

Circa: 1955

USS HUGH PURVIS DD 709

"Sea Stories"

Title: Portholes

By David Barter MMJ

This story began at the overhaul period in the Boston Naval Shipyard early in 1955. We were getting ready for the 1955 Med Cruise where we would have Operations with NATO.

I noticed one day a welder cutting a round hole on the starboard side of the after head bulkhead. Sure enough they installed a Porthole. No problem right?

Well, there wasn't until we were in Cannes, France, with their lovely beach and all sorts of outdoor activities. This one day I had the duty and on my off time I was back on the fantail leaning against the rail with my buddy George Myers, MM3.

At that time one of our officers was conducting a tour of the ship to a group of young ladies (showgirls from the clubs in Cannes). As they came around the after 5" Gun Mount to go forward on the Starboard side I said to George "I bet you 20 bucks one of those ladies will look inside that Porthole to see what's inside.

At that time Tom Brennen, also an MM3, was in the head having his, daily constitutional not realizing the Porthole was open. Sure enough as the ladies were walking by not one of them seemed to notice the open Porthole until the last one in line turned and saw it, she said, "Hey, look this." She walked straight toward it and actually poked her head inside.

Seeing Tom inside on the commode, she screamed and nearly broke her neck trying to get her head out. She ran forward screaming, embarrassed, ever, and all the other ladies laughed like hell as she related what she saw.