



USS Edenton, USS Beaufort, USS Brunswick.

In the early 1970's Brooke Marine Ship-builders in Oulton Broad, built three salvage tugs for the American Navy. The first was named U.S.S. EDENTON, the second U.S.S. BEAUFORT and the third U.S.S. BRUNSWICK (see pic above) these had to be delivered to the American Naval base in Norfolk, Virginia. As a contract electrician I spent six weeks in Holland while the 'BEAUFORT' underwent lifting trials, then returned to Brooke Marine for the ship to be completed. Mid December 1971 together with American Naval personnel and Brooke Marine employees I was aboard as 'BEAUFORT' sailed for Norfolk, Virginia.

It was quite plain sailing until Christmas day, when mid afternoon we ran into a hurricane in mid Atlantic. We had enjoyed a Christmas lunch and the mess table was laid up for a buffet meal in the evening, with the ship rolling so badly everything on the table ended up on the floor with broken crockery everywhere. Much damage was done to the structure of the ship, navigation lights smashed, radar and radio damaged and the cargo in the hold had shifted. The nearest port of call was Ponta Delgado on the island of SAN MIGUEL, The largest island in the Azores, where we stopped to have the cargo in the hold re-stowed. We reached the naval base on New Year's eve and were taken to the Holiday Inn in the town, where we stayed for a month being transported to the base each day to do the repairs, mine being the electrical work.

When we reached America after the epic journey I vowed never to do it again, but when the third ship was ready to be delivered I was again on board only this time I was back home in England in time for Christmas after a non-eventful voyage.

Jim Aguss