

Joe Biron (XO AGR-9, 1958-59, CO AGR-14, 1964-65)  
and Ralph Edwards (CO AGR-9, 1958-59)

Shortly after arriving on station one weekend in the spring of 1959 the Investigator was on holiday routine when a skunk was reported at 15 miles closing on a collision course. The skipper was notified and he changed course. Within minutes the skunk altered its heading to remain on a collision course. Needless to say the entire watch kept a close eye on this approaching contact after such an unusual maneuver. In less than a hour it was close enough to identify as a soviet ELINT trawler that was fishing for electronic intelligence. It was the first time a soviet ELINT vessel had approached this close (about 300 miles) to CONUS. The skipper had just finished reading the monthly intelligence magazine which featured an article on the ELINT trawlers. He decided to try a little ploy to lure them in a little closer. He figured they were taking careful measurements of our electronic emissions. Our AN/SPS 12 air search radar was taken out of radiation. After putting out the word on the 1MC, every still and movie camera on the ship was topside and ready to shoot. When the contact closed to 1,000 yards, we were able to identify it as the soviet trawler "Vega" and reported this by FLASH message, as Captain Edwards put it "To God and everybody else". When the trawler closed to about 300 yards on our port quarter on a parallel course, the Captain ordered the air search antenna trained on it with full power, figuring to disable its monitoring instruments. We never did find out the effects of this gambit, but we probably cooked all the eggs in their galley. We then veered away to starboard and we both went our ways.

NORAD notified us that search aircraft were being sent out to view and presumably to photograph the "Vega". As dusk was falling Captain Edwards offered to illuminate the target with stars shells from our trusty 3"50s. This request drew a rapid response from all levels of the chain of command. "DO NOT OPEN FIRE"! It seems they had some aversion to starting World War III.

Bob Marshall (AGR-8, 1961-65) sent in that the Interceptors Captain at the time had his picture published in All Hands magazine as one of the few Captains who had a monogram command. This Captain was G. R. West., the ship hull number being GR-8.