

7. Ensign Challenges (3:06)

Well, I remember being on the Taney. I had a CO that liked to challenge me. He knew I liked challenges so that's what he did. He kept giving me stuff. He put me in charge of the number one boat and man overboard drill and that sort of stuff. I was probably the littlest officer he had and here I was on the sweep oar. That could toss me in the water in two seconds if it wanted to. If we went to do something you know - if I pulled the wrong way.

But anyway he liked challenging me. Kind of sorry he was letting me go. I remember when I didn't have anybody. I didn't even have any cooks. He said listen to your people. I haven't got any cooks to listen to. I didn't have any. I fortunately had this steward that was on the ship with the CO's steward. So we had a cook but then he was not in our galley. He just helped with the galley. It worked fine. So the guys didn't have to eat crackers and milk? No. They mostly had all kinds of ground meat though. Every kind of meat almost came out ground because we didn't cut the steaks you know. We mostly had hamburger and so forth. We had a meat grinder. In those days you got a side of beef. You didn't get a box of cut beef you know - pieces and stuff. It just was different in those days you know. And that's the way I remember it as being a difficult time.

Then of course the thing that really tickled me was it was interesting story was that after we got in the yard on the east coast in Maryland we got the East Coast people that were going to go on the ship. Then here comes the chief, first, second and third class cook. We got like a whole crew. Then they turned the job over to the other ensign who couldn't really find his way in and out of a room but he had now all the talent he needed to run the galley.

So I like to challenge. I admit to that. I did. I enjoyed the whole aspect of that trip. We were short on people. You've heard me say so many times I'd rather be short of people than over people because the crew does so much better. Too many people, if there's too many people looking for a job that doesn't need anybody to work - pretty soon nobody's doing anything. They're all looking for that job. You know when in the other services where they're preparing for the next war they're all training all the time.. That's not as exciting as working a job like a Coast Guard aviator or drug interdiction or whatever. We had a job that. We were busy and usually short people. So we were busy.

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