staying away from gay bars and brothels. We were handed a long list of places that were off limits. Also, we were required to travel in groups at night for safety. Sailors were beaten and robbed on a regular basis. One of my instructors, nicknamed "Boats," was beaten a month or so after I arrived and the attackers cut off one of his ears.

Drugs were a big problem on Key West, and all over Florida. The Coast Guard cutters based in Key West had the biggest drug problem. Rumor had it that every Coast Guard crew was stoned when they went out to sea, and the skippers would cruise around aimlessly for a day or two while their crews sobered up, before taking on any serious duties. We had drug busts regularly. One of my close friends had spent a weekend in Fort Lauderdale and brought back a small amount of marijuana, which he foolishly tried to hide in his locker. It was found during a surprise inspection the following Monday and he was busted, yanked out of Sonar School, and thrown in the brig. I never saw him or heard from him again.

I was in Key West only a short time before I was asked to meet with a few officers and senior enlisted men, along with the best students in my class. All of us had heard more and more about sea duty and the fact that we would almost certainly be first assigned to destroyers, which sailors called "galloping greyhounds." Sea duty was adventurous, but only for officers, and I never met anyone who enjoyed serving on a destroyer. We learned that the Navy needed highly trained men like us for highly classified work. The rate was called OT, which stood for Ocean Systems Technician. The work was so secret, that those who met with us couldn't tell us what it was until we were investigated and approved for a top-secret security clearance. All we could do at that moment was volunteer for special training if we qualified for it. I listened with great skepticism, knowing that no one in his right mind ever "volunteered" for something in the Navy, especially if that something was unknown. One of the officers, however, did make a pitch that hit home with most of us: "I can't tell you anymore, except that if you volunteer for this special training and qualify for a top secret clearance, then you will probably never go to sea." Nearly all of us signed up. Not only did I like the idea of shore duty, but this also meant that I could stay a little longer in Key West, and floors could remain floors

instead of decks, and walls could remain walls instead of bulkheads, and ceilings, ceilings instead of overheads, and doors, doors instead of hatches, etc.

The OT training program was intense but rather interesting. Most of us were college graduates and we were treated very well. We had very good instructors but a heavy workload, which was rewarded with more R&R than anyone else. Another advantage was that we were assigned special duties instead of guard duty and other annoying tasks. I was put in charge of the instructors' lounge in the classroom building for the officers and senior enlisted men who taught the classes. I kept them happy with freshly brewed coffee and a clean and well-stocked snack bar and soda fountain. My supervisor came to me after my first week of managing the lounge and told me that my profits for the week were a record, even though the volume of sales was about average, and he wanted me to know how pleased the instructors were. Evidently, my honesty surprised a few people and astonished the rest.

In July or August we had to prepare for a hurricane. This was no small job on an island that is only twelve feet above sea level at its highest point. Most of the Navy buildings were two stories high. Everything valuable was removed from the first floor and placed on the second floor of every building. All first floor barracks residents doubled up with those who lived on the second floor. Shutters or metal storm windows protected most windows, but those that weren't protected were boarded up. All coconuts were cut off of the palm trees so they would not become missiles, and all Navy ships headed out to sea, even the old sub tender, which went to sea so seldom that it was given a building number and a street address. The storm hit one morning and we were confined to our quarters. No one could go anywhere. Seawater poured out of the storm sewers and flooded all the streets. Fortunately, the storm was gone the next day, but the clean-up took weeks.

OT School was over by the end of the summer and we put in our requests for duty assignments based upon the Naval Facilities (NavFacs) that had openings. Most locations were remote and rather undesirable, such as Midway Island with its Gooney Birds. We could make only two choices, one in the Pacific and one in the Atlantic. My first choice was Iceland and my second choice was Guam. If I went to Iceland, I knew I could get to Europe, and Guam was supposed to be good duty. No one else chose Iceland, so that was my assignment.

While I was stationed in Key West, I flew to Tampa to visit my great uncle George Rudolph and aunt Ethel. Uncle George, a sea captain all his life, had retired in a beautiful suburb of St. Petersburg. Their home was lovely and I especially enjoyed relaxing in their Florida Room. In the backyard was a large grapefruit tree, and each morning Uncle George went out to it to pick tree-ripened grapefruit for breakfast. He explained that the grapefruit is one of a very few trees that has ripening fruit, new fruit and blossoms on it simultaneously. Aunt Ethel didn't like to cook, so we went out to very nice restaurants each night for dinner. I also visited my great uncle Howard Rudolph and aunt Margery, whom I had not seen for many years.

When OT school was finished, I had thirty days of leave before I needed to report for duty in Iceland, and I used it to go home and visit family and friends. I traveled to Vermont to visit my Aunt Doris and Uncle Bernie and stayed in their lovely cottage on Lake Saint Catherine, and then drove to visit my Great Aunt Ethel on Cape Cod.

The flight to Iceland was on a chartered 727, which refueled in Newfoundland before setting off to Iceland. At the halfway point between Newfoundland and Iceland, the pilots of a 727 had to decide if everything was OK for the rest of the flight, because from there on they would have only enough fuel to get to Iceland and land there. [This made landing at the Keflavik/NATO Base airport in the winter more than interesting. Planes had to land no matter what the weather conditions were. I recall landing in a blizzard one winter. The pilot dared not apply the brakes on the icy runway and used only the reversed engines to stop the plane, which finally came to a stop at the very end of the runway.]

I was greeted at the airport by the NavFac yeoman, who took me to my quarters and then gave me a tour of the NATO base. The OTs were very much at ease. This was not a ship, not a training school, and it certainly was not Boot Camp. Nobody saluted anybody, and the adage, "If it moves salute it; if it doesn't move paint it," no longer applied. The food in the Galley was excellent. The Navy Exchange had very nice goods from all over the world, at great prices, and before Christmas each year I enjoyed picking out special gifts to send to family and friends back home.

Our barrack had large rooms with huge picture windows and decent bathrooms. The rooms were designed to house 4 people, but the OTs had their own barrack for security reasons ("Loose lips sink ships.") and we only had one or two persons per room. My first roommate was a heavy drinker, and spent his days between watch strings with a group of drunks, smoking and playing cards until they were all laying on the floor in a drunken stupor. One day I came back after a watch to find our sink filled with broken beer bottles, the trash can overflowing with garbage, and the ashtrays piled high, one of them billowing stinky smoke. The floor was soaked with beer and so was my bed. My roommate had passed out in a chair in which he had urinated, and I could not wake him, so I went to get the first class boatswain's mate who was in charge of our barracks. We called the ambulance to take my roommate to the hospital because we were afraid that he might die of alcohol poisoning, and he almost did. Instead of cleaning up the mess, I packed up my stuff and, with Boat's approval, moved to another room. From then on, my roommates were rather pleasant. By the time I left Iceland I had the nicest room in the place, tastefully painted and decorated, with comfortable chairs, nice rugs and furniture, my lovely stereo, a spinet piano that was discarded by the chaplains at the base chapel, and a small refrigerator.

I spent the rest of my enlistment--nearly three years--in Iceland. I traveled all over Iceland in the summer, and all over Europe. My favorite places by far were the British Isles and Spain. There were regular free R&R flights to Amsterdam, Glasgow, Madrid, Rioja, Naples, and several places in Germany. We also had vacation packages with chartered flights at certain times of the year. I spent every Thanksgiving in London, taking in concerts, opera, theater and church music events, and doing some special

Christmas shopping in places like Harrods. I loved Spain and went there as often as possible during the winter months. The food was wonderful. I could get an extended R&R to go to Spain, and I always traveled on orders, so, for brief trips, I didn't need to use my leave.

I had only one disappointing travel experience. I wanted very much to go to Constantinople/Istanbul. I got as far as Italy on one trip, only to be told that I could not fly to Turkey from there, because the plane was going to fly over communist countries. Since I had a top-secret clearance, I was not allowed to make that flight. I did not have enough time to wait for another Navy flight, so I flew to Spain the next day for a couple of days and then back to Iceland via Glasgow. Damn the Cold War anyway!

On Thanksgiving Day in 1972, my second year in Iceland, my father had a severe heart attack. He spent several weeks in the hospital but was home for Christmas. I was in London for R&R, so I did not know about the heart attack until I returned to Iceland. I immediately made arrangements to go home for the holidays.

On 10 December that year, before I went home for the holidays, I played a well-received organ recital of Christmas music at the Hafnarfjardarkirkju on a beautiful three-manual pipe organ that was built in Germany. The morning of the recital, a fierce blizzard struck the base. I foolishly walked through the near whiteout conditions to a chaplain's house to use his home phone, because the only phones that could call off base were phones in officers' quarters. I called the organist, Pall Palson in Hafnarfjardar, to ask if the recital was cancelled. He said no, and that the roads there were not too bad. I told him I would be on my way immediately, because if the base closed because of the storm, I would not be allowed to leave. I had arranged to stay the night with the family of a fellow NavFac watch supervisor, Barry, who lived in Reykjavik, so I did not have to worry about accommodations once I arrived in Hafnarfjardar. I made the trip safely in my trustworthy VW beetle only because of my four studded snow tires and the fact that I was driving with the wind instead of against it, although I did get into some whiteout conditions that made it necessary to drive very slowly with the right wheels on the gravel shoulder. The wind was not as fierce in Hafnarfjardar, but the snow was gathering quickly. The NATO base closed before my friend, Barry, got off watch, so he never got home or to the recital that night. Neither my friend Mary nor anyone else from the base got to the recital, and Barry was stuck on the base for another twenty-four hours. As the recital hour of 8:30 P.M. approached, the church was empty. I looked out the front door and there were no cars in the church parking lot. The snow was more than a foot deep and still coming down. I asked Pall why he did not cancel the recital. He said calmly that people would be coming and not to worry. The church bells rang at 8:20 and people started arriving. Everyone was very quiet. By 8:30 the large church was full and Pall and I waited patiently until the ushers told us that everyone was seated. Nearly everyone in the audience had walked to the church through the snow.

I had prepared the recital well and I was very satisfied indeed with my performance, and Pall was delighted. The senior pastor, the equivalent of a Lutheran bishop or president here in the USA, and his wife, had a formal reception in their beautiful home following

the recital. Dr. Robert Ottosson, who directed the Symphony Chorus, and sometimes the orchestra, and his wife were there, and Mr. and Mrs. James Rail (Jim Rail was principal of the NATO base elementary school), who lived in Reykjavik, and local musicians, and Pall's friends, but I was disappointed that no one from the base could make it.

I flew home just before Christmas. Dad seemed to have recovered quite well, and we had a wonderful family Christmas holiday.

The following spring, however, Dad had an even more severe heart attack and had to be resuscitated. I was getting ready for a trip to Paris, but I quickly cancelled my reservations and rushed home on a commercial airline. He was on a respirator and was unconscious for about a week. When he finally gained consciousness, it was obvious that he had suffered some brain damage, and his short-term memory was temporarily gone. He thought I was still in college and he could not remember that I was in the Navy. I had a nice surprise for him, however, that really perked him up, because I had purchased a new Nikon camera, and brought my Pentax camera to give to him as a present. Dad loved cameras and he was delighted. (He had a certificate in photography from the Stevens Institute of Technology and was a fine photographer. For many years he photographed weddings on weekends for the finest studio in Ridgewood, New Jersey, but he did it as a hobby and never wanted to do photography for a living.)

After using all of my emergency leave, I had to return to Iceland. Dad seemed to be recovering, but very slowly. When I left New Jersey, I did not know if I would see him alive again. I was back in Iceland only about two weeks, when he passed away. He never left the hospital.

The day Dad died, I had gone to the Galley for an early breakfast, because my watch section had a day watch. When I returned to my barracks to gather my watch section and board our bus, Boats told me that the captain had called. I wondered why, but I had an uneasy feeling. When I called the captain, he told me he had received a call from the Red Cross and I should call home immediately. I did, knowing what to expect. Mom was sad but had her wits about her. She was exhausted from the anxiety of the previous six weeks, spending every day at the hospital. I quickly lined up another supervisor for my day watch so that I could pack, and arrange my trip home, but there was no one else available to drive the bus that morning. I told my section that I would drive them. I was in no rush, and I would like to have a few friends around me just then, thank you. We usually joked around on the bus as we picked up the married watch section members and our watch officer and made our way to the NavFac, which was fifteen miles from the base, on the coast. No one said a word at first, but then I started talking, and everybody relaxed a bit. As they filed out of the bus they expressed their condolences. I just stayed on the waiting bus to drive the relieved section back to the base. I felt so empty. All I was looking forward to was going home the next year. But now "home" had become something else because of the loss of a parent. A chapter of my life had ended, the one titled "Mom and Dad." What was going to be left of the world I had known before the military? I was very uncertain.

Dad's funeral was the last funeral held in our lovely, large, old Methodist church before the sacred place was to be demolished. The graceful Gothic Revival edifice was filled with the memories of many generations. My mother and father were married there. There were stained glass windows in memory of family members, and church furnishings in memory of my grandfather, and the lovely pipe organ on which I had practiced for years, the pew in the West transept where my paternal great-great grandparents sat, and another in the front of the church where my maternal grandparents sat. Now my brother and I sat in it with our mother and grandmother and numerous family members. The church was completely filled and additional folding chairs were placed in the side aisles, and a number of people had to stand in the back of the church. The organist at the time was a very talented musician who had been the Dean of our Northern New Jersey Chapter of the American Guild of Organists when I was in high school, which made me very happy, because Dad loved good music and was so proud of what I had accomplished as a church musician. I controlled my emotions quite well until we sang "For All the Saints," when I burst into tears. This was goodbye not only to my Dad, but to the man whom my mother loved, who was raised by his grandparents, after his mother was killed by a drunken driver when my father was twelve years old; a man who fought for five years in the South Pacific during World War II, who commuted by train to work for the same company in New York City for twenty-five years, who sent both of his sons to college, and much more. Where should a son start to remember his father? I do not know. I know only that I loved him and that he loved his family, and that is probably the best and simplest summary of his life, which should have lasted more than just fifty-four years. One thing he told me when I was drafted and torn away from my career, I will always remember. He said, "I fought in World War II for five years so that my sons wouldn't have to go to war."

What else do I want to remember about those Navy years? Only a few more things! I am still bitter that I was torn away from a promising career just to waste four years doing the mindless work of a Navy enlisted person, but that was the price I paid for avoiding the draft and Vietnam. The Vietnam War and the entire Vietnam Era was insane. It was sinful. It was unforgivable. No one in the military escaped its evil, and no one was ever immune from the potential horror of the extremely dangerous charade called the Cold War. Fortunately, in spite of the insanity around me, I greatly enjoyed living in Iceland, a land of civility and manners and grace and culture, and I am grateful for the traveling experiences I had while I was stationed there.

Between watch strings I often retreated to a very nice Bed and Breakfast in a lovely home in the scenic dairy town of Selfoss. The people there were very friendly, and over the years I got to know many of them. Not very many people spoke English there, so I had a chance to practice my Icelandic. I remember having a flat tire in Selfoss one day. The garage mechanic spoke no English. I tried to tell him in Icelandic that I would like him to put the new spare tire on the car for me and put the older repaired tire in the trunk for the spare. I did not do very well, so he called a young man to come to the service station and translate. He then quietly repaired the tire, tested it for leaks, put it in the trunk, checked the pressure in the spare, balanced it, put it on the car, and charged me the equivalent of

\$.50. There is no tipping in Iceland, so I didn't know what to do, but he finally accepted another \$1.00.

In the summer of 1973, Mother came to spend a week with me, and we greatly enjoyed touring Iceland together. We stayed in hotels, in private homes, and in the rural public boarding schools, which were run as inexpensive hotels in the summer, and the food was excellent. I still enjoy simple Icelandic breakfasts with sliced cold meats, cucumbers, tomatoes, cheese, hard boiled eggs, and yogurt with sugar and granola and cream.

The week before Christmas 1973, I put together a wonderful program of Christmas music at the NATO base chapel. The chapel choir did an excellent job and the String Ensemble from the National Symphony Orchestra performed with us. The ensemble, with Ruth Magnuson, premiered my "Christmas Song" for alto and strings.

In the beginning of 1974 I was accepted at Princeton Theological Seminary to begin studies there the following fall. With that, I proposed to my sweetheart, Mary Katherine McPherson, a teacher in the American grammar school, and we began to plan our wedding. The date of June 8th was set, announcements were sent, and plans for the service and reception fell together. Both of our mothers would attend.

The wedding rehearsal went well and the musicians had prepared beautiful music, including my "Agnus Dei," which Ruth sang during the communion. Mother hosted an elegant rehearsal dinner at the Officers Club for everyone who was participating in the service.

I was invited to stay with friends in their home the night before the wedding so that I could avoid the Friday night noise in the barracks. After dinner, I took Mom to the Navy Lodge, and stopped at the barracks to pick up a few things, and then drove to my friends' house. It was quite late, but of course it was still light. The Icelandic police loved to hunt down drinking drivers on Friday and Saturday nights. Unfortunately, my left turn signal was not working, but I had had no time to get it fixed. Sure enough, I got pulled over for not signaling to turn left. I wound down the window and the cop stuck his face into the car to smell for alcohol. Dinner had been hours before and I was chewing gum, so he smelled nothing, but noted that my turn signal was not working. I assured him that I thought it was working and that I thought I had signaled when I turned. He asked me to try the signals. Sure enough the left rear bulb was out. I assured him that I would have it repaired right away. "Have you been drinking," he asked point blank. "No, not at all. But I really need to get to me friends' house, where I am spending the night, and get some sleep, because I am getting married tomorrow." "What," said the cop, "you are getting married tomorrow and you have not been drinking?!" We both laughed. Then he waved me on and we both said good night in Icelandic.

June 8th was a perfectly beautiful day and the charming Gardarkirkja next to the sea was packed with our guests. Officiating were the pastor of the church, who was also the personal chaplain to the President of Iceland, and Captain Ted Herman, head chaplain of the NATO Base Chapel. The service was a traditional Icelandic wedding with me and my

best man greeting guests as they arrived (Traditionally the groom and his father would greet the guests.). The men sat on the right side of the center aisle and the women on the left. Ruth Magnuson sang, a friend of ours from the National Orchestra played the violin, and Pall Palson, organist of the Harfnarfjardarkirkju played the organ. The reception was in a lovely nearby community house. Mary and I spent our wedding night in the elegant Hotel Borg in Reykjavik.

The next day we returned to Keflavik to prepare for our trip to Britain the following day. Both of our mothers were on a sight seeing trip to the Westmen Islands that day, where the volcano was still erupting. A storm blew over the island and they could not return until the following day. Therefore, I arranged for an extra night of lodging for them and rescheduled their flights back to the USA, and then Mary and I flew to Glasgow to spend two weeks, first in the Lakes District and then in Scotland, as scheduled. The plane flew directly over the Westmen Islands, and we both had quite a chuckle thinking about our mothers being stranded on the smoking volcanic island below us. Ultimately, they had an unforgettable adventure on a volcanic island, and we had a splendid “walking holiday” in England and Scotland, which ended far too soon.

I returned to Iceland to find my command almost dysfunctional. Our new skipper was grossly incompetent and a newer master chief, who had given me fits before the wedding, decided to make my life as a Watch Section Supervisor as miserable as possible. I responded to this new nonsense by applying for and receiving an even earlier release from active duty in order to prepare for studies in the fall.

Just before our wedding, I had been involved in a highly classified incident in the North Sea. My friend and colleague, Barry, whose watch section preceded mine, was involved in the initial phase of the incident. When my watch section arrived to relieve his, the captain and a number of day workers were giving Barry fits, but he was soon able to break away and dump everything in our laps. My watch officer and I were given orders to proceed as the Analysis Department day workers directed, even though this seemed to contradict Barry’s expertise, but the data we were gathering was rather inconsistent. After midnight, I was certain that new data indicated the need for an abrupt change and correction in our reporting. I knew the Operations Officer and a number of other officers were at a party at the Officers Club, so I stuck my neck out and jumped my chain of command to call him directly at the club. I could not go into much detail on the telephone, but I insistently told him that we could not continue as directed earlier, and I and my watch officer needed permission to change and correct our reporting immediately. He was hesitant, but directed me to make the changes if necessary.

We finished our watch with much anxiety, but I was certain, with the data we had, that my decision was sound and it would stand. When we got back to the base, I went to breakfast, and stayed up a while, dressed, just in case I was called back to the NavFac to answer questions. Finally, I hit the rack, exhausted, but I no sooner fell asleep than Boats was knocking on my door saying that I was to report to the NavFac immediately. The day workers were furious. The jackass master chief was telling the Operations Officer that I should be put on report for insubordination and disobeying orders. I guess I should have

been more concerned, but I had called the Ops officer the night before, and I knew my job, and I was confident that the decisions I made were correct and timely and vitally important. If the analysis team and the other day workers were too stupid to handle the data correctly, others in Norfolk and Washington would eventually realize that I was correct and things would eventually calm down. [It was more than a year after I was separated from the Navy that I received a letter of commendation for the work I did that night. I have no idea of who in my chain of command recommended the letter, but I was pleasantly surprised to learn that even if the jackass chief and the analysis team didn't like what I did, the Commander of Oceanographic System Atlantic did. Decades later, the Navy publicly acknowledged that this event was the first detection of a Soviet Delta Class submarine. (See the article on SOSUS for more details.)]

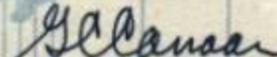
Commander Oceanographic System Atlantic

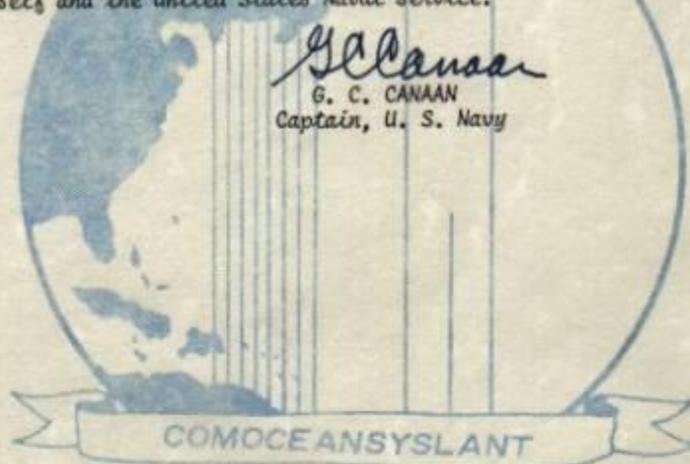
Letter Of Commendation

Commander Oceanographic System Atlantic takes pleasure in commending Ocean Systems Technician Second Class Thomas L. MOWBRAY, U. S. Navy for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

From 19 May 1974 thru 3 June 1974, Petty Officer MOWBRAY was involved in operations of high national interest. Throughout this period his performance was exemplary. Faced with an overwhelming workload, Petty Officer MOWBRAY rose to the challenge and ensured the timely flow of vital information. Under stressful conditions, he was required to evaluate data, establish priorities among competing needs, and make difficult decisions based upon limited information. Only a highly trained professional, confident of his knowledge and abilities, could have performed at such a high level of expertise. Petty Officer MOWBRAY's performance throughout this period reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Naval service.


G. C. CANAAN
Captain, U. S. Navy



I admit that at times I took my responsibilities as a watch supervisor somewhat lightly. I was continually assigned the less trained, younger and less disciplined watch standers, especially if the other watch supervisors, all of whom outranked me, didn't like a certain person. That didn't bother me too much, because I was good at training my men, but it was somewhat difficult at times to appreciate that my superiors had so much confidence in me, if that's what it was. The position of Watch Supervisor was supposed to be for First Class petty officers or chiefs. I was appointed as a Second Class petty officer, and since E5 was as high a rank as I could have during my four years of enlistment, that was my limit, even though I passed exams for a higher rank. I was also continually assigned watch section members who were cross training to become OTs, and some were First Class, i.e. they outranked their watch supervisor, and in matters of military discipline I needed to rely on my watch officer. This was sometimes very awkward. For instance, I once had two E6s in training in my watch section. On one very busy midwatch, during which we were required to do a certain amount of cleaning, I asked the two E6s to do the cleaning, because they simply could not do the other work. They did not object, but my watch officer that night, the jackass chief, had a fit. With that, I did the cleaning myself, along with everything else I needed to do, which still infuriated the chief. I simply could not pull my few well-trained men away from their work for a cleaning detail if we wanted to get out of there in the morning. And with that, I will attempt to close this chapter.

Mary had returned to the USA, after the honeymoon, as soon as we got all her household stuff packed and shipped, and she stayed with my mother until I arrived at McGuire Air Force Base in August. Getting separated at the Philadelphia Naval Base reminded me of boot camp. What a rat-sucking hole that was, with the most idiotic career enlisted people I had ever met. One grace note to the separation process was that the kind soul who checked me in, looked at my record with my medals, awards and evaluations on it and assigned me to the best enlisted quarters. I later found out that the usual barracks for separating enlisted personnel was very much like the brig. The departing physical exam was as humiliating as the first physical in boot camp. Although I had the assurance that this four years of mind numbing stupidity would soon end, the process seemed to linger on and on in some kind of a military purgatory.

Finally, on 08 August 1974, I was free. Mary and Mom picked me up and we could not leave fast enough. To my great surprise, as we pulled out of the gate, I turned on the car radio to learn that Richard Nixon had resigned. Needless to say, I let out a shout of joy. Just nine days before, Art Buchwald had published his infamous piece by Dr. Seuss, which was a re-written portion of Seuss's 1972 book, *Marvin K. Mooney, Will You Please Go Now*, replacing Marvin K. Mooney with Richard M. Nixon:

Richard M. Nixon, will you please go now!

The time has come.

The time is now.

Just go.

Go.

Go!

I don't care how.

You can go by foot.
You can go by cow.
Richard M. Nixon, will you please go now!
You can go on skates.
You can go on skis.
You can go in a hat
But
Please go...
Please!...

I had had my doubts about the future, over the past four years, but now it seemed as though there was still a God somewhere doing something good for the sake of humanity. Perhaps as a seminary student I would again discover my faith and find a few new ways to create some order out of the chaos that had surrounded my life for four years.

What else is worth remembering about 1970-1974? Spending more time on such empty years seems foolish, but there are a few more experiences I would like to remember.

In 1972 or 1973 I signed up for a P3C flight. It was, I believe in the fall, but it might have been in the spring. The Navy was keeping a close eye on the Soviet Mediterranean Fleet returning to Murmansk from the Mediterranean. The “zoomies,” as we called the P3C crews, welcomed OTs on their flights because it was easy for us to operate their detection equipment, which was a simplified version of the sophisticated equipment we operated. Also, because we OTs were frequently in contact with the P3C crews as we coordinated our work, the flights helped us better to understand the work of both units.

The P3C was an amazing airplane. With four powerful turbo prop engines and large propellers, they could safely skim over the waves at a very low altitude, thus avoiding radar detection. We sometimes flew through the spray of large waves.

The Mediterranean fleet was an awesome sight as it battled its way through the gigantic waves of the stormy North Sea. On their way from the Mediterranean, in fairer seas, the crews had spent untold hours scraping and painting everything topside with red lead paint, in preparation for a new paint job when they reached port. The sight of the huge carriers and cruisers, accompanied by their smaller destroyers and support vessels, all dark red over dark gray, crashing through the monstrous, icy, gray waves, was impressive. If anyone doubted the might of the Soviet Navy, this armada would correct their thinking.

As we flew past each ship, we photographed the hull numbers on both sides of the bow, because the Soviets often painted different hull numbers on each side when returning to port in order to confuse us. With each pass we made, the guns and the surface to air missiles followed our every move, keeping us constantly in their crosshairs. At one point our pilot must have passed a cruiser too close for comfort, because a Soviet officer, speaking perfect English, radioed the pilot and told him that if he came that close again, they were going to use our P3C for target practice.

The only thing I did not like about flying with the zoomies was that they required their guests to clean the head after the flight. But it was certainly worth that much effort in order to view the awesome sights they encountered.

Another favorite pastime in Iceland was my adventures in advanced photography. My superb Nikon camera, with its lenses and other equipment, took beautiful pictures. We had a very good photo lab at the base where we could process our own photos. Each Christmas I framed and sent some of my best photographs to family and friends as gifts.

Iceland provided endless photographic venues of incredible beauty. I especially enjoyed the colors of the fall, and the pleasant weather of summer and fall, especially the autumn sunsets with bright oranges and pinks and shades of aubergine, and the colors of the winter sun, when the sunrise was sometimes a dark blue, and the rising sun a bright yellow, and of course the Northern Lights, which I successfully captured by time lapse photography on numerous clear but bitterly cold winter nights. The rivers and lakes and glaciers and waterfalls, the meadows and mountains, the Icelandic ponies, and sheep and cattle and reindeer, the fishing villages and country churches, all were charming.

The Northern Lights were especially brilliant one year. I was exiting the base movie theater with friends late one winter night, when a black guy from the deep south, who had just arrived in Iceland, looked up at the sky and freaked out. "O Lordy! Dear God Almighty! What the hell is that?" It took us a while to calm him down.

As I have mentioned several times, the enlisted Galley in Iceland produced very good food. I often invited my officer friends to eat there with me, because the food was usually as good as the food at the officers' club. The MidRats (midnight rations) were always welcome after an eve watch. Breakfasts were endless displays of food, but I remember most of all the cook who made excellent omelets to order. He told me that people were always complaining that he used powdered eggs. The cooks always used real frozen eggs that came in gallon paper containers like milk containers. These had to be thawed before use. Of course they also had fresh eggs for cooking. Therefore, in order to avoid complaints about fake eggs, this particular cook would often take one whole real egg, smash it to bits, shell and all, and add it to a gallon of the thawed eggs. I thought that his pragmatic attempt to add a measure of authenticity to egg cookery was ridiculous, but he claimed that it eliminated the complaints about powdered eggs.

At the NavFac we had a dining room, but the food was begat via fifteen mile chow runs to the Galley. We had large cylindrical, insulated stainless steel containers to transport the food, and the only difficulty was in finding someone to do the chow run in a timely manner so as to get the food back to the NavFac while it was still palatable. Those who did chow runs often took advantage of the opportunity to avoid work. They would eat hot food at the Galley while our food was being packed into the containers, and then it didn't matter to them if our food arrived cold. This was of course before the age of the microwave oven. I often did the chow runs myself, and always on Sunday, if I had a day watch, picking up our Sunday dinner after I played the organ and directed the choir for

the chapel worship service. My PR with the cooks was good, and they treated us well. And my food arrived hot.

In our NavFac galley we had a serving counter with pop machines, and a milk dispensing machine in which we placed huge plastic-lined cartons of milk. We called the machine our mechanical cow, because in order to pour a glass of milk we lifted a large weighted handle that released pressure on a plastic spout that looked somewhat like a cow's tit. One day, one of my witty colleagues wrote an ode to the metallic cow and taped it to the beast. I never found out who the author was but I fondly remember the poem and how we all laughed when we read it:

Metallic cow, shiny and bright,
Giving milk all day, all night,
No tits to pull, no dung to pitch,
Just lift the handle of the son-of-a-bitch.

One of my remembrances had nothing to do with my work, but it occurred during the Cod War and raised a few alarms. The British and the Icelanders were at war over fishing rights and territorial water boundaries. The Icelanders at one point had fired a rubber ball bullet over the bow of a British destroyer as a warning shot, and there were numerous other amusing skirmishes on the high seas, some rather dangerous.

One day, the marine guard called me to report "a man-o'-war" within eyesight of the NavFac. The Marine guards were always playing jokes on us, so I proceeded with caution. One guard had recently called and asked, "Sir," (thinking I was an officer because I answered the phone), "are we supposed to report any ships on the horizon, Sir?" This was a standing order because of an occasional Russian Fishing Trawler that would try to snag our cables that ran along the ocean floor. "Yes," I answered, "you are, indeed." "Well there aren't any, Sir," he said.

The marine assured me that this was not a joke. So, I strapped on my 45, put on my jacket and accompanied the marines out to the fenced perimeter. Sure enough, without my binoculars, I could see what looked like a destroyer, followed by a large sailing vessel, followed by a huge cruiser or frigate.

My watch officer and I were puzzled. One of NavFacKef's responsibilities was to know where every single warship in the entire Atlantic Ocean was located at all times. No one knew about these ships. Because of the tensions of the Cod War, we decided to go ahead and report our findings even as we were calling and wiring our superiors. I clearly recall a Teletype message we received from Norfolk, asking how we detected these ships. I reported that the detection was by a visual sighting, which blew their minds. We scrambled with the confusion for the remaining hours of our watch, finding out from the embassy only at the last minute that what we reported had actually been the arrival of the Queen of Denmark for a state visit. What we reported as a destroyer was in fact the flagship of the Icelandic coast guard. It was serving as an escort ship through the channel to the harbor in Reykjavik, followed by the Queen's yacht, followed by a large cruiser

that was Denmark's newest naval vessel. The cruiser was to show off Denmark's might, but it also had the practical function of providing the Queen with more comfortable accommodations for her trip across the stormy North Atlantic. When the three vessels entered the calm waters of the channel, the Queen boarded her yacht for a ceremonial arrival.

Another pleasant memory is of a winter choir rehearsal in Reykjavik of the Brahms Requiem, directed by Dr. Robert. Mary had sung a number of times with the symphony choir, but I could not manage singing in the Icelandic language, so my choral activities were limited to those sung in Latin. The rehearsal was in a large inner city school. Just as the rehearsal was to begin, there was a power failure and everyone was plunged into darkness. Dr. Robert told everyone to be calm and instructed some of the women to go home and get candles. The women soon returned with candles and candleholders. They lit enough candles for all of us to see our way to the rehearsal room, but there was not enough light to rehearse, so Dr. Robert sat at the grand piano and suggested that we sing favorite folk songs until the lights came back on. His improvisation was very impressive. This went on for more than an hour before power was restored, but we had a wonderful time attempting to reach Dr. Robert's goal of singing a favorite song from every country imaginable. The Icelandic folk songs were lovely, but I was also impressed with how many songs they knew from other nations and in other languages. I sincerely doubt that such a happening could be duplicated in the USA.