

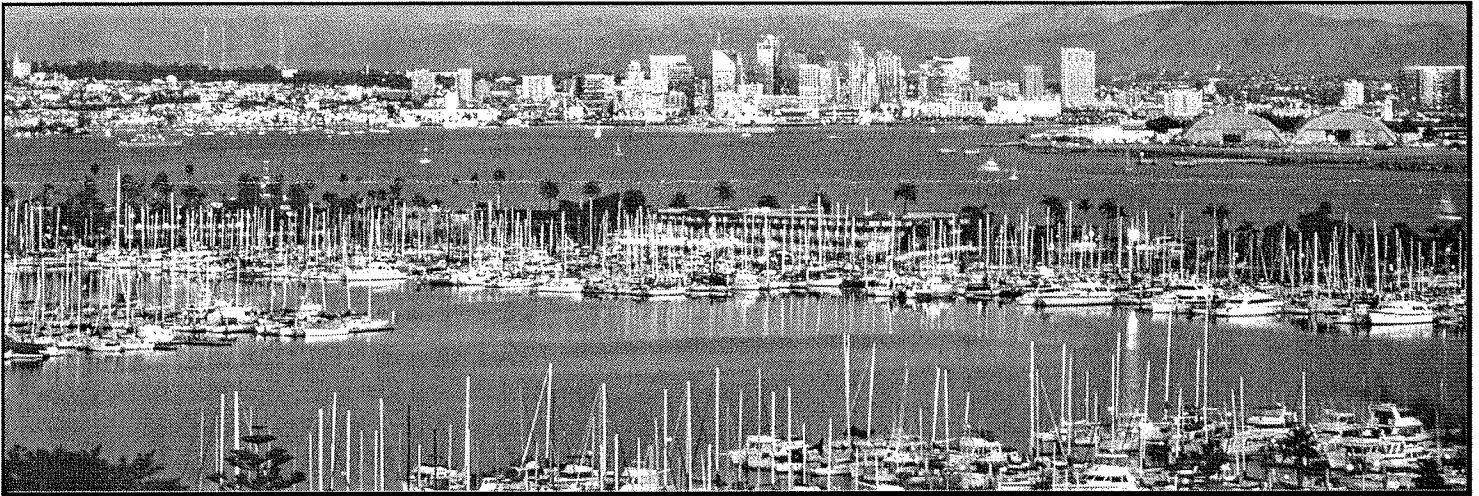


Radars Picket Ships

YAGRGRAM #18

Fall 2000

C/O Harry Miller, 230 West Forest Ave Pawtucket, RI 02860-3318 (401) 724-7278 e-mail YAGR@MSN.COM



City of San Diego from San Diego Bay

San Diego, CA

Population: 1,110,500

Elevation: 13 feet

Average Temperatures Month of June: 72°/ 60°

Rainfall Average for the month of June: 0 inches

Reunion San Diego.

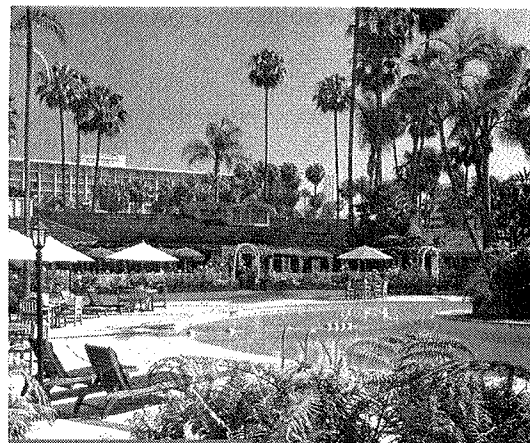
YAGR'S will be holding its 6th reunion in San Diego, CA on June 14, 15, 16, 2001.

Our host hotel will be the Town & Country Resort and Convention Center, 500 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108. To make your reservations the number is 1-800-772-8527. **Our room rate will be \$90.00 per night.** When you call the hotel to make your room reservations, let them know that you are with the YAGR'S group. You must make your room reservations by May 25, 2001 to guarantee that you will receive this special rate, but more important that a room will be available for you. The Town & Country will extend the \$90.00 rate for 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion dates. If you have any problems making your reservations, get in touch with me.

The Town and Country encompasses over 40 acres of gardens and grounds. It also offers 5 restaurants - everything from a deli and food court to fine dining.

While this is a large complex, all of our function rooms will be close to one another.

For those of you who will not have a car, the San Diego trolley stops adjacent to the hotel (a 2 minute walk). This will get you



to most of the area attractions and downtown San Diego, and if you walk for another minute, you will be at the Fashion Valley Mall.

If you are arriving by car, parking will cost \$6.00 per night (all of the local hotels charge for parking). You will be within a 10 or 15 minute drive of the area's attractions. RV's are able to park on site, parking only.

We plan to use the same format as previous reunions; Thursday for checking in, Friday the group tour and Saturday morning the mens meeting and spouses breakfast with the banquet that night.

The reunion registration form will be sent out with the next YAGRGRAM.

You can view the hotel's web page at <http://www.towncountry.com>

Hotel Rooms

To insure that you do not have any problem with regard to your room reservations, reserve your room as early as possible. Judging by the input I'm receiving from people that I have talked to, we are going to have a large turnout in San Diego.

Send Out A Reunion Notice

If your local newspaper has a column that features reunions and events, please send them a notice that we will be holding our reunion. Here is a sample of what you might send:
RADAR PICKET SHIPS (YAGR'S) USS Guardian AGR-1, Lookout AGR-2, Skywatcher AGR-3, Searcher AGR-4, Scanner AGR-5, Locator AGR-6, Picket AGR-7, Interceptor AGR-8, Investigator AGR-9, Outpost AGR-10, Protector AGR-11, Vigil AGR-12, Interdictor AGR-13, Interpreter AGR-14, Tracer AGR-15, Watchman AGR-16, USS YR-23 and USS YR-65 while attached to RADRON TWO, and staff will be holding their 6th reunion in San Diego, CA on June 14, 15 and 16, 2001. For more information, contact Harry Miller, 230 W. Forest Ave, Pawtucket, RI 02860 (401) 724-7278 e-mail yagr@msn.com

YAGR'S Still Growing

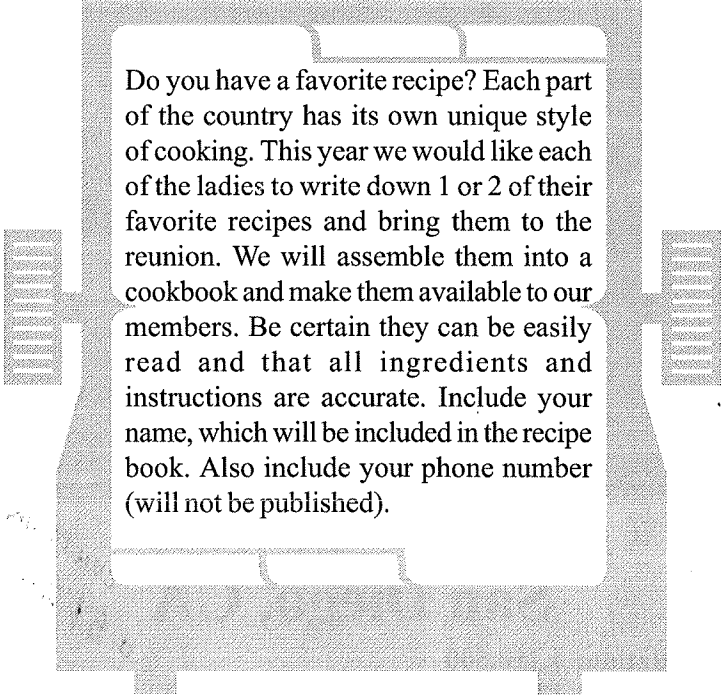
1,392 Located

If you have any information on any former crewmen, please get it to me and I'll try to locate them. If you know of someone, get in touch with them and let them know that an organization has been formed for the Radar Picket Ships.

For The Ladies

Again this year we will have our penny social following the Saturday morning breakfast. We are asking each of the spouses/guests to bring an inexpensive item to be raffled off. Items should be in the \$5.00 range. Homemade craft items are certainly most welcome.

Just a reminder that we will have a tee shirt/sweat shirt contest after the Saturday morning breakfast. Decorate a tee shirt/sweat shirt that somehow (no matter how loosely) relates to your home state. You have almost a year to come up with a good idea. Let your imagination run wild.



Do you have a favorite recipe? Each part of the country has its own unique style of cooking. This year we would like each of the ladies to write down 1 or 2 of their favorite recipes and bring them to the reunion. We will assemble them into a cookbook and make them available to our members. Be certain they can be easily read and that all ingredients and instructions are accurate. Include your name, which will be included in the recipe book. Also include your phone number (will not be published).

See you in San Diego, Amigos.

Things To Do To Relive Your Navy Days

1. Six hours after you go to sleep, have your wife wake you up, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and mumble, "Sorry, wrong rack."

2. Once a week blow compressed air up through your chimney making sure the wind carries the soot across and onto your neighbor's house. Laugh at him when he curses you out.

3. Once a month take every major appliance apart and then put them back together.

4. Use 18 scoops of coffee per pot and allow it to sit for 5 or six hours before drinking it.

5. Every so often, throw your cat into the swimming pool, shout "man overboard, ship recovery!", run into the kitchen and sweep all the pots/pans/dishes off the counter onto the floor, then yell at your wife for not having the place "stowed for sea."

6. Put on the headphones from your stereo (don't plug them in). Go and stand in front of your stove. Say (to nobody in particular), "stove manned and ready." Stand there for 4 hours. Say (once again to nobody in particular) "stove secured." Roll up the headphone cord and put it away.



UFO ???????

Jeff Cahill (AGR-1, 1964-65)

I served aboard the USS Guardian from the early part of until its decommissioning in 1965. As a Radarman striker, I stood watches down in combat along with the rest of my division.

As was the custom we tracked all aircraft coming into the coast line. Our position was about 300 miles off the New Jersey or New York coast. Bear in mind for those of you who weren't "scope jockeys" that a contact or a bogey on a radar screen leaves a mark approximately 1/2" long and moves across a 12"-14" screen in about 30 to 45 minutes, as I recall, all the while leaving a trail caused by the operator's grease pencil. There also would be accompanying "hack marks" with time denotations dictated by protocol; and depending on the style of the person that's on the scope, a few other notations as well. So when the aircraft is finally off the screen, the plot is then scrubbed because it would have been passed on to the on-base operators at the base station.

One night while on the 2000-2400 watch in early 1965 I was sitting on the scope immediately starboard of the Watch-Officers table (George Sleeper AGR-11, 1962-64, AGR-1, 1964) when an anomaly flashed on the edge of my screen approximately 2" in length. It could have been interference so I watched as the cursor showed it again on its revolution.

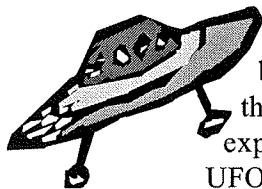
Immediately "hacked" it with a grease pencil, noted the position in seconds and, because of the phosphorous coating on the backside of the scope's cathode ray tube, I was able to back track and mark the first impression, half way onto its longish image. The next rotation of the cursor yielded yet another impression. With this hack mark, the timing of the rotation of the cursor and the interpolation from the previous marks coupled with our formula of distance divided by time equals speed, we were able to calculate the airspeed of 1,600 mph.

Well, whatever this thing was, it was really moving. Most planes we tracked were going 630 to 765 mph in those days and they took quite awhile to go across our screen. It took hundreds of "sweeps" that painted our scopes surface. Here was something that leaped across the screen in less than a minute. When we called the monitoring station at McGuire

Air Force Base, they said they had no flight plan for any sort of craft on that azimuth or trajectory, and besides we had nothing at the time that could go that fast. Man what an experience. I believed I'd tracked a

UFO!!!!

The mood in my home State of New Jersey at the time was all aflutter with ubiquitous sightings of these types of phenomena. My mother was a devotee to any source or new tidbit of information that was available. I told my Mom in my

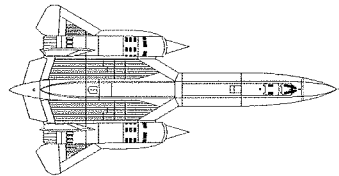


next letter home and, of course the fastest four methods of communication at the time were telephone, teletype, telewoman and yes tell-a-Mom!

Oh, I guess she was the hometown heroine for a while because she had a son in the Navy who personally tracked a UFO. I don't know. I wasn't there but I would get newspaper clippings of accounts of various sightings of craft that were allegedly hiding beneath the waters of the multiple reservoirs and other bodies of water back east. But all things fade with time and naturally people's interests move onto other things.

In the spring or summer of 1973 or so, I sat down at my father-in-law's home one afternoon and there was the most recent issue of Popular Science Magazine laying on the coffee table and what do you suppose I saw on its cover? Well in their typical beautiful illustrative style were two giant jet engines with a fattish pointed looking center fuselage coupling them together and the headline across the front read:

MACH - THREE - SPY - PLANE - REVEALED



There she was. My own personal UFO. Mystery solved. The SR-71 Blackbird.

Another UFO?

Ed Wiggins (AGR-10, 1960-63)

On or about June 1962 while on station off the coast of Massachusetts - New York grid, I along with other shipmates and the bridge watch observed an object no more than an eighth of a mile from the ship. It hovered dead still and was very bright with no sound. It stayed in that position for 10 minutes or so - long enough for me to go below to CIC and check radar. Nothing showed. Then I went back to the bridge. It then rose on an angle into the sky and was gone. I did take a picture of it and when the pictures came back, it looked like a flash in a dark room.

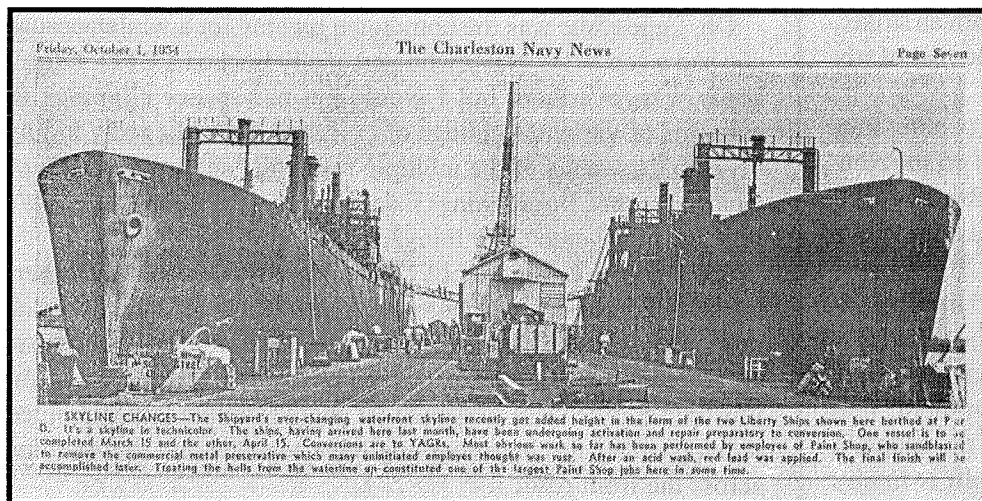
The weather at the time was crystal clear to the horizon and the water was like a sheet of glass.

Are You Moving ?

If you are planning to move or have just recently moved, remember to tell us. This way we will not lose track of one another. Also remember to send along your new phone number.



In The Beginning!



The SS Claude B. Kitchin, soon to become the USS Lookout YAGR-2, and the SS James W. Wheeler that will soon be the USS Searcher YAGR-4 shown tied up at the Charleston Naval Shipyard, Charleston, SC, shortly after the two ships were brought to the yard for conversion to Radar Picket Ships.

This picture was published in the shipyard's newspaper on October 1 1954.

Part of the caption reads, "The most obvious work so far has been the sandblasting of the commercial preservative which many employees thought was rust." It goes on to say that after an acid wash the ships were painted with red lead.

Dues

I want to apologize for not stating what the dues are in the last YAGRGRAM. They are \$17.00 the first year you pay and \$15.00 per year after.

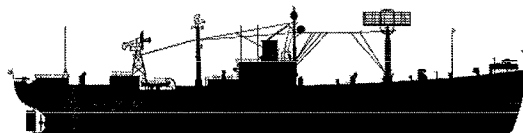
YAGR'S year for dues purposes runs from June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001. If you have paid your dues for this year, a date such as 5/31/01 will be above your name on the mailing label (please check this label) on the envelope that this YAGRGRAM came in. This date represents that your dues are paid until May 31, 2001.

If you have paid your dues and have not received your membership card, the latest crew list from your ship/ships or you do not see a date on the envelope, get in touch with me so we can correct it.

YAGR / AGR

In the last YAGRGRAM the question was brought up as to why the ships were classified as a YAGR. Did I get a response on this! After untold phone calls, mail and e-mail the general consensus is that when the Navy was directed to come up with a ship that was specifically designed to act as a radar picket ship, it had to come up with the funding needed to do so and the only available funding was found in the SERVLANT budget.

While this is the most plausible explanation, it is just hearsay as nothing has been found in any Naval documents to back up the funding theory.



RADAR PICKET SHIP FACTS

February 18, 1965 Robert S. McNamara, then Secretary of Defense announced the deactivation of the Radar Picket Ships.

Mr. McNamara said in a report to the House Armed Services Committee that the missile age has outdated the ships. Another factor was the development of new radar that can see over the horizon and at long distances.

(Received from Ted Wilming, (AGR-3, 1962 / AGR-10, 1962-65)



Each ship's anchor weighed 8,400 pounds.

The ships carried 720 feet of chain.

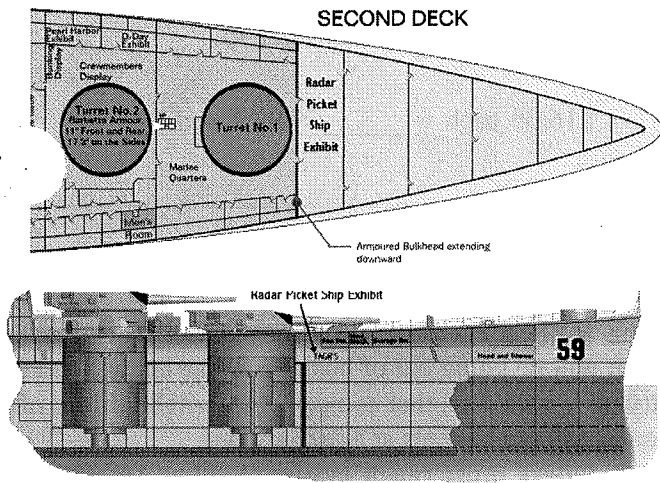
Each link weighed 15 pounds.

The Interceptor received on average 500 telegrams per day and sent 8 per day in 1960.

70 pounds of roast beef, 75 pounds of potatoes, 21 pounds of tomatoes and 20 pies was used per meal.

The ship went through 20 pounds of coffee per day.

(Received from John Shaffer, (AGR-8, 1959-62)



Drawing courtesy of Battleship Massachusetts

USS Massachusetts

Radar Picket Ship Exhibit

The USS Massachusetts saw another group of YAGRMEN on board her on the 18th, 19th and 20th of August. This group included Tom Giardina (AGR-3, 1961-63), Bill Hinman (AGR-4, 1955-57), Tom Manning (AGR-4, 1955-57), Roland Cote, (AGR-10, 1961-62), Harry Miller (AGR-11, 1962-64, YR-65 1964-65) and Al Nannini (AGR-15 1960-62).

Tom Giardina, Bill Hinmam and Harry Miller arrived on board Friday night as they were going to be staying on board Friday night and also Saturday night. They were joined by Al Nannini who arrived on Saturday morning.

Work got started where we left off the last time we were onboard, burning off stanchions, brackets and grinding all welds smooth. At the end of the day, Al departed as he could only stay for the day.

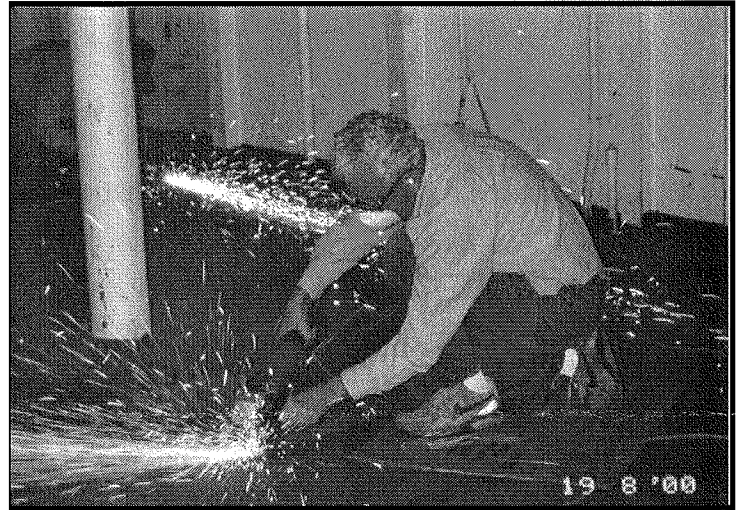
Sunday morning Tom Manning and Roland Cote were onboard for the first time to lend a hand. Once again the burning and grinding started. Happily this phase of work for the exhibit was completed that day, and we are now ready for the next phase of work.

The burning off of stanchions and grinding of welds may not sound like a big deal, but over 100 feet of welds were ground smooth and 17 grinding wheels, over 1 bottle of oxygen and close to a bottle of acetylene and a lot of hard work were used to accomplish this phase of work. It also should be noted that Chris Nardi, the ship's Curator, spent hours of work over and above our hours removing materials that were stored in the compartment.

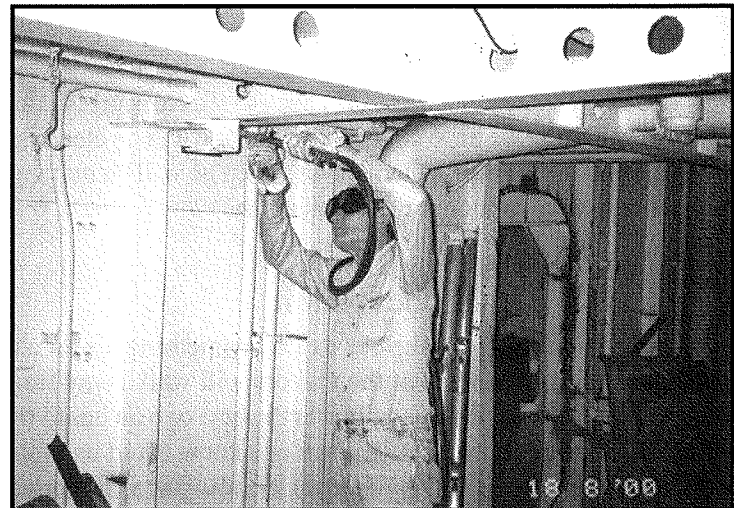
Next we will begin work on the building of wooden bulkheads that will hold our signs and house the model of the USS Guardian. Also we plan to build a platform to receive a large display depicting the history of radar. The Battleship Massachusetts has this display onboard but had it in storage because it did not fit with any of their existing exhibits.

Once this is done, the preparation and painting of the compartment will get started. This work will be done by others, as per the vote taken at the Minneapolis reunion.

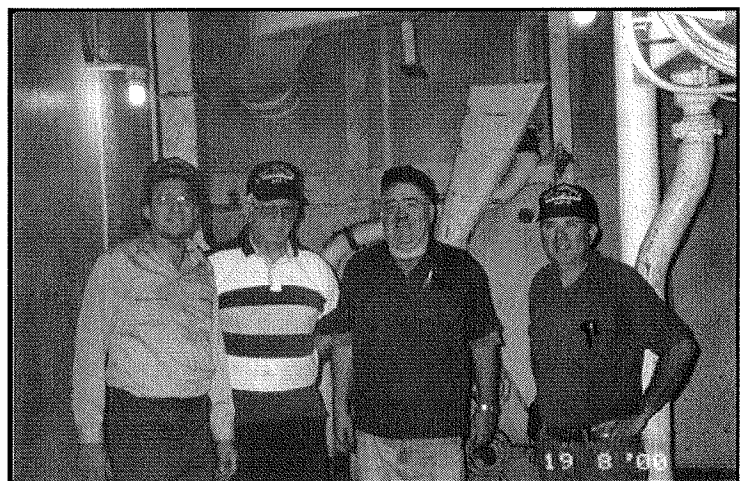
We have selected the lighting that will be used in our display, track lighting along with fluorescent lighting will be used to highlight all of our displays.



Al Nannini grinding welds smooth.



Harry Miller preparing to cut off another bracket.



Tom Giardina Bill Hinman Tom Manning Roland Cote

Needed For Exhibit

At this time we are still looking for the following items for the exhibit on the Massachusetts.

Shoulder Patches (Ship Names)

Searcher Interdictor
Locator Interpreter
Picket Tracer
Vigil

Cigarette Lighters

AGR 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16.

YAGR 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15

Pictures that show the ships in rough seas or covered with ice

Off Site Work Going On

YR-65 Model

Recently Bob Campbell (AGR-12, 1957-58) and I met down at the old Philadelphia Naval Yard to go on board the YR-64 (same hull type as the YR-65). The purpose of this was to take pictures and measurements that Bill Simcox (AGR-4, 1960-61) needed so that he can start on the model of the YR-65 that will be put on display on the Massachusetts.

Ship Plaques

Lee Doyel (AGR-15, 1960-62) has started to refurbish the ships plaques that we have collected so far. Lee will be cleaning and painting the emblems themselves. Then he will be making a wooden plaque to mount the emblems to.

The Exhibit

We are striving to make our exhibit something we all can be proud of. It is hoped that the visitors will walk away from the exhibit thinking that visually it is the best one on board the ship. (Even though we know that no one knew about us or the ships while they were in commission) It is also just as important that the exhibit inform these visitors of what we did in the 10 years the ships were in commission. Hopefully, it will do so.

The exhibit is estimated to cost \$10,000.00. This figure includes all prep work, painting, signs, wood working and lighting. We have collected \$8,352.35, leaving a shortfall of \$1,647.65. If you would like to make a donation, please send in your check as soon as possible. Make all checks payable to YAGR'S.

USS Tracer AGR-15

In the last YAGRGRAM it was reported that the Tracer was taken in tow for transit to Shanghai, China to be scrapped and that it would take approximately 30 days to reach China.

I have not received any more information on her, but I assume she has reached Shanghai and that she is being broken up at this time.

If I receive any new information, I will pass it along.

Ships Store

Hats ___ x \$16.00 each = _____ Enclosed \$ _____

Name of ship/ships _____

NOTE: This will be the last time we will be ordering hats from this company. It will be going out of business at the end of the year. We are trying to locate another company that will be able to offer us the same high quality hats at a decent price.

All hat orders must reach me by October 16, 2000.

This is the date that I will be sending in the order.

Travel mugs ___ X \$10.00 each = \$ _____ Enclosed \$ _____

These 12oz coffee travel mugs with tops are a pearlized tan color with a black top. Cups have the YAGR'S logo in black on both sides of the cup.

Ship Emblems ___ x \$3.50ea. = _____ Enclosed _____

Emblems

YAGR 2, 3*, 5, 6, 7, 8*, 9, 10, and 12 Hull # _____

AGR 1 thru 16 Hull # _____

YAGR DIVISION 21 _____

RADRON ONE and RADRON TWO _____

NOTE: * the emblem is the same drawing with the exception of the letters YAGR or AGR
Emblems are approx. 4 1/2" in diameter printed on 8 1/2" X 11" glossy paper.

All prices include shipping.

If you have ordered a hat, cup or emblem and have not received it, get in touch with me.



YAGR'S Web Page

<http://members.tripod.com/~YAGRS/index.html>

Note: when you go to access the web site, the Letters YAGRS are in capital letters.