USS Aeolus - Memorables – Section 3

Crewmembers that boarded the USS Aeolus (ARC-3) - 1968 through 1973

Also includes crewmembers that were part of the Military

Sealift Command (MSC) on Aeolus (T-ARC-3) 1979 – Nov 1981

John ‘Jack’ W. Beatie – Rank MR3 (E-4), Jan 1968 – Sept 1968. Reported to duty in Portsmouth, NH

and disembarked in Guam. After I boarded I think we were in the North Atlantic for OPS, near

Newfoundland for around 3 months. April/May, we were under way to Vietnam – traveled

thru the Panama Canal to San Diego, CA. Went to Hawaii, to Guam in the Northern

Mariana Islands. Operated out of Guam for a month or so. Had repair problems with

cable track machinery, returned to Guam for repairs.

Remembers being cold in North Atlantic/ hot in Guam! Not sure if Aeolus ever made it

to Vietnam. Most memorable – 4 man sleeping compartments – just 2 men assigned to machine shop – good duty! When discharged, I traveled from Guam to Philadelphia Naval

Shipyard for final paperwork.

Note: Aeolus was my second ship. I’m a survivor of the USS Liberty (AGTR-5) that was

attacked 8 June 1967 (deliberate) by Israel. After that I was given orders to the AEOLUS.

I did 20 years in Navy – retired a Chief Machinery Repairman – E-7.

David L. Bartholomew – Rank WO – (Jan 1968 – Apr 1971). Boarded and disembarked in

Portsmouth, NH. While on board – 3 years, 3 months, made three trips to the Pacific.

Went as far as Guam. Layed last array off of Bermuda to complete chain from North

Sea to past the Caribbean. Off of Bermuda, we picked up a corrosive sample that had been down for several years, also picked up at that time a prototype underwater nuclear beacon.

After the Aeolus, I went to Naval School of Cryogenics for 2 yrs, 6 mos. Boarded the

USS Santa Barbara ( AE-28) for 3 yrs, and last USS L.Y. SPEAR ( AS-36).

Note: David sent article of the Aeolus being sunk – pictures of crew – pics of

John McKay and himself, etc. Myself and the McKays continued to stay in touch.

Michael D. Conley – Rank RD2 – (Jan 1968 – Jun 1970). Boarded and disembarked at Portsmouth, NH.

Jan 1968 was in Halifax, Nova Scotia for about 45 days and the North Atlantic.

April 1968 was on ship at Bayonne, NJ for about 30 days; In June went West through the

Panama Canal. Stopped in San Diego CA and also went to Pearl Harbor. November or

Dec 1968 was in Japan for about 7 days.

Most memorable --Participated in War Games at Gitmo – wasn’t ready for that. We were to prove we were capable of defending the ship. There was a mine field ‘simulated’ just outside the harbor and we were required to track multiple ships in the Gulf. It ended after two days as a result of what our ships mission was and the fact that we would probably never actually be in combat. I was in Operations and our radar room was the size of a closet. Not really conductive to battle. In June 1970, I boarded the USS Reeves (D66-24) (Guided Missile Cruiser) and was

on until January 1972 when I was discharged.

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Jan A. Weatherford – Rank E3 – Jan 1968 – December 1971 – No other info sent.

Michael Barrett – Rank BT3 – Apr 3, 1968 – Oct 3, 1971. Boarded at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

and disembarked in Adak, Alaska. Please refer to the Deployment Log as to the dates/

locations of my time on the AEOLUS –May 68 - Hawaii for 13 days; July for 8 days Guam;

San Diego; Halifax, NS; Gitmo, Cuba; Acapulco. From my time 68 to 71 – I made 7 transits

of the Panama Canal and 4 stops in Hawaii.

In November of 1969 we helped in recovery of “Snap 7”and dropped off in Davisville, RI.

Each crewmember received certificate. Memorable moments was the visiting several

ports such as Hawaii, Panama, Guam, Midway, San Diego, San Francisco, Acapulco and Boston.

After leaving the AEOLUS – from 1977 to 1995 I was in Naval Reserve. Assigned to USS

Patterson, USS Boulder, SIMA Mayport and Little Creek, VA. Also 4 years Naval Training

Facility in Brooklyn, NY.

Scotty McLaughlin – Rank EN3 – (Apr 23, 1968 – Jan 10, 1972). That 1968 cruise was a long and

problem filled one. It was my first cruise. I went on while we were loading at Simplex, just

out of basic at Great Lakes. We spent Thanksgiving and Christmas at sea and did not get

home until January.

After reviewing the picture that John Logue had of crewmembers in Midway Oct 13, 1968

some look familiar but can’t remember their names -- since their work uniforms are so

clean – I am sure they weren’t in the engineering dept.!!!

John G. MacKay, Jr. Rank – LCDR – (May 26, 1968 – May 21, 1971). John McKay deceased, but

his wife, Barbara sent this information. She states that he served as Chief Engineer

Officer and Senior Watch Officer. His next tour of duty was at Headquarters First Naval

District, Boston, MA.

I have stayed in touch with David Bartholomew and his wife since John’s death. (NOTE

there is a picture that David sent, of John in the background when David and Skipper Dave Thomas).

John Walter Rushford – Rank ETN3 - (1968 – Oct or Nov 1969). Discharged at Portsmouth.

No other info sent

Darrell W. Mintz, Rank LTJG ( Retired from USNR as Commander). (Nov 1968 – Nov 1969) –

Reported aboard while the Aeolus was in Apra Harbor, Naval Base Guam, with CD Dixon, Commanding. Loaded cable from a USNS ship – seems like the loading took a week working 24/7.

My recollections of dates/locations – (note: refer to the Deployment Log just released).

Special times - Thanksgiving Day in Apra Harbor, departed the day afterward. Saw the USSR AGR just outside 12 mi line – Dec 1968, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii taking on fuel – believe we

were there only for 1 day and 1 night liberty call. Dec. 1968 – in San Diego for multiple

days including Christmas, liberty call. Dec 31, enroute to Panama – were directly abeam

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Acapulco, Mexico at midnight! I had the mid-watch on the bridge and recall seeing the fireworks in Acapulco. Jan 1969 – Panama City, Panama for 1 night liberty call – made

canal transit the next day – steamed directly from Panama to Norfolk, VA – stayed 2

nights – liberty call – very cold and blustery. Continued directly to home port, Portsmouth

Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine; transited Cape Cod Canal – arrived in evening. I believe

the Aeolus had been deployed 9 months.

February in Portsmouth Naval Shipyard – March in Boston Naval Shipyard – dry dock and

then over to the piers - I believe Apr – August – was moored portside for reminder

of overhaul; change of command while in shipyard. CDR Thomas Commanding. I

remember that CDR William McGonagle, former skipper of the USS Liberty (AGTR-5) attended

the change of command. It was the first time I had met a Medal of Honor holder. The over-

haul was longer than planned and I recall that some of the shipyard sand crabs were

difficult to manage. I had all my cold weather gear stolen from out of my room. Just

when we were about to depart we still needed a key component for one of the steam

turbines; a sand crab dropped it and that delayed us for several more days. I remember

being absolutely furious; I actually felt that this was deliberate sabotage.

Aug – Sept 1969 – Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, then up the Piscataqua River to the

Simplex Wire & Cable CO. to load cable. When we arrived from Boston, we could see a

good chunk of wire rope wrapped around the port screw. I remember setting up the

base frogmen to remove the entanglement.

Oct – Nov 1969 – Headed up to Nova Scotia, Canada for cable ops. Recall meeting the

southbound commercial tanker Manhattan…. she was the first tanker to make the NW

passage to the Pacific. During cable ops off of Nova Scotia, a Polish trawler crossed our

bow during night cable ops; we did an emergency back down to avoid a collision. Typical

cold war harassment scenario. Started seeing P-3 overflights. Got fouled in some sword-

fish nets off Sable Island; traded down 5 gal of ice cream to the fisherman.

Halifax Naval Base …port call for 5 days?? while waiting for USS Papago (ATF-160) to

sail up from Norfolk. The Papago was dispatched to ride “shotgun” with us by fending off

Soviet Block ships. I was dispatched to Papago while in Halifax. The Aeolus Engineer

Officer, LT John McKay, sent me over to be an observer for a series of engineering

exercise on Papago. My understanding was that I would ride her for just a day. That one

day ride turned out to be a week or so because the seas were too high to do a boat transfer.

I think I was scratching for clean clothes by the end of that week. I remember that we

had a radar casualty on the Papago and that there was no ET to fix it; Viet Nam was

going hot and was sucking up all the qualified to support 7th Fleet. While on the Papago,

word was received that I had been promoted to LTJG. The XO of the Papago was a LTJG

and he immediately took off his silver bars and pinned them on me. My son now has

those same bars and he wears them on his fire fighter blues; he is a LT in his Dept in 2015.

November 1969 – I was detached from the Aeolus. Returned to home port; arrived about

midnight. I checked out the next day and headed to my next duty station …NAS Pensacola

Florida!

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As best as can recall, these were the serving officers in 1968-69: CO….CDR Dixon;

CO ….CDR Thomas; XO …. LCDR McKinnon; OPS…LT John Harvey; Comm…LTJG Charlie Facas;

Bo’s’n…WO Gallant; Engineer….LT John McKay; MPA….WO “Bart’ Bartholomew;

DCA….LTJG Darrell Mintz; Supply…..LTJG Howard Staley.

As I was the DCA, I was the Division Officer for R and E Divisions. I very fondly remember

Shipfitter 1st Fisher from VA, and the Electrical COP – can’t remember the Chief’s name,

but he was only 28 years old and talk about a sharp cookie. I bet he had a great career;

I hope he made Admiral.

James ‘Jim’ Bullard – Rank SK-3 – (Dec 1968 – Sept 1971) – Boarded the Aeolus in San Diego

with about 8 new shipmates including me. We flew from Portsmouth, NH and came

on board here..

During the stay in Mare Island in April 1970, several of us were in a deserted barracks

when the lockers started walking across the floor. We realized we were experiencing a

small earth quake. The only one I have ever experienced.

October 1971, the log notes ‘crew member disembarked’. That would be me. I received

an early discharge because my Dad died and left my Mom at home with a six year old. We

were supposed to go to Mare Island to muster out but got we bribed a crusty old chief

with a bottle of whiskey to reroute us to Seattle. We flew to Anchorage and then on to

Seattle and mustered out the same day.

Ronald Dring – Rank BM3 – (1968 – 1971) – Notes that while on the Aeolus he went to Hawaii

twice – other trips have run together. Remembers being in Canada for Thanksgiving 1968 (both of us are Canadian) and Panama on January 1, 1969. No other information

at this time.

James Williams – Rank MM1 – engine room (Feb 1, 1969 – Nov 1, 1971) - Boarded and disembarked

in Portsmouth, NH. Remembers loading cable at SIMPLEX. If I remember correctly, I was

going on the Aeolus about the time that Ray Cooper, Bill Rush and Cecil Snyder were coming

off. We are still good friends.

I think I went through the Panama Canal 2-3 times and made two trips to Hawaii. Did OPS in Adak, Alaska and repair cable – short trip; went into San Francisco’s old ship yard and salvaged items from the old ships that could be used for repair on the Aeolus. Had R&R in Acapulco, Mexico; Remember doing OPS in Bermuda and the Bahamas. I served time in the North

Atlantic - COLD!!! Went into Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1970 – took liberty there.

One time while in Pearl Harbor, Warrant Officer David Bartholomew told some of the crew-

members, while off-loading cable to a Japanese Cable layer, to ‘take it easy’ on the Japanese crew since they weren’t used to hard work. I remember the Japanese had the cable loaded so fast that the Aeolus crew couldn’t believe it – they were in and out of there and gone!

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Thomas ‘Tom’ Tjomstol – Rank RO2 – (1969 – 1970) – writes – I was only on the ship for about a year as

leading Radarman, but enjoyed my crew and time.

Kent E. Missler – Rank EM-3 – (Nov 1969 – Mar 1973). Boarded at San Diego, CA and disembarked

in Portsmouth, NH. Was in San Diego about six weeks – Nov 69 had R&R in Hawaii;

July 70 went to Portsmouth and loaded cable somewhere in the area, then to Bermuda for four weeks. No date, but in Portsmouth, NH loaded cable to go to Adak, AK for six weeks –

Back in Hawaii in Aug 71 for R&R, but also took cable to a Japanese ship in Pearl Harbor.

Remember we were hit while doing OPS hit by the Neptune- on port side!! a sideswipe! Also was hit by a barge and tug boat in Boston Harbor as it was turning to starboard. Remember a huge storm where we had 30 foot waves --

Frank Saunders – Rank MA1 – (USNR Ret) – (Jan 1970- Dec 1971). I came aboard while she was

tied up in Portsmouth, NH. I served as the ship’s barber (SH3) and was on the Aeolus until

December 1971 where I was discharged from Portsmouth.

In that time period we went to GITMO (late Jan 1970). We transited the Panama Canal

some time in February and reached San Diego later that month. We then proceeded to

Pearl Harbor arriving sometime in March. We put down cable until probably early to mid

April and the ship put into San Francisco (Mare Island). We left SF and had liberty in

Acapulco, then headed to Panama. I believe we arrived back in Portsmouth sometime

in early May.

Later that summer we went back to Pearl Harbor to transfer cable over to a Japanese cable layer, arriving back in PNSY in October. The next mission found us heading to Halifax, NS

in Nov. 1970 and got back to PNSY in early Dec. In 1971 we had some ‘quick’ repair

missions off of Halifax and St. Johns, Newfoundland. While in that area we encountered a

strong snow storm that required the ship to put into Halifax for a few days. In the spring

of that year we completed a few other jobs off of MA, off of Delaware (May 1971).

That summer again saw the Aeolus deployed to the Pacific. We did some work up in

Adak, AK, along with the USNS Myers and I think the Thor was there for a while as well.

While working up there the ship was involved in a minor collision with the Myers. The

collision was strong enough to bend some of the support beams of the help deck, rendering

it unusable. Not that I ever saw a chopper land on it. Also during that time, the Soviets

sent two aircraft to look us over. I took pictures of them and foolishly had them developed

in Pearl Harbor and never got the pics back. After the mission we went to SF and then

back to Pearl Harbor. We arrived back in PNSY in late Nov. and I was discharged that

December. I retired from the Navy Reserves in 2003 as MA1, USNR Ret.

Robert Clark – Rank LTJG – (Apr 1970 – Apr 1973). I boarded the Aeolus at Kittery, Maine and

disembarked at the Boston Naval Shipyard. Not sure on dates, but was on board while

doing OPS in Bermuda; Adak, Alaska; Nova Scotia; Newfoundland - time in the Boston

Naval Shipyard.

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I remember a minor collision, I believe with sister ship (Neptune or Thor) when transferring

supplies.. Aeolus was Captained by CMDR Manduca – probably in 1971. Most memorable – severe storms mainly off North Carolina. Enjoyed the experience on the Aeolus.

Michael Thomas – Rank SN – (1970-Dec 31, 1971) - Was to have boarded in Portsmouth, got there, no

ship – sent to Boston – no ship – finally flew to Panama and picked up the ship while it

was on its way to the West Coast for OPS. Remembers being in Adak, Alaska; Newfoundland;

Halifax, NS; Caribbean; Aleutian Islands. Was in Newport for retrofit .

Note: This info was in talking with Michael by phone. Michael had sent to Mike some time ago – many pictures made while he was on the Aeolus – some names: Danny Weiss; someone nicknamed ‘baby red’; Joe Betterton?; Hess? – Bennett? – Chief Rick? –Gortafner? - pictures of Pearl Harbor; Adak, AK; lots of pictures from the deck

Thomas Pritchett –Rank - Boilerman 3rd Class (Aug 1970 -Sep 1973)–(on board for the Decommissioning) On Aug 10, 1970, I entered the service. On March 24, 1971, after Great Lakes Training and School - in the boiler field I went on board the USS Aeolus in Portsmouth, NH. April 8, 1971 to May 8, 1971, performed cable operations off Halifax in Canada. This operation was done in the middle of the Russian fishing fleet and was protected by an armed tug boat. Sept 4, 1971 – pulled out of Portsmouth, NH for Adak, Alaska. Passed through Panama Canal and stopped at San Francisco for refueling.

NOTE: The dates that are in this info from Tom are noted on the Deployment Log.

After operations off Russia, stopped in Hawaii on Oct 9 – Oct 14, 1971. Was in Acapulco

on Oct 31 to Nov 3 – passed back (East) through Panama. Went through the Bermuda

triangle during a bad storm with over 50 foot waves that covered the ship. Home 11/15.

Mar 7, 1972 to Mar 11, 1972 – operation off and in Newport RI – Apr 18, 1972 until

Apr 30, 1973 ship in Boston shipyard for repairs. May 14 – Jun 1, 1973 in Little Creek, VA.

doing operations. June 23, 1973 left Portsmouth, NH for North Atlantic operations.

June 27 pulled into Saint John, Newfoundland – July 29 in Cardiff, England – Sept 10 in

Rotterdam, Holland. Back in Portsmouth Sep 21, 1973.

From Aug 30 – Sept 1, 1973 while on operations off Ireland, the Aeolus helped in

the rescue of the two man sub that broke free from the mother ship. Two men were saved

thanks to the rope that was supplied by us to snag the sub and get it back to the surface.

I believe that I still have the news article on this.

Oct 1, 1973 the USS Aeolus was Decommissioned and turned over to the Merchant Marines.

I transferred to the USS Forrestal in Norfolk, VA till 4/18/1974 when separated from service

under Honorable conditions with Boiler 3rd class rate.

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Robert ‘Bob’ Pampanini – Rank SK3 (Oct 10, 1970 – Jan 5, 1973). Boarded and disembarked in Portsmouth, NH. It seemed we took on duties of the USS Thor often, the sister ship on

the West Coast. It seemed the Thor was constantly out of commission. The most memorable

time on the ship was the period from March 1971 to December 1971. The Thor was in dry

dock (as usual) and there was special operation dealing with National Security (so we were

told). It involved laying and repairing cable off the coast of Russia in the Northern Pacific.

We were 50 miles off the Russian coast and near Adak, Alaska. We stopped in port at

Alaska to pick up the ATT technicians who would run the electronics of the cable operation.

We were in our home port of New Hampshire, preparing to go in dry dock when we got the orders for this op. We traveled down the East Coast through the Panama Canal and up the

Pacific Coast to the target area. I remember Russian planes flying over, trying to take

pictures. The U.S. Air Force was called to keep them away. The ship and all sailors received

a special Commentation from OpNav, including a Meritorius Unit Commentation.

Other than that special op, we just performed normal cable operations. I remember

quite a few operations in the North Atlantic, off Nova Scotia and further up. The weather

always seemed terrible, cold and ice everywhere. Standing watch on the deck required

hanging on to something for the entire watch since everything was ice and as the ship

moved from side to side. We would have slid right off and no one would have known for a

while. Always seemed the guy relieving you was sound asleep and never on time.

I remember being on top of the bridge in bad weather, mostly always in the North Atlantic,

watching the ship rise up on the bow and the water below appearing to disappear. It

looked like the bow would come down low and be overcome by a huge wave but somehow

it never happened. I have some great pictures of that but am still looking for them.

Also ominous, was standing watch on the bow, on the cable laying platform, the furthest

frontal point on the ship. This would only occur when the ship was in fog. Besides the

foghorn and whatever they had on the bridge, we would stand on that platform, with the

ship behind us, suspended over the dark water. I often thought I would be the first to

go if we did get hit. It was kind of funny because the fog was so thick that by the time we

would see anything, it would most likely be too late.

The ship always seemed to be moving side to side, so often a rough ride. The flat bottom

surely contributed to that. Constantly had to put bread slices under our food trays so they

wouldn’t slide away from us.

The best time was on the trip to Russia/Alaska in the warm water of the Pacific. It was

the calmest water we were ever in. The temperature was great. You could actually hear

the swoosh of the water as the ship glided through. We had quite a few dolphins riding

along with us. Every once in a while we saw a whale of two. They all seemed to follow

along side the ship. The back of the bridge was painted white and they would show movies

outside. It was one of the better memories.

As the ship was a working ship, we were really never in port very much other than to

pick up supplies or the technicians. We were always on the water working. That was

truly disappointing. It would have been great to spend some time in the ports we were near.

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The ship was constantly scheduled to go into dry dock for repairs and maintenance, but

the Thor would be out of commission or some urgent op would come up and we would go

out within a two or three day period. It wasn’t bad for me, being single, but I felt for the

guys that had families. They would make all these plans and with no warning, we went

back out.

I was honorably discharged when I left the ship in 1973. I was a storekeeper and my job

was accounting, doing the books for the ship, and keeping the supplies organized, dis-

tributed and re-stocked. Other duties included standing watch for 2 to 4 hours at different

stations on the ship, usually at night, after my regular duties.

The last thing I remember was when I was discharged. The ship was scheduled to go into

dry dock AGAIN. I am not sure how long it was after I got out, but one of my friends still

on the ship said they were called out again for a job, no dry dock. I guess three sailors

put acid into the main boiler and put the ship out of commission and into dry dock. My

friend said they caught the guys. I heard they were put into federal prison. That was my

last communication with the Aeolus or anyone aboard.

Russell Peavey – Rank EMCM – (Oct 1970 – June 1973). Boarded and disembarked in Portsmouth,NH

Remember being in Hawaii and working in Adak, Alaska off Russian coastline and north of

British Columbia. No other info at this time.

Lief David Keelty – Rank Fireman, B Division – (Feb 1971 – Feb 1973) – Came aboard at Kittery, Maine

disembarked at Boston Navy Yard.

Note: The dates that David listed are a large part of the Deployment Log during his time

aboard the Aeolus.

Feb 71 or early Mar 71 – the Aeolus arrived at Kittery, Maine where I picked up the ship.

Apr 71 – May 71 – North Atlantic cable OPS – visited Halifax, NS

July 71 – Nov 71 – Westpac via the Panama Canal. Mobil Oil tanker just missed in heavy

fog off the NC coast…went swimming (unauthorized) from the ship in Gatun Lake

while transiting Panama Canal toward the Pacific

Aug 71 – Pearl Harbor… while enroute to Adak, AK, I recall a huge rogue wave hit us and

swamped the mess deck

Aug 71 – Oct 71 – Cable ops off Adak, AK. I recall we had a collision with our sister ship

the Thor… a lot of bells in the fire room on that watch…full back then full ahead

then full back. If I recall correctly, we got 17 bells in about two minutes.

Oct 71 – San Francisco…arrived at Treasure Island…but we were a little rowdy so they

made us move to Hunters Point

Oct 71 – Acapulco, Mexico

Oct 71 –early Nov 71 – transited the Panama Canal, returning to Kittery

Feb 72 – Mar 72 – I was in the hospital but the ship went to Gitmo

May 72 – ship was ordered to deploy quickly…I remember we were at Newport, RI, then

Boston…ship was sabotaged…someone tampered with the electric propulsion motor.

May 71 – Feb 73 – ship was overhauled at the Boston Navy Yard

Feb 73 - post overhaul sea trials out of Boston

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Steve Ganiere, Rank MM2 – (Apr 1971 – Jan 1973) –

Was in the USN Sept 1969 to Feb 1994. Retired LCDR. (cheng) USS Guam LPH-9

No other info

Martin Paul Olson – Rank RM2 – (Sep 1971 – Sep 1973) – Boarded in San Francisco and

disembarked in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Sept 1971 – ship went from Alaska cruise through the Panama Canal to Portsmouth

Aug 1973 – several months in Cardiff, Wales (South Hampton) then Rotterdam, Netherlands

There was a two man Canadian sub that sank. Their air was running out but the Canadian

Navy wanted to grab it and raise it. We circled the area waiting for them to ask our help.

Can’t remember if we attached or they attached, with the sub with only hours of air left.

The sub crew survived.

While laying cable, the cable snapped and killed, I believe three crew members. We had

to go to St. Johns, Newfoundland and release the bodies.

We went to Boston for yearlong overhaul. After a couple months a message came that

I received as the Radioman on watch. It said ‘to put everything back ASAP and get under-

way to fix a broken cable’ . We had just gotten to Boston, some guys had bought houses

knowing we were going to be there for an extended period. Some of the crew were angry

that we had to go back out to sea. A couple guys were so angry that they poured battery

acid in the main motor. That destroyed the engine so we had to continue with the over

haul and the USS Thor had to go in our place. The Thor crew was not happy with us!

Gerald ‘Jerry’ W. Manuel – Rank USN/RET/BTFN – Nov 1971 – Oct 73 – Was on the ship when it was

Decommissioned – copy of certificate was enclosed) – No other info received.

Von Tomlinson – Rank –Ships Bos’n - (Jul 1, 1972 – Oct 1, 1973) – Boarded the Aeolus while it was in

Naval Shipyard in Charleston, MA., where the ship was undergoing replacement of most

cable handling equipment. We got a hydraulic crane on the foscle, new bow sheaves and

new hold back equipment and winches, etc.

I remember when we were laying cable in the North Atlantic and during a practice towing operation with a fleet tug, there was an accident on the tug when the towline came off a capstan and hit three crewmembers of the tug. They were transferred to the Aeolus where we had a Captain Doctor on board. We then took them to St. Johns, Newfoundland so they could be treated in a hospital. During this cruise we delivered cable to a facility in Southampton,

England. Had a liberty port in Cardiff, Wales where we got to go to the full dress rehearsal

for the Cardiff tattoo which was very entertaining.

While we were dragging the bottom, a mini sub, the pieces 2 got stuck on the bottom. We

rushed to the area and was ready to lift it, but we ended up transferring 2 miles of 3 inch

line to another ship who got the sub up just hours before they would have ran out of air.

Before returning to conus we had a liberty stop in Rotterdam where we picked up some

of the MSC crew who were taking over the Aeolus.

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After the Decommissioning of the Aeolus and after the transfer to MSC -1, I was transferred

to USS Hermitage LSD-32. I spent two years on the Hermitage and was promoted to CW02

and was on my second Med cruise. I also qualified as a fleet OOD and CDO. My career

continued after the Hermitage. I spent a 2 year tour at VC6 as the OIC of a PT boat built in

1948 and after that I spent 4 years at BMU2 as a beach party team commander, making 2 Med cruises, 2 North Atlantic cruises and was promoted to CW03 in June 1978 and CW04 in 1980.

Spent two more years sat VC6 as Det at Little Creek OIC.

3 years on USS Pensacola LSD-38; 4 more years at VC6 as surface targets officer; 3 years

on USS Portland LSD-37. I retired Oct 1, 1993 and moved to Edgewater, FL

My most memorable time on the Aeolus was our deployment to the North Atlantic. I

learned so much on there that helped me during my career, met a lot of great men and truly

enjoyed my tour.

NOTE: The USS AEOLUS (ARC-3) was Decommissioned 10-1-1973

USNS AEOLUS (T-ARC-3) under Military Sealift Command (MSC) - (1979 – 1981)

Terry Markham – Rank RM1 – (1979-1981) 9 AS T-ARC-3 under Military SeaLift command

Atlantic (navy crew out of Norfolk, VA. and civilians under MSC Pac, Oakland, CA

Bob Gradisher, Rank RMC – USN Retired – (Feb 1980 – Feb 1981). I was stationed on the USNS

Aeolus (T-ARC-3) and was an RMC and the OIC of the Mildept (military department).

I was only on it for a year which was the normal tour of duty while it was part of the

Military Sealift Command special purpose ships. I was able to leave my family in Navy

housing at Roosevelt Roads, PR, which was my last duty station, prior to the Aeolus because

of the family separation due to the normal operations of the Aeolus.

Our normal ships compliment was 100 civil service mariners under the ships civil service

Captain, 20 Western techs and a 6 man military department under a Radioman Chief

(officer in charge). I had myself, one 1st Class ET, one 1st Class Radioman, a 2nd, 3rd, and seaman radiomen. I was considered part of ships officers, ate in the Officers mess

and had my own stateroom with head (right next to the officers galley).

We stayed at sea for approximately 24 to 28 days a month, only going in to port to

replenish supplies (mainly foodstuffs). The ships homeport was Oakland, CA. and we

were only in it briefly. Our normal operating area was the Atlantic.

I met the ship in Bermuda and we spent about 6 weeks or so there repairing SOSUS cables.

We had a lot of bad weather there and kept going back into port to ride it out. We then

went back to Portsmouth, NH to onload cable supplies at Simplex Wire and Cable and went up to the grand banks to repair cables up there. Spent a short time in Norfolk twice and then

had a nice two months in a civilian shipyard/dry dock in Savannah, GA.

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After that we went back up to Portsmouth to on load supplies and then headed to the

Panama Canal and on up to San Francisco. We spent about 3 or 4 weeks there, docked

right next to the base of the Bay Bridge and loaded more cable that had been barged to San

Fran previously for us.

We then headed on up to Adak, AK for 3 or 4 weeks where we laid new cable up there.

We went back to San Fran and that’s where I left the ship and flew back down to Roosy

(Roosevelt) to move my family up to my next duty station in Norfolk. That was just an overview, not a complete operating list.

I was raised in Muskegon, Michigan and joined the Navy in 1962, did boot camp at

Great Lakes; RM school at Bainbridge, MD; then went to Navcommsta Keflavik, Iceland;

Navcommsta Londonderry, Northern Ireland (met and married my wife there); USS Wasp (CVS-18); Navcommsta Rota, Spain; USS Albany (CG-10); Naval Tele Comm Center, Roosevelt

Roads, PR; USNS Aeolus, Tactical Air Control Squadron 21 at Little Creek and then retired

in 1982.

We moved from Norfolk to the Atlanta, GA., Metropolitan area, we now live in Grayson,

about 45 miles East of Atlanta.

Edward C. Bohling, Jr. (Rank 3rd Electrician) – (May 1981 – Nov 1981). For all to understand the

nature of the Aeolus mission -- It is the same mission that continued into the 1980’s after Military Sealift Command assumed the management and manning of the ship. I stood

cable watches from May to Nov 1981 until transferring to the refit of the USNS Kilauea.

Aeolus and her sister ships (Neptune) were involved in the SOSUS program.

This is one of the secrets betrayed to the Soviets by the Walker spy ring. Aeolus never

was tasked with laying communication cables. AT&T had its own fleet of cable layers

committed to that task as is the case today.

The cable that Aeolus laid was part of the SOSUS infrastructure and was itself designed

to detect seismic and other subsurface noises. The cable was so sensitive that it could

detect a pin drop. There was no use of hydrophones. The science of the project is quite

simple. Where there are layers of cold and warm water a submarine could submerge

below what we termed a gradient. SONAR was incapable of penetrating this gradient

and thus SOSUS or Surveillance of Submarines Under the Sea was developed as a counter

to the gradient problem. The Walker spy ring basically destroyed the SOSUS concept.

Today we only employ the USNS Zeus in this program and it spends most of its time in a

reduced operating status. Aeolus itself was sunk as part of the reef program off the coast

of Cape Hatteras, NC in 1988.

Our ports of call were Cheatham Annex, Virginia; Norfolk NOB; Navy Support Facility in

Bayonne, NJ; Simplex Wire and Steel, Newington, NH; St. Johns, Newfoundland and Bermuda.

Edward C. Bohling, Jr. - MA Military History – American Public University Class of 2015

Author of Rear Admiral William T. Samson; An Admiral Forgotten

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With the end of this Section 3, this completes the history of the USS Aeolus (ARC-3)

from 1955 through 1973, then continuing with the USNS Aeolus (T-ARC-3) from

1979 through 1981.

NOTE: If any of these Aeolus stories/history bring any memories that you would like

to share, or if you did not complete the questionnaire form sent early, you can still do so.

Complete and mail to us, or just type up your info in an email. Please email or send to us

and we will generate a Section 4.

PLEASE MAIL any information that you would like to share to:

Robert Luttrell

1814 Enrique Dr.

The Villages, FL 32159

(or call 352-259-8758)

OR EMAIL to: luttrellb@aol.com

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