



### **Robert Pruessner (AGR-3, 1955)**

A copy of a letter sent to my Mom and baby sister (age 13 then) living on a farm (Rural Route 1 Box 403) in New Braunfels, Texas from the Skywatcher YAGR 3. The ship was operating out of Newport, RI to assigned ocean stations a couple of hundred miles off shore. We were to stay within a few miles of the assigned point to radar track incoming airplanes hopefully to identify the enemy planes before they bombed Washington. We stayed on station for six weeks, as I remember, and we managed to convince ourselves that six weeks was a long time to be at sea. The scuttlebutt around the ship was that, with this boring duty and the "extended" time at sea, some of the crew would go crazy. With this background, here is a copy of the letter I sent home.

28Aug 1955

Dear Mom & Sis.

The hurricanes have all gone now. We will be in port by the time the next one is up here. We have only 9 more days to do before our relief shows up.

There was a most humorous incident that happened today. Some of the radarmen with nothing to do in their spare time organized a secret club - - The Bird Watcher's Society. Today was initiation day. The new members were to be the Capt. (John Anto), myself, the Electronic Officer and two new Ensigns. It started off very quiet but with each of the new members to wear odd clothes. The captain was to wear a black rain coat, tennis shoes and a sailor hat. I wore unmatched shoes, shorts, a funny hat, etc.. It was expected that all of this would take place in one compartment and very few of the crew would see us. Part of the initiation (that was added) was standing watch on the main deck as a lookout but not to speak. This is where the humor comes in. (Background, the captain is very friendly but very military, requiring respect from enlisted men etc) He was the first one placed on watch. Being a Sunday afternoon it was very quiet on the ship and he started standing his watch on the after part of the ship. The First Class Metalsmith walked out and saw the Commanding Officer looking around and in a very strange uniform. After the first shock he tried to talk to him and could receive no answer. His first thought, "The Old man is off his rocker." The captain finally said "I'm trying to catch birds," noticing how disturbed the first class was. "Yes Sir, I'll help you get them," said the First Class and ran around trying to humor him. At the first chance, he left him to run to the Chief Hospital Corpsman and the police chief. "The Captain's gone mad and is out on the main deck aft." They, in the line of duty and not knowing what was going on, couldn't help but believe him and placed the Captain under arrest. They then took him to the Officer of the Deck, who knew what was happening, and when asked what to do, he said take him to sick bay and examine him. It then became involved and he explained the story to them (his captors) and was released. The three persons involved were quite embarrassed to say the least and the Captain thought the whole thing very funny, so all's well that ends well.

Looking forward to the drive home and being home

Your Son  
Bobby

