

Sea Stories

submit your sea stories to mel.harder@snet.net

Submitted by Ken Wehr DK3 USS Skywatcher 1964-1965. Appreciated the stories in the latest Yaggram about the Searcher and the Skywatcher. I had heard about them before but the details were very interesting..ken

In the summer/fall of 1964(can't remember exact time)we were on station when one of our usual Soviet trawler shadows got a little too close for comfort. We were close enough to wave and give each other the one finger salute. The Capt. ultimately passed the word to one of our junior officers who spoke Russian to hail the trawler and warn him to stand off and move away which it eventually did. I don't know what we would have done if He didn't. We certainly weren't going to fire on them and cause an international incident. Besides the fact that one of our 3 inch 50's was completely rusted and unable to fire and I'm not sure our gun crew could have hit it anyway.

During that same time period one of our fresh water holding tanks got contaminated by salt water due to a hole in the hull .I seem to remember some sort of alarm going off but my memory fails me at that point. We were on water hours until the problem could be located and fixed. Ultimately a BT2 named Tinsley got down into the tank, the water being extremely cold, and plugged the hole in the tank with a self tapping machine screw with a rubber washer. It held until we back to Davisville much to the relief of the crew. We heard later that the Capt. had a Letter of Commendation put in Tinsley's personnel file. Life was not always boring on Yagrs...Ken WehrDK3

USS Watchman Rescue - This is a excerpt from crew member Frank McNamara's ship's history on the Watchman web site. The photo is from Watchman plank owner TOM WIGGIN, BT3.

WATCHMAN completed her fair share of patrols in 1959 (total of 6). While enroute to RPS #9, on December 17, Watchman picked up an SOS from the SS GUAM PIONEER. It soon became apparent that she was the only ship in the area who could effect a rescue and received permission to alter course. She was designated SAR commander and set course toward the PIONEER's last known position. Mr. West's navigation was right on the money and WATCHMAN sailed right to the survivors. A mere few hours later, lookouts reported several red flares visible. The ship maneuvered and eventually picked up 15 survivors of the SS GUAM PIONEER including the Master, Harry M. Drew. Search and rescue for mariners in trouble was a secondary mission of the radar picket ships - **mission**

accomplished. There was much discussion over what to do with the survivor's life boats including sinking them with 3" gunfire or towing them. In the end Capt. Boaz ordered them set adrift and notified the Coast Guard. The survivors were eventually transferred to the USS PICKET (AGR-7) and WATCHMAN continued to station.



Navy Saves Crew of 15 From Missing Freighter

LONG BEACH, Calif., Dec. 17. (AP)—A navy ship today rescued 15 seamen who abandoned their sinking freighter in the Pacific.

The U. S. S. Watchman, a navy picket boat, found two lifeboats after hours of searching. All the crew was rescued and there were no injuries.

The coast guard here said it was presumed that the freighter S. S. Guam Pioneer, laden with scrap iron, had gone down.

The crewmen were to be transferred to another navy ship, the U. S. S. Picket, for return to San Francisco.

Earlier the agents for the freighter said they assumed it had gone down as there had been no messages since an SOS was received. The distress message from Capt. Mahlon Boese said there was flooding in the shaft alley of the hold.

The 300-foot, 3500-ton freighter sailed from San Francisco Sunday headed for Honolulu and then for Japan.

The ship's agent, Transmarine Navigation company, said four Americans were aboard: Captain Boese; Capt Harry Drew, one of the ship's owners; Hubert McCall of Honolulu, being broken in as the chief engineer, and Aubrey Corbett, believed to be from Texas, radio operator and second mate.

"Hard Luck" Ship

The Guam Pioneer had been plagued with bad luck. Just last October 20 it went aground off Honduras but was able to pull itself off. Then it put in at San Pedro here for inspection and repairs and had to leave because of an impending shipyard strike.

The freighter then sailed to San Francisco for the repairs and left there with the cargo it had picked up in Central America.

The ship is of Liberian registry, with its home port Guam. It was being transferred to American ownership.



From the USS INTERPRETER AGR-14 website

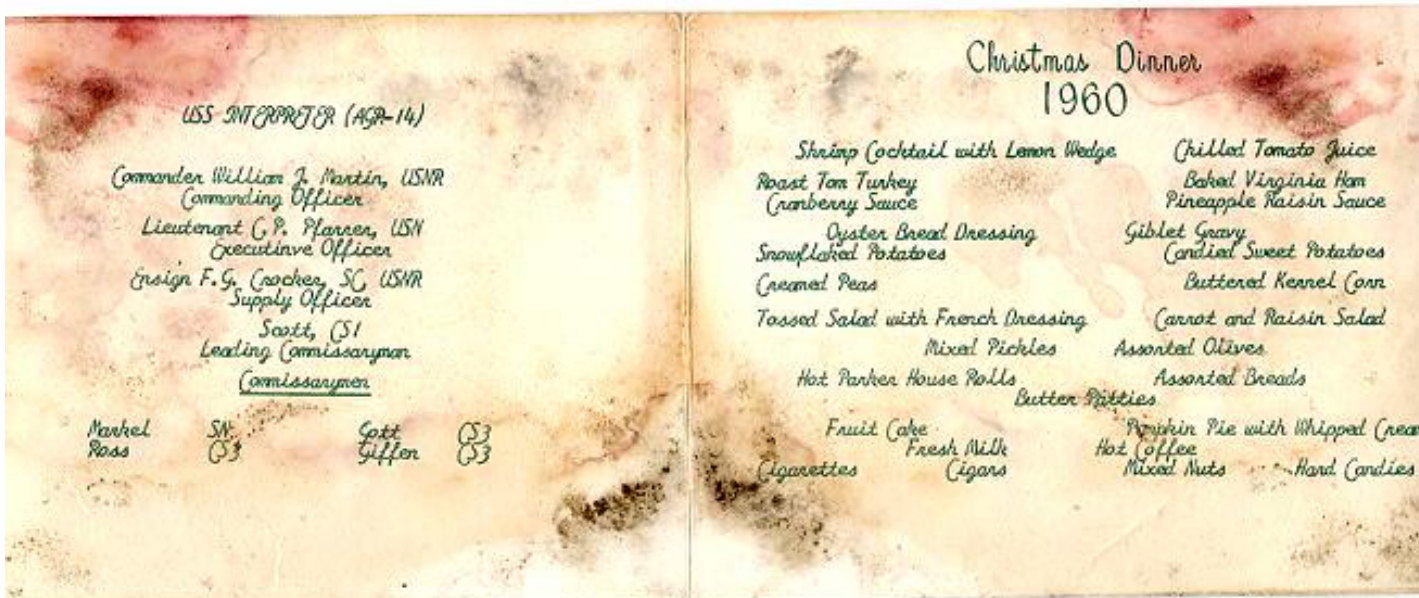
While going through some boxes that were in the basement and were water damaged, I came across an envelope that contained the Christmas menu from 1960. It was sent to all the families of the crew so they would know what we were having for Christmas dinner. It's in pretty bad shape but I hope you'll get a kick out of it.

respectfully.

Walter Hildbrand



CHRISTMAS DINNER
MENU

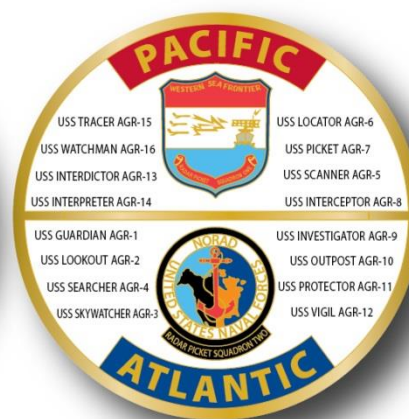


Challenge Coin - Lee Doyel

For sometime I have been thinking about a Challenge Coin for the Association. Below is what I've come up with to date. The front will be the YAGR Logo. The backside presently has two options. Option 1 shows the ANSPS radar antenna that was unique to our ships. It also has a triple expansion steam engine which was also unique to our ships. Around the perimeter are the ship numbers but no names, Option 2 has the RadRon 1 & 2 logos with the individual ship names listed. The size would be 1 1/2" in diameter if option 1 is used. Option 2 would be 1 3/4" due to the ship names. None of this is set in stone (except the front side) and if anyone has some other suggestions, (including different art for the back side) feel free to submit them. Depending on the number ordered (from the vender) the price would be around \$5 to \$6 a coin to members including postage.



OPTION 1



OPTION 2