



## YAGRGRAM #67 - SEPTEMBER 2013

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view, download & print this YAGRGRAM in full color at [yagrs.org](http://yagrs.org)

# 19th Annual YAGRS Reunion - San Antonio, Texas

The 19th YAGR reunion will be held at the: **San Antonio Double Tree Hilton Downtown**  
**502 W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.**  
**San Antonio, TX 78207**

**Reservations: Hotel Direct - (210) 224-7155 between 8am - 5pm**  
**Nationwide Reservation Center - (800) 222-8733**

The rate is \$99.00 plus 16.75% room tax. The rate is good 3 days pre and post reunion dates. The reunion dates are Tuesday, May 20, 2014 through Saturday, May 24. There are two pre-reunion tours (Tues. May 20 and Wed. May 21). Check in and hospitality room opens Thur. May 22 and a group tour on Fri. May 23. The ladies breakfast and men's business meeting will be on Sat. May 24 along with the banquet that night.



The hotel has been renovated and the rooms are very nice. It is downtown and within walking distance of the River Walk and other activities. Additionally a shuttle stops by the hotel to downtown. As the hotel is located down town it (as in most down town hotels in cities around the country) does not have an airport shuttle. However there are taxis and companies that fill this void. Cost from the airport to the Double Tree is about \$25.00. We get free self parking, free buffet breakfast and internet, pool, weight room, etc. Again we plan to offer at least one free room night drawing to early sign ups. You can make reservations by calling 800-222-8733 or the hotel direct at 210-224-7155 between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. I recommend the direct line to the hotel to avoid problems. Be sure to say you are with the Navy group YAGRS. You can also make reservations at the hotel's web site [sanantoniodowntown.doubletree.com](http://sanantoniodowntown.doubletree.com). If you have a problem registering call Brian Forrester at (480) 998-1112.



RIVER WALK, DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO

### Pre-Reunion Tours:

#### **Tuesday, May 20 - San Antonio River Walk**

A private barge (with guide) will give us a historical tour of the river and drop you off at the Mexican Mahatten Restaurant for a Mexican dinner buffet on the patio overlooking the river walk. Dinner will include a non-alcoholic drink and desert. Tour is 3 hours long. Cost is \$69.00 per person.

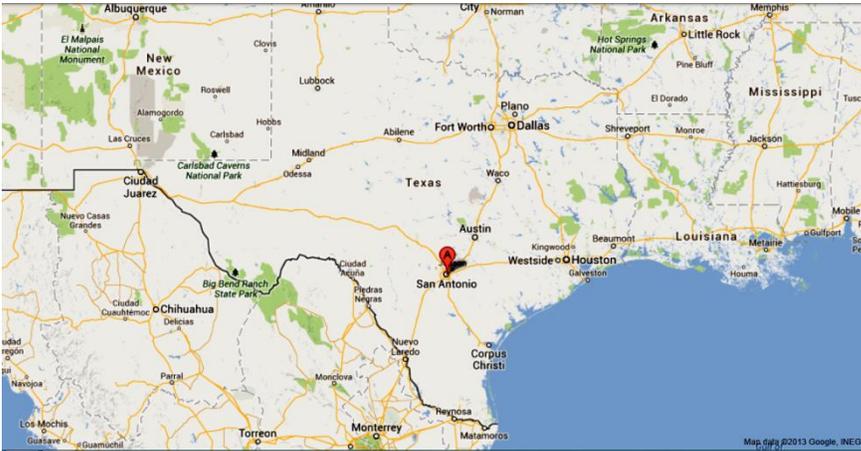
#### **Wednesday, May 21 - Fredericksburg Tour**

Bus (with guide) to the crown jewel of the Texas Hill Country with its shops, restaurants and the Pacific War Museum. The cost is \$73.00 per person which includes entrance to the museum. Lunch is on your own. The tour is 9 hours long.

#### **Friday, May 23 Group Tour**

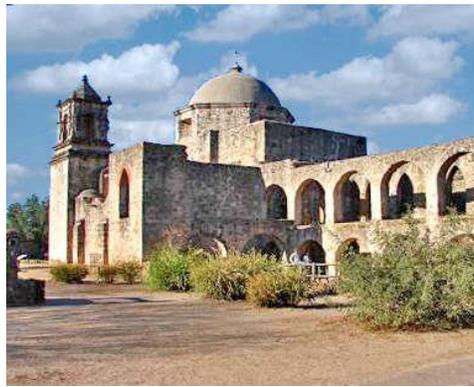
Bus (with guides) includes SAS Factory, Missions, lunch, Tea Garden, and Alamo. Cost is included in the reunion registration fee.

# San Antonio & Fredericksburg Texas



FREE DAILY BREAKFAST BUFFET FOR YAGRS

**Get a taste of the HILL COUNTRY!**



**FREDERICKSBURG**

**CHARMING. HOSPITABLE. HISTORICAL**

Founded in 1846 by German immigrants, today Fredericksburg is the unofficial capital of the Texas Hill Country, attracting visitors from around the world.

**Fredericksburg®**  
THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**  
Home of Admiral Nimitz Museum | Fredericksburg, Texas

<p><b>THE FOUNDATION</b></p>	<p><b>ADMIRAL NIMITZ</b></p>	<p><b>MUSEUM HISTORY</b></p>
<p><b>HONORING HISTORY AND SERVICE</b></p> <p>The Admiral Nimitz Foundation has supported a world-class military museum complex from humble beginnings on Fredericksburg's Main Street since 1971.</p>	<p><b>A MAN OF DISTINCTION AND HUMILITY</b></p> <p>The man at the center of the story insisted that in honoring him, we also honored all the men and women who served in the Pacific Theater.</p>	<p><b>A HISTORY-MAKING MUSEUM</b></p> <p>We are the only institution in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific and Asiatic Theaters in World War II.</p>



**JAPANESE TEA GARDEN**

BRACKENRIDGE PARK  
SAN ANTONIO, TX

The Japanese Tea Garden is open every day from dawn until dusk and is wheelchair accessible. Please enjoy free admission. Children are welcome, as well as pets on a leash. Please feel free to join us for lunch at the Jingu House restaurant near the entrance to the Tea Garden. You can find out more about the Jingu House restaurant and view a menu by visiting their website at [www.jinguhousesa.com](http://www.jinguhousesa.com).

## Message from the Chair - Lee Doyel

### REUNIONS

The reunions are scheduled up to two years in advance and details for the each upcoming reunion are done in the year and months prior to that reunion. Due to various lead times required by the hotels, tour companies, shirt suppliers, etc. for services, a registration cut off date of 30 days prior to the set reunion date is required. However there are always some who for various reasons/circumstances register after the cutoff date. Usually a few late registrants can be handled. That was the case in the Lancaster reunion. The Tucson reunion saw a larger number of late registrants. This caused more than the normal adjustments for these people. The only reason they were able to be accommodated was the larger than normal of late cancellations. Therefore those who make the cutoff date will have priority and late registrants will be placed on a standby list for any scheduled activities/tours in case there are cancellations/no shows. Unfortunately we are not like the IRS, a postmark date doesn't mean you have made the cutoff date. Your registration form should reach the treasurer by the cutoff date, not postmarked on that date.

### REUNION SHIRT POLICY

Several have asked if they could purchase a reunion shirt even if they did not attend the reunion. I have no problem with this as long as they ORDER IN TIME and pay for it. The cut off date for reunion registration is the SAME CUT OFF DATE for ordering shirts. Late orders may or may not be filled. They will be filled on an earliest date ordered if any shirts are left over due to cancellation/no shows.

Yaggram 66 reported the "theft" of boneyard encapsulating material that was passed around on bus #2. Subsequent information has been received that the material was apparently inadvertently left in a seat on the bus. After reading about it in the newsletter, Alfred Van Lennep, AGR-9, reported that as he and George Miller, AGR-10, exited the bus they found the material in a seat. They recovered it and turned it over to the bus driver. Many thanks to Alfred and George for their information and returning it to the bus driver. Hopefully he managed to get it back to the tour guide.

### Battleship Massachusetts

On 7-3-13 a YAGR Association donation was presented to the Battleship Massachusetts. Representing the Battleship Massachusetts was Paula Hague. Presenting the donation were YAGR Association members Roland Cote, AGR-10 (on left) and John Hemminger, AGR-2.



### Ship's Coordinators

The following is a list of current ship's coordinators. Still need coordinators for AGR 7, 8 & 13. If you ship does not have a coordinator, contact Lee Doyel and volunteer. Ship's coordinators maintain an email list of crew members and forward communications from the chair. Crew members receive advance notices of current YAGR news, activities etc. If you wish to be included, send an email to your ship's coordination requesting to have your email address added.

#### Ship's Coordinators

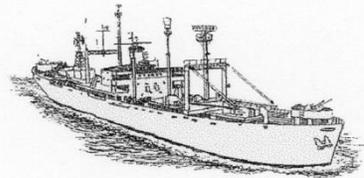
AGR-1	Frank St Mark	<a href="mailto:smarks117@hotmail.com">smarks117@hotmail.com</a>	AGR-9	Frank Mahaffey	<a href="mailto:bnf@att.net">bnf@att.net</a>
AGR-2	Ralph Rappuhun	<a href="mailto:rrappuhn@aol.com">rrappuhn@aol.com</a>	AGR-10	Paul Langenus	<a href="mailto:plangenus@cox.net">plangenus@cox.net</a>
AGR-3	Chuck Parker	<a href="mailto:chuckparker@gmail.com">chuckparker@gmail.com</a>	AGR-11	Richard Lechtenberg	<a href="mailto:dickberg@staffing.net">dickberg@staffing.net</a>
AGR-4	Steve Mierzejewski	<a href="mailto:smjm@bex.net">smjm@bex.net</a>	AGR-12	Jesse Germany	<a href="mailto:jgermany31@gmail.com">jgermany31@gmail.com</a>
AGR-5	Bob Wrestler	<a href="mailto:rdwerst@sbcglobal.net">rdwerst@sbcglobal.net</a>	AGR-14	Joe Jackson	<a href="mailto:jacksonj@pldi.net">jacksonj@pldi.net</a>
AGR-6	Lee Doolittle	<a href="mailto:tleedoo@u.washington.edu">tleedoo@u.washington.edu</a>	AGR-15	Lee Doyel	<a href="mailto:mldoyel@cox.net">mldoyel@cox.net</a>
			AGR-16	Frank McNamara	<a href="mailto:ec2sc1@comcast.net">ec2sc1@comcast.net</a>

## **Dues Fund Established**

At the Tucson reunion a member gave a check to set up a fund for widows that want to keep in touch with the Association and receive the newsletter but can't afford the dues. If anyone knows of a widow (or significant other) who cannot afford dues contact the treasurer, Armand Lamarche ([arlmarche@aol.com](mailto:arlmarche@aol.com)). He will work out the details. Many thanks to the donor.

The address on newsletter envelope indicates your current (or delinquent) dues status. If you have thrown it away without checking and wish to know your status, email the Secretary, Mel Harder, ([mel.harder@snet.net](mailto:mel.harder@snet.net)), or call 860-653-2444, if you do not have the internet.

If you want to know if a check has been received or cleared, contact the Treasurer, Armand Lamarche ([alamarche@verizon.com](mailto:alamarche@verizon.com)) or call 978-671-9578 if you do not have the internet



# Sea Stories

Send your sea stories to Mel Harder, Secretary at [mel.harder@snet.net](mailto:mel.harder@snet.net)

## **A Mid Watch to Remember**

**submitted by David Crestin, USS Protector**

It was 1963. I was the deck officer on the bridge of the USS Protector during the mid-watch. We were underway on an extremely dark, hot summer night offshore of the Virginia Capes. At about 0230, I noticed a contact on the radar scope that appeared to reflect a steady bearing and decreasing range. I woke the captain, LCDR. Herman Eugene Goebbles, per standing orders if a vessel was coming within one mile of our ship. The skipper seemed not too happy about being awakened when he asked me what the problem was. I told him a vessel was closing on us and I could see her port running light. He got out of the sack, dressed, and came onto the bridge. The first thing he did then was to light a cigarette, which, with the night so dark blinded everyone including him. Because it was a hot summer night, the port holes were open and their covers secured to the overhead to allow a cooling breeze aboard. Each heavy brass cover was held against the overhead by a U-shaped "dog" that allowed a threaded bolt to slide into it and be tightened down. Goebbles was 6'6" tall. While blinded by his lighting the cigarette, he walked forward to scan the horizon when we all heard a loud "BOING!" as his forehead came into direct contact with the forked dog of a port cover. The air turned blue with curses, as all of us, knowingly, silently chuckled. At least I did, but I couldn't help it. However, what goes around comes around. When the collision threat was dealt with, Goebbles finally regained his composure, walked over to me and said loud enough for the sleeping crew below decks to hear: "Crestin, port wine runs red," and stormed off the bridge. He got me. I had called the green running light on the oncoming vessel the port side. My pride was hurt and I was embarrassed in front of the bridge crew. On the other hand, I got a certain satisfaction out of the event. At breakfast, there sat the captain at the head of the table with two beautiful red lumps in the middle of his forehead. No one dared say a word.

**submitted by Bill Ivie**

## **USS Vigil AGR-12**

In the 1950's the US Navy was assigned the task of extending the DEW Line seaward. To accomplish this task the Navy looked for a ship that would offer a stable platform for all of the electronics and radar that would be needed to be carried aboard ship. The type of ship decided on was World War II Liberty Ships, the best type would be the box-aircraft type (Z-ECS-S-C5). In 1954 the conversion of these ships started. This new class of ship would be called the Guardian Class and they would be classified as YAGR. At the end of these conversions in 1959 there would be sixteen (16) of these ships eight (8) home ported at Treasure Island, CA and eight (8) at Davisville, RI.



After these conversions the ships did not change their outward appearance much, except for their distinct radars-one of which was a special SPS-17A antenna designed specifically for these ships. However the interior was something else. The most powerful and modern air and surface radars and communications equipment were installed; as not only would these ships extend radar coverage seaward, they would track and direct aircraft, report weather conditions and numerous other tasks. Because these ships would spend so much time at sea, usually 60 to 70 percent each year (220 to 250 days), the Navy realized that habitability would be a prime concern. So living conditions were nothing like any other Navy ship. The Officers had their own private state room; CPO's shared a state room with another CPO; 1st class PO's shared a state room with 4 men and the crew had CPO type bunks with mattresses. The crew's berthing compartments on some ships were set up to create 4 man cubicles by using lockers to form them. On some ships the berthing compartments were even air-conditioned. This was unheard of at the time in the Navy. The mess decks were not unlike a civilian restaurant, and the food rivaled shore base galleys. The mess decks were done in cheerful colors and on many ships, turned into the unofficial crew's lounge, even though there was a space designated as a crew's lounge in another part of the ship.

To help avoid boredom on these long periods at sea, each ship came up with ingenious ways to entertain the crew. During periods at sea, fishing tournaments would be held, shooting practice, skeet shooting, swim call and, of course, sun bathing on the southern stations would help pass the time. As they were converted freighters, there was plenty of space aboard ship. All ships had a movie theater set up in one of the cargo holds. The other cargo holds were put to good use as basketball courts, archery ranges, weight lifting rooms, libraries, wood working shops, volley ball courts or anything else the crews could come up with. One ship even had a small swimming pool. Even with all the above, it was still tedious and boring duty.

I served aboard the USS Vigil AGR-12 from March 1963 to January 1964, in Davisville, RI. I came aboard as an ETRSN and made ETR-3 while aboard. There were 5 ET's: Jan Murray, ET3; Pettit, ET3; Clifton, ETRSN; Abear, ETN3 and me plus one ETC. Our ship was anything but relaxed with the Master-AT-Arms, a BM1 named Large, and he fit the name. I believe he had a great dislike for Operation Department personnel.



We had four radars: SPS-10, (Navigation) SPS-8 (Height Finder), SPS-17A, (Air Search) and SPS-5, (Surface Search). We had about 6 SPA-8 radar repeaters and one SPA-4 repeater on the bridge. We had Tacan, IFF, UQN Weather receiver, Depth sounding equipment, navigation equipment and much Communication gear that kept us very busy.

I have many good memories during this time. I was married to my high school sweetheart in October 1963 and we had an apartment in Providence, RI. This was my first assignment out of "A" school and I learned a lot about electronics onboard this ship. I remember vividly when I put on my 3rd class crow. I had a shirt with the crow on it and at midnight I put that shirt on and admired my new rank. Of course I also have some memories that are not so good. Our in port periods were 8 days for a short in port and 14 days for a long in port. Our cruises (Pickets) were 27 days and 35 days in duration.

**Dues Payment** - mail dues payment to Armand Lamarche, Treasurer, 3 Finnway St., North Billerica MA 01862  
Dues are \$17 per year. The current membership year ends May 31, 2014. The highlighted date on your address label is the date your membership is currently paid to. If that date is 5/31/13 or earlier, your dues are tardy. Please complete the information below and send with dues payment. You may pay for more than one year. Make checks payable to YAGR'S Association.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

# YAGR'S 19th Annual Reunion - San Antonio TX

## May 20 - 24, 2014

Return completed registration and check as soon as possible **but no later than April 20, 2014** to Armand Lamarche, YAGR'S Treasurer, 3 Finnway St., North Billerica MA 01862. Print exactly as you want your name to appear on your name tag. Also, indicate your choice of meat, chicken or fish for the Saturday evening banquet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ banquet choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ banquet choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Ship: \_\_\_\_\_

Reunion Registration - Thurs. May 22 - Sat. May 24 2014			
Includes Fri. May 23 tour & Sat. eve. banquet	cost/person	# of people	total
dues paying member, spouse/guest	\$95.00		\$
non-dues paying member	\$112.00		\$
<b>pre-reunion tours</b>			
Tues. May 20, 2014 - San Antonio River Walk			
names of people on tour	cost/person		total
	\$69.00		\$
			\$
Wed. May 21, 2014 - Fredricksburg Tour			
names of people on tour	cost/person		total
	\$73.00		\$
			\$

Reunion Shirts	# of shirts X cost	total
small @ \$18/each	\$	\$
medium @ \$18/each	\$	\$
large @ \$18/each	\$	\$
X-large @ \$18/each	\$	\$
XX-large @ \$20/each	\$	\$
total for all shirts		\$

## NEWS FROM THE YAGRS WOMEN' BREAKFAST

**OOPS!** Yagrgram #66 erroneously reported the winner of the "Parade of Aprons" at the ladies breakfast at the Tucson reunion. The winner was Sylvia Vacca whose entry was entitled "Pick-a-Pocket, Pick-a-Treat." On a plain white chef's apron, she added nine small pockets, all of different materials and all with different types of openings (snap, button, zipper, etc.). Each pocket contained a cookie, candy or small toy. Mrs. Vacca's unique design made it a perfect teaching tool for grandmothers, aunts, preschool teachers and day care staff. The prize, a 1920 USN "General Mess Manual and Cookbook" with recipes to feed 100 men brought big chuckles to Sylvia and husband Ronald (USS Outpost).

**From: Pat Reichling**

**Subject: A recap of YAGRS WOMEN'S BREAKFAST**

**Date: May 29, 2013 10:23:14 AM CDT**

In 2012 a movement was made at our women's breakfast to do something for our wounded military. . It was decided that we would donate warm clothing. Since Bill and I were already supporters of our Military Hospital in Landstuhl , Germany, and I had a contact person there, I offered to see that the packages got mailed, if the ladies contributed to the postage. The ladies were all very generous and the endeavor was a great success!! Many nice articles were donated, including some beautiful hand made blankets.

The ladies were also very generous with the amount they donated for postage and I had \$ left over. Just to let everyone know that, at the request of MaryAnn Phillips, my contact person in Germany, I purchased additional hooded zippered sweat shirts and tee shirts at Wal-Mart's on line site, with the leftover money, and those items will be shipped directly to Germany, Estimated arrival July 5th ( So that was easy!! Whew!!)

I want to give a special thanks to Claudia Jerzewski & Lorna Barbour for helping to package up the donated items after the breakfast. They were great!!! Added thanks to Claudia for taking some of the items back home with her to mail. ( We discovered everything would not fit in my car!)

Below is an email acknowledgement from Landstuhl , for the articles we sent.

Thank you all, Pat Reichling

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From: MaryAnn Phillips, Soldiers' Angels LRMC

Sent: Mon, May 27, 2013 4:18 pm

to: Pat Reichling

**Dear Pat and the YAGRS WOMEN'S GROUP:**

Thank you very much for all of the lovely blankets you sent at the end of April. We were just thrilled to see them! After over 10 years of war and a tough economy, we understand how difficult it is to keep going - for both our troops and our donors. We are continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of donors like yourself who answer the call to give again and again. We are so very grateful for people like you who continue to support our Heroes.

Although things are not as busy here as they once were - thank God - we still receive new patients every day. Their stories and their experiences are just as compelling as ever. They, too, are thankful and moved to know that their fellow Americans back home haven't forgotten them. You really do make a difference.

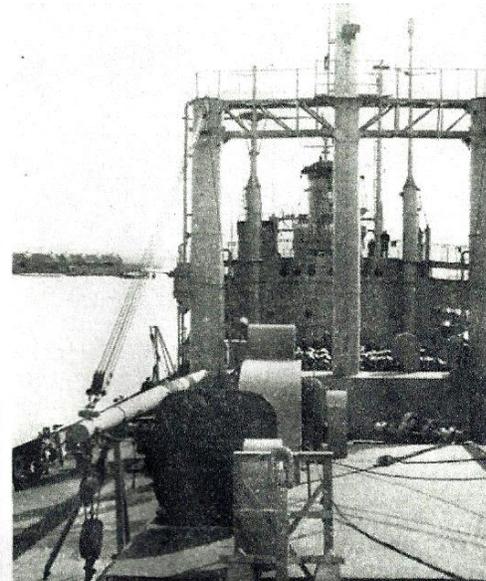
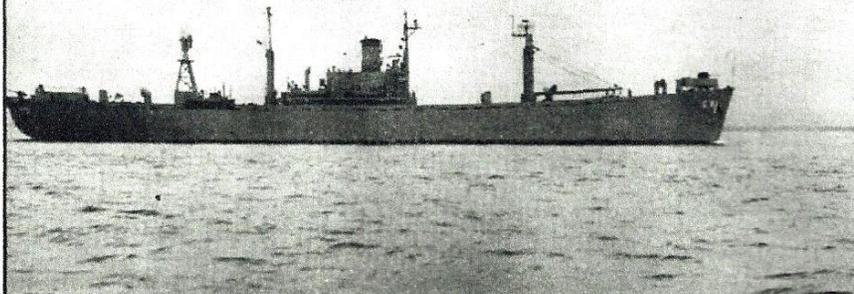
Thank you again for your patriotism and your generosity on behalf of the patients at Landstuhl hospital.

Hugs from Germany,

**MaryAnn Phillips**

Vice President, Warrior Medical Support Europe





ON THE ALERT—USS *Picket* (YAGR 7) and USS *Interceptor* (YAGR 8), shown at commissioning, are part of picket team.

## YAGRs Stand Ocean Sentry Duty

PERHAPS THE MOST UNUSUAL of the recent additions to today's "Navy of Tomorrow" are the YAGRs—Ocean Radar Station Ships.

They are the clumsy, awkward—but vital—ex-Liberty ships of World War II which underwent conversion and provided an economical answer to an urgent need—a mobile answer to extending our Continental Air Defense System seaward.

Last year, when the Navy was required to bolster its contributions to CONAD, the mass-produced merchantmen were taken out of mothballs and converted for off-shore screening and advance warning duties.

The first of these were USS *Guardian* (YAGR 1), *Lookout* (YAGR 2), *Skywatcher* (YAGR 3) and *Searcher* (YAGR 4), which now comprise YAGR Squadron 21, based at Newport, R. I.

At present there are eight YAGRs in service. The latest are: USS *Scanner* (YAGR 5), *Locator* (YAGR 6), *Picket* (YAGR 7) and *Intercept* (YAGR 8) operating out of San Francisco.

Like the DERs, the YAGRs while on station, are under the operational control of the Commander Naval Forces, Continental Air Defense Command. When not on station the YAGRs are under the administrative command of either the Eastern or Western Sea Frontier Commander. (The DERs are under ComCruDes or ComDesLant while not on station.)

Although having the same basic

mission, the YAGRs differ considerably from the DERs. During conversion, the Liberty ships were converted solely for radar picket duties and are no longer capable of being utilized as merchantmen.

"Conversion," in the case of the DERs, meant primarily the addition of communications and electronics detection devices, enlarging the Combat Information Centers and redesigning compartments necessary for the job of extending the nation's early warning system beyond the reaches of shore-based radar. With these modifications and added equipment the DERs took on a new role, but did not lose their capabilities of performing the diversified duties for which they were originally built.

The WW II Liberty ships were selected for conversion to ocean radar station ships because there was no immediate need for their use as cargo carriers. Their wide and deep 10,000-ton-capacity cargo holds were ideal for installing large amounts of electronics detection equipment and building spacious living compartments.

During conversion, former storage spaces became enlarged CICs, air and surface radar masts replaced cargo booms, overhead lighting gave way to indirect fluorescent fixtures, air conditioning and additional communications equipment were added.

Habitability was the keynote of the conversion of the ex-merchantmen in order to give officers and crews of the YAGRs modern living conditions and features of shore-

based facilities during long periods of patrolling on lonely stations.

Messing compartments, with four-man tables and colorful inlaid linoleum, have taken on the appearance of modern restaurants. Officers and CPOs have individual staterooms, while POIs share four-man compartments. Other crew members have double-deck "chief-type" aluminum bunks, individual bunk lights and roomy lockers.

Two former cargo holds are now utilized for handball, archery, volley ball, table tennis, weightlifting and even a golf driving range. Hobby shops include woodworking equipment and a photographic darkroom.

The ocean radar station ships even have permanent motion picture theaters which are also used for divine services and assembly halls.

To insure greater stability and to help keep sensitive electronics equipment on an even keel, 6000 gallons of water have been sealed in the double bottoms.

With the new distilling systems now in use, the inconvenient rationing of water—common to most ships at sea—is unheard of aboard the YAGRs. Their enlarged distilling systems are adequate to assure enough fresh water so that usual conservation steps are not required.

The YAGR men like their duty. The crews of ocean radar station ships boast that, while performing tough and vital sentry duty on the high seas, they have the best living and recreational facilities in the Fleet.

—H. George Baker, J01, USN.