



Radare Picket Ships

YAGRGRAM #35

Winter 2004

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

San Francisco, CA

May 19, 20, 21, 2005

The projected reunion schedule

Wednesday May 18, 2005: (Optional)

Pre-reunion tour.

Thursday May 19, 2005:

Day one of the reunion, hospitality room opens at noon.

Friday May 20, 2005:

Reunion group tour

Bus tour of San Francisco.

Tour of SS Jeremiah O'Brien with lunch on board.

Saturday May 21, 2005:

Mens meeting.

Spouses/Guests breakfast/penny social/contest.

Evening banquet.

Sunday May 22, 2005: (Optional)

(A) Post reunion cruise on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien, or

(B) Post reunion tour of Sausalito, CA.

The San Mateo Marriott has 476 guestrooms and plenty of space for our hospitality room and banquet room, so once again we will not have to worry about any space limitations. Parking is free for overnight guests. The hotel has a free shuttle from the San Francisco Airport to the hotel. We will also be able to utilize the hotel's free shuttle to take us to nearby locations of the hotel and also to connect us with Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), which will get us into downtown San Francisco.

You can view the hotel on their web site at

<http://www.sanmateomarriott.com/>

Our host hotel will be the:

Marriott San Mateo

1770 South Amphlett Boulevard

San Mateo, CA 94402

To make your room reservations, call

1-800-556-8972

Make sure you tell them that you are with YAGR'S military reunion group to get the group rate.

Our group rate is \$79.00 a night for a single/double room.

The Marriott is all set up for receiving room reservations for YAGR'S at this time. We ask that you reserve your room as soon as possible. Doing so will enable us to arrange for more rooms to be set aside for YAGR'S, if needed.



Don't forget, make your room reservations now!!!!

Group Tour.

Friday May 20, 2005.

The group tour is part of the reunion and the cost is included in the reunion registration cost.

See what the locals see up close. Once around town, hitting all the hot spots, from Fisherman's Wharf to the Palace of Fine Arts, including the Presidio, Golden Gate Bridge, Cliff House, Seal Rock, Twin Peaks, Mission Dolores, Nob Hill, Union Square, Chinatown and North Beach.

Once the San Francisco tour ends, we will go on board the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien for a tour of the ship. While we are on the O'Brien, we will have a box lunch. The O'Brien is tied up at pier 45 (Fisherman's Wharf).

Optional Pre Reunion Tour.

Wednesday May 18, 2005.

We will board a luxury motor coach for a narrated tour of Marin County and the Cameros wine region in Sonoma and Napa Counties. The Cameros region is host to a dozen wineries and more than 6,500 acres of vineyards. Sonoma and Napa counties' Mediterranean climate makes them the premier wine grape growing provinces of North America.

To provide you with as broad an experience as possible, we are scheduled to be visiting 3 wineries: Gloria Ferrer, Madonna Estates and Viansa, where we will have lunch (included). The cost of this tour is \$66.00 per person.

Alcatraz

To pass along some information to those of you who plan to take a tour to Alcatraz, I have been told that you should plan to get your tickets 30 days or so in advance.

One of the tour companies that goes to Alcatraz is Blue and Gold Fleet
Web site: www.blueandgoldfleet.com
Phone number: (415) 705-5555

Optional Post Reunion Tours.

Sunday May 22, 2005. (Option A)

Cruise on the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien. The cost is \$125.00 per person, which includes a day cruise on the O'Brien, bus transportation to and from the hotel, an onboard continental breakfast, and Bar-B-Que lunch. Also a band plays throughout the day for your entertainment.

While onboard the O'Brien, visitors have full access to the ship, engine room included.



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YAGR'S

Sausalito, CA Tour. (Option B)

As an alternate to those of you who do not want to take the O'Brien cruise, we have arranged a tour to Sausalito, CA. Sausalito is across the bay from San Francisco, and I am told is very picturesque. The cost of this tour is \$40.00 per person.

Our bus will take us from the hotel to pier 41 to pick the ferry for a short ride across the bay to Sausalito.

Sausalito offers the Mediterranean-style charm of a seaside village tucked amongst the hills on the Bay. Step aboard a Blue & Gold Ferry for a smooth, quick ride to this delightful community. Art galleries, shops and gourmet restaurants provide hours of browsing, shopping and dining (lunch is on your own). Experience the uniqueness Sausalito is known for around the world.

Return trip is again by ferry to Fisherman's Wharf where we will pick up our buses for the trip back to our hotel.

Spouses/Guests

By now most of you know that on Saturday morning while the men attend their meeting we have something for the spouses/guests to do also. There is something for everyone whether you just like to eat, show off your handy work, take chances on some gifts or, for that matter, just to meet new people.

We have a buffet breakfast, a penny social raffle and this year a contest to see who can decorate a tote bag the best. And of course, 100 or so people to get reacquainted with or to meet for the first time. As anyone who has attended before can tell you, we are a friendly group. Remember there is no extra cost for this as it is covered in the registration fee.

As a reminder we ask each spouse/guest to bring an inexpensive item to be raffled off. The item should be something that you would like to win.

The theme for this year's contest will be
The "Fabulous Fifties."



Decorating a tote bag has lots of advantages. It's easy to pack in your suitcase going to the reunion and it can be filled with raffle winnings, souvenirs, etc., when returning home. Start to plan your entry now. You could be the winner!

USS Protector AGR-11

The Last Radar Picket Ship

Thanks to Dominic Ullom (AGR-5, 1956-59) for sending the following information on the Protector.

Dominic clipped this article from The Virginian Pilot, dated September 28, 2004. The picture in the article does not show the Protector.

As published earlier the Protector is part of what is called the "Ghost Fleet" and she was scheduled to be towed to England for scrapping. Protesters in England said the ships posed an environmental hazard and should not be allowed in England. It seems that they got their way.



Members of the Ghost Fleet sit on the James River. Four ships - the General Nelson M. Walker, the Protector, the Donner and the General William O. Darby - will be hauled to Texas to be dismantled.

Four more Ghost Fleet vessels are being sent to their graves

BY SCOTT HARPER
OF BRUNNEN PILOT

NEWPORT NEWS — Four more environmentally risky "Ghost Fleet" ships will be scrapped and their toxic innards recycled under contracts announced Monday worth \$3.5 million.

The head of the government caretaker of the James River Reserve Fleet, or Ghost Fleet, said the awards represent a milestone: The 10 worst vessels, with thinning hulls most likely to leak heavy oil into the open environment, all are under contract to be dismantled.

"I feel very good that we're making progress here," William G. Schubert, head of the U.S. Maritime Administration, said at a press conference overlooking the moth-balled fleet off Fort Eustis in Newport News.

Still, much work needs to be done, Schubert said.

Only two of the junk vessels have been towed to their graves so far this year, and there are at least 41 other unwanted, but more stable, ships that must leave the James River by September 2005 to comply with a clean-up mandate from Congress.

Financed by U.S. Reps. Jo Ann Davis and Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, Schubert said the latest contracts will send four ships to two Texas scrap yards. All Star Metals and

Only two of the junk vessels have been towed to their graves so far this year.

Marine Metals, both located in Brownsville, near the Mexico border.

All Star Metals will receive three of the ships, all built in the 1940s - the General Nelson M. Walker, the Protector, and the Donner. The Protector, a converted Liberty ship from World War II, has been moored at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth.

Marine Metals, which has won previous salvage contracts, will get the fourth vessel, the General William O. Darby, a troop carrier with service in WWII, Vietnam and Europe.

All of the ships will be towed by tugboat down the Atlantic coast, around Florida, through the Gulf of Mexico, to south Texas. The trek should take between 12 and 15 days, weather permitting, Schubert said he "fully anticipates" the ships leaving Virginia waters by the end of the year.

Environmentally, the Donner is perhaps the most notorious ship in the 90-vessel Ghost Fleet.

In August 2000, it created the largest known oil spill from the fleet to date - about 1,000 gallons of heavy fuel,

which escaped through a hole in its rusted hull. An oil sheen stretched for two miles on the James and spread a half-mile across. It cost \$250,000 to clean up.

Since then, the Donner has been patched and all oil has been pumped from its belly, so it will not require special protections during transfer to Texas, officials said.

The other three ships hold a combined 500,000 gallons of fuel and oil. Their removal from the James should help defuse what Scott, the congressman, described as "an environmental disaster just waiting to happen."

Beginning in World War I, the government has stored freighters and military support ships in the middle of the James River. Some went back into duty, the rest were declared surplus and sold at auction.

But in the 1990s, concerns about exports of junk ships to India, China and other nations lacking in environmental and worker-safety rules led to a virtual ban on overseas sales, and ships began to stockpile.

The Maritime Administration needs to get rid of about 110 obsolete ships at reserve fleets across the country. Most of these are moored in the James, including some of the oldest and poorest-conditioned ships.

■ Reach Scott Harper at 416-2740 or at scott.harper@pilotonline.com.

New e-mail address.

My new e-mail address is

yagr@cox.net

Please update your address book.

e-mail messages.

In the past I have asked everyone who sends me an e-mail to put something in the subject area that indicates it is coming from someone associated with YAGR'S.

Some have not and the e-mail has been deleted because I did not know who it came from. This has caused a few problems. I do not know everyone's e-mail address by memory so it is important to have something I can recognize as coming from a member.

Because of all the viruses being sent in e-mail, I don't open anything I can't identify.

Sea Stories Needed!!!

We are always looking for sea stories to publish in the YAGRGRAMS. If you feel you have something of interest, send it in.

We hope that you will take this opportunity to send in any articles that relate to your time spent on the radar picket ships. And, as a side benefit, you just might hear from some of your former shipmates who decide to get in touch with you and talk about old times.



Change of Address.

8 YAGRGRAMS were returned from the last mailing. This is due to people failing to send me their new address. It is most unfortunate that we have lost track of these former crewmen.

Please remember, when you move get your new address and phone number to me.



Dues.

Dues for this year

June 1, 2004 to May 31, 2005

are now due. If you have not paid your dues yet, please do so.

If you have paid your dues there will be a date above your name on the mailing label this YAGRGRAM came in.

50 Years

2005 marks fifty years since the first radar picket ship, the USS Guardian YAGR-1, was commissioned. Also in 1955 the USS Lookout YAGR-2, Skywatcher YAGR-3 and USS Searcher YAGR-4 were placed in commission. (You all know the YAGR was changed to AGR in 1958).



U.S.S. SKYWATCHER (AGR-3)

LIBERTY SHIP: SS RAFAEL R. RIVERA

BUILT BY:	J.A. JONES CONSTRUCTION CO., PANAMA CITY, FL
KEEL LAID:	30 NOVEMBER 1944 (HULL #2337)
LAUNCHED:	16 JANUARY 1945
SPONSORED BY:	MRS. EVELYN ANDERSON
PLACED IN SERVICE:	30 JANUARY 1945
PLACED IN RESERVE FLEET:	26 OCTOBER 1947



U.S.S. SKYWATCHER (AGR-3)

CONVERTED:	20 SEPTEMBER 1954 AT NORFOLK, VA
COMMISSIONED:	29 MARCH 1955 AS YAGR-3 AT NORFOLK, VA
HOMEPORT:	08 MAY 1955 AT NEWPORT, RI 01 OCTOBER 1957 AT DAVISVILLE, RI
RECLASSIFIED:	28 SEPTEMBER 1958 AS AGR-3
DECOMMISSIONED:	29 MARCH 1965
DISPOSITION:	31 DECEMBER 1970 SOLD AS SCRAP FOR \$115,045.75

Skywatcher was the third of eight radar picket vessels assigned to RADRON TWO. While the primary mission of the radar picket vessels was guarding the skies, they performed other tasks while on station, such as a floating weather station and when needed helped in search and rescue missions for ships and/or aircraft.

Special Project

Onboard The Battleship Massachusetts

Roland Cote, John Hemminger and Harry Miller have spent some more time on the restoration of the duct work on turret #1. The work we have done to date has been replacing the deteriorated sections of the duct. Now we had to correct the cause of the damage, water getting into the duct. While we knew where the water was coming in, we could not get to it from the outside because the turrets optical range finder was over the area in question. So, the only option we had was to cut out a section of the duct so that we could gain access to the area that was allowing the water to get in. Once we had done that and looked over the rusted out area, we found that we would have to replace a section 4' by 1' 2". After cutting out the rusted out section of plate and welding in a new piece of steel plate, we also decided to do a little preventive maintenance work by installing a drain line at the top of the duct and running it through the duct so it would drain out through the bottom of the duct. This should help to prevent water from being trapped at the point where the turret and duct work meet.



Area that was cut out to be able to get to the damaged section of duct. New piece of plate is tack welded inside of duct..



Harry welding new steel plate in place.



This will give you a good idea of the general area we have been working on.



Roland painting new steel. Area is inside the duct. Note new drain line installed in duct.



John grinding welds.



Roland painting top of duct with Harry looking on and footing ladder.



YAGR'S Exhibit

Onboard the Battleship Massachusetts

Fall River, MA



Work Weekend.

We had 6 former crewmen working on our exhibit the weekend of November 12, 13, 14, 2004. The 6 were: Roland Cote (AGR-10, 1961-63), Jack Floyd (AGR-11, 1962-64, YR-65, 1964-65), Henry "Harry" MacKay (AGR-12, 1962-64), Harry Miller (AGR-11, 1962-64, YR-65, 1964-65), Al Nannini (AGR-15, 1960-62) and Jim Spiegel (AGR-12, 1963-65).

We managed to get a long overdue project done. The forward bulkhead of our exhibit space was an area that needed some attention. With the bulkhead framing, cable runs, duct work and miscellaneous piping it would be almost impossible to mount anything on it. So we decided to open up this wasted space by installing plywood sheeting on the framework.

After cutting and bolting the plywood to the bulkhead frames, we now had 2 major obstacles in the way, large vents that ran across the overhead to the bulkhead and down it to just above the deck. The only thing we could do was to box them in. This involved forming around them and this proved to be a project in itself. We did not want to come off the sheeting square but at an angle, (this would give a better visual impact). We cut and installed the plywood around the vents (no square cuts, all ends cuts were mitered). Now we have another area where we can mount photo's, paintings and a few other displays that are in the works.

At this time we do not expect to be doing much on the ship due to the holidays, but one never knows. Roland, John and Harry have been known to make arrangements at the last minute to go onboard and work on a few odds and ends as the mood strikes them.



Jack Floyd, Roland Cote, Henry MacKay, Al Nannini, Jim Spiegel.



Jack, Al, Jim and Roland cutting plywood.



Sliding plywood sheeting in place



Henry checking measurements before cutting front panel.

Roland using nail gun to attach front panel.



Side view showing boxed in vents.

YAGR'S

10th Annual Reunion

San Francisco, CA

May 19, 20, 21, 2005

Please Return As Soon As Possible, But No Later Than April 1, 2005

Name _____

Name Of Spouse/guest _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

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

Reunion Registration		San Francisco, CA	May 19-21, 2005	Please Print	
	Cost per person	X	Number of People	=	Sub Total
<i>EXAMPLE</i>	\$95.00	X	4	=	\$380.00
Dues paying members, spouses/guests	\$95.00	X		=	\$
Non dues paying members, spouses/guests	\$105.00	X		=	\$
Optional Tours			Please Print		
Pre Reunion Tour					
Wednesday May 18, 2005		\$66.00	X	=	\$
Names of people going on tour					
Post Reunion Tours					
Sunday May 22, 2005					
Option (A) Jeremiah O'Brien Cruise	\$125.00	X		=	\$
Names of people going on tour					
Option (B) Sausalito tour	\$40.00	X		=	\$
Names of people going on tour					
Reunion Shirts					
\$18.00 each	Small	Medium	Large	X LARGE	
Number of each, times \$18.00					= \$
\$20.00 each				XX- Large	
Number of each, times \$20.00					= \$
				Total	\$



If you have placed an order for an item and you have not received it yet, please get in touch with i.

All of the ships' emblems, RADRON ONE, RADRON TWO hat/lapel pins are in color and are approx. 1 inch in diameter.

Two new pins USS Guardian AGR-1
USS Interceptor AGR-8



Lapel/hat pin silhouette of a picket ship is in color and is 1-1/2 inches long.

Hat specialty devices AG, BM, BT, DC, DK, GM, IC, EM, EN, ET, HM, *HT, MM, MR, MS, QM, RD, RM, SH, SK, SM, 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.

*New Shipfitter Rating



ITEM	EACH	QUANTITY	SUB TOTAL
HAT HULL # _____	\$19.00	X	NOT AVAILABLE
DENIM SHIRT HULL # _____	S, M, L, XL \$33.00	X	=
SIZE _____	NOT AVAILABLE		
SIZE _____	XXL \$35.00	X	=
HAT/LAPEL PINS \$4.50 EACH OR ANY TWO FOR \$8.00			
YAGR'S LOGO HAT/LAPEL PIN		X	=
RADRON ONE		X	=
RADRON TWO		X	=
GUARDIAN AGR-1		X	=
SKYWATCHER AGR-3		X	=
LOCATOR YAGR-6		X	=
INTERCEPTOR AGR-8		X	=
PROTECTOR AGR-11		X	=
TRACER AGR-15		X	=
RADAR PICKET SHIP PIN 1-1/2" LONG		X	=
PO1, PO2, PO3 CROW FOR HAT PO _____	\$4.50	X	=
HAT SPECIALTY DEVICE SPECIFY DEVICE _____	\$4.75	X	=
COFFEE CUP	\$15.00	X	=
MAKE CHECKS OUT TO YAGR'S SHIPPING IS INCLUDED		TOTAL	\$ _____
YOUR NAME _____			

Note: All orders must reach me by February 28, 2005. This is when orders placed with our suppliers. It can take up to six weeks after that for you to receive your order.