



SEA STORIES FROM Group 24

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One Army 2nd LT, that I threw off the LCT when he alleged that we had stolen some beer, came back with a Provost Marshall . . . to search the LCT. They did from stem to stern, including opening up the flooded outboard voids, but they could not find the 200 cases of beer.

THE MAGNAVOX

Tom Rosser's story about a Navy commander reminds me of when I first met Commander Ewald, who was in charge of the Navy's Supply Depot in Subic Bay, early one morning on the LCT jetty.

A few days before our meeting the LCT-949, we had picked up a load of wooden boxes that were to be unloaded and destined for the Navy Supply Depot. Several of the boxes were stenciled Magnavox Console Radio-Record players. Others seemed to indicate that the 949 had a hot cargo load aboard.

I was taking the day off to go over to the Recreation Base to play baseball. I left the 949 in charge of Exec Tom Rosser with explicit instructions to leave the cargo alone, i.e., no pilfering. At that time I wanted to avoid any risks because I was getting close to going home. Also, with several flag-ranked Naval officers ashore, perhaps waiting for their console radio-record players, coupled with the fact that it was always harder to confiscate some cargo when it was being handled ashore by the Navy, seemed a prudent course to take.

Upon returning aboard from my R&R I went to the galley for some chow. While eating I noticed that most of the crew and Tom Rosser were all in the crew's quarters. After eating, my curiosity steered me into the crew's quarters--and guess what I found? A beautiful mahogany Magnavox console radio-record player!

I called Tom Rosser out side and reminded him my earlier instruction. But it was too late to do anything because the crate was destroyed and the unloading crew had long since finished their work. Faced with this exigency, and more than a bit peeved, I got the 949 underway and when off the jetty, instructed that the Magnavox be put down in a center hold and then it's two outboard holds flooded. Shortly afterwards, one of the crew came up to the con to advise me that

the Magnavox would not fit down through the manplate hole. I told him to unscrew the cabinet and store the radio in the hold piece by piece. A bit later he returned, with the saddest of looking faces, knowing what I would say, to advise me that the cabinet was glued together. "Chop the cabinet up and throw it overboard," is what I think he had expected me to say.

Several days later the watch awakened me early because there was a full commander on the jetty who wanted to talk to the skipper. I rolled out of the sack and, dressed in olive drab Army under shorts and a baseball cap with my officer's insignia attached, climbed over the gunnel to see what the Commander wanted.

After introductions, Comdr. Ewald stated that he had a report from one of his officers that I had refused to let him inspect the 949 after his crew had unloaded cargo from the 949. It appeared that some stainless steel cutlery was missing and his officer had surmised that the 949 may have confiscated it while the SPs were in the galley being fed--this was SOP by Ship's Cook Joe Zommick whenever the 949 had a cargo-caper on!

When I advised the Commander that his information was true, he wanted to know why. I proceeded to tell the tale of working 7 days a week 24 hours a day and being harassed by accusations and/or allegations from every unloading organization (mostly the Army) from New Guinea, Biak, Noemfoor, Morotai and Leyte Gulf of thievery. All I did was to explain my position to his officer, i.e., that if he wanted to inspect the ship of another command he would have to do it according to Navy Regulations and obtain a "Provost Marshall's" order allowing him to inspect my ship.

Cmdr. Ewald was an alert listener and responded stating that I was doing a good job, that the Navy