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Early 80's, Southern Coast of Spain,

My Buddys & me is(ah, are) drunk already, i'm laying mid-afternoon on a beach of the Spanish Riveira ah Riviera, the Corte' D'Azur, near Malaga, Spain.

aka "The Blue Coast" or maybe i'm Corte de Sol, of the Sun, it really doesn't matter which port of call,

Liberty has called me again to be so warm and comforting onto a foreign beach, so unlike the sand of my childhood Carolinas, but still so sweet in its uniqueness.

With a roll-up straw mat bought for a dollar, any rock or sand surface becomes my face laid back and again UP to the sun!

As still as the Earth is around me, the swells of the past week roll gently still through my Body, thus comforted, even more so since I'm finally On the beach, my ultimate reward! For me it is even more precious!

'tis THE blessed Liberty for only few hours of the last half our time remaining in port. From the responsibilities of my Ship to be off again soon deployed to a destiny anywhere from Gibraltar to Libya Gulf, to Beirut, or to stamp again our Naval strength into the Soviet Black Sea, but always sure to find wherever goes the Threat:

The Ultimate Global Destruction capable by the ultimate stealth ever known!

The Soviet Submarine, Demon of the Deep.

My job on My ship:

US Navy Quartermaster First Class, Leading QM on a Knox-Class Fast Frigate.

Our "Cold-War" Mission: Maintain accurate Navigation at all times and relentlessly pursuit Enemy submarines hopefully without allowing detection by the Enemy that we are tracking them.

Who can launch first?

Who can prevent that Launch?

Ah, there you are, do you know we know you are there? hope not....

Lots of Global cat and mouse consequences at risk every hour!

or sometimes a relentless boredom of no contacts, just forever on patrol mostly Mid-Atlantic,.

Stop scaring yourself... think Liberty for your good job on the Atlantic crossing...

Who else could have got Me here other than the crew of a Warship of the Greatest Navy since The British Fleet at Trafalgar!

Then it took months to cross the Atlantic, they simply didn't have steam powered metal ships then...

ah, the days of Wood, Sails, and the Cannons that shattered the enemy to Splinters right before your eyes instead of maybe a disturbance of the missile's impact over the horizon or under the sea.

I laid out the Great Circle East from Norfolk to Spain, my QMs were the reason we kept on track hourly all the way over the Atlantic Ocean for just a week's crossing that could have been faster without all the drills. But that's ok, we needed to be Battle Ready approaching Europe.

DRILL, drill, drill, course changes! come right, come left, we QMOWs (Quartermaster of the Watch) kept the ship headed across the Atlantic. That's ok, just part of the routine, drill that is, flight quarters that is. GQ! General Quarters! ALL hands man their BATTLE STATIONS!

As a simple Navigator, I just wanted to get us across the Ocean on time with a precise Landfall.

The USS VanRaine FF-1198, a fiction ship named of course after the fiction Brave Navy QM2 Chesterfield "Chester" Ronald VanRaine, Medal of Honor, posthumous, from the Vietnam conflict (war),... to protect the innocent from any delusions of grandeur and to spare them from any damage from the typing out of my nocturnal, semi-conscious fictitious renderings. What's that ? Old TV fbi or cop show disclaimer saying the "names were changed to protect the Innocent".

Ah yes...Back to the resort beach....

In other words I got the ship & crew here from point A Norfolk, VA, USA to Point B on the Spanish Riviera...

sort of like driving a football field from Boston to Seattle, except it was all on the water, no places to stop or recognize, no land for rest, just a gray horizon across the swells...all around everyday.

and safely avoiding the most hazardous weather, with all due respect to my nautical and command Superiors all the way up the Line to have me what?

Ah yes...Back to the resort beach....

uh, drifting out again...what?. Excuse me... I'm on th' Beach...

OK, gonna slide my cover down and shade my face to you reading what I'm thinking. If you bother me too much on my Beach, I'll just stop thinking so you can't read any further...

After all the Spanish beaches from Malaga to Barcelona to the Isles of Mallorca are the BEST Liberty.

Sun still warming me as I doze.

Sweet Liberty. Topless Beaches of Europe, Landscapes of Famous Painters and Tourist Sights abound other than

the redundant simple Gray Horizon of my weeks past.

I pity the engineering snipes of the ship that don't even get topside at sea.

We sometimes spend two plus months on patrol with no land, and sometimes no supplies!

I am blessed by at least being on the Bridge everyday, even though almost Always, day and night!

My thoughts soon slide to sleep and dreams start-up the fragments of duty as they zap into my head from my recent stress of duty, yep, theres that twitching of my eyes back and forth in that half-sleep when you can actually realize that you are dreaming.

My forehead warms and droplets start to stream past my brows down to the tip of my nose.

I blink and twitch my head, trying to shake the sweat off my face!

Ugh, time to wake up... been there, done that, DAMN just another nice dream of Liberty. Want to try to slip back to the Beach...

WHAT's that Klaxon!

BONG!BONG!BONG!

GQ

General Quarters!

ALL HANDS MAN YOUR Battle Stations!!

Launching from my bunk, I fall into redlights, racklights and the darkness of a coffin. The floor is 2x6 feet with 5! other Men frantically moving Elbows and Knees as I am against them in the Ultimate summons of the Drill or maybe a 4Real BATTLE STATIONS drives US ALL desperately to try to get IN OUR clothes& boots on and RUN up the ladders, down narrow hatches, slipping, running slanting with the roll onto the bulkheads(walls) of the ship just to get pass each other!

I MUST GET TO THE Bridge or Topside B4 the Zebra Closure.

BANG... Awake now...

Its ok, just getting tangled up in the sheets... been out of the Navy 22 years, oh so Fine are those dreams when they are good-times or paradise beaches. The drills aren't too bad either as long as its a short dream.

Stories seem to assemble in my dreams on going back to the Ship and working 25-8 with my shipmates, no matter what the emergency that drives the dream. Seems like General Quarters were always more than the Norm than blissful Paradise.

BZZ, BZZ, BZZ

GQ!

Not this time, just an old man now,

I shake my head and sling the drop of sweat from my nose.

Navy was just my youth.

I hit the snooze again of with dreams of riding above Poseidon and my Duty  
My Ship's Motto was  
"Mare Est Vita Mea" with an emblem of Poseidon riding his chariot;  
"Sea Is Life Me".  
The Sea is My Life.....

*BZZ, BZZ, BZZ*

hit the snooze again, then later soon to get to work.  
oh, ok this is just that dream of me writing a novel about my dreams was just there.  
what?  
I've got to write at least 200 plus pages worth even just to think about getting a short  
novel published?  
Well, ah, thats a lot of writing. Maybe just writing a screenplay would be better. LOL.  
ThaN writing the book!

Well, guess that's it, hope you enjoyed my short story.

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In memory of those that never stepped ashore again,  
Like a Davy J.

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