

## ESSO PROVIDENCE

ATR-7's only major towing job in Brazil occurred in **March 1945**. A confidential despatch on **1 March** ordered the ship to rendezvous with USS CHAIN ARS-20 which was standing by the disabled tanker S.S. ESSO PROVIDENCE, crippled by rudder failure.

ATR-7 immediately made preparations to get underway and left Recife late in the afternoon. Her excellent navigation team located the wallowing tanker by mid afternoon on **3 March**. There in the distance one could see the big tanker dead in the water with USS CHAIN standing by. The ESSO PROVIDENCE was an older ship of 21,000 tons and carried a full load of oil. Rudder failure caused the ship to become completely at the mercy of the sea and any German subs that might be in the area.



At first the captain pulled along side this giant ship, four times the length of the tug and put a line over with intentions of lashing the two vessels amidships and gently easing the huge ship back to port. The chief boatswain with several seamen; brought out the largest and heaviest line, an eight inch Manila rope.

The thick rope, eight inches around, was passed over to the tanker and made fast to a pair of bitts and then fastened around the two heavy steel bitts outside the port side of the tugs mess hall. Gradually ATR-7 worked up to slow speed and the rope strained on the bitts of the little tug. Suddenly a heavy swell in the sea lifted ATR-7 and put an enormous strain on the doubled line between the two vessels. With a loud bang, the heavy hawser actually pulled the two big steel bitts out of the wooden deck. The chief immediately loosened the lines and the Captain quickly abandoned any idea of pushing the tanker that way.

After several failed attempts to send a line on board the tanker, it was learned the ship could not shackle the tow wire so the wire was then cast off. The Captain then moored ATR-7 along side ESSO PROVIDENCE and sent an officer in charge of a work party on board the tanker. When the work party completed work on the shackle, the tug then had the big ship in tow shortly before midnight. Slowly the Captain worked up speed and ATR-7 was eventually underway heading for Fortaleza, Brazil. The tug had to resort to a conventional tow line over her stern,

into the water and back up to the towering bow of ESSO PROVIDENCE. The tug could barely tow the ship more than one or two knots. For hours ATR-7 struggled along watching the sea slowly moving past her fantail. After two days of slow going, they did get the ship safely into port at Fortaleza, Brazil.



On **5 March** the port was reached where a pilot came on board along with a local representative of Standard Oil Company. The following day two Brazilian pilots came on board and with tanker on short tow line the tug proceeded to bring the big



ship into a berth at Fortaleza with the help of USS CHAIN (at left) on a short tow on the stern of the tanker. After carefully navigating the tanker with the help of USS CHAIN, ESSO PROVIDENCE was finally anchored in the port and ATR-7's job was complete.

At Fortaleza ATR-7 stopped for two days. While there, ATR-7 had to anchor off the port in open sea, so the crew used the whaleboat to go ashore. One afternoon YN2 hitched a ride over to the beach. A pier of sort was under construction with the concrete skeleton framework completed, but still not ready to accommodate ships. The whaleboat tied up at the meager dock which allowed him to roam around the beach for half an hour. The people here lived in grass thatched huts together with dogs, pigs and chickens freely coming and going through the door-less entrance of the hut. Fortaleza is almost on the equator and the climate is very warm all through the year.

YN2 noticed several children playing around the grass hut. One child about six years old had a great many large raw sores on his legs. When mentioning this later to Doc, he said it was "Yaws" which was caused by lack of certain vitamins in the boy's diet.

Down at the edge of the water the locals ran to await the tiny fishing boats. These small craft were made of several logs of lightweight wood, tied together with rope. A small stool type seat was fastened to the raft amidships near a short mast with a sail. A long pole with a paddle acted as the rudder. This small boat usually carries two men. A fragile affair and I heard that many were often lost at sea.

As the fishing boats arrived on the beach, several men would pull the boat up to the safety of the higher ground while women collected the fish in baskets and then returned to their primitive houses above the beach. This great sandy beach extended along the northern coast of Brazil for hundreds of miles.

On **8 March**, ATR-7 made preparations to get underway and return to Recife. Two of the crew were absent at muster and YN2 had to prepare deserter notices, but the two miscreants returned just before the tug sailed.

### **DOC and BUCK**

After having towed S.S. ESSO PROVIDENCE into Fortaleza, it was time to go back to Recife. Some of the crew had gone on liberty in town earlier. They were ordered to be back to the ship by 2000 hours. As the ship got ready to haul up the anchor for departure, two of the crew was missing. Doc and QM1 had not returned and the Captain was quite disturbed to put it mildly.

As the time for departure grew near, the Captain became very impatient. Finally, he ordered YN2 to make up the notice of missing crew members on each man, namely Doc and QM1. This form advised to whom it may concern of a \$50.00 reward for information on the subject man. The forms were promptly typed and made ready to send ashore. Suddenly, auto headlights were seen speeding towards the distant pier.

When the car drew closer to the pier, the headlights began to flash off and on. Instantly, the Captain and men on the bridge recognized the blinker code. Dock and QM1 had made it to the pier at last. The special sea and anchor detail was put on hold and the whaleboat was lowered and instantly underway churning water for the distant pier.

Ten minutes later the "delinquents" were on board ship, much to the relief of the Captain. Doc was a regular Navy man and QM1 was a member of the active reserve, which carried a lot of weight with the Captain. YN2 canceled the "reward notices" and went up to the bridge for his station on the engine room telegraph.

A week later when the crew settled back to a normal routine, the Captain held Mast on the bridge with the XO (*ED*) in charge. Doc and QM1 (Buck) were sentenced to lose ten liberties each. A light sentence indeed, but they were two key men in the crew. Although the incident was finished, it was immediately taken up in jest by RM3. Substituting the words of a popular song at the time, the public address speaker in the mess hall soon echoed with some new lyrics:

#### **"Doc and Buck"**

They played a game called stayaway  
But it was more than they could pay  
Deep down in our hearts we say  
I remember "ED"

## "STEAK AND EGGS"

A popular Brazilian dish was steak and eggs for breakfast. YN2 can remember a few times when CK served this meal for breakfast. The crew sat down to an early morning plate of scrambled eggs with a huge broiled steak with the rib bone taking up most of the plate. This meal would last a man the whole day. Beef seemed to readily available in Brazil during the war.

The steak and eggs were a change from the morning contest of trying to find a small box of dry cereal that didn't have weevils running around inside the sealed package. The hot climate of Brazil seemed to hatch unseen tiny eggs in the cereal and nearly every box of bran flakes had these little things. Even the flour in the galley had some weevils at times.

CK ordered the eggs from an Englishman who ran a ship supply company. The eggs were obtained locally and arrived on board ship in a dirty wooden box. The eggs were covered with dirt and dried yellow yolk from broken ones and just placed loose in the dirty old box. Even through the eggs were inspected by Doc, we had no choice of another supplier.

Canned milk was used for coffee, and the cook would make up a batch from milk powder that was acceptable, but not as good a fresh milk. The butter came in a tin container, but still melted quickly in the hot climate. They did have some excellent cheese, made in Brazil, in the shape of a ball that was packed in a sealed tin. It can be said that it was one of the better products of Brazil.

The job for CK in the hot tropics was not an easy one.

Recife had a big marketplace with many stalls. One item of interest to YN2 was a ship model like one of the little sailing vessels that came down river into Recife and sailed along the channel past the tug moored beside the dock. One evening he went ashore with QM1 doing his job as mailman. They headed for the marketplace and QM1 brought with him a few cartons of cigarettes for trading purposes.

At one of the stalls they found a variety of bric-a-brac, and some ship models in particular. YN2 chose one he wanted and QM1 picked out another model of a ship he admired. The young fellow in charge of the stall was a boy about 18 years old. QM1 did all of the bargaining while YN2 watched the haggling from the sidelines. QM1 thought the price of the ship models was much too high and haggled with the young merchant for ten minutes. Finally QM1 mentioned one final price along with a couple cartons of cigarettes "to boot". The boy at the stall hesitated and looked longingly at the cigarettes which he wanted desperately. Still he held off making a sale.

As we turned to leave, the boy quickly followed QM1 and said "OK we will make a deal". So QM1 gave out ten dollars or whatever in Brazilian cruzeiros plus two cartons of cigarettes, for which he got two nice hand carved sailing ship models. In


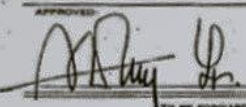

the heat of the bargaining, the young fellow said in fractured English to QM1 as we were leaving with our prizes -- "You no tell my popeye, he trump trump my ass!" QM1 promptly reassured him that he would not tell his "popeye".

Another sight that must be mentioned was the day YN2 had to go over to the base on a errand for the Captain. This involved a ride in a Navy truck over a narrow road on the outskirts of the town. Along the road the foliage of the jungle was a bright green and very thick. Away from the city, one could see the real Brazil.

Again in town one Sunday afternoon, a couple of men passed YN2 on the street. They were dressed in dirty brown stained shorts and sleeveless shirts, trotting barefoot along over the cobblestone on the crude street. Balanced on the shoulder of each man was a large bloody quarter section of freshly slaughter steer. When the fellows swung past, blood dripped intermittently on the pavement into the dust as they hurried on their way to a nearby shop.

## PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

ATR-7's only link with the outside world was the radio shack. Each day they received a few short paragraphs of news bulletins. Once a week; a condensed copy of Time magazine arrived in the mail. On **12 April 1945**, President Roosevelt died and a memorial service was held on the base at Recife. The whole crew dressed in blues and marched over to the base at Recife for a special ceremony. YN2 remembers standing in the hot sun in his heavy blue uniform, listening to the service while looking up at the stars and stripes floating at half staff. The flag pole was surrounded with blossoms of orange and red Canna plants.

CONFIDENTIAL	731
DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET	
NAVPERS-20 (REV. 1-42)	
UNITED STATES SHIP	DATE
<i>ATR-7</i>	<i>SUN 12 April 1945</i>
<p><i>00-12 Moved port side to U.S.S. Y.O. 71 at berth 6, Recife, Brazil, using standard mooring line. Bunk No. 2 in use for supplying purposes. Ship in modified condition. 0500 Mustered on station. No visitors. 0945 quarters for inspection of personnel. 1015 Secured for personal inspection. 1016 1st Lt. and forty men left ship to attend memorial service at H.Q. Officers, being for deceased President of United States. 1105 Memorial service party returned to ship. 1130 Made daily inspection of magazines and S.P. samples. Conditions normal.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L. W. Burnett</i></p>	
	
<p>Memorial service for President Roosevelt.</p>	
APPROVED:	EXAMINED:
	
U.S.N. COMMANDING OFFICER	U.S.N. NAVIGATOR
TO BE FORWARDED DIRECT TO THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL AT THE END OF EACH MONTH	

## BAHIA, BRAZIL

ATR-7's first trip south to **Bahia**, a state whose main port was Salvador, began the afternoon of **28 April** when she got underway at 2050 in accordance with COMSOLANT secret despatch to proceed en route from Recife to Bahia, Brazil. The ship arrived at Bahia and moored at 1207 on **30 April**, she moored next to the USS CHAIN ARS-20 several times and a few times mooring next to the cruiser USS ONAHA CL-4.

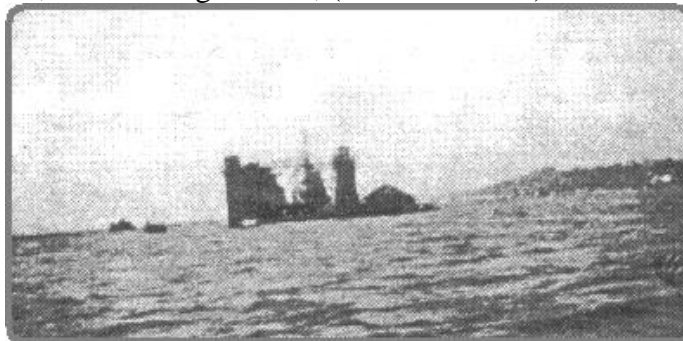


ATR-7 departed from Bahia en route for Reife on Thursday evening 10 May after having completed towing target for gunnery exercises.

The second cruise to Bahia began at 1536 on Monday **21 May**, this time to go into the floating drydock to have her hull

cleaned and repainted. The ship again moored on 1009 Wednesday **23 May** and prepared to enter the drydock. She was resting on the blocks of floating YDF-27 on the morning of **24 May**.

All hands turned to and began scrapping and wire brushing the wooden hull to remove the accumulated marine growth from the wooden planking. A few days later a new coat of anti-fouling paint, to discourage teredo, (a marine worm) on the hull was complete with a new ring of black boottop above the waterline. While stuck on the drydock, the crew spent their days fishing off the end of the drydock or just watching the small schools of tropical fish swimming around looking for food scraps.



With a clean hull and other maintenance accomplished, ATR-7 left the drydock on Tuesday afternoon **29 May**. At 0929 on **31 May** she took departure of Bahia and set her course back to Recife, ATR-7 moored in Recife again on **1 June** to await her next assignment.



ATR-7's third cruise to Bahia began at 1305 Wednesday **20 June** when she left Recife, Brazil and after steaming several hours dumped a small quantity of unserviceable ammunition into the sea. She then continued on en route to Bahia, Brazil. The ship arrived again in Bahia and moored to the pier at 0224 on Friday **22 June**. The first job was to move the big floating drydock over to a new location.



B.B. MINAS GERAIS was built in Britain in 1907 with (12) 12 inch guns, She was scrapped in 1954.

A few days later they assisted in moving the Brazilian battleship B.B. MINAS GERAIS from one anchorage to a berth at a pier in Bahia. A short, dilapidated weather-beaten old Brazilian steam tug worked with ATR-7 in the operation.

YN2 was standing at special sea and anchor detail on the bridge and the captain was on the flying bridge directing the operation of moving this big ship into a new berth.

The Brazilian tug had an unusually high bridge; its captain was a small man in a faded blue uniform wearing an official cap. His face was dark and weathered from years in the tropics and he wore a prominent gray walrus mustache. He stood proudly on his awning covered flying bridge, master of all his domain, ready to assist ATR-7's captain.

In the heat of the maneuvering, ATR-7's captain sent orders fast and loud to the Brazilian counterpart over on the other ship. As things went from bad to worse in the operation, the Captain shouted abuse at the Brazilian captain. The Brazilian in turn shouted double abuse -- in Portuguese -- so intense it seemed to make the brass pipe of the voice tube shiver. Then a cloud of black-gray smoke rose from the stack of the Brazilian tug while at the same time under the stern the green water boiled and foamed from changes of speed.

This little show (Comical Opera) went on for several minutes while the crew in the wheelhouse watched. Each time ATR-7's captain bellowed an order, the Brazilian captain sent a staccato of orders in hot Portuguese down the quivering voice tube on his ship. Then suddenly on the main deck of the Brazilian tug, a little old man covered with grease and sweat emerged from the engine room hatch. He just stood by the rail taking in the cool air and looking at ease without a care in the whole world. Up above on the flying bridge of both ships, the two captains still continued to shout insults back and forth to each other relayed down into the respective engine rooms.

B.B. MINAS GERAIS never moved from its anchorage during the ATR-7's duty in Brazil. After the war in Europe ended and Germany surrender, Brazil joined the



Allies. Suddenly one morning she got up steam and left port for a training exercise. .

While in Salvador (an abbreviation for "Salvador da Bahia"), YN2 had an afternoon free to explore the city. Actually there are two cities, a lower level were are located the docks, the warehouses, the port and the poor people and the upper level were located the main offices, administrative buildings and the rich people, perched on a high bluff overlooking the harbor, a city modeled after those in Portugal . It was said Salvador has 365 churches -- one for each day of the year, but actually there are not so many.

To reach the upper city there was an elevator running a dozen stories up to the level of the upper town with an extended walkway over to meet the face of the cliff. YN2 had heard of this remarkable elevator and recalled seeing a picture of it in an atlas at home. While here, he bought a few lace handkerchiefs with a scene of a double tower church embroidered in one corner.



Art Deco Elevator Lacerda, 236-foot-tall elevator was built in 1872, rebuilt in 1930, to whisk people between the upper and lower city.

These he sent home to his mother. He also found a small lacquered jewelry box with an inlaid wood frame around natural butterfly wings mounted under the glass. This too he sent home in the mail.

On the way back to the ship he walked down a steep hill along a narrow cobblestone street down to the docks and lower city below. Stucco houses lined the street with open windows and shutters pulled back. Glass was never used in the windows here in Brazil. The steep yards outside the homes clung to the hillside and numerous banana trees grew in the tiny gardens which were fed by raw sewage seeping from the houses.

As he walked along he passed an old man sitting in the doorway of one house. His leg extended out toward the street. A thick scaly scab covered his foot, some unusual type of growth he guessed. He wondered at the time if it was leprosy.

On one the trips down to Bahia the crew has an opportunity to see a rather unusual sight. Possibly the event was a celebration of one of the local holidays. Late one afternoon they noticed what appeared to be kites drifting along over the ocean. On further investigation, they discovered that the kites were actually paper hot air

balloons made of thin colored tissue paper, about one or two feet in diameter. Slung under the opening at the bottom of the paper sphere, was a tiny basket, or small cup containing a lighted candle which produced enough heat to fill the paper sphere.

The late afternoon breeze over the upper city of Bahia gently carried these little balloons gracefully out over the wide bay. When the candle burned out and the hot air buoyancy was lost, the little balloon would drift down into the ocean. The crew watched the colorful event for a couple of hours. Later, YN2 asked one of the men going ashore that evening if he could get a balloon for him, but he had no luck, much to his disappointment. Only in Bahia, could such a game be played with a small incendiary device such as described above. In other lands it would certainly be a most dangerous plaything.

ATR-7 returned to Recife again and once more remained moored to a small tanker between ATR-7 and the granite pier.

### **SALUDOS AMIGOS**

Small ships like ATR-7 did not rate the luxury of a movie projector. However, through the base or another visiting ship, they were treated to a movie set up on the dock. A movie screen was mounted on the pier and a sound projector set up and wired. When darkness came, the crew sat on makeshift chairs around the pier along with a hundred or more local Brazilians, mostly young children.

The movie was "Saludos Amigos" by Walt Disney and it was in color -- a U.S. Defense Department production by Disney Studios to foster better Pan American relations during the war. In the story Donald Duck and his friends went on a holiday around Brazil with assorted adventures. The kids watching the movie at first were as quiet as mice, but as the story progressed, they went wild over the scenes in their own country.

The story is hard to recall today. One line does remain in YN2's memory. The animated parrot "Joe Corioca" asked "Have you ever been to Bahia?" and rolling his eyes with a smile said "Ah Bahia!" All the kids went wild! For weeks after that movie, the words were quoted every now and then throughout the ship. "Have you ever been to Bahia?" "Ah Bahia!"



## 21st Century reviews of "Saludos Amigos" do not mention the purpose of this movie.

### One:

This film was made during the war and Walt didn't have the money to turn out another full length animated film. To appease his fans, he made a film which is basically a trip with him and some of his best animators "South of the Border." The animators were then inspired to make several short animated films, which are all packaged together to make this feature. The back of the box says "Total Running Time: Approx. 75 Minutes." By total running time, the mean with special features. The film is only 45 minutes.

### Two:

Live-action segments show members of the Disney staff touring South America and recording their impressions in sketches.

These segue into four animated sections: "Lake Titicaca" depicts tourist Donald Duck's troubles with a stubborn llama; "Pedro" tells of a little mail plane's adventures flying over the treacherous Andes; "El Gaucho Goofy" transplants an American cowboy into the Argentine pampas; and in "Aquarela do Brasil," Jose Carioca shows Donald the sights and sounds of Rio de Janeiro.

### Three:

This rather cute collection of four Disney cartoons are kinda interconnected with a travelogue of South America that is very dated by today's standards, but entertaining nevertheless.

The best of the four cartoons is "El Gaucho Goofy". Previously unavailable on DVD, "Gaucho Goofy" is Goofy at his all time best. Watch the bit with the bolas - simply hilarious.

The next best is "Pedro". The story of the little airplane that could (think "The Little Engine That Could" with wings) is very good at telling a story - and you almost believe for a moment that Pedro didn't get through the Andes.

Next best is "Lake Titicaca". This hilarious romp with Donald Duck fighting a reluctant Llama (could this be the inspiration for "The Emperor's New Groove"?) will leave most anyone laughing.

Finally, there's "Aquarela do Brasil" - probably closest to the material that links the four stories and introducing the great Jose Carioca.

It's kind of a mystery to me why Disney considers this mixture of animation with live-action to be a "canon" movie. It's simply a collection of four Disney cartoons joined together with a live-action look at traveling in parts of South America.

## **UNDER FIRE**

Towing jobs were scarce in Brazil. Most of ATR-7's days were spent moored next to a small tanker at the dock and the time passed slowly with the usual humdrum routine. The U.S. Navy turned over to the Brazilian Navy two nearly new destroyer escorts. The destroyer escorts were renamed the BOCAINA (formerly DE-174) and BERTIOGA (formerly DE-175). In the course of the changeover, the Brazilians were instructed on operation of the ships and finally they were ready for sea trials with their all Brazilian crews.

ATR-7 was assigned the job of towing a target for gunnery practice one day. She reached the exercise area and spent the afternoon running up and down the course while the Brazilians began their gunnery practice. Before returning to port, ATR-7 had to make a final run in darkness for a night firing exercise. She sailed on course and all was set, when the Brazilian ship opened fire with 20 mm guns blazing and lines of red tracers filled the air.

At the time, YN2 was not on watch, so after the evening meal, he stretched out on the boat deck under the cradle of the motor launch. Space between the launch keel and the steel deck was only a few inches. When the red tracers came through the air across the water from the DE, they made straight for ATR-7. The space between the motor launch keel and deck suddenly widened to three feet, YN2 thought. He heard shouting on the bridge and quickly crawled behind the big steel smokestack for cover, although the thin steel plate of the stack offered very little real protection.

The Captain quickly ordered the signalman flash A--A to the Brazilian DE. Within half a minute the firing stopped and ATR-7 got a blinker signal from the DE. After an exchange of caustic messages, things finally got straightened out and the night exercise ended. No doubt the Brazilian fire control picked up the ATR-7 instead of the target which was trailing some thousand yards behind.

## **LAUNDRY**

Usually the ship's laundry washing machine was busy, so YN2 had to make other arrangements to have his laundry done ashore. Quite often there were several women who came down to the dock looking for laundry to wash. YN2 turned his clothing over to a woman named Lucy and she did a very good job for a dollar a bundle. She had several customers on the ship and it was a good business. However, in the rainy weather, it was very hard to get clothes dry. Local women washed clothes near a river and beat the garments on smooth rocks to wring out the water. Later the clothes were put over bushes to dry in the sun. In the rainy season, it might take several days to get laundry dry and even then the clothes came back clean, but with a dampness and smell of mildew.

Shortly after one rainy spell, the crew watched a lot of flotsam and debris floating down the channel by the pier where ATR-7 was moored. Sometimes huge chunks of green grass with shrubs several feet high and ten to fifteen feet long, a small island almost, slowly floated by. The large clumps of vegetation and soil had broke loose miles away up the river, and floated all the way down to the mouth of the river and out into the South Atlantic Ocean.

When ATR-7 had been in Brazil a couple months, YN2 decided to clean his locker of some extra clothing that took up badly needed space. A couple of untidy urchins generally hung around the dock when the tug was in port. Usually they were looking for a handout of food left over from meals. A couple of other crewmen and YN2 took pity on the dirty wretches and scrounged up some extra clothing that they no longer needed. YN2 dug out a set of long underwear that he used at boot camp. Another man had a pair of canvas leggings, also left over from boot camp. Added to this was a dirty old white hat that someone else donated.

The group called to a young boy idling on the rock, to come over to the side of the ship and generously donated their unwanted clothing. The boy; about twelve years old, excitedly gathered everything up and promptly disappeared. Early next morning their friend appeared on the dock just after breakfast. He was proudly wearing the long underwear, canvas leggings and the old dirty white hat. He paraded about the dock for an hour or so looking for the crew approval, and after a little while disappeared.

A day later, the same urchin with a friend returned, this time he was dress in the same old dirty rags he had been wearing before. "What happened to the clothes we gave you yesterday?" inquired one of the crew. After some time, the boy confessed that he had sold the lot for a small amount of money.

## BELEM

Saturday **7 July**, USS ATR-7 took on fuel oil at berth 6 Recife, Brazil for the last time. On the trip back to the USA, ATR-7 was to tow two barges. Two small yard tugs were to follow along also. The Captain set up a detailed plan of operation similar to a regular task force with ATR-7 as C.T.U. and O.T.C. Each ship and the two barges had code names. There was "Bat", "Ball", "Base", "Glove" and for the big barge -- "Meatball".

On Sunday **8 July**, the crew said good-bye to Recife, Brazil, shackled two lines to the two barges and took leave of Recife, Brazil followed by the two yard tugs YTB-192 (Pessacus) and YTB-242 (Manada). The YTB's were ordered to make routine inspection of the tow while the group sailed along. YTB-192 constantly lagged along behind, never checking the tow. Next morning YN2 found the orders for YTB-192 sitting on his desk in the office. In the frenzy of preparations for sailing, YN2 had forgotten to deliver the papers to the skipper of YTB-192. Earlier when he first went over to deliver the orders in person the tug was not moored at the dock and he forgot to make a second delivery of the orders, so there they lay in his desk.

YN2 immediately went to the bridge to see the Captain but was told that he had gone down to the wardroom. He was in the midst of taking a shower when YN2 told him about the YTB-192 sailing orders. YN2 expected to be keel hauled for negligence, but the Captain took it calmly and the papers were promptly transferred over to YTB-192. That explained why YTB-192 had not been making routine checks of the barges while the tow sailed along.

The two YTB's came along side frequently to speak to the Captain. YTB-242 would race up at flank speed and then throw the YTB's diesel engines into full astern. This went on for a couple of days when one morning his engine broke down and ATR-7 had to set up a tow line and attach YTB-242 behind the second barge.

The tow continued north and once again crossed the equator. Half a dozen of ATR-7's crew came on board at Recife. They had previously flown down to Brazil by plane and therefore never appeared before the court of King Neptune. It was a brief ceremony given by some of the "old" shellbacks, but this time the hazing did not have the enthusiasm of ATR-7's earlier initiation. The men earned their certificates which were duly signed and issued to the new shellbacks.

A new problem arose on Thursday **12 July**. While towing two barges and a crippled yard tug, the Kingsbury thrust bearing burned out. Now ATR-7 had to be taken in tow by the one remaining ship in the flotilla - - YTB-192. Moving ever so slowly, they headed towards Belem. The tow made a grand silhouette on the horizon at 0° latitude -- YTB towing a rescue tug, two barges and another yard tug, all moving across the placid waters of the equator. The engine room crew under MMC worked at a feverish rate around the clock to repair the thrust bearing. Finally, with the

bearing lapped and installed back in place ATR-7 once again began running at normal speed.

Shortly before midnight, ATR-7 cast off the tow line to YTB-192 and gradually worked up speed to resume the course north towards Belem, Brazil. This area of the South Atlantic was empty except for one radar contact 13 miles away that could not be identified.



On the morning of Friday **13, July**, ATR-7 anchored in Salinas Falsas Bay. Her tow of two barges and the YTB-242 were cast off and anchored in the bay. Brazilian Pilot came on board and the tug made ready to get underway for the trip up the Para River to Belem, Brazil.

The journey up the Para river to Belem was a fascinating experience. On the map, Belem appears to be closely linked to several outlets of the mighty Amazon River. The channel ATR-7 sailed was half a mile wide or more. The water was a muddy opaque brown. The shoreline consisted of green trees standing at the edge of the water. A low, wide, green, flat forest stretched as far as the eye could see; no hill, mountain or sandy beach anywhere.

The Brazilian pilot stood on the flying bridge wearing a crumpled

pale blue cotton uniform, quietly giving instructions to the helmsman. As the tug moved along, through the brown murky water, what appeared to be a log, floated by. On a closer look, this "log" had a rough surface and was actually a huge live crocodile lazing in the water and drifting along with the current. ATR-7 arrived at Belem, and moored to the stone quay. *(A quay is a structure built parallel to the bank of a waterway for use as a landing place).*

Except for the city, all about them was thick green jungle. Several river channels disappeared into the green forest. Small steamers moved about, loaded with piles of wood on deck for the steam boilers, similar to the river boats on the Mississippi in the states.



*Belém, also Pará, is the capital of Pará State, and chief port of the lower Amazon River, near the equator, on the Pará River estuary. The port is accessible to oceangoing ships and includes a naval base. Founded in 1615 by the Portuguese, Belém owes its commercial importance to the opening of the Amazon to foreign trade in the late 19th century.*

While in Belem, in spite of the hot damp climate, the crew slept below out of the reach of tropical mosquitoes. One time when they were lounging back on the fantail, they saw a big crocodile in the brown water silently gliding past the stern, the rough brown knobby back of the animal barely breaking the surface of the water.

YN2 had a chance to go ashore for an hour or so one afternoon and found a little store in town that sold postage stamps. He picked up a dozen or so stamps of Brazil, one with a picture of a music score was most interesting. Back at the ship again where the tug was moored, was a warehouse that stored bales of crude rubber. YN2 picked up some gray spongy stuff and put it aside with other souvenirs he had been collecting while in Brazil.



Some of the crew set out with the Captain in the motor launch on an expedition up river one after noon. YN2 heard stories about all the birds they saw in the middle of the dense green jungle. The men shot at a few birds, but did not get any specimens to bring back to the ship. You don't go wading about these waters with all the crocodiles or piranhas.

The ship refueled and supplies were stowed on board. They said good-bye to Belem the morning of **16 July** and retraced ATR-7's course down the river to open sea to pick up their tow with Brazilian pilot. By mid afternoon the ship again entered Salinas Falsas Bay and dropped the pilot. The YTB's and barges did not go up to Belem, so they pumped water over to YTB-192 and began to set up their tow. ATR-7 was finally underway by late afternoon. The time passed slowly as they headed for Port of Spain, Trinidad, where they had to refuel once more

## PANAMA

Sunday **22 July** the crew sighted Tobago Light and prepared to dock at Port of Spain, Trinidad. Port of Spain is a tropical paradise with lush green forests and high mountains. Billowy white clouds pass the high peaks and one moment the sun is scorching hot only to be followed by a heavy tropical downpour. ATR-7 cast off her tows and then tied up at the Escort Repair Base. SK1 had to go into town for mail and supplies, but asked YN2 to arrange to get some small anchors delivered to the ship from the nearby GSK.

YN2 took the instructions with him and was directed to a distant corner of the base. When he got there he met a thin blonde Scandinavian fellow who looked over his papers regarding the extra anchors. These heavy articles had to be loaded onto a truck with a small forklift. The boss went over to a half dozen local black men lying around and with a voice of authority said "All right girls, lets get these anchors loaded!" but no one seemed to pay the slightest attention. They just jabbered away in their own peculiar dialect. My Scandinavian friend in a louder tone then said "You there -- the white looking one -- come here!" Now they heard and all six came running up to help work the anchors onto the forklift truck.

No time was wasted at the base in Trinidad for ATR-7 had been put on report for having a sloppy man on the gangway watch. This crew is in the "workingman's" Navy. It was not until late evening on Wednesday **25 July** that the ship underway once again. A secret despatch ordered them to sail from Trinidad, B.W.I. to Cristobol, Canal Zone with the two barges in tow and accompanied by YTB-192.



On Tuesday afternoon **31 July**, ATR-7 reached Portobello, Panama and anchored in the harbor. Here they broke up their tow. ATR-7 spent most of the day in the anchorage not far from a little native village. A couple of natives passed by in a small boat carrying big stems of green bananas. Later the ship was shifted several miles over near Gatun Range to another anchorage near the canal entrance. With the exception of the Captain and SK1, no one went ashore.

On two occasions the crew saw battle damaged destroyers emerge from the canal entrance, heading for some east coast shipyard. The ships had huge holes around the bridge and superstructure from the Jap suicide planes. Up to now the war was a remote theater that the crew only heard of by radio or newspaper.

Business finished in Cristobol, C.Z., ATR-7 hauled up the anchor Friday morning **3 August**, Left Colon harbor and sailed north for their old port -- Miami, Florida.

## HOME

Since ATR-7 was returning to the United States from foreign duty, the crew made arrangements to declare all their purchases overseas on entering Miami. Shortly after noon on **7 August** they sighted Fowery Rock Light. In the distance they could see the skyline of Miami Beach and soon began moving down the channel into Biscayne Bay -- just like the old days. ATR-7 had not been stopped by U.S. Customs at all. Possibly because they thought we were just on another training duty. The ship nosed up to the dock and the first line went over after having been away from native soil for nearly seven months.

When the first line reaches the dock and the loop is slipped over the bollard on the pier, it is Navy custom to signal with a short toot on the steam whistle. YN2 stood inside the bridge waiting for each order from the Captain who was directing the docking operation from the flying bridge. YN2 handled the annunciator which relayed each change of speed the Captain called down the voice tube. When engines stopped and the first line slipped over the bollard, the Captain signaled the helmsman -- "Hit it!" for a short blast on the whistle.

The helmsman pulled the brass lever overhead with a short yank and the whistle let off a blast. But -- the whistle did not stop with a short blast! It continued on, and on, and on! The frantic helmsman jiggled the whistle lever, but to no avail. A phone order was sent to the fireroom, but no one could release the valve that controlled the steam line to the whistle. The valve had frozen! Noise from the whistle was deafening! They closed and dogged all the open ports and hatches and then stuffed cloth into the voice tube, but still the noise seemed just as loud.

The din was so great that the crew could not speak or hear anything except the blast from the bellowing steam whistle. Fireroom again tried to turn off another valve to the whistle. More bad luck, it was frozen solid and would not budge. There was no other solution but to wait until all the steam in the boiler ran down after the fire was put out. Over half an hour passed before the terrible noise finally came to an end.

Meanwhile out on Biscayne Boulevard near the pier, automobile traffic slowed down to a crawl. People thought that the war with Japan had ended and the ship was celebrating. The only celebration was the arrival of USS ATR-7 back again in Miami, supposedly a low key affair. Next day the tug made the front page in the Miami Herald.

It was after their return from South America that a PC came into Miami and moored at a berth near ATR-7. From correspondence with BUPERS, YN2 remembered the number of the PC one of his old buddies was stationed on. So in a spare moment, he went over and found him on board. They had a nice chat and then YN2 had to return to his ship as the buddy was getting ready to put out to sea again. For his buddy it was a good duty. His PC was assigned to patrol the east coast of the United States between Florida and New York which gave him time to get back home to Brooklyn once in a while.

Biscayne Bay was not a large body of water and the only large ships around were destroyer escorts or small patrol craft. One afternoon a big 10,000 ton liberty ship came into the bay. This ship had little or no ballast and was riding high out of the water. As the big hull headed towards one of the piers to berth, a strong wind came up and pushed the huge ship off course. The master tried desperately to bring the vessel back under control, but not quite in time.

As the big bow of the freighter nosed into the slip between two piers, it clipped the stern of a destroyer escort, spilling a rack of six depth charges onto the steel deck. Had these charges been armed, the whole pier, DE and Liberty ship included, would have been blasted into the sky.

As soon as ATR-7 had completed docking in Miami, she took aboard several new crew members. A new YN2 was one of the men. He was to be YN2's replacement wherein he had orders to go to Newport, Rhode Island for duty and training. At this time CK3 was transferred to the Receiving Station Miami for Discharge.



Sunday morning **12 August** ATR-7 got underway with two target rafts and orders to proceed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Once again ATR-7 was underway out of Miami and they passed familiar landmarks along the Florida coast

Early in the evening of 15 August they arrived in Guantanamo Bay and anchored in the harbor. They broke up her tow after some difficulty with one of the rafts sinking several times.

The Captain and SK1 went ashore to the big naval base. SK1 returned with some mail. At this point a number of crew received promotions and new orders. The

Captain was advanced to LTCD and several more members of the crew received higher ratings.

In addition to change of rate, there were new orders. XO assumed command of ATR-7 and LTCD received transfer orders from Service Force Norfolk. SK1 received new orders to report to the Receiving Station at Newport, Rhode Island for duty on a new LSD (landing ship dock) a much larger ship than the old ATR-7.

## WAR END

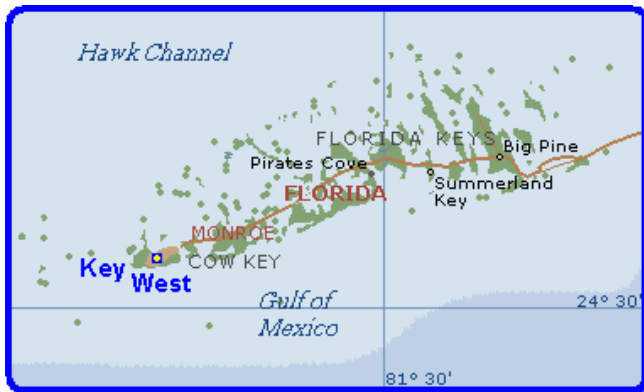


While the rest of the world celebrated, those aboard ATR-7 had to be content just listening to the activities ashore on the ship's radio.

Friday **17 August** ATR-7 picked up YNG-23 and took it in tow with orders to proceed to Key West, Florida

Once again they were underway, but this would be YN2's final cruise in the faithful old USS ATR-7. The ship arrived once more at this familiar port but this time, YN2 got ready for transfer from the ship. He was busy showing his new replacement the duties of yeoman and spent his remaining time going over all of the details he could think that would help him in his new station. The new Captain called YN2 down to the wardroom and asked if YN2 wanted to stay aboard ATR-7 for the trip to Portland, Maine. YN2 thanked him for the offer, but told him he wanted to go by train instead. It might have been an easy cruise, as Navy ships could now show lights and dispense with other wartime measures.





On **20 August** YN2's orders were ready and he said good-bye to ATR-7 for the last time, asking the gangway watch for permission to leave the ship and with a salute, walked down the gangway for the last time.

That same day the first Captain, now a LTCD, relinquished command to former XO, a LTJG. On **21 August 1945** ATR-7 cast off lines at Key West, Florida with orders to proceed to Casco Bay, Maine.

### NEW CREW

In Maine several crew members were given leave, a few were transferred to Separation Centers and others sent to new assignments. On **6 September** ATR-7 towed target for USS AUGUSTA CA-31. Another target towing assignment came along on **12 October** and again between **16 and 20 October**. During this time the ship ran into some patches of fog off the coast of Maine while in the firing area. Again ATR-7 got underway **14 November** to calibrate compasses and later moored at the Naval Supply Pier starboard side to USS ATA-173.

In accordance with a secret despatch ATR-7 got underway at 2100 on **21 November** to proceed to Bar Harbor, Maine. At 0805 on **22 November** she anchored at Bar Harbor with bearings on Porcupine Island, Sheep Island and the City Dock where the ship awaited further orders. the following afternoon the ship got underway to participate in special underwater search operations. This work involved dropping buoys in various locations off Bar Harbor using Sonar detection gear.

The special underwater search operations continued until **10 December 1945**. (*Could this have involved a UFO? In March 1945, one was sited in Maine and this routine is consistent with UFO history*). At 0111 that day the ship got underway on orders to proceed to Portland Maine. Once again ATR-7 moored at Fox, Long Island, Casco Bay, Maine and took on fuel.

Under COMSERLANT orders ATR-7 got underway at 0500 on **8 January** en route from Portland, Maine to Halifax, Nova Scotia. On **9 January 1946** at 1156 ATR-7 moored portside to PCNS Destroyer K-331 at pier #3, Naval Dock Yard, Halifax, Nova Scotia. On **11 January** at 0500, ATR-7 got underway en route from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Portsmouth New Hampshire escorting the RCN submarine U-889.





ATR-7 entered the channel of Portsmouth, New Hampshire at 1500 on **12 January** and anchored at 1606 in the lower harbor. Later the following morning, Sunday **13 January** the ship got underway and moored at berth 11 Baker, Portsmouth, New Hampshire Navy Yard.

On Monday **21 January 1946** ATR-7 refueled and moored portside to YO-13 with German merchant ship S.S. BLACK PANTHER moored inboard. On Tuesday **22 January** ATR-7 at 1036 moved and moored starboard of S.S. DACE.

After securing tow wires to S.S. DACE, ATR-7 got underway with S.S. DACE in tow and anchored in Portsmouth harbor. At 1300 on 22 January ATR-7 with S.S. DACE in tow passed Buoy #1 and took departure from Portsmouth New Hampshire for New London, Connecticut.

With S.S. DACE in tow the two ships passed Cape Race Point Light abeam at 2107 on **22 January**. Once again ATR-7 with a tow made the transit of the Cape Cod Canal with towing lights illuminated and took pilot on board for passage through the canal. At 0210 passage of the canal was completed and the pilot left the ship. ATR-7 and tow passed Little Gull Light abeam at 1035 and entered Long Island Sound.

After the tow had been shortened, YTB-346 came alongside and made fast to S.S. DACE. Lines from ATR-7 were cast off and the ship got underway for New London, Connecticut. AT 1328 on **23 January** ATR-7 moored at berth 14, Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut. Thursday **24 January** ATR-7 changed berth to alongside USS PC-1173 at State Pier.

Pursuant SERVALANT ADMIN. despatch, ATR-7 received orders to get underway Monday **4 February** en route from New London, Connecticut to Charleston, South Carolina. At 1050 Race Point Light was abeam 500 yards distance. On Tuesday **5 February** at 2354 a flashing white light at bearing 255.5° T was identified as Diamond Shoal Lightship 15 miles distant.

At 1735 sighted Frying Pan Shoals Lightship bearing 185° T six mile distance. At 1815 the fire room was unable to maintain feed water pressure to the boiler and the



ship slowed to two thirds speed. Still unable to correct feed pump, engines were stopped and the ship was now laying to, drifting with wind and sea.

At 1824 the casualty was partly cleared and the ship got underway to two thirds. The feed pump cut out again at 1846. Stopped engines and rigged emergency electric pumps. the anchor was dropped at 2030 in 19 fathoms of water with Frying Pan Shoals Lightship bearing 234° T at 11 miles. This casualty was repaired by 2349 and the ship got underway at two thirds speed. The feed pump failed again at 0120 Thursday **7 February** and speed was reduced to one third.

At 0130 the engine was stopped due to loss of steam -- all power lost. Ship drifting out of control, showing auxiliary breakdown lights. At 0230 sighted ship bearing 090° relative 10 miles. Casualty repaired and underway at 0436 at one third speed. Frying Pan Shoals abeam to starboard 4-1/2 miles. At 0718 boiler feed water pumps failed. Stopped engines again and lying to. Inspection of feed pumps and lines show clogging by pieces of sponge from feed water tank filters. Commenced working to clear lines and pumps. Underway at 1320 Thursday **7 February** and passed Frying Pan Shoals Lightship abeam to starboard 5 miles.

Friday **8 February** at 0438 approaching Charleston, South Carolina on various courses and speeds. Pilot came aboard at 0608 and took the ship to Folly Isle Roads off Fort Sumter where the ship anchored. At 0844 ATR-7 shifted to an anchorage in the Ashley River, Charleston, South Carolina. Underway again at 1057 for U.S. Naval Frontier Base and moored to dock Able at 1107.

Monday **11 February** ATR-7 shifted berths to pier Able with ATR-30 moored to starboard side. Pursuant to orders of SOPA, certain ammunition was removed from the ship. During the next few days the crew continued removal of ammunition. An inspection board of three officers from the base came on board Monday **18 February** and held material inspection.

Thursday **28 February** ATR-7 got underway anchored by a mooring buoy in the Ashley River, U.S. Naval Frontier Base, with USS ATR-30 AND USS ATR-95 mooring portside. Tuesday **5 March** ATR-7 got underway for the fuel dock. After refueling; anchored again near the mooring buoy in the Ashley River. Aside from shifting mooring, ATR-7 saw the end of **March 1946** anchored in the Ashley River by a mooring buoy at U.S. Naval Frontier Base, Charleston, South Carolina.

On Wednesday **17 April 1946** ATR-7 got underway for the fuel dock and after refueling returned to the anchorage alongside USS ATR-30 and USS LCI-522. Tuesday 30 April the tug W.H. WILLIAMS and YTB-260 moved ATR-7 to the fuel dock with pilot in charge. All bunker fuel oil was discharged from ATR-7 by 2035. The following day Wednesday **1 May** ATR-7 was sifted to Pier F, berth #7 Navy Yard where they began the preservation process on ships machinery for decommissioning purposes. Moored next to ATR-30 and ATR-70.

Monday **13 May** 1946 USS ATR-7 was riding at mooring lines at pier Fox, berth #7, Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina. A group of four men were transferred to the Separation Center at 0830 this morning. At 1035 a Pilot came on board. ATR-7 was underway at 1050 in tow of tugs en route to excess vessel berthing area in Wando River. At 1202 the ship moored portside to ATR-25 and secured the starboard anchor with stoppers at 40 fathoms. At 1240 set material condition Able.

All hands were ordered assembled at quarters for the decommissioning. At 1300 on Monday 13 May 1946 the commission pennant and colors were hauled down in accordance with COMSIX decommissioning letter dated 1946. All watches were secured.

The deck log was signed by LTJG, the last duty officer.

By authority of BUPERS CL/46 the remaining enlisted men were transferred to the Receiving Station Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina for further assignment this date.

Deck log signed, by LT. USNR, Commanding and LTJG Navigator.

So ends the story of a proud little ship.

AVA