

Sea Stories

If you have a sea story or incident that happened on your ship it can be published in the YAGRGRAM. Email (or snail mail) to Mel Harder at: mel.harder@snet.net, or mail to Mel Harder, Drawer N, East Hartland CT 06027

Submitted by Gordon L. Broome, ETR2, USS Searcher (AGR-4)

During the Covid-19 home quarantine, cleaning out my basement and "HAM SHACK", I ran across this old QSL card, and thought this might be a little trivia for the YAGRGRAM.

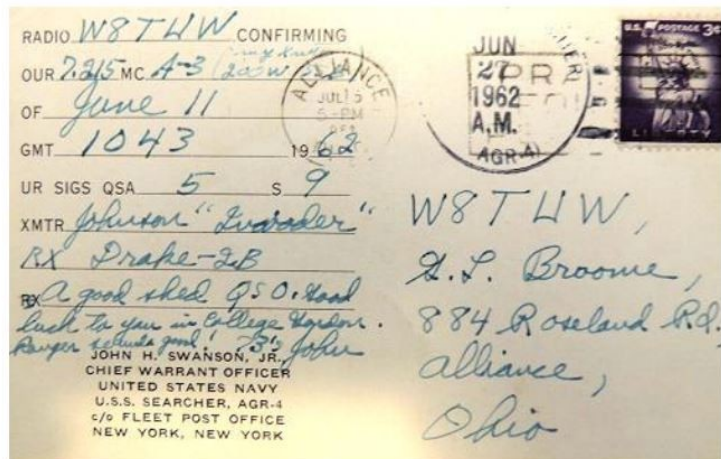
While serving aboard the USS Searcher (ARG-4) as an ET in 1962, my Chief Warrant Officer, John H. Swanson, discovered that we both had Amateur Radio Licenses. Mine was only a novice license at the time. I had gotten interested in it back in 1954, when I

witnessed transmissions between a "ham" friend conversing with the "Kon Tiki" while in the Pacific between South America and Easter Island. He was on just the right wavelength which only he could make contact. He then would relay information to National Geographic in Washington DC. I got hooked and worked on my novice license that year. I received my next



license (conditional General – with call sign W8TUW), aboard the Searcher, at sea, in 1962, through John (W3PWO), a licensed examiner. We applied for a maritime ham license for the ship and was assigned the call letters "W9HXP/MM. With approval from the ship, we set up a station in the aft part of the ship above the shipfitters shack. We made contacts with stations all around the world. We also "phone patched" a lot for shipmates to be able to converse with family members on Sundays. An example of that was when a shipmate became a father while we were at sea. He was able to talk to his wife at the hospital with their newborn with the help of a ham operator in his hometown.

We did a lot of communications like that on Sundays. When I was discharged that same year I kept in contact with John at sea until he retired to his home in Annapolis, MD where he set up his own ham shack with his wife Bernice. We kept in contact until he moved to a retirement home in Arizona and passed away years later. Your webmaster Frank Pulaski (ham call WT1B) and I tried to contact him while he was still alive to say we were having these great YAGR reunions but were unsuccessful. Attached is a QSL card,



which is exchanged to verify that two hams made contact, of a contact I had with John aboard the Searcher in 1962. (notice the 3 cent stamp). Hope to see you guys in 2021.

