

I was a first class Sonarman who got Christmas greetings from Uncle Sam. He said do not pass go, do not collect \$200 but go straight to Key West and get on board this diesel submarine and take a nice winter cruise to England and points north. And so I went.

On our two weeks to England, nice weather, travelling on the surface. But about a week into it all of a sudden the after battery is full of water. We traced it to open flushing valves on the after battery head. Two days later, it happened again. Now once is an accident. Some non-qual doesn't know what he is doing. Two and you have a problem. Two day's later it happened again. We couldn't find out who or what was doing it.

On this particular boat the sonar room is under the mess hall. And the forth time it happened it happened in the wee hours so a lot of water got there. Guys are wading through it and a non qual comes into the mess hall and say's "hey, we got water back here". Of course everybody knew what was going on, throwing blankets around the battery well hatch to keep the water from going into the battery and causing chlorine gas. Water got down into the sonar room and ran on to our Bogen amp and blew the power tube. It also went down on a piece of equipment that we carried that was a three stack, salt water was all over it. Luckily, the spooks in radio had a tube for the Bogen because we didn't carry any spares. But the rack, we didn't know what we were going to do. You could see the salt water traces all over it. So we just took it apart, carted it up to the deep sink, dipped the three pieces in fresh, hot water and sat them all back on the engines and let them dry out. Hopefully, the hot water would wash the salt off and since it was all hot it wouldn't damage any of the parts. After they dried, we put it back together and damned if it didn't work.

So the rest of the way to England we're still trying to figure out who in the hell was doing what. We had a second class non-qual quartermaster that I caught in the head one day coughing is head off. He'd be coughing and then he stopped and he came out and I said, "do you want me to get the corpsman?" "No, no, I'm fine". And then he would start coughing again. One of the engine room crew was coming through and I told him to get the corpsman. So he came back and talked to this guy.

We go into England and the next thing we know that quartermaster is gone. Apparently he decided that the whole trip rested on him doing his job and being a non-qual was too much pressure. So he was trying to stop us early.

So anyway, out of England we start our run into the Arctic Circle. Second day out we shear a bolt in the scavenging air blower in #2 engine. Now I'm no mechanic back there but it was not fixable. #2 is now out of commission for the rest of this cruise.

So we get into the area and February 23rd 1962 comes along. We'll call it the day that would never end, the day that will live in infamy or what ever else you want to call it, but it was 24 hours of something else. At midnight we start to snorkel. And on this particular boat there is a ventilation pipe down in the sonar room that dumps exhaust air into the room so we get some ventilation down there. Suddenly, it's full of smoke. I mean the densest, blackest smoke you ever saw is coming out the vent pipe. Now we had heard nothing other than to prepare to snorkel and commence snorkeling. Suddenly, it's full of smoke. You know how firemen tell you in a smoky room get down on the floor? Well we had to, as you could not see. I told the Conn we were abandoning the seats, we can't man it. "Check on us when you get rid of the smoke to see if we are still alive". It was that bad. We hit the deck where we had about two feet of air and above that air, it was black. You could not see anything. And we don't know what the hell is going on in the boat. Other than they were trying to ventilate. There are no alarms or anything. Turns out #1 engine had an air box explosion. When that crankcase let go there was engine covers flying all over the engine room and all this smoke filled the whole boat. They ventilated and we could see again and man sonar again. We find out two of the Enginemen had oil in their eyes, burns on the face and hands The doc had their eyes all covered and in three days they were well again. But we were down to two engines.

So we continue on our day and it's the mid watch. We picked up a 400-hertz tone on sonar that lasted maybe a second. Thought it was ships noise and we hunted through the boat. Nothing. We get relieved and a few of us are sitting back in the after battery and the toxic gas alarm goes off. We were off watch so we headed for the torpedo room. The watch had passed out. Six of us get up there and everybody we woke up

in the room passed out as soon as they hit the deck. We carried these guys back to the after battery. Well there are only six of us carrying and we had to carry eight. So a couple of us had to make three trips. I don't know if you have had to carry someone who is unconscious, but it's like carrying a wet noodle. Any place you are not supporting sags. So we are carting these guys back through two hatches into the after battery. The corpsman is back they're with the guys and the second guy we carry back, an IC man, is not breathing. Doc applied mouth to mouth and got him breathing again. We ventilated. Our little 400-hertz tone apparently had been one of two torpedo's trying to run. The Firecontrol men had been doing their tests and we figured the batteries didn't shutdown. When we opened those tubes there was creosote everywhere. So we just closed them up, flooded them and kicked those torpedoes out into the ocean. Apparently all that gas ventilating into the room replaced all the oxygen so it wasn't poisonous.

So we continue on with our little sojourn. We prepared to snorkel. Raise the snorkel mast and the next thing you here is "**grind, crunch, crunch, bam**". The snorkel mast jammed. We ended up having to surface and taking up to the lower position. An Auxiliary man went up on top and wedged it so we could operate.

So we come back down and by this time we are in the early morning wee hours and we need to snorkel as our batteries are getting low. So the engine men light off #4 and the upper crank broke. Now we went from a four engine boat to a one engine boat which is a little difficult when you have to snorkel eight hours to get the battery back up when you only have one engine. The word was passed "prepare to abandon ship" and we headed out of our area. In the meantime, radiomen, electricians, cooks etc. became engine men. What they did, was take the upper crank out of number one and put it in #4. 72 hours around the clock to get #4 back on the line. In the meantime we're heading out and hopefully get far enough away so we can have friends.

They get #4 back together and we say, "hell we're back to a two engine boat again, we'll stay". So we turn around and go back in and finish up until everything is over. On the way home, they fix #1 engine so, by the time we pull in to Key West we are a three engine boat.

What did we accomplish? I think the main thing we accomplished was getting home.