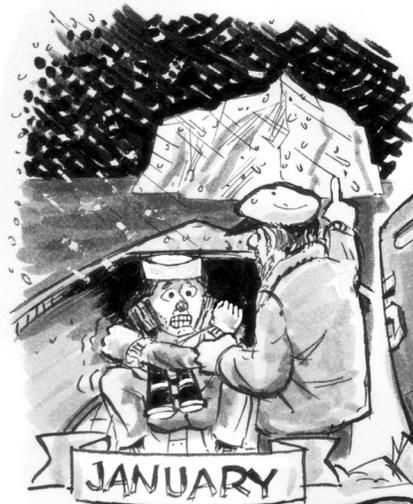




★★★★½  
 "Chilling!" — SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON  
 "Breaks the Ice!" — Adm. R.E. BYRD  
 "A Bountiful Adventure!" — CAPT. Wm. BLIGH  
 "Whale of a Time!" — CAPT. AHAB



# "McFREUND'S NAVY"

STARRING  
**JIM FREUND**  
 Lt. (j.g.), USNR  
 1956-1959





## PREFATORY NOTE

Jim Freund

The major literary assignment I gave myself this year was to write a personal memoir.

Up to now, I've authored eleven books (including two primarily photographic). In this current run-up to my 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, it hit me that an even dozen would constitute a good lifetime's work. But I had no particular candidate in mind – either fiction or non-fiction – for the twelfth.

Then I happened to come across a short quote attributed to Margaret Atwood: "In the end, we'll all become stories." Very perceptive, I thought – and promptly decided that while my brain still seems to be functioning, I should take a hand in telling my own.

That's what my memoir is about – multiple unvarnished stories covering a lifetime of activities, plus an appreciation of those people who have been closest to me. In each case I'm trying to select those aspects of activities and relationships that have been most meaningful to me, as I reflect back on them from this distance. I hope the assemblage will be well-received by the readers I care most about – my family (including members yet to make their appearance) and good friends.

My optimistic timetable is to complete the memoir by next spring and publish it in July 2019, on the occasion of my 85<sup>th</sup> birthday. But I thought it would be worthwhile now to send a draft of one chapter to my friends – both as a foretaste of what's to come next July, and hopefully to engender some helpful advice from readers regarding the overall project.

The episode I've chosen for this is the one distinct period of my life, from June 1956 to May 1959, that my family and friends know least about – my service as a junior officer in the U.S. Navy.

One major theme of the memoir is a realization that as we approach our dotage, it's worth taking a fresh look at various aspects of our lives – that we can't simply accept the accuracy of the perspective we had on events while we were in the middle of them. As a result, I've been trying to adopt a more nuanced view toward certain activities and relationships, and to re-examine my attitudes about what I was then engaged in. I consider this a worthwhile endeavor to pursue for those of us in our "golden years."

Chief among those periods that invited a fresh look were the nearly ten years between my graduation from Princeton in mid-1956 and my arrival at Skadden Arps in early 1966. Those first two decades from birth through high school and college were terrific years for me. The three decades at Skadden were exciting and productive. And my retirement years (the two decades from 1997 to the present) have proved to be quite rewarding.

But I've always considered that middle decade to be a real downer. It consisted of the Navy service, a disagreeable stint at law school, and three-plus seemingly wasted years at my first law firm. I've been especially negative about the three years spent in the Navy. So in this memoir project, I set out to evaluate whether my contemporaneous viewpoint was valid, or whether those ten tough years contained some valuable experiences (not necessarily appreciated at the time) that have served as a positive influence on me in the five decades since they occurred.

The Navy proved to be just such an activity, compelling me to re-evaluate what transpired. Here's a draft of what I recalled and uncovered – a draft that will probably be shortened in the memoir volume, but that contains all my primary reflections about this seemingly bleak period. (It also features a sprightly cover and illustrations by my talented collaborator, Joe Azar.) I'd like to know what you think of my ruminations.

November 2018

Jim Freund

MY THREE YEARS IN THE NAVY  
1956-1959

Jim Freund

Maybe it's because nowadays I get a warm frisson hearing *Anchors Aweigh* being played, but whatever the reason, the time has come for me to re-evaluate my service in the United States Navy – an interlude that I've consistently ranked close to the nadir of my lifetime experiences.

Sure, the tedium of daily life, the restraints on free movement, my vexation with an unsavory superior, still rankle. But as I reconnected with the distant past, aided by some late '50s prose and photos, memories of my Navy days came flooding back. And what I found was that the special incidents from those three years – some scary, others funny, a few unique – remain more sharply etched in my mind than those from other pursuits, both before or after. And the lessons I absorbed – albeit not always consciously at the time – served me well in the years ahead. Sadly, though, few friends from those days are around to share my recollections – so I'll share them with you.

\* \* \*

First, some background. It's the winter of 1951-1952, my senior year in high school, and I'm in the middle of the college application process. I'd done well at New York's Horace Mann School, and pretty much had my pick of institutions.

The college that appealed to me most was Amherst. Its bucolic setting in the rolling hills of Massachusetts promised to be a delightful shift from my citified upbringing; the enrollment was small enough that I wouldn't feel lost; its neighbors were the eminent all-girl colleges Mount Holyoke and Smith (not an insignificant factor for a guy hailing from an all-male high school); and my football coach, who

knew Amherst's football coach, had sent him a fulsome letter of recommendation for his lightweight halfback.

In late 1951, the Korean War was on everyone's mind. With the military draft in full swing, the fear spread that the Army might draft those without deferments right out of college. The idea of fighting in a land war against Communist Chinese hordes near the Yalu River didn't appeal to me; whatever patriotic fires might still have burned within from my World War II adolescence were banked for this savage and unpopular military engagement.

The classic college deferment was enrolling in the ROTC. It meant a period of mandatory service after graduation, but that wasn't so daunting because otherwise we were almost certain to be drafted after college. The remaining question was which branch of service to join.

In terms of the Korean War, there was no comparison for a non-heroic guy like me – the Navy won hands down. Far from freezing your butt off in the frigid hills north of the 38th parallel with the Army or Marines, or joining the Air Force and braving MIG's and murderous anti-aircraft fire while going after the bridges of Toko-Ri, the popular view was that sailors ate heartily at clean mess tables and slept in warm bunks before lobbing a few unopposed shells in the direction of Inchon harbor.

The Navy also had a special NROTC scholarship program called the Holloway Plan. If you were fortunate enough to be selected, the Navy covered your entire college tuition, bought your books, and paid you \$50 per month toward living expenses – all of which, at the time, seemed a meaningful stipend. My family wasn't wealthy, and the expense of sending me to a good college was going to be a stretch for them. So, although neither my father nor mother ever pushed me in that direction, I felt that getting an NROTC scholarship would be my thank you to them for their 18 prior years of financial backing.

I applied for the Holloway Plan and was accepted, subject to a physical exam scheduled for the following week. This led, however, to a personal crisis that's still fresh in my memory.

The Horace Mann basketball team was in a tight race for the league title, and I was a starting guard – not a star, but part of the successful team fabric. The date for the physical exam coincided with the day we played Adelphi, one of our toughest foes. I don't think our coach went so far as telling me to forget about the Navy physical, but he certainly made me aware of his displeasure over my prospective absence.

I had to make a tough decision. I seriously considered not showing up for the physical, but I didn't want to lose the scholarship. So, in my usual style, I tried to fit everything in – praying I could complete the physical in time for me to make it to the game, which was being played at Adelphi's home court in an outer borough.

But the exam dragged on interminably; and by the time I arrived at the Adelphi gym, the game was already underway, with Horace Mann behind by seven points. As I burst into the arena in my street clothes, some of our fans recognized me and cheered my arrival. It was a heady moment for yours truly – Freund to the rescue! I located the locker room, changed as fast as I could, and took a seat on the bench.

The timing was ideal, I thought, to insert me into the game – providing an emotional lift for our beleaguered team. But the coach – perhaps out of pique, maybe to teach a life lesson to his young charges – refused to acknowledge my presence. Even with some fans chanting "Put Freund in!" he sat there impassively, continuing to use substitutes at my position for the rest of the game. We ended up losing. Even though we ultimately managed to win the league championship, it was a bleak day in my young life – a mixture of anger at the coach and guilt for showing up late . . . . But I did pass the physical.

Being accepted in the Holloway program was good news, but there was one hitch. To take advantage of it, you had to attend a college with a Naval ROTC program. And Amherst – situated far from any deep blue water – had none. So, although my heart was still in the Berkshires, my head said, "Take the scholarship and settle for a second choice." And that's how I chose Princeton (for reasons set out in the section on college), which turned into a lifelong love affair for me, with but one notable exception – the NROTC.

\* \* \*

I have often been heard to complain about the fact that 20 percent of my education at this prestigious Ivy League institution consisted of courses on gunnery, marine engines, seamanship and the like. And even courses that might have been informative– like World Naval History – were taught by officers with minimal pedagogic skills.

I can still picture the officer who taught that course, standing at a lectern, reading from his syllabus, and asking the class – a puzzled look on his face – “Did the Greeks have a Navy?” Since there was no immediate response – we were all comatose – he answered the query himself, in a suddenly loud, definitive and enthusiastic tone, as if he were discovering this fact along with us: **“Yes, the Greeks had a Navy!”**

But in reviewing a first draft of this section, John Doyle, one of my college roommates and a superb editor of prose, opened my eyes to reconsidering the scorn I had long heaped on my NROTC college experience. He pointed out, among other things, that I must have realized I'd be required to take these courses under the scholarship. He was right, of course, and the difficulties of integrating two such disparate programs was simply one consequence of accepting the benefits of the Navy's helpful grant.

I must say, though, that it grated on us when the commissioned officers teaching the NROTC courses did not abide by Princeton's venerable honor system. At exam time in every other course, the professor would hand out the test to students and then disappear from the classroom until time was up, at which point he returned to collect the booklets. We took pride in the trust the University displayed toward us and never considered cheating. But in Naval Science courses, the officers paced resolutely up and down the aisle throughout the duration of the exam, eyes peeled for possible violations.

In addition to cursing the early morning hours (often 7:40 am) of the NROTC classes, I really deplored the drilling. For some reason, I just couldn't master the rhythm and cadence in marching and other training exercises. My unwashed, unpressed uniform did nothing to help the negative impression I made on the officers. In my fourth year – when every senior was given some position of authority in the NROTC hierarchy – I received the lowest possible command rung, as squad leader. Then, within a matter of weeks that showcased my drilling incompetence, I was ignominiously demoted and returned into the ranks, replaced by a more martial junior classman. Oh, the shame of it . . . .

Each summer during college, the Holloway midshipmen were obliged to serve with the regular Navy in its various activities. For the first and third summers, we took two-month shipboard cruises, while the second summer was split – three weeks at Little Creek, Virginia for Marine training and three weeks in Corpus Christi, Texas at a Naval Air station.

On those cruises – my first on a light cruiser, USS Worcester;\* the second on a battleship, USS Wisconsin – shipboard life was unpalatable. We were the lowest of

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\* How's this for a coincidence – it turns out that Ed Schiff, one of my good friends of recent decades, was serving as an officer on the Worcester the same summer I swabbed the decks.

the low aboard ship – even the rawest seaman apprentice could give us orders –so we swabbed the decks and performed other dreary tasks. I think I developed my lifelong susceptibility to claustrophobia from being shut up in a congested engine room for a sustained period.

But there was one silver lining to the cruises, for which I really should give the Navy credit. They introduced me to Europe, which I'd never visited before. We made port in Norway, Denmark, and Scotland.

I remember taking sick as we approached Edinburgh. Rather than turning myself into sickbay and risk being prevented from leaving the ship, I was determined to take advantage of the leave. Although suffering from chills and light-headedness, I boarded a train by myself to London – a city I wanted to see above all others. I wandered around there for a sickly day or two, then headed back to Edinburgh for a quickie Scots tour before finally seeking treatment on the ship.

My favorite stop was Copenhagen – a buoyant city featuring Tivoli Gardens, the colorful waterfront, friendly people, and beautiful girls. But at the outset of our visit, my buddies and I ran into an unexpected obstacle in our hot pursuit of female companionship.

We were required to wear into town our white sailor suits and those round sailor caps – except that for us midshipmen, there was a black rim around the white caps. As we attempted to pick up girls the first day, we were met with negative reactions from several likely candidates. It took a few inquiries to discover the reason – the ship's regular seamen had been spreading a rumor that the sailors with black rims had the clap!

One of my most enduring memories of Copenhagen is now almost too scary to recall. After we managed to controvert the clap rumor, my new buddy from UCLA (Charlie) and I got involved with two lovely Danish girls. We had a super time for

several joyous days that included drinking a lot of aquavit. On our last night, as the curfew hour neared to return to the ship (which was scheduled to set sail after midnight), I adamantly refused to get out of my girl's bed. "I don't want to get back on that damn ship!" I shouted at Charlie, as he tried without success to coax my drunken self into leaving.

Well, thankfully he persevered and was able to load me into a taxi. We reached the ship just before they pulled up the gangway. I hate to think of what would have befallen me if I'd gone AWOL that night – I'd probably still be in Portsmouth Naval Prison today!

As for that second summer, my dominant memory of Corpus Christi, Texas was flying very low over the Gulf of Mexico in the back seat of a two-man trainer, wearing one of those tight-fitting leather helmets from World War II, pushing back the plastic cowling to let the wind hit my face, and praying I wouldn't be called upon to do anything that might adversely affect the plane's minimal altitude.

The Marine training at Little Creek, VA was really tough – stuff like crawling on our bellies across a muddy field, while what appeared to be live ammo was being fired just above our heads, plus a lot of running, climbing, jumping, and carrying heavy packs in extremely hot weather.

The worst moment for me came when, laden down with heavy backpacks, we were jammed into a small landing craft, as part of a simulated assault on an enemy-held island. Our boat's engine proved faulty, so we were forced to return to the troop ship, which (with the troops now off) sat very high out of the water. The crew lowered a flexible Jacob's Ladder down from the stern to our boat, and we were directed to climb up it to the ship.

I was unused to such heroics. Weighed down by the heavy pack, I froze during the climb and just couldn't seem to make it. I contemplated letting myself fall

into the water and be rescued, but I was afraid of landing on the hard metal of the boat itself. I begged a crewman up on the ship's stern to give me a hand, but he refused. I finally mustered just enough energy to make it all the way up, collapsing in exhaustion on the deck.

It's now over six decades ago, and I still can't get that panicky memory out of my head . . . .

\* \* \*

I have a theory (but no hard evidence) about how I got assigned to the ship on which I would be spending the next three years after my Princeton idyll.

Other than in NROTC, I had done well in college, graduating *magna cum laude*. But my marks in Naval Science subjects like artillery were mediocre; my uniform was scrungy enough to cost me periodic demerits; no one confused me with John Paul Jones on board ship during the summer cruises; and I couldn't march worth a damn.

During senior year, the Navy solicited our views as to what type of sea duty we preferred for the three years of service that lay ahead. A battleship? A destroyer? Truth be told, I didn't want to be on any ship at all. Was there any kind of vessel I could tolerate? My eyes scanned the list of possibilities. And then it hit me: how about a hospital ship, complete with female nurses! I checked the applicable box.

In case they were unable to accommodate your specific choice of vessel, the Navy also asked you to indicate the category of ships it fell into, to insure at least partial fulfillment of your desires. A battleship, for example, was a "Large Combatant"; a destroyer a "Small Combatant." A hospital ship was an "Auxiliary," so that was the category I checked.

I've often fantasized about the scene at the Navy's Bureau of Personnel in Washington when they received my papers. I can just hear the guy reviewing my application chirping to his colleague, "Hey, Harry, listen to this. One of those lightweight Princeton boys, no less, with the lowest Naval aptitude in the entire class, and a disheveled uniform to boot, is asking for a hospital ship – to get near the nurses, I'll bet! . . . . Let's see what *other kind of auxiliary* we can put this bozo on – one where females aren't so available. . . ."

I will never forget the day we received our orders to active duty. Every NROTC senior on campus was excited about what he got. "Hey, it's the battleship *Wisconsin* for me!" "Look, I'm on a can in the Med!" My orders, however, left me puzzled. I was assigned to a ship called the USS Staten Island AGB-5. I had no idea what an AGB was – except I knew instinctively that it was *not* a hospital ship. Based on the name of the vessel, it could have been a local ferry – although I duly noted that its home port wasn't in New York City but across the continent in Seattle.

No one could figure out what kind of ship I'd been assigned to, so a group of us sought out the crusty veteran Chief Petty Officer, who'd been in the Navy forever and seen just about everything. "What is it, Chief?" I asked – "What's an AGB? What kind of ship am I on?" A look of absolute glee appeared on the Chief's face as he contemplated the orders received by his least-favorite midshipman. "Get this, boys," he said to our group, his rotund body bouncing in merriment. "Lady-killer Freund here has been assigned to a goddamn icebreaker! I bet he won't be getting much ass at the South Pole!"

And that's how I ended up for three years on the USS Staten Island AGB-5.

\* \* \*



Back in those days, Navy icebreakers were called upon to do just what the name implies: break through the pack ice to reach a blocked destination. In our case, the goals were usually to deliver supplies and such to one of the American bases in the Arctic and Antarctic, often shepherding in a much larger cargo ship that wasn't able to transit the ice by itself. For reasons I'm not privy to, there are no Navy icebreakers on duty today.

Our ship resembled a squashed destroyer – shorter in length, wider in width. It had virtually no keel, which made it quite susceptible to pronounced oscillations even in not-so-rough water. We liked to say, “It rolls in wet grass.” And when the sea did get rough, we often experienced alarming, seasick-causing gyrations.



The ship broke the ice by amping its diesel engines to full throttle and riding up onto the floes, creating a pathway by the sheer weight and thrust of the icebreaker's bow. The ship also had a small flight deck accommodating two helicopters, which were used to fly ahead and scout optimum routes for us to follow through the ice. It had a complement of 250-plus officers and enlisted men.

The Staten Island had been launched during World War II and promptly turned over to the Russians for their use in Siberian and other far-north waters. It was returned by the Russians to the U.S. in the late '40s, apparently in terrible shape; some sailors who were in the original post-Russian crew were still on the ship in 1956 when I came aboard.

Home port was Seattle, the ship docking at Pier 91 on Puget Sound. Seattle was something of a hick town back then, unlike the urban metropolis it has become today. There was an excess of rain, and the fog could be daunting. I remember once driving my car with the door ajar, so I could peer down to locate the white centerline of the road.

Most of the time, however, we were at sea, on five lengthy cruises – two to the Arctic, two to the Antarctic, and one towing four overage destroyers out to Eniwetok Atoll for use in the nuclear testing that took place there in the late '50s.

I was an Ensign for half my three-year term and a Lieutenant (junior grade) for the balance. I served as communications officer, navigator, and the officer in charge of the Operations Division, plus handling a number of collateral duties. When we were at sea, I stood four-hour watches twice a day as officer of the deck, in temporary command of the ship's movement and well-being.



I made some good friends among my fellow officers – many of whom came from states that weren't near New York and had attended colleges I knew little about, thereby broadening my geographic horizons. Three of those friendships – with Jim Messing, Noel Peacock and Jack Taylor – endured beyond our time together on the ship, although sadly only Jack is still with us.

Serving as an officer on the ship was my first opportunity to manage other people, particularly during my final posting as head of the 50-odd sailors in the Operations Division. I found myself working with warrant officers and chief petty officers who were older and much more knowledgeable about naval matters than I, with kids just out of high school, and with others who were more senior but not necessarily wiser. As I look back now, this was a valuable experience for me to have, even if it didn't register at the time.

On a practical basis, I learned about such subjects as seamanship, navigation, radar, sonar, and telecommunications. This was also my first real introduction to photography, as one of my collateral duties was Photography Officer. The first class petty officer who was the ship's photographer provided some useful instruction in picture-taking and darkroom procedures, and I often hung around the photo lab – especially when I wasn't anxious to be located.

The Arctic cruises we took, lasting several months during the summer, went up and around northern Alaska to resupply the DEW-line outposts that stretched across Alaska from Point Barrow into western Canada. These bases were a Cold War tripline to give early warning of a Soviet aircraft or missile attack on the U.S. We never got off the ship on these missions, except once for a half-day visit to Nome – not exactly a sparkling treat.

We departed Seattle for the first of my Arctic cruises within weeks after I arrived at the ship. I'd hoped it would be a fascinating experience, but it fell short of that. I do recall seeing a few polar bears, seals, and possibly a walrus on ice floes as we muscled through the icepack; but the scenery consisted mostly of ice or tundra, the sun rarely made an appearance, stars were non-existent, and the whole operation never got my senses stirring.

A new Captain of the ship had just taken over the helm. (Let's call him by his nickname among the crew, "Jumbo.") The more experienced officers spent a lot of

time trying to figure Jumbo out, but I was too far down the executive ladder to have much direct contact with him. I did sense from our minimal encounters that he held me in low regard – “one of those pampered Ivy League kids they sometimes send us,” he was probably thinking. I reciprocated by being on the lookout for Captain Queeg-like tendencies in him – shades of *The Caine Mutiny*, a favored fiction of the day.

Upon our return from Alaska, we had a few months in Seattle to prepare for the longer journey to the Antarctic. I invited my college girlfriend Louise to join me for this period ashore. We settled into a comfortable one-month rental apartment in town. But I wasn't prepared for how this would be viewed by the wives of the ship's married officers.

There was a lot of socializing among the officers and their wives/girlfriends when the ship was in Seattle, but the ostracism Louise and I encountered six decades ago caught me by surprise. (An exception to this were the Messings, Jim having completed his Navy tour and being employed at Boeing; in fact, I'm still friendly today with his lovely wife Ellen.) Most of the wives were so aghast at our breach of mid-'50's decorum – two unmarried adults shacking up – that they refused to socialize with us; and their husbands just shrugged and went along with them.

\* \* \*

The highlights (and low points) of my naval experience were two Antarctic voyages of five to six months each. They featured alluring scenery, some sunny days (albeit cold as hell) and no nights, a lot of penguins, and several interesting cities we visited on the way down and back. Most of my enduring Navy memories stem from these two cruises.

We were part of something called Operation Deep Freeze. Its goal was to complete building sturdy bases around the Antarctic continent that would be used

by scientists during the International Geophysical Year 1957-58 and subsequent periods. Our presence down there came in the Antarctic summer (North America's winter), but the bases would be manned throughout the cold and dark Antarctic winter, when there was minimal contact with the outside world.

For the first cruise in 1956-57, we were part of a 3,500-man contingent in twelve ships, plus air support. The Staten Island's particular goal was to enable a base to be built from scratch in the Antarctic's most treacherous and remote oceanic area, the Weddell Sea. That's where Ernest Shackleton had his comeuppance many years earlier – his ship broken up in the grip of the ice, the great man leading his crew on a memorable escape journey on foot, as related in *Endurance*. It was known as the "hellhole of the Antarctic," and information about it was scanty. Our task was to lead into that hellhole the USS Wyandot – a cargo ship that had crammed into her holds 5,600 tons of what it would take to build and stock the base.

On the way down, after a brief stop in San Diego to pick up our helicopters and their crews and gear, we visited Panama and Valparaiso, Chile – enjoyable stops, although not providing me with any strong memories.

We then traversed the famed inland waterway to reach the world's southernmost outpost, the Chilean town of Punta Arenas at the tip of South America; and after a brief stopover there, we took off for the Antarctic.

Most of that latter voyage was through heavy ice-cold seas whipped into a frenzy by severe wind gusts. Our no-keel design wasn't made for such conditions, and life became decidedly uncomfortable. At meals, we had to strap ourselves into seats at the wardroom table, snagging bites of food from gyrating trays. I can recall playing a pump organ in the crew's mess hall for a church service one Sunday morning with the ship rocking like crazy; fittingly, each stanza of the chosen hymn seeking God's protection ended with the words, "For those in peril on the sea."

But my moment of real terror occurred after we'd maneuvered through a heavy concentration of icebergs and were in relatively calm waters just outside the extremity of the sprawling ice pack.

Atmospheric conditions were clear that day, and the pilots of our two helicopters decided to test the equipment. The junior pilot (let's call him Bob) asked me if I'd like a ride – something I had never experienced. I said "Sure," and the next thing I knew we were airborne and flying over the ocean at a considerable distance from the ship, with no ice in sight.



That's when it happened. A strange loud noise came from the equipment, and a few seconds later, Bob mouthed the most chilling sounds I'd ever heard emanate from human lips: "Uh, oh . . .". I looked over his way and saw a man in a clear state of panic – wide-eyed, punching gauges, twirling knobs. The helicopter began to lose altitude.

I was wearing a life preserver but knew damn well that the human body would last about two minutes in those ice-cold seas. All I could do was silently wail, "Why the hell did I accept Bob's invite?!"

To my great distress, Bob seemed thwarted in his attempts to even diagnose the problem, let alone correct it. I, of course, could be of no help. Although the crisis didn't last long (yet seemed to be an eternity), it was very scary . . . .

Finally Bob had the good sense to make radio contact with the senior pilot (let's call him "Joe") in the other helicopter. Bob bewailed his predicament in a frightened, excitable voice, using technical terms I couldn't understand. I don't remember ever enduring more terrifying moments.



Then Joe's voice came into our cockpit, cool and composed, asking a few pertinent questions, then instructing Bob on what steps he should take. Bob complied and, almost miraculously, the helicopter stopped losing altitude and resumed flying as usual. Whew! . . . P.S. I didn't ask Bob what had gone wrong, and he clearly didn't want to talk about it with me.

*Lesson learned: I never again ventured up in a Navy helicopter. Broader life lesson: be wary of volunteering for activities that have a possible risky downside.*

It was probably just as well that this was my airborne swan song, because later in the voyage, one of our helicopters crashed on the flight deck while taking off. Although no one was injured, the wrecked craft (minus some salvageable parts) was pushed over the side to a final resting place on the ice, dubbed by the crew, "Helicopter Hill."

Before we departed Seattle, I bought one of the first Wurlitzer electronic pianos ever produced, which was put to good use on Christmas Eve. At the time, we were beset in thick ice. The hull of the cargo ship had been smashed, causing water damage and lost fuel, and several tips had broken off her propeller blades. To raise spirits, we carried my piano up to the flight deck, where a good segment of the crew had assembled; and I played familiar carols for them to sing. It was so cold that between carols I had to plunge my hands into the parka pockets to keep them limber enough to play the next one. A night to remember . . . .



Here's Joe Azar's take on the scene.

And here's the text of a radiogram message I sent my parents the next day: "Shepherds saw star Santa sleighed south and ship snow sobriety seldom smother seasonal spirit Merry Christmas."



\* \* \*

Until this recent re-evaluation of my naval service, I usually backdated the villain's role played by our first Captain to our earliest contacts. But though I've racked my memory, I haven't come up with any specifics to justify this from my first half-year under Jumbo. (The bad stuff did occur later on – stay tuned.)

As a matter of fact, my first encounter of note with the Captain that I recall didn't occur until several weeks after the caroling session; and although it was one of the worst moments in my naval career, this clash was totally my own fault – not Jumbo's.

It was early in January, and the two ships had again become beset. We were frozen in the ice about a thousand yards apart, with the ice pressure so intense that the Staten Island couldn't get any closer to the cargo ship. But we needed to, because the ice was gushing in the Wyandot's hull – damage that could be ameliorated if we were alongside.

That stalemate went on for days, as things grew increasingly tense. This was, after all, Shackleton territory. There was no way to rescue us if we couldn't make it out on our own, especially once the Antarctic winter began.

The duty officers still stood regular four-hour watches on the bridge every day and night; but with the ship stuck in the ice, there was little to do. One evening when I had the watch, I avoided the frigid temperatures on the open bridges outside the wheelhouse and plunked myself down in the "Captain's chair," immersed in trying to memorize a favorite poem, Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach*.

As usual, a movie was being shown in the wardroom that evening. When it ended, the Captain, as was his habit, came up to the bridge for a brief visit before retiring to his cabin for the night. Anticipating his arrival, I mouthed a final ". . . on a darkling plain," stashed the poetry book, stood up from his chair, and saluted as

Jumbo entered the wheelhouse. After mumbling a few words, he went out onto the open wing of the ship's bridge to survey our static situation.

"Freund!" came his sudden shout, "Get the hell out here!" I did, took a look around, and couldn't believe my eyes. The pack ice that had held the ship so tightly in its grip for a week – so tight that it actually lifted the ship out of the water several feet – had abruptly eased off. Blue water was visible alongside the ship, and the outline of a narrow channel appeared between us and the Wyandot.

"When did this happen?!" Jumbo roared at me. I had no answer – I hadn't gone outside to take a look for at least an hour.

Now the Captain turned his attention from me to the ship. He was all business – ordering the engines made ready to get underway, setting an operational watch of the crew, signaling the Wyandot that we were on our way, etc. But alas, it was to no avail. As swiftly as the ice pressure had eased, it quickly returned; and before we could even get underway, we were once again locked in tight.

Although it was never clear whether or not, had I sounded an earlier alarm, we'd have been able to reach the Wyandot before the ice pressure resumed, the Captain was furious at me for my dereliction of duty – and rightly so. My relations with Jumbo now went from merely mediocre to much worse – to him, I was just a preppy Princetonian, not fit to serve our country.

For me the sole redeeming feature of this sorry episode is the lesson I learned: *Never assume a damn thing! Don't take anything for granted – including, but not limited to, the consistency of pack ice pressure. You can never tell what's around the corner. Just when you think you're so damn smart – so full of yourself and the facile assumptions you make, the shrewd inferences you draw – life throws you a helluva curve ball.* This became a byword for me in both my legal career and personal life, serving me well and often through the years.

Finally, after eleven days frozen in place, the ice pressure mysteriously eased. I think it had something to do with tides or currents, but the mystery was never unlocked. We gained enough leeway to reach the Wyandot and lead her out of the pack. The ice remained heavy – so tough to get through that we broke a blade on one of our propellers – but we finally located a section of the ice shelf extending from the coast that would permit offloading.



The Staten Island now acted like a bulldozer, using its prow to trim the ice shelf and knocking away rough edges so as to fashion an unloading pier. Then all of us on both ships worked around the clock to get the base built and up-and-running. Ellsworth Station came into being in just 12 days, after which we set off for home. It was quite an achievement – even my cynical self back then had to admit that we'd accomplished something worthwhile.



*Ellsworth Station*

But, incomprehensible as it now seems, I might not have been aboard the Staten Island for the trip back. A few days before we departed the Weddell Sea, word was passed that they needed an officer from one of the ships to volunteer to “winter over” at the base. As distasteful as the idea was of spending a whole winter at 50-plus degrees below zero in an isolated hut, I seriously considered volunteering! That’s how bad life with the Captain had become for me after my screw-up on the evening watch. I’m sure Jumbo would have been only too happy to grant me permission to volunteer . . . . At any rate, sanity finally won out – *maybe I was following the be-wary-of-volunteering lesson I’d absorbed from the helicopter incident* – and not without some regret, I turned down the proposal.

Our first stop on the way home was again Punta Arenas. There was no opportunity to go ashore, but a British naval ship in the harbor sent a message inviting the Staten Island officers to lunch. I was one of those who took them up on the overture.

Unlike the sparse trappings of U.S. Navy ships, the wardroom area of the British vessel had the look of a well-appointed living room on a passenger vessel, including a plush carpet covering the deck. Another big difference was that on British naval ships, unlike those in the abstemious U.S. Navy, they served hard liquor.

I hadn't tasted anything alcoholic for months – since our stop in New Zealand on the way down. The scotch that was offered came neat – no rocks, soda or water. I gulped the first one down. Then another. And then – shortly after knocking down my third – I threw up all over their plush carpet!

The Brits were solicitous, but I'm sure they got a big chuckle out of it. For me, though, it was quite embarrassing – although not as bad as when I was brought back to the Staten Island in a close-to-comatose state, and virtually carried aboard the ship, to the delight of a full crew of onlookers.

*Lesson learned: stick to a two-drink limit where plush carpeting is involved.*

After departing Punta Arenas, we stopped at Talcahuano, Chile, where a shipyard repaired our broken propeller. Talcahuano was the port for the small city of Concepcion, and many of us ventured downtown nightly during our stay. The only places of entertainment to visit were the whorehouses, and I have a distinct memory of playing the piano at Concepcion's finest– shades of Scott Joplin!

\* \* \*

We later visited Callao, Peru (the port for Lima), and I had the chance to do some worthwhile sightseeing. Then came the long trip back to Seattle. Somewhere near the equator I shaved off the beard I'd acquired in the Antarctic – the heat of our polar-



insulated quarters made that shaggy adornment itchy and unbearable.

The voyage home was dull, but for one unforgettable occurrence. Each year, the Navy holds several simultaneous fleet-wide exams that serve as a pre-requisite for sailors to advance to the next higher rating. The 1957 date for the exam occurred while we were at sea, but we had received the necessary testing materials and were all set to go.

I was on our ship's testing committee, which was headed up by my friend, a veteran officer I'll call Phil. When I heard that the exams were scheduled to be given the next day, I contacted Phil and volunteered to help him administer the tests.

"No need," he said, "I'll handle it."

"Don't be silly," I replied. "I'm happy to pitch in."

"Jim," he said, his tone ominous, "you don't want to be involved in this."

His comment was mysterious, so I decided to show up the next day anyway to help monitor the exams. Phil shook his head sadly when I appeared, but didn't order me to leave.

The exams took place in the mess hall. Those being tested were seated at the long rectangular tables that filled the room. Standing around the perimeter of the mess hall were a number of chiefs and first class petty officers, representing each of the operational departments on the ship.

Once the exam began, every minute or so one of the exam-takers would signal by hand for a certain chief or first class to come over to his seat. The testee would then point to the question being asked, the chief or first class would supply the correct answer, and the testee would so mark it on the answer sheet.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I went over to Phil who, when he saw me approach, wouldn't meet my gaze.

"What in hell's going on here, Phil?" I asked, clearly agitated.

"Captain's orders," Phil replied. "As Jumbo put it to me, 'In recognition of the fine job the men did on the cruise, I want each of them to do as well as possible on the exam'."

That evening, I sat with Phil in his stateroom, contemplating our fate. We'd heard that at least one sailor who wasn't taking this year's test had found out what happened, was reportedly furious, and threatened to call his Congressman.

"This is awful," I murmured. "We could get into terrible trouble."

"They could lock us up and throw away the key," said Phil.

No more was said about this incident until about a month after our return to Seattle. Then one day an official-looking letter came to the Staten Island from the Bureau of Personnel. I was the ship's administrative officer, so it landed first in my hands. I was certain it would announce that an official inquiry had been ordered into what happened on that test date, preliminary to convening a court martial to try the officers responsible.

With trepidation, I slowly opened the envelope. Here, paraphrased, is what the letter said: "Congratulations! The officers and crew of the Staten Island are to be highly commended. On the recent fleet-wide exams, those tested on your ship achieved the highest cumulative score of any ship in the Navy. Please see that this commendation is placed in the record of those responsible for this result."

When I sent the letter up to Jumbo, he wrote back: “Make sure this goes in the Captain’s record.”

*The lesson for me here, which poked holes in my youthful naiveté, was that although virtue may be its own reward, vice occasionally pays off. I’ve tried hard to abstain from following this advice, but it’s made me aware that some folks you run into do subscribe to that nasty message – so you’re wise to be prepared for such encounters.*

There was one otherwise trivial incident on the last leg of the voyage that nevertheless sticks in my mind. When we stopped in San Diego to offload our one remaining helicopter. I was the officer on the quarterdeck, overseeing people boarding or leaving the ship. Standing on the dockside was a young Naval officer, wearing a full-dress white uniform with a ceremonial sword dangling from his belt. I thought, *What the hell is this?* Then it hit me; we’d gotten word that a new assistant supply officer would be joining our ship’s company – a recent graduate of the Naval Academy.

Now, you have to understand that up to then we had zero Annapolis graduates in our ranks. All the officers were from NROTC or OCS or had been promoted from the enlisted ranks. And after almost six months at sea, we were a scruffy bunch indeed.

The elegantly bedecked Ensign requested permission to come aboard, introduced himself, and then took out what appeared to be a business card, handing it to me and saying something like: “Please deliver my compliments to the Captain, and let me know when I may have the pleasure of introducing myself to him.”

This was evidently something he’d learned at the Naval Academy. I had never heard of this kind of ceremony, and at that moment the Captain was busy supervising the offloading operation. So I fetched a messenger to take the Ensign to his quarters and told him we’d be in touch shortly after departure.

When we set sail for Seattle, the Pacific Ocean offered up some pretty rough seas – although nothing like what we'd encountered between Chile and the Antarctic. I went down to the Ensign's quarters later that day and found him lying glassy-eyed in his bunk. A nearby bucket contained his most recent meal.

For the next several days, almost until we reached Seattle, he never emerged from his quarters, which reeked from what he continued to throw up daily. On each visit, as I left, he asked me in a weak voice to please convey his regrets to the Captain. I doubt he ever got to meet Jumbo until we finally reached port.

The Ensign turned out to be a nice guy, but I'm ashamed to say that the rest of us adversity-hardened non-Annapolis shipboard veterans felt sheer joy at the idea of this former midshipman being stricken with an interminable case of seasickness in these relatively benign seas. Oh, how cruel we were . . .

\* \* \*

After several months in port, we embarked once more on an Arctic cruise that occupied the summer of '57. The Captain, in a grant of partial absolution from my Weddell Sea screw-up, designated me as the ship's navigator, a position of some importance. I enjoyed the responsibility and considered myself fairly competent at the job. My main memory of the voyage coalesces around two days near the end of our time up north.

Just as the other ships in the Arctic were ordered to return to the lower forty-eight, we received a different directive from Naval authorities. A team from a leading oceanographic institute would be boarding the Staten Island shortly, to spend up to a week taking sonar depth soundings of the waters north of Point Barrow.

Since all of us were anxious to get back to Seattle, this extension was upsetting – and no one was more irate about it than the Captain. But it was a fleet order and thus unchallengeable.

A key role in ensuring the success of this assignment would be played by the ship's navigator – namely me. For the depth soundings to have any significance, each had to be recorded at the exact location on the navigational chart where it was taken. Unfortunately, though, for an icebreaker in the Arctic back in 1957, this presented real difficulties.

Few of the plotting aids that seamen rely on nowadays to fix their position were available to us that summer. The sky was never clear enough for a sextant to position us based on the sun or stars. For technical reasons, the newly-installed Loran system was of little help. We were too far from shore to get any assist from our rudimentary radar. Even the basic dead reckoning system used by ships when nothing else was available – based on the ship's speed and the course followed – was questionable, because the frequent ice floes we encountered required us to make temporary shifts of course and adjustments of speed to deal with such obstacles.

The oceanographic team was responsible for dictating the various courses it wanted us to follow during this exercise. The navigator had to furnish them a written report of the ship's location at three designated times each day. Before we began taking the soundings, I informed the Captain of the difficulty I anticipated in fixing our location – a disclosure that Jumbo took in without comment.

So there I was in my cramped charthouse, trying to fix the first noon position I needed to report, when the Captain materialized. I don't recall him ever having stopped by there before.

“Well, Mr. Freund,” he said, “where are we?”

“I hate to be vague, Captain,” I replied, “but I’m really wrestling with this.” We had been maneuvering around and through ice all morning, and thus lacked precise criteria from which to judge our exact location.

“Well,” the Captain interrupted, “I’ll tell you where we are” – and his index finger stabbed the chart at an otherwise unidentified spot. “We’re right here!”

“That may be, Captain,” I protested, “but I’m just not sure. . . .”

“Did you hear me, Mr. Freund,” Jumbo snapped – and then, banging his fist down on the spot he’d previously identified, announced in a loud, resolute voice, “I said we are HERE!”

“Aye, aye, sir,” I replied, marking the spot with my pencil. This became the position I delivered to the oceanographic folks ten minutes later, without excuses or qualification.



This same scene played out at regular intervals over the next two days – the Captain entering the charthouse prior to the issuance of my report and telling me precisely where we were. I had no idea where we actually were located, and I’m sure he didn’t either. But I could see what the circumstances called for. Jumbo wanted to get this assignment over with quickly and return to Seattle, and I wasn’t about to stand in his way.

I don’t recall the oceanographic people openly questioning my reports, although I sensed their skepticism. Then, on the third day, they tried a new tactic. We were directed to follow certain designated courses during the afternoon that caused the ship to cross over a spot it had traversed in a different direction that morning.

A few minutes after the crossover, the head of the oceanographic group confronted me angrily in the charthouse. "Freund," he said, "you don't know where the hell you're at!" He placed a chart on the table that showed the ship's courses over the period, with the various depth soundings noted at regular intervals. In the space where the ship's later path crossed over the earlier one, the depth intervals leading up to and following the crossing spot on the afternoon's east-west path were (let's say) 48 fathoms, 49, 50, 50, 51, while on the morning's north-south course they were 23, 24, 25, 25, 26 – a basic impossibility. I didn't even attempt to respond.

The next thing I knew was that, much to Jumbo's delight, we were on our way back to Seattle. The oceanographic group had concluded that nothing reliable was ever going to be forthcoming from this Staten Island navigator!

*The moral of the story: you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't (etc.) . . . .*

There's a postscript to this incident. We were never told the reason why the oceanographic folks were doing the charting, but not long afterwards, the nuclear submarine USS Nautilus made its heralded first crossing of the Northwest Passage. I just hope they weren't relying on our soundings.

\* \* \*

A gap of a little over a year occurred between that voyage and my second Antarctic cruise. During that time, my steady date in Seattle was a Northwest Airlines flight attendant named Alice, who was good fun to be with. She lived in a house out near the airport with several of her colleagues; I introduced them to my shipmates, and the house quickly became a welcome home-away-from-home for my buddies and me. I moved my electronic piano out there, which contributed to some enjoyable evenings. We even experimented with our own home brew in the basement, inaugurating it at a big party – not very good stuff taste-wise, but oh, what a sense of accomplishment . . . .

A choice recollection from those days is when Alice managed to get several consecutive days off from flying, I took a short leave, and we drove my old car down to San Francisco. Neither of us had ever been there, and we enjoyed the visit thoroughly.

What I'll never forget was the scene that played out when we arrived at our cheapo hotel room. I said to Alice, "Let's take stock of how much money we have between us." (Neither of us had anything like a credit or debit card.) We each took out all the bills and change we had in our pockets, wallets, her handbag, etc. and put the lot in the middle of the bed. It was pretty paltry. Out of this, we transferred to a table the amount the hotel would cost and what was needed for gas and food to get back to Seattle. The meager sum left on the bed was all that we had to spend on food and entertainment in San Francisco.

It's so hard to believe now that I was ever so penniless . . . .

Anyway, the two of us made do – eating at cheap diners rather than fine restaurants, looking for tourist freebies wherever available. It was a worthwhile experience.

Each of us had comparable deadlines to get back to Seattle. We stayed in San Francisco as long as we possibly could, leaving us just enough time to drive straight through to Seattle. The roads in those days were not as good as they are today, I had an old wreck of a used car, and – worst of all – Alice didn't drive! So it was all on me. I would stop every few hours, ask her to wake me in 20 minutes, and then catch a few winks by the side of the road. It was exhausting, but we made it back with less than an hour to spare.

The Staten Island's major service assignment during this period was to tow four over-age decommissioned destroyers across the Pacific to Eniwetok Atoll, where they would be used in the nuclear testing program. I was sent down for a few

days to Long Beach, CA, where the destroyers were tied up – supposedly to inspect them for seaworthiness. Having no idea what I was looking for, I went through some plausible motions during the days – peering at the hulls, paying quickie visits to the inoperable engine rooms, and so on – and hit the local bars at night.

The voyage to the atoll was grueling. Due to the combined bulk of the four ships we were towing, we had to travel at sluggish speeds of three or four knots. I was still the navigator at this point; and unlike conditions in the Arctic, I was able to take reliable sextant readings to fix our position. But the position changed so little from, say, eight in the morning until noon, that the marks I made on the large scale Pacific Ocean chart were typically within a hair's-breadth of each other.

And it was hot, our route being not far from the equator. Icebreakers of the '50s, which were insulated for the cold weather, had little ventilation and no air-conditioning. I couldn't sleep in my bunk and had to come up on deck at night, strapping myself to some low-hanging superstructure before hitting the hardwood.

The only notable event on the trip occurred when a sailor who worked on the mess deck went nuts, tried to stab one of the cooks with a big kitchen knife, and then – thwarted by others – ran to the ship's rail to jump overboard. He was caught just in time and locked up in the ship's brig for the balance of the trip. Upon arrival in Eniwetok, we turned him over to U.S. Navy authorities.

Something really bizarre – a touch of comic, but with plenty of potential for misfortune – occurred after we were back in Seattle. The Captain's best friend on the Staten Island was the officer (Pete) who served as Chief Engineer, a crucial posting on the ship. For some valid personal reason, Pete wanted to leave the ship, and Jumbo wished to accommodate him. But the Bureau of Personnel wouldn't allow a Chief Engineer to leave a ship unless there was a replacement for him. On the Staten Island, none was available.

About then, I received a summons to report to the Captain. I had no idea what was in store, but given my prior experience with Jumbo, approached his cabin with trepidation – which turned out to be quite justified.

“Freund,” said the Captain, “Pete is leaving the ship, and I’m appointing you as the ship’s new Chief Engineer.”

My first thought was that Jumbo was joking, although he wasn’t known for having a sense of humor. “You’re kidding, of course, Captain. Me as Chief Engineer? I know nothing about things mechanical or electrical, engines, pipes or wires . . .” My voice trailed off as I took in his steely expression.

“I’m not kidding,” he said. “You’re it . . . Now get the hell out of here.”

And thus began one of the diciest periods in my Naval career. I had no idea what I was doing – a total misfit in the role, and everyone in the crew knew it. At one point, I latched on to a paperback pamphlet they gave to the lowest grade of new engineman recruit, just to impart some basic knowledge of the field into my head (“This here is a diesel engine . . .”); but even at that rudimentary level, I found my mind going blank.



During this time, we took the ship out of Seattle on a short training mission. Here’s a snapshot of the way things went. I’m sitting in the wardroom drinking a cup of coffee. The chief machinist, a knowledgeable warrant officer, comes in and says, “We’ve had a problem with [something or other] on Engine #2, and we need to take it off-line for further checking. You ought to tell the Captain.”

So I go up to the bridge, salute, and tell the Captain we have a problem with Engine #2 and need to take it off-line. He says, "What's the problem?" I salute again and say, "I'll find out." I run back to find the chief machinist, who tells me the problem, which I don't understand but manage to memorize (something about a certain valve, or was it a gasket?). I go back to the Captain and repeat it. Then he asks how long the engine will be off-line, and I have to go through the same drill again with the chief machinist.

There's no telling how long this charade might have gone on, but for a lucky break. Dave Reedy, an officer who had been the Chief Engineer on a destroyer for several years, tired of the duty and put in for a transfer to any other ship where he would be able to serve in a different capacity. The Navy sent him to the Staten Island. The day he arrived, the Captain – who by now had come to realize the absolute folly of me serving as Chief Engineer – made Dave the Chief Engineer, much to the latter's chagrin. "But, but, but . . ." he sputtered, to no avail. He got the job, and I was returned to a posting where mechanical aptitude wasn't essential.

\* \* \*

During this period before my second Antarctic cruise, an incident occurred that, six decades later, still produces an occasional nightmare.

Our ship was heading west through the Straits of Juan de Fuca toward the Pacific Ocean. I was the officer of the deck; a junior ensign, Ron, was assisting me.

An assortment of small craft were running in these waters, although they usually kept their distance from us. But one vessel's captain had a different idea. He was operating a large ferry a few miles away on our port bow, proceeding north – perpendicular to our westerly course.

I told Ron to keep an eye on the ferry, which meant he needed to track its bearing from us. If the numerical bearing steadily decreased, that meant the ferry would pass astern of us. If the bearing steadily increased, it meant the ferry would pass ahead of us. And if the bearing stayed the same, it meant the two of us were on a collision course . . . .

And so we were. “Bearing remains the same,” Ron sung out at thirty-second intervals. As the icebreaker and the ferry closed in on each other, I grasped the crisis at hand.

For military and non-military vessels alike, maneuvering at sea is governed by the so-called “Rules of the Road.” The rule applicable to this particular situation states that the ship (here, the icebreaker) that has the other ship (here, the ferry) on its port bow is the “favored” vessel and is required to maintain its course and speed. The other ship, the “burdened” vessel, must change course or speed to avoid the favored vessel. This meant that under these circumstances I should do nothing but continue to proceed on the same course and at the same speed as I was operating on. The ferry was required to take the necessary evasive action. But despite the rule, the ferry wasn’t taking such action and gave no sign that it would do so.

“Bearing remains the same,” Ron intoned mechanically. I couldn’t help wondering whether he was conscious of how serious this was – two vessels heading at top speed toward each other, risking an unavoidable collision. And where, you may ask, was our Captain for expert assistance? He had informed me a half-hour earlier that he’d be taking a badly-needed nap in his stateroom, and shouldn’t be awakened except in an emergency.

Was this an emergency? I thought so, as the ferry bore down on us without slackening speed or altering direction. Did the ferry captain even know the Rules of the Road, I wondered – did he realize he was supposed to yield?

I could see the disturbed look on the face of our helmsman at the steering wheel, who did realize what was happening. He was the guy to whom I'd have to give any order to alter course so as avoid the ferry. But acting in disobedience to the Rules carried real risk. If I turned to my port, and the ferry – with its captain finally awakening to the problem and realizing he was required to do something – turned to his starboard, we would probably collide.

Another option was to give a command to the engine room to stop all engines – or even more severe, “All back full.” But even this would be a violation of the Rules, with the same risk of confusing the ferry captain. And since the ship would then jerk noticeably and make a loud noise, it would wake up the Captain – something I wanted to avoid at all costs.

So these were the kinds of thoughts that were streaming through my head during the last few minutes of the looming encounter . . . .

In the end, I did nothing – perhaps not so much because it was the right decision to make (which it was), but more that I froze into a kind of fatalistic immobility.

Well, I won't keep you in suspense. The ferry passed just ahead of us, with its fantail so close I could see the expressions on the faces of the people standing there – a matter of mere yards away.



I can't remember how I handled this with Ron and the helmsman afterwards – was I cool and collected (just another day at the office), or did I figuratively wipe the sweat off my brow after a close call? I think I must have just walked out onto the wing of the bridge, where I could be alone with the reality that we'd just narrowly avoided a disaster.

As I thought about it later, I was sure the ferry captain knew the Rules. This was probably a game he liked to play with the Navy ships that occasionally cruised in these waters -- ships being handled by novices like me. He, on the other hand, plied these same waters every day of his life; he had total command of his craft; and he managed his speed expertly to just miss us – not by a mile, but rather a seeming millimeter – with the goal of giving heart palpitations to the Navy's latest incompetent young officer.

\* \* \*

Jumbo finally left the ship for another assignment. I was delighted that the Staten Island now had a new Captain (we'll call him Patrick), who would be in charge on our second Antarctic cruise. I hoped my relations with Patrick would prove to be a lot better than with Jumbo.

To stimulate those good relations, I invited the new Captain to join us when my friends and I decided to have a big party at Alice's house prior to leaving port. I was aware that Patrick's wife hadn't come to Seattle, inasmuch as he'd be asea for the next six months. I thought he might be lonely – perhaps concerned about the big task he was about to undertake – and would enjoy a change of pace. Patrick was delighted to be invited and promptly accepted.

By coincidence, a classmate of mine from Princeton happened to be passing through the area, and I invited Dick to join us also.

The party was terrific. I took on the task of introducing the Captain to everyone he didn't know (including Dick, whom I identified as "my good friend from college"). The introductions included an attractive flight attendant friend of Alice (let's call her "Nancy"), who was there without a date.

A half hour later, I saw the Captain canoodling with Nancy in a corner of the room, looking very happy. I was pleased; obviously I'd already gone a long way toward getting Patrick to appreciate me – if not for my nautical skills, then at least for my matchmaking ability.

After that, I lost track of things while playing the piano and joining in a ceremony to introduce our home brew. When this ended, I looked around for my friend Dick, who seemed to have disappeared. I asked if anyone had seen him and was told by a fellow officer, "Oh, Dick left ten minutes ago with Nancy." Just then, I caught sight of Patrick, visibly angry, putting on his jacket and stalking out of the house.

Well, I figured, to make it with the new Captain, I guess I'll have to fall back on my nautical abilities after all . . . .

The ship was now preparing to embark on a six-month cruise to the Antarctic, one of the world's coldest and most isolated outposts. No liberty, no booze, no women – it was a trip to tax the fortitude of Job.

I was the duty officer one day, standing on the quarterdeck. All of a sudden, I saw on the gangway the same crazy sailor who'd tried to stab a cook and jump off the ship – the one we had to lock up and put ashore in Eniwetok.

"Permission to come aboard," he barked, saluting smartly.

"What the hell are *you* doing here?" I sputtered.

“Reporting for duty, sir.”

Needless to say, I barred him physically from entering the ship, and immediately called the Captain. We got in touch with the authorities, told them of their terrible mistake in ordering this nut back to our ship for the arduous Antarctic trip, and managed to get his orders changed.\*

\* \* \*

For my second Antarctic trip, as part of Deep Freeze IV, the Staten Island produced its own commemorative cruise book. Yours truly wrote the text – serviceable, if a trifle over-the-top. Here’s an excerpt from the book’s introduction, under a big photo of the ship breaking ice:



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\* I used that incident in an article I wrote many years later called, “An Ode to Embellishment.” After having related the story to an acquaintance just as I wrote it here, the thought had occurred to me that perhaps I wasn’t really standing on the quarterdeck when the crazy sailor arrived back at the ship. Maybe I was just embellishing the story. My memory was even dim as to whether the sailor actually returned to the ship. We may just have received an advance copy of his official orders and complained to the authorities. Still, my article endorsed the possible embellishment in this case (while tut-tutting about it in others) – it enhanced the tale, allowing me to express the incredulity I felt at the time, and it didn’t falsify the point of the story, namely the Navy’s bureaucratic snafu. [See also my discussion in the memoir’s introduction of Oliver Sack’s piece entitled *Speak, Memory*, regarding the potential invalidity of many seemingly impregnable memories.]

## RENDEZVOUS WITH ANTARCTICA

*The quiet sense of destiny that underscores life on the sea was very much in evidence that bright October morning in 1958, as USS STATEN ISLAND (AGB-5) made her final preparations for getting underway. Amid the kisses and sobs, the last-minute instructions concerning the family car and the whispered words of good-bye, was the curious sensation that many thousand miles away, under a milky curtain of ice and snow, the ship had a strange rendezvous to keep – in a land that some had seen but no one really knew. And, intermingling with the regrets at departure and the anticipation of adventures ahead, was the disquieting knowledge that the icebreaker would confront its fate alone.*

As it turned out, the trip from Seattle to New Zealand (with only a brief stop in San Diego to embark our helicopter unit) was the most comfortable we ever experienced.

*Nary a coffee urn was overturned nor a recent recruit tossed from his rack; no flying missiles in the wardroom nor independent garbage cans on the mess deck marred our journey.*

We had several scientists aboard conducting various projects – such as the study of cosmic rays emitted by the sun at 18 different latitudes between Seattle and Antarctica – for which I foresaw great things:

*It will be some time before the ultimate result of their research is known, but this and similar studies being conducted elsewhere will eventually play a considerable role in man's conquest of outer space.*

There were also physicians doing research into the virus connected with the common cold, and scientists conducting an intensive oceanographic program.

Crossing the equator on a US Navy ship is a big deal. Those who have crossed before (called “Shellbacks”) terrorize the first-timers (“Pollywogs”) regardless of rank, making them endure all kinds of sloppy and funny initiation rites. You have to be there to grasp the absurdity of it all. But it does serve to bond the crew together.

Our major stopover in New Zealand was at the small city of New Plymouth. We were the first American ship to ever pay the town a visit, and the locals rolled out the red carpet. Maoris danced on dockside; sailors were entertained in private homes and plied with food and drink; and the whole ship’s company paraded (with me out of step once again) through the main street of town to cheering onlookers. We visited the scenic splendor of Mt. Egmont, and I fell in love with a charming lass – a three-day relationship doomed in the end by my never returning to New Plymouth.



After stopping briefly for fuel and fresh provisions, we headed south. Two days out from New Zealand’s south island, as I later recounted, “*We ran into mountainous seas and high winds which tossed us about with reckless abandon.*” Rolls of up to 55 degrees were experienced. Eating and sleeping became major efforts.

As we neared Antarctica, one night in particular sticks in my mind. The weather was horrible – a driving rain, freezing temperatures, rough seas, almost zero visibility. I was in charge of the watch as the Staten Island fought through all this mess, pitching and rolling violently. A junior officer was glued to the radar, searching for any signs of obstacles to our progress, and we posted a seaman lookout in the open area above the bridge.

I was peering out the window of the wheelhouse through that cold driving rain when all of a sudden, without any warning, I saw a huge shape loom up close to the bow of the ship. Neither the radar operator nor the lookout had provided any warning of anything being out there, although we were aware that the region might contain icebergs . . . .

And that's just what it was! – a huge iceberg that the radar had failed to detect, the lookout had neglected to notice – and we were heading right for it!

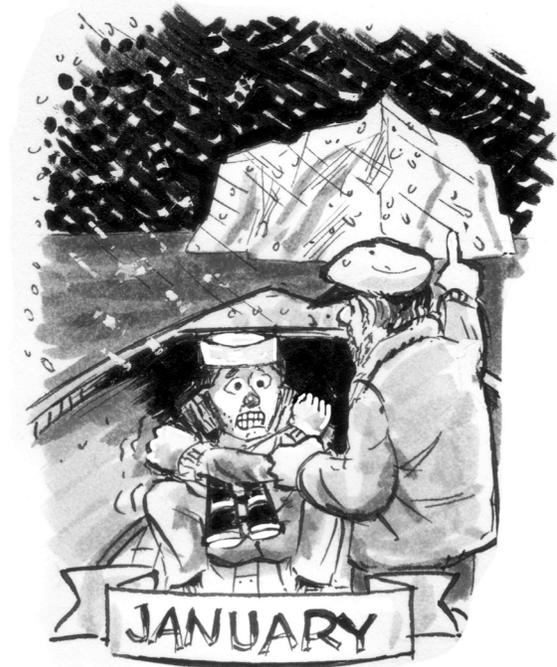
*(If those first terrifying seconds had made it into the cruise book, which I ensured they didn't, I would probably have termed that initial sighting a Titanic moment – envisioning the huge ocean liner being sent to its watery grave by a berg smaller than this one; and I certainly would have mentioned that these waters were so cold no one could last more than a few minutes in them.)*

This time however – as contrasted with my timidity in that ferry incident reported earlier – I acted instantly and with decisiveness. “Right full rudder! Starboard engine back full!” The ship responded, began to come about slowly to the right, and the turn was finally completed – with us only a short distance from a disastrous collision.

After we had changed course to go around the iceberg, I finally caught my breath and wondered why I hadn't been warned of this danger earlier. The radar

was an early model that wasn't good at picking up smooth icy objects, but how about the lookout? So I used the intercom to call up the seaman.

After unloading a few choice expletives on him, I closed with: "Goddamit, what the hell are you doing up there?" And the voice came back over the bridge loudspeaker, in a tone marked by an icy shiver, "I'm . . . freezin' . . . to . . . death." We all cracked up – we needed a good laugh – picturing him huddled beneath some canvas, facing away from the bow, trying to keep warm, and probably still unaware that we'd encountered an iceberg.



*Lesson learned: when you're in charge of something important, be wary of dependence on others – especially when they're cold and wet.*

By the next day, the storm had eased. As we neared the icepack, we saw the sun glistening on another iceberg, which I could (and did) write about:

*We passed this silent sentinel of the Antarctic with awe and slight apprehension, and turned to our duties with new vigor.*

Then we hit the icepack, at first plowing easily through small belts of scattered brash, and then contacting the main bulk of the pack. It was the first time that the new Captain had ever encountered ice; and, except for two of us, all the other officers who had been on our first voyage to Antarctica had been replaced by individuals with no polar experience. The other veteran was sick this day, so when we reached the first real obstacle in the ice field, the Captain called me to the bridge.

“Okay, Mister,” Patrick asked with a modicum of seeming respect, “what do I do now?” I supervised some minor unskilled maneuver, and we slithered away from the smallish ice floe that had been blocking our path. A little later, we encountered more serious ice and again he sent for me. I tried a different technique, slightly more complicated, and after a few minutes we were again free.

This went on a few more times, and then we came to some thick blue ice. I ran through my repertoire, but the ship didn’t budge.

“Well?” the Captain inquired.

“That’s it,” I answered.

His face flushed as he stammered incredulously: “Is that your *whole* bag of tricks?”

“That’s right,” I replied, smiled weakly, and headed for the wardroom.

Needless to say, Patrick didn’t call me to the bridge again. I’m informed that, shortly upon returning from the voyage, *he* decided to write his own book about piloting ships in the ice!

We spent the next several months actively engaged in the Antarctic. Here are a few highlights.

- The sun never set. Everyone’s hours were disoriented; for instance, the mess deck was busy at 3:00 am.

- The ship rode smoothly in the ice (except for an occasional jolt as a tough floe was shouldered aside), in contrast to the pitching and rolling experienced in the Pacific Ocean coming down from New Zealand.

- When we had to halt to await better conditions, groups went penguin hunting, bringing some birds on board. I posed happily for a picture holding one of them; five seconds later, the little bugger crapped all over me.



- At one point when we stopped for a longer period, an ice football game was arranged by crewmembers.
- The huge icebreaker USS Glacier broke two blades (and bent the other four) off her screws, was virtually helpless, and had to proceed back to New Zealand for dry-docking. This resulted in Staten Island having to do both her own job and the Glacier's. Forgive me, but I just can't resist quoting the apocalyptic terms in which I described this back then:

*It was a grim moment, for the fate of the entire operation depended on whether she [the Staten Island] could accomplish the task of breaking the channel into McMurdo for the cargo ships and tankers – all by herself. The best-laid plans of mice and men could not have prefigured this development; never before had the channel been carved out solely by a wind-class icebreaker.*

*But a new and resolute spirit was emerging among the old hands and first-timers aboard STATEN ISLAND as she picked her way down the narrow leads and broke through the thick ridges en route to the Naval Air Facility. If it was possible, and there was reason to believe it*

*was, we were sure we could accomplish it; after all, we had emerged undamaged from the worst the Antarctic had to offer.*



*Slowly our channel began to take shape, about a mile's worth per day . . . and our [McMurdo Sound] objective started to come into focus. Working steadily around the clock, with no rest for the tireless diesels, the icebreaker that was too small for the job was getting it done.*

- We tasted tinned biscuits preserved in Scott's 1910 hut at Cape Evans and later "rescued" steaks buried in the ice from Admiral Byrd's Little America V (established in the '40s) on the Ross Sea ice shelf.
- One of our missions took us to Cape Hallett, the "garden spot" of the Antarctic, where we visited a large penguin rookery. Listen to me, marveling over the experience:

*Of all the magnificent and other-worldly vistas to be viewed in the Antarctic, there is a little doubt that Cape Hallett is the most breathtaking. It is ringed by jagged mountains and picturesque bergs; glaciers and icefalls abound; and with every passing hour the Antarctic sun changes the shadows and glinting colors in a glorious panorama.*

- Going over to Wilkes Station on the Indian Ocean side of the continent, we encountered beautiful sunsets, now being far enough north to experience night. Once there, we officially turned over the American encampment to Australia in a simple ceremony, but one in which I saw larger import:

*The Antarctic is a fertile breeding ground for international amity. Let there be no doubt of that, and this was one more example of cooperation between nations in a scientific venture that vitally concerns all.*

\* \* \*

Finally we headed back north. It was a long tough tour, but all this would soon be redeemed – because we were about to spend a week in Melbourne, Australia. I can still picture one of these late evening sessions on the way there, with a grizzled chief petty officer – who had spent some time in Australia during World War II – holding forth on what was in store for us.

“Oh, you’re gonna love that place. The people are so friendly, the women are beautiful and available, the goddamn beer is fantastic . . . .”

I had arranged with one of the less adventuresome officers to assume my duties, so that I could take the entire week off “on the beach.” It was shaping up to be one of the highlights of my life.

We arrived in Melbourne, berthed the ship, and were poised on the quarterdeck to go ashore when an urgent message was received. "Return to McMurdo Sound." There was a rumor about a Japanese ship being stuck in the ice or whatever, but it didn't matter – the sickening point was that our ship would have to leave the next morning for the Antarctic. We were devastated, although I tried to put a better face on it in the cruise book:

*It was a hard blow to take after so long in the ice, and with Melbourne beckoning and Seattle not far away; but once more the icebreaker responded to the call . . . .*

But not before we had one night in Melbourne – one night to make up for the week they were robbing us of. My buddies and I took a big suite at a hotel, located some of those beautiful Aussie women, stocked up on booze (we might also have had some food, but I don't recall any), and threw a helluva party.

My enduring memory of that night was being so drunk that at one point I claimed loudly to be indestructible – whereupon I proceeded to open a window all the way, climb out onto the ledge, and try to sidle along the ledge toward the next window of the suite. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed – I was pulled back into the room and dumped on a couch.

*Lesson learned: When blotto, stay away from open windows.*

Meanwhile, the ship's crew, irate over the change of plans, marauded all over the city – breaking things, accosting women, getting into fights with locals. I was later designated by the Captain to write letters of apology for the crew's conduct to a plentiful number of local institutions and establishments – definitely not the Staten Island's finest hour.

I can't remember much about that detestable trip back south, except to recall that we had to move fast because in a few weeks this part of the Antarctic would begin to seal itself off for another winter. I don't even remember seeing a marooned Japanese ship.

When it ended, we weren't able to return to Melbourne but instead hit New Zealand again. This time it was Christchurch and the beautiful cosmopolitan city of Wellington, which made up in part for the disappointment over Melbourne.

On our way back home, we made a visit to tiny Niue Island, a New Zealand dependency in the South Pacific which had been struck by a brutal hurricane that depleted its food supply. The island had no airstrip, so we were called upon to transport supplies of tinned corned beef and mutton to the island.

We finally got back to Seattle in mid-April. I can't resist quoting myself on the dock scene and how we felt:



*Wives and sweethearts lined the pier, and a Navy band broke into the familiar strains. Reporters and cameramen swarmed aboard as the brow went over; the return of the icebreaker was big news. Men saw small children they had never seen before, brought into the world during the five and one-half months we had been away. It was a reunion en masse, and it felt very good.*

*And as the general pandemonium subsided, we were able to draw up a final balance sheet on our accomplishments. It was indeed a favorable one. Many thousands of miles away, we had encountered our special enemies – ice, bitter weather, uncertain seas – and we had emerged victorious. We were still strong and very much in commission. We had completed all missions assigned in the face of very special difficulties. We had, indeed kept our rendezvous with Antarctica.*

\* \* \*

What really disappoints me, as I look back at those years from today's vantage point, was how I managed to waste so much time. During my legal career and even through retirement, I've valued every spare hour to accomplish things I considered meaningful. Not so back then. There was an immense amount of dead time on the ship that could have been productively employed, but I utterly failed to utilize it.

For instance I did like to write; and I could tell from the outset that I'd be exposed to some good story ideas aboard ship. (Maybe a little something along the lines of *The Caine Mutiny* . . . ) Even if I didn't write the book while onboard, at least I could have made voluminous notes to later serve as my primary source material for a work of either fiction or non-fiction.

For a few weeks at the beginning of the three year hitch, I did jot down my fresh impressions. But then I just stopped, neither writing nor collecting information. I acted as if the whole experience just wasn't worth it. I was wrong.

Another thing I initially vowed to do was to read – to devour good books that I knew about but hadn't time to peruse in college. My starting point was Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, which I cracked open the first month on the

ship. By the end of the three years, I hadn't ventured beyond page 50. Likewise with other classics – they were never opened.

What did I do with my spare time? I really don't know. I played some gin rummy, flipped through some magazines, fooled around on my electric piano, dozed off – it's painful to think about how I let three valuable years get away from me.

\* \* \*

Two really significant lifetime events did happen to me in the Navy. One of these, occurring near the end of my tour of duty, was meeting my first wife, Barbro. (I'll cover that in the section devoted to her.) The other one – the way in which the Navy shaped my subsequent professional life – I'll talk about here.

For some people, the choice of career is almost foreordained – a youngster going into his dad's business, for instance, or someone who always wanted to be a doctor. But for me growing up, the whole question was subject to benign neglect.

My eventual career choice turned out splendidly. Looking back at it today, practicing law might seem to have been a natural evolution – the various requisites for an attorney playing generally to my strengths. But this career was in no way foreordained. And who could have predicted that the USS Staten Island would be responsible for my eventual choice of profession? But it was – and here's how it came about.

Back in college, when my friends were worrying about what they wanted to do in life, I refused to think about it. There wasn't anything I particularly wanted to do. I was not tempted to go into my father's (and grandfather's) business which, although operated with pride and care and capable of turning out estimable products, was only marginally profitable. I found it almost painful to observe my father working unstintingly but without any appreciable financial success.

Actually, business in general held no allure for me. (I remember having a subscription to *Time* magazine and avidly devouring its contents each week – except for the "Business" section, which I passed up with regularity.) I liked to write, but never saw it as my life's work. Teaching held some interest, but the low pay scale was unenticing.

I don't recall in those days ever considering law as a career. Back then, lawyers weren't nearly as much in the news or all over the TV screen as they are today. It was a more refined profession, operating quietly behind the scenes. Since our family knew few lawyers, I wasn't subjected to any avuncular prompting.

As a result, while many college classmates were taking the law school aptitude test or being interviewed by prospective business employers or applying to graduate schools, I stood off to the side. My rationalization was that inasmuch as I had to serve three years in the Navy, that's when I'd decide what I wished to do later. I don't recall even speculating what my life's work might be; and when asked, I took to replying, "Maybe I'll want to stay in the Navy." This made for a most enjoyable undergraduate experience, devoid of the pressure many youngsters feel today to find a job or enter a graduate program.

Then, during my first months on the ship, the only career decision I made was that I would *not* make the Navy my career! But I still seemed no closer to choosing anything else – until, unexpectedly, I found my calling.

When an enlisted man on a ship goes "over the hill" or commits some other dereliction of duty, the captain convenes a special court martial to try him, find the seaman guilty, and sentence him. The consequences can be serious, ranging up to six months prison time, loss of pay and a bad conduct discharge. The accused is entitled to be represented by an officer acting as defense counsel, but the officer doesn't have to be a lawyer so long as the prosecutor isn't an attorney. On a large ship, I might never have gotten involved in the process, but our icebreaker had just a

small complement of officers. Moreover, because icebreaker duty was so tedious, we had more than our share of seamen going astray.

As a very junior officer on the ship, my first assignment was to sit as one of the five judges on a special court martial. I approached this with an open mind, but most of my fellow judges were hardened warrant officers with little patience for the process and a low regard for the accused. I'll never forget watching one of the judges doodling as he listened to testimony about a seaman's AWOL – doodling a hangman's noose.

Then one day, I was assigned as defense counsel for an accused sailor. That's when I found my calling. Serving as defense counsel was a job that none of the other officers wanted, so it was continually available. You only had to read one book – the Manual for Courts Martial, which I devoured. Although my clients were convicted with regularity (after all, they were clearly guilty), I fought hard to keep their sentences to a moderate (non-noose) level.

I tended to disparage almost everything else that came my way in the Navy, but I found the court martial work absorbing. As my three-year hitch was nearing an end, it wasn't a big step for me to apply to law school. I sent in my application from the Antarctic and took the LSAT test when we returned to Seattle. Harvard accepted me – I probably had the advantage of Harvard's geographic diversity quota, beating out a couple of overachieving penguins! – and that's how my career at the bar begun.

Most of the cases I handled on the ship were pretty cut-and-dried, but there was one legal situation worth mentioning.

I was assigned to defend a guy we'll call Kyle, an arrogant young seaman who was disliked by officers and enlisted men alike. He had been accused of taking a swing at a respected Petty Officer (whom we'll call Porter). Kyle's story was that he

threw the punch in self-defense after being attacked by Porter. No witnesses to the incident had come forward.

As we discussed the case in my stateroom. Kyle suddenly turned to me, speaking with deep emotion: “Mr. Freund, you gotta get me off! I hate the goddamn Navy. I’ve only got three months left to serve before I get my discharge. But if I’m convicted, they can stick me in the brig for up to six months and then they add another six months to the time I have to serve. I swear, Mr. Freund, I won’t make it through another year.”

“Well, Kyle,” I replied, “I’ll do what I can, but it’s a tough case for you – your word against that of Porter, a well-regarded petty officer, who claims you assaulted him without provocation.”

“He’s lying,” said Kyle. “He hates me from something that happened between us way back when, and this is just his way of evening up the score.” He looked pleadingly to me. “Look, Mr. Freund, I’ve got to beat this rap. I’ve saved up some real money I won at gambling, and it’s all yours if you can get me off.”

I smiled. “Listen, Kyle, that’s one of the benefits of being in the Navy – you don’t have to pay your defense counsel! Don’t worry, I’ll try my best. Save your money for when you get out of the service, which I hope will be earlier rather than later.” But I had little confidence that Kyle would be acquitted.

Three days after meeting Kyle, there was a knock on the door of my stateroom. A seaman we’ll call Seward entered. “They told me you’re defending Kyle, Mr. Freund.”

“That’s right.”

“I just wanted you to know that I saw the whole thing between Kyle and Porter, from up on the 40-mm turret where I was oiling the guns.”

“You saw it? I didn’t realize there were any witnesses . . . Well, Seward, tell me what happened.”

“They started yelling at each other, and then all of a sudden Porter took a swing at Kyle, missed him, then threw another punch that Kyle blocked, and then Kyle belted him on the chin.”

I remember the excitement I felt. Seward’s eyewitness account of the incident, describing Kyle’s blow as having been struck in self-defense, represented total exoneration for my client. I tried the case, highlighting Seward’s testimony. In what might have been the first acquittal ever obtained on the icebreaker, the court dismissed the charges against Kyle. I was jubilant, Kyle even more so.

A week after Kyle’s acquittal, I woke up one morning with a start. Suddenly it all came into focus – Kyle’s desperation to beat the rap, his mention of having saved up some cash, Seward materializing after a previously unsuccessful search for witnesses – my God, I realized, Kyle used those funds to pay Seward to lie on the witness stand! It was all quite obvious – but I was wet behind the ears and had been so delighted with Seward’s testimony that the thought never occurred to me until the trial was over.

I remember wrestling at the time with the issue of whether to do anything about my belated surmise. If I’d realized during the trial that I was sponsoring false testimony, I would have taken immediate steps to rectify it. But now the trial was all over. Could I overturn what had already happened? And besides, I rationalized, there was no proof of what Kyle and Seward had cooked up – only my own after-the-fact suspicion.

So inertia ruled the day. I didn't nose around to see what I could find out, or have any further contacts with either Kyle or Seward, or approach the president of the court or the ship's executive officer to relate my conjecture. I had to live with the knowledge of my inaction through the law school years that followed and on into practice – and I still feel a sense of discomfort over the case.

\* \* \*

So, that's the story of my stint in the Navy. It was not my favorite experience. The interminable cruises, the turbulent waves, the long hours of tedium, the arrogance of those in authority – I couldn't wait for the three years to end.

But now, in revisiting my service six decades later, I realize that for all these years I've been short-changing the experience. I retain vivid memories of some unforgettable moments. I learned some valuable life lessons. It furnished an estimable transition between those rollicking college years and the relative sobriety of my subsequent life. And it backed me in to my ultimate profession.

There's one other aspect of this that I've always been reluctant to point out – but I'll endorse the words of my Princeton NROTC classmate, Ross Webber, who characterized it so well:

“Like most of our contemporaries, I have come to value more my time on active duty as it has receded into the past. Perhaps this reflects a sense that we did sacrifice something for our country even if its value was not ever clear to us. Today, so few young men and women have such an opportunity (or want it apparently).”