



Radar Picket Ships

YAGRGRAM #23

Winter 2002

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

Rhode Island Newport By The Sea

YAGR'S 7th Reunion

Location: Newport, RI
Dates: Tuesday May 28, Wednesday May 29
and Thursday May 30, 2002
Hotel: Best Western Mainstay
151 Admiral Kalbfus Rd.
Newport, RI 02640
401-849-9880

Room rate: \$68.00 per night

We are expecting a larger than normal turnout for this reunion. Make your hotel reservations now. Be sure to mention you are part of the YAGR'S reunion when you make your reservation to get the special rate.

There are just 38 rooms left of the 125 rooms that we had set aside for us available at this time.

Reunion Registration

Dues paying members and their spouses/guests - the cost will be \$75.00 per person

Non dues paying members and their spouses/guests - the cost will be \$85.00 per person

A confirmation of received payment will be sent to you. If you do not receive one in a timely manner, please get in touch with me.

Reunion Schedule

The reunion format will be the same as the past 6 reunions.

Hospitality room has soda, beer, wine, drinks and light snacks

will be kept open as much as possible.

Tuesday May 28 will be for checking in at the hotel and our hospitality room to pick up your reunion packet.

Wednesday May 29 We will board buses for transport to the Battleship Massachusetts located in Fall River, MA. Once onboard the ship, we will dedicate our exhibit. You will be free to tour the Battleship and other vessels located at Battleship Cove. We will be served lunch on the Battleship.

Thursday May 30 morning We will hold our business meeting in the morning. While we are doing this, our spouses/guests will have their breakfast/penny social. **Thursday night** we will depart the hotel by bus for our farewell banquet. The dress for this evening: men usually wear a suit or sport jacket, women a dress or suit.

For tourist information on Newport, RI you can contact
Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau
23 America's Cup Blvd.
Newport, RI 02840
1-800-326-6030

Radar Picket Ships Dedication

As all of you know by now, we will be dedicating our exhibit on board the Battleship Massachusetts on Wednesday May 29, 2002. For those of you who will be wearing your uniforms, dress blues with ribbons is suggested. And as a reminder to the women, going up and down ladders can be tricky, so wear comfortable shoes.



Newport, RI

Pre-reunion tour

On Monday May 27 we will once again offer a pre-reunion tour. The cost of this tour is \$39.00 per person. **It does not include lunch.** We will need at least 30 people to set this tour up. If we do not, it will be canceled and your money will be returned.

Tour Information

Step Back in Time to Plymouth, Massachusetts

Experience a day in the 17th century. Our tour guide will narrate enroute. We begin the tour by visiting Plimoth Plantation, an authentically re-created living museum where skilled interpreters portray historic characters from the days of the Pilgrims. From here we travel on to see the reproduction of the Mayflower and view Plymouth Rock. Enjoy free time to shop in Plymouth, have lunch, or perhaps visit the Cranberry World Visitors Center.

A Note To Our Handicapped Members

The hospitality room we have at the hotel is located on the second floor and there is no elevator to reach this floor. Also to gain access to the battleship a steep brow (gangway) will have to be negotiated to reach the main deck. Also our exhibit is located on the second deck of the battleship. To reach it you will have to descend a steep ladder to reach the second deck.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me.

50/50 Raffle

Once again we will be holding a 50/50 raffle. The proceeds of this raffle will go toward our exhibit on the Battleship Massachusetts. The previous winners were

2001: Roland Cote (AGR-10, 1962-64) \$1,216.50

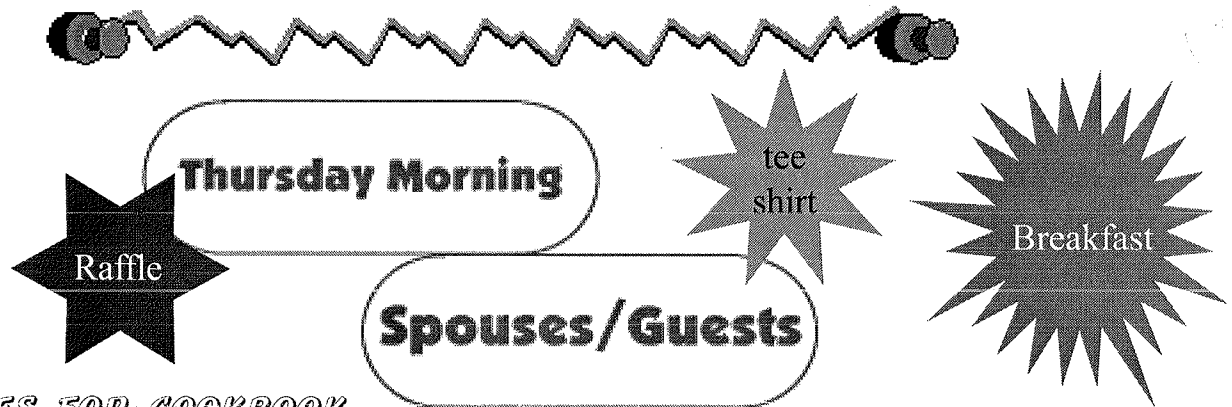
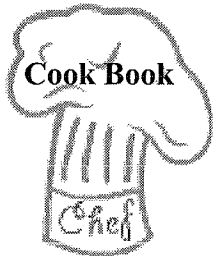
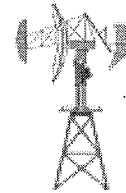
2000: Mike Smith (AGR-12, 1961-63) \$819.00

This will be the 3rd year that we are having a raffle and as you can see by last years total, the winner's share is growing each year. The tickets are \$1.00 each or a book of 6 tickets for \$5.00. Please return the ticket stubs (this is the tear off section with name and address) with your check made out to YAGRS to me by May 1, 2002.

I would appreciate your returning any unused tickets so that they will be available to those who would like more than one book of tickets. If you want additional tickets, please contact me and I will get them right out to you.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the Newport reunion.

You do not have to be present at the reunion to win.



RECIPES FOR COOKBOOK

Do you have a favorite recipe? Each part of the country has its own unique style of cooking. We would like each of the ladies to write down 1 or 2 of their favorite recipes. 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).

At this time with the number of recipes we have, the cookbook will be very thin. We need as many of you as possible to send in your recipes to make the book a success.

A note to the men

Send in your recipes to be included in the cookbook!!!

You are invited to the Thursday morning breakfast/penny social that is held while the men are at their meeting. The cost of the breakfast and raffle is part of your registration fee. We do ask that you bring an inexpensive item to be raffled off. Yes, homemade craft items are certainly most welcome.

We will have a tee shirt contest also. It is amazing what people will come up with. See if you can surprise us even more. This year's theme will be food. Decorate your tee shirt that somehow relates to your favorite food. Remember this is just to have fun, so you don't have to be Rembrandt. You have 4 months to come up with a good idea.



Radar Picket Ship Exhibit

USS Massachusetts
Fall River, MA

Onboard Work

John Hemminger (AGR-2, 1960-62), Tom Giardina (AGR-3, 1961-63), Bill Hinman (AGR-4, 1955-57), Tom Manning (AGR-4, 1955-57), Don Batty (AGR-9, 1963-64), Harry Miller (AGR-11, 1962-64, YR-65, 1964-65) Al Nannini (AGR-15, 1960-62) spent the weekend of October 15 onboard the ship. We completed the installation of the large display on the history of radar.

Now that the painting of the compartment is done (with the exception of the deck) we will be going onboard January 18, 19, 20 to start re-installing our displays.

Off Site Work Going On

Ship Wheel

Don Batty (AGR-9, 1963-64) has refinished the ship's wheel that was donated by Charley Williams (AGR-4, 1955, AGR-3, 1956-57, YR-65, 1957-63).

Jeff Cahill (AGR-1, 1964-65) has started work on additional signs.

Model Maker

In answer to our call for a model maker to make a model of a boxed aircraft type liberty ship, Bill Wisemen (AGR-10) got in touch with his son who in turn got in touch with me. As it turns out Bill "Doc" Wisemen, is an accomplished model maker. After explaining to him what we wanted, he agreed to make the model for us at no cost to YAGR'S. He also will be doing a model of a standard liberty ship.

Both of these models will be part of a display that will be set up in our exhibit on the Battleship. I think that I speak for all of us in thanking him for taking on this task. As of mid December 35 to 40 percent of the work was done on the models.

Listed below is a brief bio on Bill.

"I enlisted in 1983, went to Hospital Corpsman "A" school in Great Lakes. Served on Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown VA., Bethesda Naval Hospital, Naval Ordnance Station, Indian Head MD, Foxtrot Company 2/25 USMC. After Desert Storm, I processed out as a Second Class

Since 1994, I've been a Career Fire Fighter with the City of Newburgh Fire Department. I am currently a Senior Fire Investigator in the Fire Prevention Bureau and I'm working toward my National Certification as Fire and Explosion Investigator.

I'm a Civil War Re-enactor with Co "D" Third Alabama Volunteer Infantry. I'm the President of The Hudson Valley Historical Miniatures Guild. I'm also a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the Armor Modeling and Preservation Society, a Member of the International Plastic Modelers Society, Mid-Hudson Chapter.

I've won multiple medals at local, regional and National Model shows. I've built models for several private collectors and for the USS Missouri Museum in Hawaii."

If you would like to build this model or scratch build it as a picket ship you can order it from:

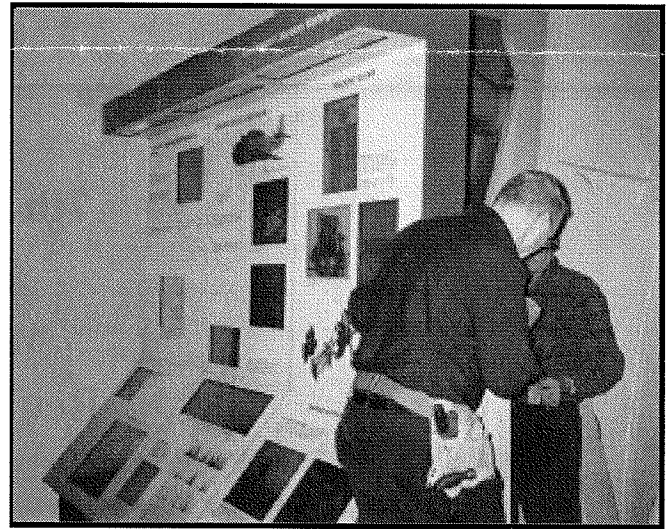
Commander Series Models, Inc
551 Wegman Rd
Rochester, NY 14624
1-888-476-6744

The cost of this model is \$85.00. Let them know that you are with YAGRS to get this special rate.

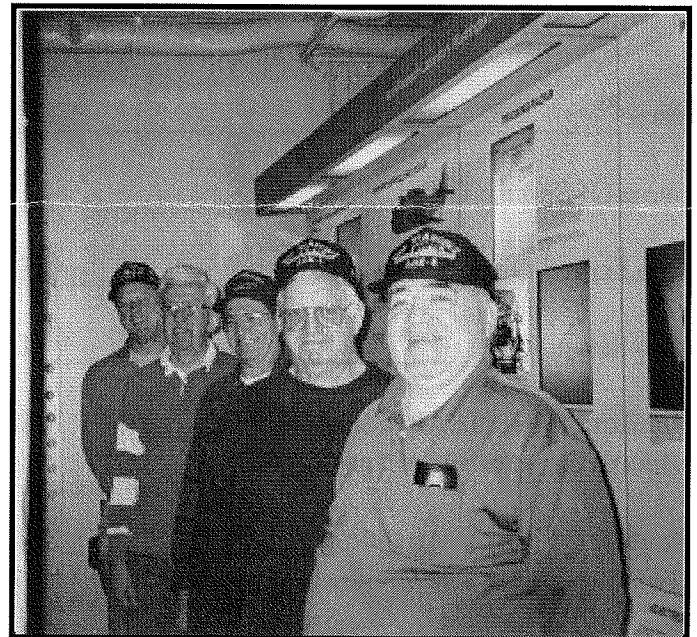
If you would like to talk to "Doc" about building a model for you, he can be reached at 845-567-0476.

YAGRGRAM'S

DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION OR ANY SEA STORIES THAT YOU THINK OTHERS MIGHT ENJOY READING ABOUT. IF YOU DO PASS THEM ALONG.



John Hemminger (back to camera) securing 3rd unit to support brackets



Working party standing in front of radar display.

Note: display is powered up.

Front to rear: Tom Manning, Bill Hinman, Tom Giardina, Al Nannini, Don Batty

**Pre-reunion Tour
Monday May 27, 2002
Tour of Plymouth Rock And
Plimouth Plantions
\$39.00 per person**

Names of people going on tour

NOTE: If you are going on the tour, please include the tour fee with your reunion registration.

Number people _____ X \$39.00= \$ _____

7th Annual Reunion

Newport, RI

May 28, 29, 30, 2002

Reunion Registration

\$75.00 Per Person (Dues Paying Member And Spouse/Guest)

\$85.00 Per Person (Non-Dues Paying Member And Spouse/Guest)

Please Return As Soon As Possible, But No Later Than April 18, 2002

Name _____

Name Of Spouse/Guest _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

Number Of People Attending _____ X \$75.00 = \$ _____ Enclosed \$ _____
Dues paying members and guest

Number Of People Attending _____ X \$85.00 = \$ _____ Enclosed \$ _____
Non-dues paying dues members and guests

Make All Checks Payable To YAGR'S

This information will be used for your name tags. Use the name you want printed on your name tag

YAGR'S

1,576 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.

Are You Moving ?

If you have moved or will be doing so soon, please get your new address to us along with your new phone number. This will insure that we will not lose track of one another.

Since the last YAGRGRAM, 2 of our members did not and they are now among the missing.

Liberty Ship Part Two

The information listed below was given to me by Tom Patterson who served on the USS Guardian AGR-1 as XO and CO in 1954-56. Tom is Chairman of the Board of the National Liberty Ship Memorial. It was he who determined that the SS Jeremiah O'Brien was the best preserved Liberty ship in the reserve fleet and managed to keep her from being scrapped. The O'Brien operates out of San Francisco, CA. If you would like to volunteer time on the ship or would like to get the sailing schedules you can call 415-441-3101

OPERATIONS - WORLD WAR II

The prime utilization of the Liberty Ship was to transport military supplies during the war to support all theatres of Allied Operations world wide.

As shipyard production increased during the war, the highly developed 20 column-5 row 100 ship convoy system in the North Atlantic became composed almost entirely of Liberty Ships. The speed of advance of convoys was set at 9.0 knots primarily to accommodate the speed range of Liberty Ships.

As the design and construction of Liberties was simplified and standardized so was their operation. This greatly aided in both training and efficient operation by licensed and unlicensed crew members. Once one learned to operate "a Liberty" one could operate "Any Liberty".

The Liberty fleet was owned by the U.S. Government and operated through the WSA (War Shipping Administration) which engaged private steamship operators as general agents with all costs for WSA's account.

More than 200 Liberties were sunk by enemy torpedoes, bombs or in storms at sea while many others survived such casualties with varying extents of damage. Some Liberty Ships operated by the U.S. Navy were deliberately scuttled in the Normandy Invasion to form breakwaters called "gooseberries".

The U.S. Navy converted many Liberties for commissioned Fleet Service including cargo ships, troopships and hospital ships.

OPERATIONS - POST WAR

Following World War II few U.S. Operators purchased Liberties. They preferred obtaining the larger, faster and more modern VC-2 Victories as well as the C-1's, C-2's, C-3's and C-4's which had been used during the war as U.S. Naval auxiliaries. These latter vessels were available to U.S. operators through protection against sale to foreign nations by the 1950 Ship Sales Act which excluded Liberties. Most Liberties either headed for the eight U.S. Maritime Com-

mission lay-up fleets or were sold to foreign allied countries.

One exception was CALMAR LINES, a division of Bethlehem Steel, which purchased 12 Liberties and converted them to steel products carriers for U.S. intercoastal trade. Another was Weyerhaeuser Steamship Company which employed Liberties in intercoastal lumber service. Some Liberties were also converted by foreign operators after the war into liquefied gas carriers, tankers, and bulk cement carriers. Greek ship owners acquired many and placed them in break-bulk or bulk trade usually in tramp service. One Greek owner jumboized Liberties into tankers by the insertion of a 70 foot midbody.

A brief revival of the Liberty Ship was attempted in 1953 to upgrade the U.S. National Defense Reserve Fleet when the U.S. Maritime Administration undertook a program to modernize these vessels and return them to active service in the U.S. Merchant Marine. Four vessels were removed from lay-up, bows replaced with ones of finer lines lengthened 25 feet, re-engined to 6000 SHP, one with a geared steam turbine, two with gas turbines and one with a diesel engine. Cargo handling gear and hatch covers were also modernized and though increased speed to 15.0 knots was achieved there were no takers among U.S. steamship operators. Vessels were returned to lay-up after a brief trial service.

In 1954-55 the U.S. Navy converted sixteen four hatch Liberties (Z-EC2-S-C5 Aircraft Transport) to ocean radar station ships (AGR's) as part of the Continental Air Defense System. Other Liberties were converted for special missions as YAG's. The postwar period saw Liberty Ship hulls employed in a wide variety of functions including grain storage, fish process plants, artificial reefs, naval mine testing, crane barges, etc.

During the 1960's a systematic scrapping program was initiated by MARAD with many Liberties being "broken up" in U.S. yards. When scrap steel prices offered abroad greatly exceeded those of the U.S. domestic market these vessels were towed, often in "tandem of fours" to the bone-yards of Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

USS SEARCHER (AGR-4) HOW A TAILSHAFT AND SCREW WERE LOST

Strafford (Stretch) Moss
(AGR-11, 1960-62)

The new Atlantic Coast overhaul cycle for AGRs started in 1961. GUARDIAN (AGR-1) went into the yard first, followed by PROTECTOR (AGR-11) in late fall 1961. As Engineering Officer on PROTECTOR I was both busy and totally fascinated by the process. Upon release from Active Duty in June 1962, I went to work at the Bethlehem Steel Company's East Boston Yard where we had been dry docked. As the youngest supervisor, and just off active service, I was assigned to most of the smaller dollar value Navy jobs coming into the yard.

In early 1963 SKYWATCHER (AGR-3) came through the cycle, then in the fall, SEARCHER. On dry dock, certain grave formalities must be gone through. For the AGRs one of these was the removal of the propeller from the tail shaft, checking the stern tube bearing for excessive wear, and checking the shaft key way to ensure that the key way had been "spooned". Spooning was very important as it was a method of insuring that stress concentrations would

not be initiated in the key way. Slightly more than 100 of the 2700+ Liberty Ships built had lost propellers from tail shaft failure. Analysis by the American Bureau of Shipping indicated a critical vibration speed of about 102-105 RPM when the propeller came partially uncovered in a seaway and many shafts had broken starting at keyway stress points. To minimize the possibility of failure, the Navy limited the AGR's engine speed to 66 RPM, reduced from design full speed of 76 RPM. Stern tube clearances were acceptable and a visual check of the shaft taper showed "spooning" had been accomplished and the shaft had no apparent cracking. As a final test, the shaft taper was magnetic particle tested. A heavy coil of insulated cable attached to a large storage battery was wrapped around the taper, forming an electromagnet. The area to be tested (the key way) was sprinkled with a magnetic powder. The powder would orient itself in the form of distinct lines, showing any cracks. The test showed no cracking, but the cable ends drew a large arc on the polished taper creating a large gouge on the machined surface. The mechanics assured me that everything was "all right" and that they would polish the surface with a stone before reinstalling the pro-

PELLER. "Dumbo" bought the explanation. In fact, smoothing the surface had not corrected the stress concentration point that the gouge had created in the shaft itself.

Out of dry dock SEARCHER went off to complete her overhaul. In March 1964, SEARCHER lost her screw at sea. The news made the Boston media. I wondered what had happened: everything had seemed just fine when we had inspected the shaft. In 1964 I left Bethlehem to work for an engineering company. A course of sprouts on nondestructive testing was required in 1970, including magnetic particle testing. As the instructor spoke, my mind went back to the SEARCHER. It was very clear what had happened and that I had caused the propeller loss. Not a happy day. I called my friend the lead civilian at the Office of the Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Inspection and Repair at the Boston Navy Yard. He agreed with my analysis. His take on the situation was interesting: I had learned a lesson, no one had been hurt, another "mystery of the deep" had been solved, and finally the AGRs had been laid up for at least five years and would not be used again.

Receive YAGRGRAMS By e-mail

YAGRGRAMS will be available in Adobe Portable Document format (PDF) to those of you who would like to receive it via e-mail 2 or 3 times a year. To be able to open the text and graphics that all YAGRGRAMS have, you will have to have **Acrobat® Reader** installed in your computer. Adobe Systems Incorporated makes **Acrobat® Reader available at no charge to anyone who wishes a copy, and permits further distribution of this software. No endorsement or warranty is implied or expressed.**

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

Once you have it and are sure you have it **working properly**, you will be able to receive the YAGRGRAMS by e-mail.

To be added to the e-mail list

1. Make sure everything is set up on your end properly.
2. Send me an e-mail message saying that you want to be added to the list with your full name and ship served on. Please at this time have only this information in the e-mail message.
3. Once I receive your message I will send you a reply message in PDF format. This way we will both know that you are able to receive and open the YAGRGRAM.
4. **If you are having a problem, please do not ask me to try**

to troubleshoot what is wrong. I am not a computer person and you probably know more about computers than I do any way.

Something to keep in mind:

When receiving the YAGRGRAM, it can take a few minutes to download to your computer.

It is hoped that the Summer YAGRGRAM will go out via e-mail. But this will depend on how things go.

YAGR'S Dues

Dues are \$17.00 the first year and \$15.00 each following year. If you have paid your dues, there will be a date above your name on the mailing label. If there is no date your dues are not paid.

If you have paid your dues and there is not a date on the label or you have not received your membership card and your updated list of former crewmen from your ship/ships, please get in touch with me.

YAGR'S year for dues runs from June 1, 2001 to May 31, 2002

Two Web Sites

We have two new web pages of interest. The first is for the USS Searcher AGR-4, put out by Frank Pulaski (AGR-4, 1959-61). The other is for the USS Tracer AGR-15 put out by Bill Bossert (AGR-15, 1963-64) and Lee Doyel (AGR-15, 1960-62) Check them out. YAGRS web site has links to both of these sites.

<http://www.classypages.com/searcher/>

<http://geocities.com/traceragr15/>

Looking For Information

I received a request looking for anyone who knew RD3 Donald R. Jones. He served on the USS Guardian AGR-1 from September 1955 to March 1959.

His daughter, Kay would like to hear from anyone who knew Donald.

Kay (Jones) Schultz

PO BOX 155

German Valley, IL 61039

815-362-2413



If you ordered something and you have not received it yet, please get in touch with me.

The proceeds of items sold from the Ships Store will go towards the future expansion and upkeep of our exhibit onboard the Battleship Massachusetts. **The only exceptions will be for the Ship emblem pins. These proceeds will be used to obtain other ship emblems.**

Orders for hats will be taken with the next YAGRGRAM.



The lapel pins are 5/8 inches long and in color.

YAGR'S logo pin is a new larger size pin (1 inch) than the previous one sold.

Hat speciality devices AG, BM, BT, DC, GM, IC, EM, EN, ET, *H1, MM, RD, RM, SK, YN are on hand, but in a limited quantity. As I run out of them I will then have to order more. This could take up to 6 weeks to receive. Specify device desired.

The following hat speciality device pins can be ordered but can take up to 6 weeks to receive. Specify device desired.

DK HM MR QM SM MS SH

*New Shipfitter Rating

The USS SKYWATCHER AGR-3 and USS LOCATOR YAGR-6 ship emblem hat/lapel pins are in color and are 1 inch in diameter. These emblem pins are the first in a series that we hope to have available. As a note about the ship emblem pins, **I have been told by a lot of you that you would buy pins for ships other than your own. If these pins do not sell, others will not be available!**

ITEM	EACH		QUANTITY		SUBTO.
LAPEL PIN ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY	\$5.00	X		=	
LAPEL PIN NAVY EXPEDITIONARY	\$5.00	X		=	
YAGR'S LOGO HAT/LAPEL PIN	\$4.25	X		=	
USS SKYWATCHER AGR-3 HAT/LAPEL PIN	\$4.25	X		=	
USS LOCATOR YAGR-6 HAT/LAPEL PIN	\$4.25	X		=	
SKYWATCHER AGR-3 LOCATOR YAGR-6 HAT/LAPEL PINS	BOTH PINS FOR \$8.00	X		=	
PO 3, PO 2, PO 1 CROW FOR HAT					
PO _____	\$4.25	X		=	
HAT SPECIALITY DEVICE SPECIFY DEVICE					
_____	\$4.50	X		=	
HAT ORDER FOR HATS WILL	\$18.50	X		=	
16 OZ. TRAVEL COFFEE MUG WITH YAGR'S LOGO	\$10.00	X		=	
Make checks out to YAGR'S SHIPPING IS INCLUDED			TOTAL		\$ _____