

TIN CAN SAILOR  
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MAIL CALL  
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Dear Editor:

The USS POWER departed Newport, Rhode Island, on 4 May 1954 for a Med Cruise. The cruise lasted to the end of September 1954. It became evident when we docked in the Trieste, Free Territory that something was out of the ordinary on the cruise. Transferred to the POWER was the Special Comm Unit, which moved into the RCM room to operate in great secrecy the special communications equipment, installed there. The POWER, then, operated alone for long periods of time, visiting numerous small ports in Greece. The ports we visited, in order from Trieste, were as follows: Venice, Italy; Bari, Italy; Heyers, France; Taranto, Italy; Rhodes, Greece; Leros, Greece; Piraeus, Greece; Istanbul, Turkey; Naples, Italy; Patrai, Greece; Argostoli, Greece; Astokos, Greece; Vasiliki, Greece; Piraeus, Greece; Ismir, Turkey; Cannes, France; Gibraltar, BCC; and back to Newport. I never actually knew, or maybe I have forgotten, what the POWER was engaged in on that cruise. I would really like to know the circumstances and what the POWER's orders were. Maybe some former crew members of the POWER at that time can fill me in.

Ron Smith  
USS POWER (DD-839)

*Editor's Note: There is no entry in the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS) about the POWER's 1954 Mediterranean deployment. If any POWER shipmate has information about that cruise and particulars about the use of the special communications equipment, please contact the TCS office at PO Box 100, Somerset MA 02726 or by email at [tcs@destroyers.org](mailto:tcs@destroyers.org).*

Dear Editor:

The first thing that I look for in the Tin Can Sailor is any news about my ship, the USS POWER (DD839). So I enjoyed the history and adventures that Ron Smith submitted for mail call in the issue of Oct/Dec 2009. I went aboard the POWER right after boot camp and about a year after she was commissioned in 1945. She was moored along-side a tender in Newport Rhode Island in 1946. I wish that I had kept a ledger of her ports of call because I don't remember dates and names of all my shipmates and officers. After some training and shakedown cruises, we made a trip to the Mediterranean training midshipmen. While in Malta, our captain misjudged the wind that caused the POWER to damage the side of a supply ship with our port anchor. We are known as tin-can ships, but that supplier opened up just like a can with an eight- to ten-foot gash mid-ship, starboard side. No damage to the POWER. At another time, under the command of the same captain, we were refueling at sea with the POWER on the starboard side of the tanker and a heavy cruiser on the port side. After filling up and pulling away, We got off course and in front of the fuel ship. Both the cruiser and the fuel ship were bearing down on thePOWER's stem quarter. A quartermaster asked for full speed without the command of the captain. We had a near miss. The captain met with the quartermaster and instructed him that he gave the order. We were serving a new commander shortly after that, his name forgotten. We served under two other great commanders that were real seamen. One, in particular, could maneuver the POWER in tight places in port among other ships without the aid of tugs. At sea, we had a crew member injured because the port deck became awash when the crew was dropping the B.T., which takes the temperature of sea water at different depths.

The sonar striker suffered a back injury when washed against the depth charge racks. The POWER was ordered to come alongside in heavy seas to transfer him for treatment to the fleet carrier. Our captain asked to make a run to Norfolk for the sonar striker to receive treatment on the base. He didn't feel it was safe under the prevailing sea conditions. He was ordered to come along side. Despite all the precautions, the POWER was in the troth of waves, the carrier on top. She came down on top of the POWER's starboard side, tearing away the motor whaleboat and davits causing other damage. And leakage that was stopped with chopped broom handles to plug rivet holes. Our next orders from the carrier were to go to Norfolk for the crewman's care and to assess the damage. That captain had good sense. There are some names that I wish I could remember, and other names I don't care if I did forget. I do regret forgetting the names of shipmates that I served with in the communication dept. After a fleet cruise from the South Atlantic to Iceland, we were in port to pick up mail when all ships were ordered to scatter and prepare for some heavy weather while heading for the states. The waves were over 75 feet plus and, while on the crest, we could feel the screws beating the air before the bow nosed down like an elevator falling out from under all hands if they weren't hanging on. The POWER suffered damage to the port and starboard weather shields and other outside structures. The standing orders were that it would be a court martial for anyone opening the latches of any outside hatches. I would not like to be in the North Atlantic at this time of year, as it was in October 1947. I may not have these events in proper order as they happened or the dates and times, but I can't forget that time in the North Atlantic. My hitch was completed in October 1949. I returned home to St. Petersburg, Florida, to my bride of three months. I have since found that the USS POWER was decommissioned October 1977 and struck from service after 32 years of honorable service. She was sold to Taiwan on the same date, was renamed the SHANG YANG, and was classified as a guided missile destroyer DDG913. After 28 more years of service to Taiwan she was decommissioned 26 November 2005. She may have become a museum for the people because she was one of the last World War II ships that they purchased from America.

Joseph Roesch So 3c USS POWER (DD-839)

Thank You Ron Smith and Joe Roesch.

If any shipmates have similar stories of your sea duty, we are all interested. And if you have any photo's we would like to post them in our newsletter or website.

Posted from info from the Tin Can Sailor

By John Pinto