

## USS GEARING 1957

The Gearing crew welcomed the New Year in with the “mighty G” on keel blocks in drydock three in Portsmouth’s Virginia misnamed Norfolk Yard. Friday January 4, the drydock was flooded and the Gearing was moved and moored starboard side to Pier #4 by the YTB 501 yard tug boat. On February 18, got underway for tests and returned to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard as before to starboard side to Pier #4. On the 28<sup>th</sup> the Gearing got underway proceeding on various courses and speeds for the explosive anchorage, Hampton Roads, Virginia to load ammunitions and returned the destroyer-submarine pier where she moored starboard side to USS Vogelgesang DD-862.

March 11 the Gearing DD-710 got underway on various courses and speed en-route to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Five day later the Gearing moored to pier BB-1 Guantanamo Bay and the crew took liberty. Donald J. Benchhoff, Robert L. Mayo and Steve Minetos capsized in a small boat. Donald J. Benchhoff, Robert L. Mayo was returned to the ship by a boat from the cruiser USS Albany CA -123 and Steve Minetos was retained for medical observation and returned the next day.

This is the real story told by Donald J. Benchhoff: Three of us rented a boat at Guantanamo and decided to avoid clubs and fish instead. One of the fellows who were with us was the Greek-otherwise known as Steve Minetos. We went to the other side of the bay and fished a while, and as I recall, didn't catch anything. We were fishing right along the perimeter road where the marine patrol came by every 45 minutes to an hour. On the other side of the road, there was a fence that separated the base from Cuba and the town of Caimanera was a mile or two away over some hills inhabited by goats. As I was the only one who spoke Spanish and everyone was thirsty, it was suggested that two of us go to Caimanera and get some coke and rum. So, we waited for the patrol to pass and went under or through the fence, walked towards the town, met a fellow, gave him some money and asked him to bring us some liquid refreshments. He did just that in an hour or so, in fact he brought back some young Cuban girls as well who had a few drinks with us. Minetos got drunk as I recall, the only one to do so and as he had the tiller on the boat, on the way back, he began going in tight circles in the middle of Guantanamo Bay and sank the boat to the gunnels. Of course the motor was under water and there we were and stayed there for a few hours in the water. As we were late in getting the boat back, they sent out a search party to find us and

when they located us, took us aboard a cruiser. We were coming aboard and the officer of the deck, seeing how cold we were, was in the process of sending us below for hot coffee when Minetos took a swing at the officer of the deck. They took him to the brig, the rest of us ended back on the Gearing later that same night and went to Captain's mast the following day. Of course, we left out the details in relating the story to the Captain (going over to Cuba, where we got the rum) and I think I ended up with having to pay for a portion of a new motor and 30 days restriction, part of which I spent aboard while the ship was in Spain. I don't think I went ashore with that fellow again.

The Gearing got underway on March 21 for the ammunition anchorage and the following day and took on ammunition. On the March 23, she got underway for Guantanamo operation area where she conducted exercises through April including Hedgehog calibrations, firing runs, anti submarine exercises. She conducted excesses almost every day returning to the pier in the evenings.

May 1, the Gearing got underway from Guantanamo Bay en-route to Mayport, Florida and three days later moored portside to pier at the USS Naval Station in Mayport Florida for one day, the USS Vogelgesang DD-682 moored the her starboard side and the USS Mc Card DD-822 moored outboard. The Gearing took on fuel and got underway again on May 5, taking station to the stern of the USS F. D. Roosevelt CVA-42 for high line transfer exercise and operated various other exercises while en-route the Norfolk, Virginia. On June 7 she moored the Destroyer - Submarine pier 21, berth 4 at, Norfolk, Virginia. Six day later she shifted berths to go alongside the USS Tidewater AD 31. She moored port side to the USS Robert H. Mc Card DD-822 which was moored starboard side the USS Tidewater. She got underway on the 27<sup>th</sup> to conduct Radio calibration tests in the vicinity of Cape Henry and returned where she moored to the Destroyer - Submarine pier 21, berth 4 at Norfolk, Virginia through the rest of June..

On July 1, 1957 the Gearing left her home port in Norfolk Va. in route to the Mediterranean and Red Sea for a two and a half month tour of duty. In the first month the Gearing crossed the Atlantic, steamed the length of the Mediterranean Sea, passed through the Suez Canal and toured the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. She covered a total of 8634 nautical miles, equivalent to 9930 statute miles, spent 31 of the first 36 days at sea, and still found time to visit briefly three ports on three different continents. She had not had a single day of rain, only smooth seas, sunny skies, and warm weather, with temperatures exceeding 98 degrees every

day. The trip across the Atlantic was in company with the 18-ship Task Group, composed of an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Randolph, and a fleet oiler, the Cantisteo, and 15 other destroyers. Numerous formation maneuvers were practiced during the trip, in preparations with the Mediterranean Sixth Fleet, and she refueled twice from the oilier. On July 13 the Gearing reached the Straits of Gibraltar and together with three other destroyers, parted company with the main body and continued eastward across the Mediterranean. The Gearing cruised steadily and leisurely for five days until July 18, arriving in Piraeus, the seaport of Athens, Greece, for fuel, food stores and the first mail since leaving home. The stay lasted only 24 hours, but that provided sufficient time to grant liberty to one-third of the crew. Most made the five-mile trip to Athens and twenty-five took a bus tour of the Acropolis and other famous sights of the city.



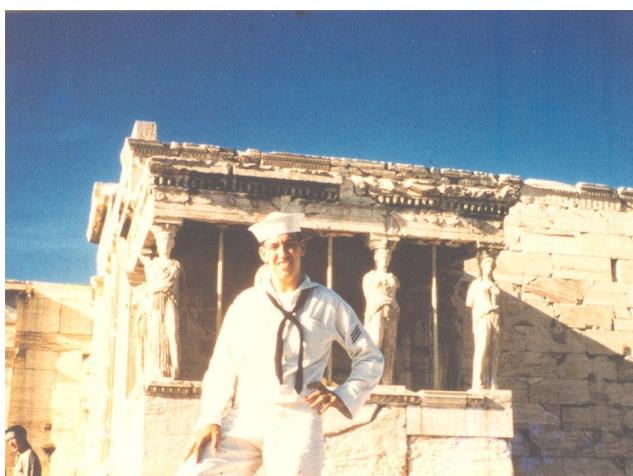
Piraeus shore line



The Acropolis Athens Greece July 1957



The Parthenon



George C. Jones in front of the Caryatids

On the evening of July 20, 1957 the ship anchored in Port Said harbor at the northern end of the Suez Canal, so recently the cause of great international tensions. Testifying to the unrest were two sunken dredges, still not raised after the numerous sinking last fall, and the base of the statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps, from which the monument to the French builder of the canal was toppled by angry Egyptians. The Gearing waited at anchor for eight hours, during which time they were besieged by hordes of local merchants displaying their wares from small boats (Bum boats) and attempting to set up shop on board the ship. Boots, at four and five dollars a pair, found many eager Gearing customers, as did a number of other items.



At 2 a.m. Sunday morning, July 21, the ship began her transit of the 100-mile canal at the head of an 18-ship convoy which included the U.S.S. Mc Card, a regular companion of Destroyer Division 41. The pilot for the first half of the trip was a Greek, and he guided the ship as far as Lake Timsah, the site of the city of Ismailia, where half of the canal's pilots live and where the beautiful, modern pilot's hospital is located alongside the canal. From Lake Timsah to Suez, at the southern end of the canal, the pilot was an Egyptian. The second half included a four-hour layover in Great Bitter Lake to allow a convoy from the south to continue northward in the one-way canal. At several points along the canal

Egyptian soldiers waved from the nearby banks. For nearly all of its length the canal is flanked by endless desert, dry and uninhabited, with just one city, Ismailia, along the route. Only occasional canal company buildings, military establishments, small huts and tents, and sparse vegetation interrupt the vast seas of sand. At 5 p.m. Sunday, July 21, the Gearing emerged from the canal into the Gulf of Suez.

The Gearing met another destroyer, the USS. Miller DD-535, at Suez and stopped long enough to receive warnings of heat and humidity and some useful advice about this area. Outgoing mail was given to the Miller to be mailed at Piraeus three days later. That evening, July 21, the Gearing commenced a voyage in the Middle East waters, Gulf of Suez, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden. Heat and humidity was the story of the cruise. Temperatures were high both day and night, never falling below 90 degrees, reaching at least 98 degrees every day, and attaining a maximum of 106 degrees all in the shade. Humidity was always high and the air was often filled with tiny, invisible sand particles which coated the entire ship and crew with a light film, and the sun was quite hot, even immediately after sunrise. The result was that nearly all hands sleep topside on the weather decks or in the air-conditioned mess hall, avoiding the stifling heat of the ship's interior. During the day the awnings, received along with three large air-conditioning units as special accoutrements for the trip, kept the sun off the decks and permitted daily work to be carried out. The engineers encountered especially high temperatures, ranging up to 160 degrees at times and never falling below 120 degrees, and men standing watches in the engineering spaces were sent topside for fresh air at regular intervals. The crew became somewhat accustomed to the heat and it did not seem nearly as bad as the tales they previously heard from ships completing duty in the area and of course the crew became used to it, to a degree. Also, according to news reports the Norfolk area had not been particularly pleasant during the heat wave which they had reported.

From July 25, to July 27 the Gearing visited Aden, the capital and port of Aden Protectorate on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Governed by Britain and maintained primarily as a fueling and bunker station for merchant ships, the city and its several surrounding small towns are built on barren, forbidding hills surrounding the fine natural harbor.



Gearing moored outboard the USS Hailey DD-556 on fueling station

There is practically no vegetation, not even grass, and all foodstuffs are imported, primarily from neighboring Yemen. Though British run and having the automobiles, roads, and buildings characteristic of a modern European society, Aden is populated mainly by Arabs and a few Europeans. All hands were given liberty in Aden, though the port offered little in the way of tourist attractions

The Gearing returned to Massawa, Eritrea, which they had visited once briefly, August 1-2. Massawa is a sleepy city of 10,000 located on the western coast of the Red Sea, inhabited by a racial mixture of Arabs, Negroes, Egyptians, Turks and Europeans. In the mountains, forty miles inland, the temperatures range between 40 degrees and 65 degrees in comparison to the occasional 165 degrees in Massawa. Asiatic flu was running epidemic proportions when the Gearing arrived in Massawa, so in order to avoid the possibility of being quarantined when they reached more attractive European ports, they stayed only one day to pick up fuel, fresh fruits and vegetables and their second mail on the trip. The ship's softball team played a team from an accompanying destroyer, the Hailey and in the evening the entire crew relaxed with a beer party in a field next to the pier, using a precious supply of Danish beer purchased earlier in Aden. The social highlight of the Red Sea cruise was a Happy Hour on the fantail during this brief stop for provisions fuel, and mail at Massawa. George C. Jones BM3 performed a few magic tricks and there was music both vocal and instrumental. The song, "The Wreck of the Old 710" writing and song by Charles (Chuck) Carr MM1 was especially funny to the crew at the time because the CO, CDR Edward A. Lane was having the ship repainted and you could not take a step without

stepping on Red Lead, so some of the crew had began calling him Red Lead Ed behind his back.

## THE WRECK OF THE OLD 710

Tribute to our skipper Edward Lane.

Words by Charles K. Carr. Music to "Wreck of the Old 97" a Country song.

THEY GAVE HIM, HIS ORDERS IN NORFOLK VA. SAYING ED, YOU GOTTA BE ON TIME,  
SO DOWN THE CHANNEL, AT MANY KNOTS AN HOUR AND THE SCREWS OH, THEY DID  
WHINE.

WE STEAM OUT IN TO THE BIG ROUGH ATLANTIC WHEN THE SPRING BEARING IT DID  
BREAK.

HE SAID HURRY UP! YOU DIRTY GREASY SNIPES WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE LATE.

HARMAN CALLED UP ALL HIS MEN, SAID MEN, WE GOTTA FIX IT RIGHT. WE'LL WORK AND  
WORK ALL NIGHT.

SO WHILE THEY WORKED ON THAT OLD SPRING BEARING THE RUST IT BEGAN TO SHOW,  
ED SAID, WE'LL USE UP SOME OF THIS RED LEAD WHILE WE HAVE TO GO THIS SLOW

SO ALONG WITH ALL THE CLEANING AND THE RED LEAD A LOWER DECK EVERY DAY.  
SO WE WORKED AND WE WORKED ON THIS OLD SHIP, TRYING TO KEEP HER UNDERWAY.

SO HEAR MY WORDS ALL YOU CARRIER SAILORS WHEN THIS TIN CAN YOU DO SEE  
JUST BOW YOUR HEAD AND THANK YOUR LUCKY STAR.  
THAT YOU ARE HEAR WITH ME.

Also there was a pie-eating contest and refreshments that were enjoyed by all. The ship ran out of deck-gray paint in the Red Sea so in order to keep the ship in top condition the boatswain mates made their own. Black India ink was mixed with haze-gray to reach the desired color.

Another problem was the motor whale-boat engine, a continuous source of trouble until Chuck Carr Machinist mate first class of Lebanon, Tennessee and Mike Futrelle Electronics Technician first class and Tom McDonough Engineman third class of Chicago, Illinois solved the problems with their mechanical ingenuity.

On the evening of August 21 the Gearing met her relief destroyer at the southern end of the Suez Canal, and the next day made the northern transit, starting at 12:30 p. m. and emerging into the refreshing cool Mediterranean at midnight. The ship and crew were all spruced up for the passage, a happy occasion.

On August 23 the Gearing made her second call at Piraeus Greece, as before just 24 hours for fuel and provisions. Again there was liberty for part of the crew.



Fuel Oil Barge at Piraeus Greece

The Gearing left Piraeus thinking it had seen the last of Greece with the crew looking forward eagerly to Barcelona and Naples. But a few hours out of Piraeus we were diverted and called to rejoin the core of the Sixth Fleet. The succeeding week was spent with a large Task Group, including carriers and cruisers, going through maneuvers. For several days the Gearing steamed at high speeds while the carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt conducted flight operations. At the end of the week the Gearing left the Task Group and steamed into Suda Bay, Crete, where she met the destroyer tender USS Arcadia AD 23 who she had originally been scheduled to go alongside for routine upkeep and repairs in Barcelona.



Gearing moored starboard side to the Destroyer Tender USS Arcadia AD- 23 in Suda Bay, BM3 Hance Hicks in photo.



Suda Bay, George C. Jones BM3 standing in front of the jack staff, George did the Turks heads and fancy work on the jack staff. For seven day in Suda Bay the Gearing Crew was quarantined because of her contact with the tender, which had several cases of Asian flu. However, the

Greek authorities finally relented and the crew had liberty the last to days in Suda Bay. The town itself was small and thus liberty consisted mainly of setting foot on terra firma and just relaxing for a while. From Suda Bay the Gearing took a one journey back to Athens, giving the crew a liberty port since, at that point been away from the U. S. for nearly two and a half months and still had not had much opportunity to get ashore. This time instead of going to Piraeus they anchored off of Athens itself, within sight of the Acropolis and most of the city.



Photo taken from the USS Gearing Anchored off Athens Greece

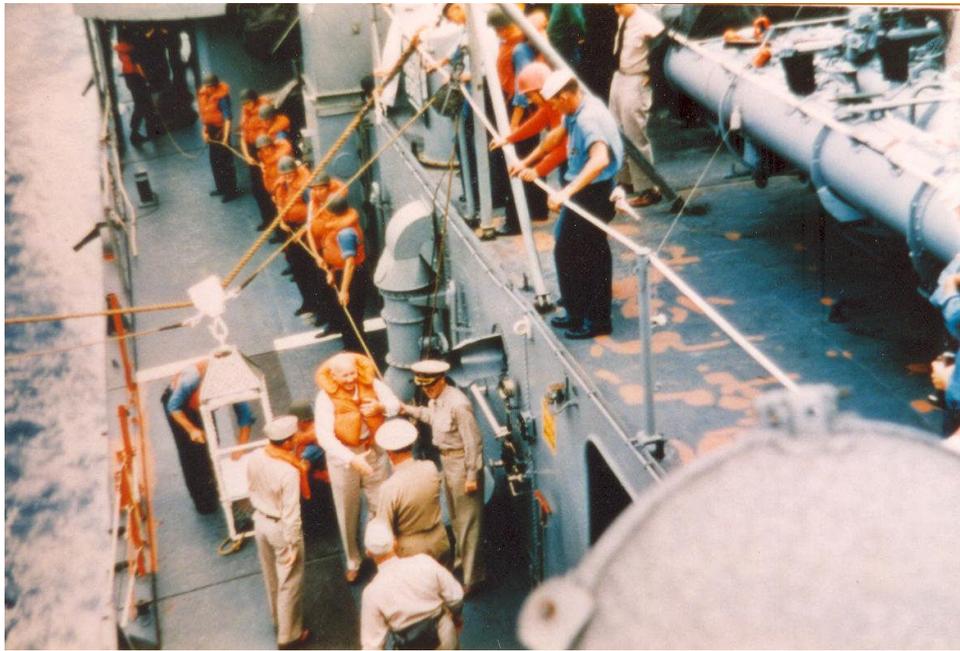
The Gearing stayed a week, and on the last Saturday afternoon they gave a party on board for a group of twenty-five orphan children. The crew showed them around the ship, gave them ice cream, cake and punch in the mess hall, showed some American movies in Greek, and gave them individual presents, toy animals and dolls for the girls, model planes, cars and trucks for the boys. The children were delighted and it gave the crew a great deal of pleasure to have them aboard.



**"FRIEND SHIP"** —Robert M. Begin, Jr., seaman, 653 Seventeenth avenue NE., shows family pictures to a smiling Greek girl during a party aboard the destroyer USS Gearing for 25 orphans in Athens, Greece. Begin was a state highway department employe before entering the navy in July 1956.

All of the Dolls ran out and this little girl got a truck Seaman Bob Begin felt so bad about it, that he bought a doll from one of the crew members who had purchased one to take home and gave it to the little girl.

The Gearing left Athens September 18 and during the next nine days participated on two NATO exercises, Operation Counterpunch and Operation Deepwater. The latter was primarily an amphibious exercise. During this period of time Drew Pearson, the famous radio and television news commentator, visited the Sixth Fleet. Pearson and vice admiral Charles Brown the Sixth Fleet Commander paid a call on the Gearing from the Cruiser Salam by way of high-line transfer at sea. They toured the ship and were later transferred via high line to the USS Roosevelt CVA-42.



Drew Pearson, visited the USS Gearing DD-710 via high line



Drew Pearson and Vice Admiral Charles Brown, high-line transfer at sea from  
The USS Salem CA- 139

The Gearing received word about the postponement of her departure for home and on September dropped anchor at Corfu, the principle city of the Greek Island of the same name. Both the Island and the city were pleasant and picturesque, which helped to pass the time as she waited for eight days. The town people spent the first half of the afternoon at siesta, with all the shops closed, and ate dinner

late. Taverns filled at 9 or 10 P. M. and were busy until 3 or 4 in the morning. The ship's basketball team played two games on the USS Roosevelt and the softball team played several contests with teams from other ships, using the town's parade ground as a ball field. A softball team organized by Douglas Slocum Metal smith first class of Philadelphia, Pa. called the Slocum Sluggers, challenged the ship's team, but despite a hard fought battle the Sluggers went down swinging. Dick Jordon, seaman former ALL- Navy wrestling champion and a crewmember of the Gearing successfully lived up to his reputation as he defeated a member of the FDR's very active wrestling team. A number of men took all-day tours of the island. On October 7, with the Gearing's relief destroyer in sight, weighed anchor and headed for Gibraltar. On Friday October 11 the Gearing moored to the main wharf in Gibraltar and took on 82000 gallons of fuel for her trip home. She got underway on Saturday October 11 for her home port in Norfolk, Virginia and 11 days later moored Starboard side to the destroyer-submarine pier Norfolk, Virginia.

There's nothing like a three and a half month cruise to take the wanderlust out of even the most ardent world traveler, and the crew was happy to see their families once again. Several of the men were especially glad to be home because of new arrivals. These new fathers were Karl Ralston, electrician's mate second class of West Union, Ohio; William Bellomy, commissary steward third class of Ashland, Kentucky; Herman Lash, boiler man third class of De Moines, Iowa; David Murphy, fire control technician seaman of Bellaire, Texas; John Pitts, Teleman third class of Orlando, Florida; Ralph Dunlap, signalman first class of Charleston, West Virginia.

On October 28 she got underway for the Foxtrot Anchorage to unload Bomb type ammunition before entering the Norfolk Shipbuilding and dry dock company for routine repairs. On November 6, she got underway for the destroyer - Submarine Pier under tug power. On November 26 reloaded ammunition and returned to the destroyer -Submarine Pier. On December 4, the Gearing Headed back to the Mediterranean and a resumption of her duties after a brief but pleasant five weeks in Norfolk. The crew had been quite busy during her stay in port and experienced a large turn over of personal but still managed to accomplish a considerable amount of routine repairs and organize three pre-Christmas leave parties. The new men who reported aboard before sailing were a fine lot, in fact, the best draft of men the Gearing had seen in some time.

The Gearing sailed again for the Mediterranean in early December 1957 and encountered some of the worst weather of her career. She encountered a storm

the first night out which lasted for two and a half days. On December 6, the Gearing left formation to take a southeast heading at ten knots while securing a loose depth charge on the fantail. The depth charge was secured and inspection showed that the port depth charge rack had been damaged by high seas and six depth charges had been lost overboard. The storm thoroughly indoctrinated her new men, many of whom were on their first trip to sea. Needless to say the old family two-and-a-half gallon bucket proved an indispensable item in many cases. After a few days of relative calm weather she encountered a second storm off the Azores Island for which the first had evidently been just a preview.

From the evening of the 10th through the 13th the Gearing was tossed about considerable by mountainous waves and high winds. On December 11, the crew began jettisoning mount 41 and 42 gun barrels and striking below components of mounts to reduce topside weight and to improve stability. Two hours commenced jettisoning twenty 7.2" rockets (plaster loaded) and fifty 7.2" rockets (service) from the starboard and port 7.2" ready service magazines (01 deck forward), respectively. At 10:04 p. m. jettisoned five torpedoes to lighten topside weight.

December 12, The U.S.S Salamonie (A0-26) commenced approach for emergency refueling and was unable to fuel due to heavy seas. The GEARING tried a second approach on the Salamonie but was unable to get lines over due to the high seas. Seaman George D. Schack while engaged in jettisoning loose gear to lighten the destroyer, in danger owing to heavy weather in low fuel, was tossed overboard when a gigantic wave broke over the Gearing. The Salamonie was approximately 1000 yards astern of the Gearing when it received a man overboard message by flashing light and voice radio circuit. Minutes later Schack was sighted on the port bow. The oiler maneuvered to bring him alongside, but was unable to turn sharply enough to get the victim to leeward, and drifted away from the tiring man. The Salamonie turned into the wind for a second approach and successfully maneuvered to the windward side of the man. Meanwhile, more than 30 lookouts kept Schack in sight. The heavy seas and 60-knot winds made it impossible to lower a lifeboat. Lawrence W. Beckhaus GM2c, USN with permission of his commanding officer, dived over the side. After a 10-minute swim the gunner's mate reached the exhausted but still conscious seaman. With the tanker rolling as much as 25 degrees in the trough, Salamonie's crew heaved the line in. Both men came on board simultaneously as the oiler took a huge wave that swamped the well deck. George D. Schack was found uninjured, but was sent to sick bay for shock treatment. At 1:48 p.m. The U.S.S Salamonie commenced making an approach on the starboard side to

attempt fueling. After receiving a shot line from the Salamonie the Gearing commenced steering various courses and speeds into very high seas to maintain fueling distances. At 2:23p.m. The Gearing collided with the Salamonie and broke away after several impacts. The damage was confined to the starboard hedgehog mount and stanchions with no flooding or punctures to the ship. Condition Able was set throughout the ship and after trying another approach the fueling detail was secured.

On December 13, two yellow life rafts were sighted on the port bow at distance of 1000 yards. The U.S.S. Mc Card was designated to investigate and reported no life on either raft. Also on the 13, the seas had calmed little, but an attempted fueling that morning proved successful largely through the efforts of Phillip M. Mayer, Signalman third class and Irwin L. Humphrey, Quartermaster third class, who were the helmsmen, and Ensign Palmer D. Sparkman, John P. Galo, Chief Boatswain mate, and Herbert L. Norfolk, Boatswain mate first class, who ably handled the lines out on deck despite difficulties encountered with the fueling rig. The 13th through the 15th was spent alternately pumping salt water ballast from empty fuel tanks and receiving fuel in its place. George D. Schack was high lined from the Salamonie (AO-26) to the U.S.S. Gearing. Fueling was completed and the Gearing finally proceeded independently to Gibraltar. During the storm the U.S.S. Mc Card (DD-822) had reached the same fuel state as the Gearing and the U.S.S. Manley had a man crushed to death when hit by a gigantic wave. Later in a ceremony aboard the U.S.S. Salamonie, Lawrence W. Beckhaus, GM2c was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal by RADM John C. Daniel, then Commander, Destroyer Force, Atlantic Fleet, for the rescue of George D. Schack. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is one of the highest peacetime citation awarded by the U.S. Navy. The 15<sup>th</sup> saw the Gearing finally en-route again to Gibraltar. Her stay in Gibraltar was short and the crew was glad when COMDESLANT representative investigating the storm damage recommended the repairs be accomplished by destroyer tender USS Tidewater, then at Naples, rather than in a foreign shipyard as had been considered. As a result the Gearing departed for Naples on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The passage to Naples was uneventful, and after an interesting approach passing close by the Isle of Capri and Mt. Vesuvius, the Gearing entered the beautiful Bay of Naples and arrived in port early the 23<sup>rd</sup>, a scant 2 days before Christmas. Christmas Day was bright and clear and LTJG McSwain, the supply Officer, Chief Commissaryman Webster, and the ship's cooks and bakers prepared one of the finest holiday meals ever prepared on a Navy ship. Many of the crew

attended the special Christmas Church services held on the Tidewater and the evening before a number of the men attended candle light services in churches of various denominations ashore. All the men missed being with their families for the holidays but were aware of the necessity of taking their turn of duty with the Sixth Fleet at this time. Those who had families in the Norfolk area were especially grateful for the Christmas party sponsored by ComDesFlot 4 for the families of deployed destroyer men. From all reports received, it was a highly successful endeavor and greatly appreciated by families and men alike and further goes to prove that despite its size and complexity the Navy is aware of the needs and problems of the individual. On the 29th of December the crews of the Gearing and Tidewater pooled their efforts and gifts and gave a Christmas party for 75 orphans from a local Naples orphanage. The children were a fine healthy lot, well adjusted, and the party was a great success for all concerned. Although most of the time alongside the Tidewater was devoted to repair work, several organized parties visited Rome, the ruins of Pompey and Mt. Vesuvius. A few hardy souls even braved the cold choppy passage to Capri on some of the numerous small excursion boats. By January 21, the Tidewater had completed all repairs to the damage caused by the storm and refueling attempts the month before. Once again the Gearing was ready to take her place in the Sixth Fleet. The repairs and other work accomplished by the Tidewater could not be praised too highly, the willingness, the quality of work performed and general can-do attitude of the tender could not be matched. Also the crew of the Gearing had to be commended for pitching in as never before and made the tender period one of the most productive periods they had ever experienced. For example, the ship fitter gang turned to all day with the tender personnel and then often worked all night to accomplish considerable other work for the ship. The fire control men, gunner's mates, deck and engineering personnel also put in long hours to bring the ship up to its highest material standard yet, (the engineers in particular have made great gains in this respect), and all hands deserved a well done. While alongside the tender, it gave pleasure to commander Lane to award letters of commendations to personnel for outstanding performance of duty during the storm 10-13 December. These men were: Mann Carroll G., FTC, USN from Dungannon, VA., Pelissier, Roland H., BTC, USN from Woonsocket, R.I., Norfolk, Herbert L. BM1, USN from Baltimore, Md., Dent, Joseph R. BT3, USN from Riverdale, Md., Humphrey, Irwin L., QM3, USN from North Granby, CT., Mayer, Phillip M., SM3, USN from Anderson, CA..

1956 Operation Springboard... [Havana \(click for Don Ruggles' MM3 54-56 photo\)](#). San Juan. NROTC middle cruise... Barcelona, Belfast, Guantanamo. Overhaul at Norfolk Naval Shipyard 1957 reftra... Kingston civilian orientation cruise off Florida 6th Fleet Med and Red Sea cruise... Aden, Massawa, Eritrea, Athens, Corfu, Suda Bay. [CLICK HERE to see Aden photos and recollections](#) forwarded by email from Arlie Harman (LTJG 55-58). Arlie writes, "Now, for the old DesRon 4 sailors. In looking on the web trying to pin down the identity of the tin can alongside us (in the Aden photo), I ran across info to recall the other ships of the squadron. Here they are in case anybody is interested. I think the hull numbers are reasonably accurate: DesDiv 41 Gearing DD 710 Flagship Mc Card DD 822 (Replaced Gyatt DDG-712 ) Ellison DD 864 Vogelgesang DD862 (Vogie) DesDiv 42 Eugene A. Greene DD 711, Dyess DDR-880, Bordelon DD-881, Furse DDR-882". December '57 Sailed for Med. Storm crisis near Azores. Emergency refueling with USS Salamonie. Lawrence W. Beckhaus, GMG2, of the Salamonie (skipped then by Capt. Edward L. Beach), was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for rescue of Gearing sailor who was washed overboard during the refueling. 1958 "Dux" logo developed. Storm damage repair at Gibraltar and Naples (alongside USS Tidewater.) 6th Fleet Med cruise continues... Ismir, Iskenderun middle cruise to northern Europe... Oporto, Copenhagen, Antwerp Vigo, Plymouth Jim Purcell remembers... "That was the year of the Brussels Worlds Fair and some of the guys who were also scheduled to be assigned to her got flown all around Europe trying to catch up with her. I wasn't that lucky. I came aboard after she returned." COMDESRON4 transfers flag from USS Gearing to USS Manley. 4 months upkeep and refresher training at GTMO In 1957-1958 William Charles Fitzgerald served aboard the Gearing after his 1956 enlistment in the Navy. He later received an appointment to the Naval Academy and earned his commission in June 1963. On 7 August 1967 Lt. Fitzgerald was killed in Vietnam. He was posthumously awarded the U. S. Navy's highest decoration for valor, the Navy Cross. In 1995 an Arleigh Burke class destroyer was named for him. [Click here to see the William C. Fitzgerald DDG-62's home page](#) which includes a complete history of William Charles Fitzgerald. (Please [EMAIL this page author](#) if you can add to recollections about William C. Fitzgerald's 1957-1958 service aboard DD-710.) 1959 On July 11 a collision at sea: Gearing was struck by a coal collier, the SS Malden of Mystic Connecticut, off Norfolk in fog and early morning darkness while executing a turn in a long line of ships. Surface search radar was out. Danger of sinking was lessened only by the fact that the impact was absorbed by Mount 51's barbette. Towed to

Portsmouth, Va. shipyard for repairs. Dahlgren weapons experts helped to unload ammunition. [Click here to see photos in drydock from Derry L Mount \(BT2 59-61\)](#). Paul Kelly (MM3 59-61) recalls, "I was throttle man in the main engine room for the collision G.Q. Chief Wade told me to answer the bells and he assigned someone else to enter them in the log knowing there would probably be an inquiry. Some of the small miracles that occurred: A messenger, Dunn, had been in the reefers taking readings when we were hit. He showed up in the engine room visibly shaken and soaking wet announcing that there was a ship in the reefers! The forward officers' stateroom was destroyed. The two officers who normally berthed there were both on watch. That was the first time during that cruise they had both been on watch at the same time." 1959-60 6th Fleet Med cruise... Beirut, Monaco, Athens, Istanbul, Barcelona returned to new homeport in Charleston, South Carolina. July 20, 1960: Observer at Polaris missile test by USS George Washington SSBN-598. Paul Kelly (MM3 59-61) and Vic Fredda (LTjg 58-61) recalled the event. Vic Fredda remembers "A test firing of a missile fired from Cape Canaveral had to be destroyed. The first missile fired from the George Washington looked like it was going to tip over, but it righted itself and was successful. We watched a total of 4 shots, all successful." 1960-61 Friendship cruise to Africa and South America as part of Operation SOLANT Amity, Oct. 31, 1960 to April 14, 1961 Flagship for Deputy Commander South Atlantic... Belem and Recife (Brazil), Freetown (Sierra Leone) Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Doula (Cameroun), Bathurst (Gambia), Dakar (Senegal), Cape Town (South Africa), and the Cape Verde Islands November 12, 1960: DD-710 is the first naval vessel to fly the 50 star flag outside the U.S. As part of ceremony the Navy's first 49 star flag was flown before the 50 star flag was hoisted by Chief Fred (Eddie) Schneider. During the Solant cruise to Africa it was a long time between mail calls and Paul Kelly (MM3 '59-'61) recalls: "I don't know who was responsible for what follows but it was a brilliant move... I believe we were in Senegal (Dakar), and at about 11:00 two French Army trucks come out on the pier and in them is Louis Armstrong and his band! They played for two hours in blistering heat and then came aboard and ate on the mess decks. He then arranged two nights in a row for tickets to his concert on him. What a guy!!!! He was in the middle of a world tour sponsored by Pepsi and the U.S. Government." [CLICK HERE to see the Louis Armstrong page](#) from the 1960-61 cruise book. G Company of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines rides Gearing for six weeks. Their LST had to make room for Belgian troops being evacuated from the Congo. Headed by 1st Lt. J. Thompson, the Marines stood watches and otherwise had a ball.

LTJG Vic Fredda recalls: "They were especially helpful during the Santa Maria crisis (*see next item*) in keeping our glorious news people under control. In one incident I had to call the marines to move reporters from the ship's side so we could rescue another reporter who had rented a plane and parachuted into the Atlantic to get to the Santa Maria. The reporters along the rail wanted pictures and would have allowed him to drown." [CLICK HERE to see photos and read the account of Ed Shea](#), a member of the Gearing's Marine detachment.