



Letter From Tokyo Bay



Hank in 1945



Hank and Ethel in 1995

Above is an interesting envelope from the *USS Colahan* in Tokyo Bay in September 1945, when Japan officially surrendered aboard the battleship *Missouri* at Yokosuka. The *Colahan* patrolled the entrance to the bay during the actual ceremonies, but joined her squadron sisters the next day. The letter was mailed by Yeoman 2nd Class Henry S. Gaffin to his parents in Massachusetts. The envelope artwork was done by Franciszek Flis, the firecontrolman who designed and painted the “Tomcat” insignia on the *Colahan*’s forward stack. Flis is pictured in “The Painter of the Cat” on this website. Notice that it cost six cents to mail an airmail letter 60 years ago, compared to three cents for surface mail. Those postage rates stayed in effect for at least a decade after World War II. All images here were supplied by Hank Gaffin of Worcester, Massachusetts, and the two at left have been pinned up in my home workshop for 10 years. The 1945 picture of Hank and his petty officer chevrons was taken at a Seattle nightclub. After two years of war, the *Colahan* had returned to America, tying up at Bremerton, Washington. A ferry took Hank and his shipmates to Seattle for a little R&R as they waited for discharge.

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