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1970's. Captain C.B. Newlin, GALLATIN Commanding Officer and I met with the Commanding Officer of the MORAN and exchanged greetings before taking part in the international attempt at stopping the flow of drugs into and out of Venezuela and into the United States.

Our moderate abilities to speak Spanish sure paid off for Capt. Newlin and myself. When Capt. Newlin completed his talk with the CO of the Moran, the small boat received him and returned to GALLATIN and I was left alone on a foreign warship, without anyone else who could speak English for the next seven days. Gosh, was that an experience of a lifetime! Let's just say I made great friends and learned a great deal about the Venezuelan culture and operating tactics.

The operation went very well for both nations' Coast Guards. It was obvious that this sort of friendship between the two nations will become invaluable in the years to come. The Venezuelans just started their Coast Guard six years ago and are still organizing their policies. GALLATIN's boarding officers and liaison officers all held sessions with the Venezuelan officers. The liaison officers from Venezuela who sailed onboard GALLATIN all learned a great deal about tactics and specific methods employed by our Coast Guard in combating narcotics trafficking.

The officers of the General Moran kept commenting on "professionalism" of our service. Along with GALLATIN and the General Moran were two missile carrying fast attack patrol boats which took part in the joint operation. As a result of our combined efforts, 17.2 kilograms of cocaine were interdicted by a joint boarding party, and the lives of two French citizens were saved in a GALLATIN rescue involving their adrift, dismantled sailing vessel. All units performed extremely well and seemed to enjoy working with one another.

GALLATIN enjoyed the opportunity to work with a foreign nation and to exchange information on tactics in fighting the drug war. The crew also enjoyed the exotic ports of Venezuela but again, we were ready for a change. Our next task was to patrol the waters between the eastern U.S. and Bermuda.

In addition to this, Rear Admiral Alan D. Breed, Commander, Fifth District and former CO of GALLATIN, asked us to hold an open house in Norfolk on the day of his Change of Command/retirement. The afternoon of June 27, RAdm. Breed joined the GALLATIN at sea to ride his old command into port one more time before retiring. We hosted VAdm. Howard Thorsen, RAdm. Robert L. Johansen and 20 other members of RAdm. Breed's 1955 USCGA classmates for breakfast in our wardroom on the day of his retirement.

Throughout the last week of our drug interdiction patrol, GALLATIN placed special emphasis on wash-downs and painting to be ready for the open house. Along the way, however, we managed to shoot the last rounds to be fired from a Coast Guard five inch gun on the east coast, and to conduct boardings. We ended up mooring at Waterside Pier in downtown Norfolk, with Admiral Breed aboard, receiving local media attention. The many hours GALLATIN's crew spent readying for "open house" had paid off. The GALLATIN really looked sharp and the visitors told us so.

Well, after two months, we were certainly ready to return home. The adventures of Navy ops, Venezuelan ops, law enforcement ops, saving lives and foreign ports of call were over, and now our thoughts returned to our loved ones whom we missed throughout the patrol. We received the wives' videotape of the Father's Day picnic and enjoyed it a great deal. Also we want to let the children know that we hung up their banner in the main passageway for all to admire. We all appreciate your support, as we know how tough it can be on those we leave behind.

*Trust me when I say that even with a most unique patrol behind us, one of the greatest adventures and the most exciting thoughts each of us had was when we returned to Governors Island and to all of you on the 4th of July!!*

