"I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face"

Description

Found while â€œsurfing,â€• but it rings so true for me:

From the USS KIRK (FF-1087) website:

Memories.jpg

* I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe â€“ the destroyer beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drove her swiftly through the sea.

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* I liked the sounds of the Navy â€“ the piercing trill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the shipâ€™s bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

* I liked Navy vessels â€“ nervous darting destroyers, plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers.

* I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge â€“ memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

* I liked the lean angular names of Navy â€œtin-cansâ€• and escorts â€“ Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy, Damato, Leftwich, Mills â€“ mementos of heroes who went before us. And the others â€“ San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago â€“ named for our cities.

* I liked the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pulled away from the oiler after refueling at sea.

* I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

* I even liked the never ending paperwork and all hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, both mundane and to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

* I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me â€“ for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were â€œshipmatesâ€•; then and forever.

* I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: â€œNow set the special sea and anchor detail â€“ all hands to quarters for leaving port,â€• and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side.

* The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the â€œall for one and one for allâ€• philosophy of the sea was ever present.

* I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard shipâ€™s work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

* I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness â€“ the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters â€“ they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

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* I liked quiet midwatches with the aroma of strong coffee â€“ the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

* And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

* I liked the sudden electricity of â€œGeneral quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations,â€• followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war â€“ ready for anything.

* And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

* I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones, and Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seamanâ€™s trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

* In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods â€“ the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chiefâ€™s quarters and mess decks.

* Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

* Remembering this, they will stand taller and say, â€œI WAS A SAILOR ONCE.â€•

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Well done, Unknown.

Tracked back @ Caoâ€™s Blog

Category

1. Navy

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