

50

Years on this date – Wednesday 3rd March

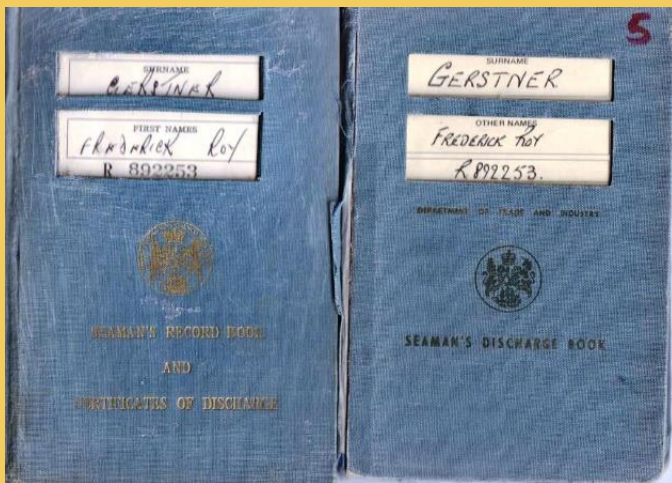
1971

A happy day for me, Roy Gerstner.

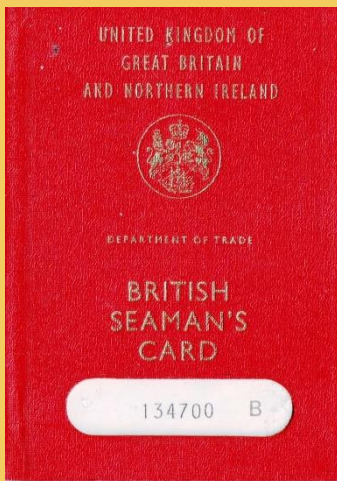
3 years at Tech College/Colwyn Bay and Riversdale Nautical College.

The week previously I had received my examination results...at last a PMG 2nd Class and a shed full of C&G's in Telecoms/Maths/Electronics.

My interview with the Marconi Marine Company in Liverpool went well and they offered me a position as a Junior Radio Officer – on the Ben Line vessel 'Benlawers', joined **03rd March 1971** at KG5 docks in London.



SEAMAN'S RECORD BOOK 3		CORD BOOK 4	
INCOME TAX CODE NUMBER AND DATE PENSION FUND AND REGISTERED NO. NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER UNION OR SOCIETY GRADE CERTIFICATES HELD DATE OF ISSUE		SURNAME (In Block Letters) FIRST NAME(S) (In Full) DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH NATIONALITY HEIGHT COLOUR OF EYES COLOUR OF HAIR COMPLEXION TATTOO OR OTHER DISTINGUISHING MARKS	
DECLARATION: I DECLARE (i) that the person to whom this Discharge Book relates has satisfied me that he/she is a seaman and (ii) that the photograph affixed bearing my official stamp is a true likeness of that person, that the signature within is his/her true signature, that he/she possesses the physical characteristics entered within and has stated to me the date and place of his/her birth as entered within.		NAME, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS OF NEXT-OF-KIN OR NEAREST FRIEND NAME RELATIONSHIP ADDRESS CHANGE IN ABOVE ADDRESS ADDRESS OF SEAMAN (if different from above) CHANGE IN SEAMAN'S ADDRESS B.S.C. No. SIGNATURE OF SEAMAN	
SIGNATURE OF SOFT. AT MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICE DATE		PHOTOGRAPH SIGNATURE OF SEAMAN	



After 3 months and 15 days of a round voyage to the Far East. There were 12 passengers and cargo, stopping at Southampton, Durban, Port Klang, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila, back to Hong Kong, Durban and London.

I was supposed to have 6 months as a Junior, but Marconi offered me a unique position of sailing with the International Red Cross taking aid to Vietnam and so, after only a few days at home off I went on another intrepid journey.

My 21st birthday in Perth Australia and what happy memories.

Nearly 2 years later, I returned to Whittlesey, enough money to buy my first sports car (2nd hand). A new girlfriend! and a few weeks leave.

My life at sea was very fragmented, the British Merchant Navy was in decline and I was made redundant 3 times.

I kept a nautical journal of all my trips and voyages, mileages and places visited. Over the 28 years spent at sea, I covered well over 1 million nautical miles and visited over 100 countries.

As for history I could write a book on my experiences and exploits! – and my wife often tells me to do so.... maybe one day I'll get time to do it.

My cv is well chronicled. Having picked myself up, gone back to Poly-Tech on 3 occasions and gained many further qualifications.

Experiences being the 2nd Tech/Engineer employed by the Sky TV group in 1987.

My 4 years working for the UK Government.

The fantastic experience of working for the Disney Corporation in the US.

Where has 50 years gone. I can tell my age, ask me something from that time and there is a good chance I will remember. Ask me something that happened yesterday – sorry if I didn't write it down, it has disappeared into some grey matter.



I look back with some fantastic memories, friends and characters, and wonder if I have joined some of my school friends working locally at say Perkins day in day out, or working in a factory seeing no daylight all day would I have had the experiences (some good and some not so good) that I've had.

My epitaph will read A well-travelled man.