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Armand Lamarche, Treasurer - arlamarche@aol.com
Mel Harder, Secretary - mel.harder@snet.net

YAGRGRAM #79 - JANUARY 2018

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view & print this YAGRGRAM in color at <http://www.yagrs.org>

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2018 New Orleans Reunion - Lee Doyel

Double Tree New Orleans Airport

2150 Veterans Memorial Blvd

Kenner, LA 70062

phone: 504-467-3111

Dates: Tuesday 18 Sep through Saturday 23 Sep, 2018.

Rate Is:

\$112.00 plus 14.75% room tax and includes breakfast. Good 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion dates.

Free parking and airport shuttle.

Tour details and registration form will be in the spring/summer YAGRGRAM.

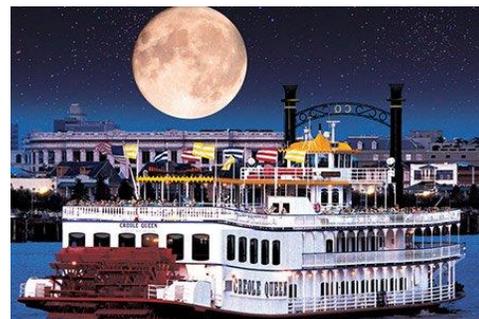
Reunion Tours

This year's reunion has 3 tours. The first is (Tuesday September 18) a dinner cruise on the paddle wheeler Creole Queen from the pier at the waterfront. The tour will arrive at the pier 1 hour early to allow members to wander the area, Jackson Square, St Louis Cathedral, French Market, etc.



The second tour is (Wednesday September 19) a dinner theater with a WWII USO style entertainment with the Victory Belles at the WWII Museum. No walking except from the bus to the dinner and stage area.

The third tour is (Friday September 21) of the WWII Museum for approximately 4 hours. The museum is quite large and covers several buildings which are connected with covered passageways and elevators. The museum has a limited number of wheel chairs at no cost. They are on a first come first served basis.



Electric Scooters available

There have been inquiries about "electric scooters" which are small framed runabouts for persons that can not walk far distances or long periods of time. There are companies that rent these machines with delivery and pickup. New Orleans has several companies that provide this service which can be expensive. One is a nation wide company called "scootaround.com" and they have an office in New Orleans. This is provided in the event you decide to use this service now or in the future.

Memo from Lee Doyel

On occasion I get a request from a member for the email address of another member. I may or may not have it. Also, even if I have it I may not be able to find it. Although I do have a lot of members emails, I do not have a "master" list and the ones I have are not "organized." I do search my files and normally find it if I have it. The best locator of emails is the list I ask everyone to put on the form I pass out at each reunion. I keep those in a binder and it is very easy to check and see if the member has listed his email. I put out the form so members can list their email addresses and make changes /updates if necessary.

As most of you know I run a small ships store. The way it works is when you order an item, I ship it with an invoice which has the price and PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS. You do not pay until receipt. The money goes to the Treasurer, Armand Lamarche, not me. Make the check out to YAGRS.

This was a cake that the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside furnished us with for the hospitality room. It tasted great.



I get calls and email asking if their dues are current and on occasion letters with a dues check. I refer these to Mel Harder, Secretary, who maintains the current membership list, as well as the ship's crew lists. While I don't mind attending to this, it is really not necessary to go through me. Also all dues money goes to the Treasurer, Armand Lamarche, not me. Their email addresses are in the upper right corner of the YAGRGRAM. If you do not have the internet I can provide their mail addresses and phone numbers for you.

from: Frank Pulaski, YAGR Webmaster (webmaster@yagrs.org)

I have completed the sea stories section of the YAGR website. You can view these by going to the home page yagrs.org and clicking on sea stories. As far as I know all the stories listed in the YAGRGRAMS and others sent to me are now on the website.

Also I have started the TRACER website and you can view it as it is being built. There is a blog to communicate your thoughts. It will take some more time to get all the information I received from Lee incorporated into the website. There are links listed that will not come up as pages until they are completed. go to the YAGR'S website <http://www.yagrs.org> and click on LINKS. You will see TRACER listed.

This was posted on our Group Facebook page by Mel Rohaus

Hi guys...My wife Linda and I are in Branson for Christmas festivities at Silver Dollar City and we are staying at the Radisson where we had our reunion 2 years ago...I am proud to show you our plaque displayed on the Wall of Honor...and it honors us well ...I was a Radioman on the Watchman AGR 16...



ship's coordinators - Ship's coordinators maintain an email list that is used to forward memos from the chair and advance notices of reunion plans to crew members. If you wish to be included, send an email to your ship's coordinator. We still need a coordinator for the USS Picket (AGR-7).

- AGR-1 Frank St Mark smarks117@hotmail.com
- AGR-2 Ralph Rappuhun rrappuhn@aol.com
- AGR-3 Chuck Parker chuckparker@gmail.com
- AGR-4 Steve Mierzejewsk stevejackie43@gmail.com
- AGR-5 Bob Werstler rdwerst@sbcglobal.net
- AGR-6 Lee Doolittle tleedoo@u.washington.edu
- AGR-7
- AGR-8 Ron Stasiak ronstasiak@rocketmail.com

- AGR-9 Frank Mahaffey franknbetz@gmail.com
- AGR-10 Paul Langenus plangenus@cox.net
- AGR-11 George Sleeper gsleeper@roadrunner.com
- AGR-12 Jesse Germany jgermany31@gmail.com
- AGR-13 Richard Willhite willys55nut@comcast.net
- AGR-14 Joe Jackson jacksonj@pldi.net
- AGR-15 Lee Doyel mldoyel@cox.net
- AGR-16 Frank McNamara ec2sc1@comcast.net

Dues Payment - Mel Harder, secretary - dues are \$17/year

checks to YAGRS ASSOCIATION, mail to Armand Lamarche, Treasurer, 3 Finnway St., North Billerica MA 01862

The current membership year ends May 31, 2017. The highlighted date on your address label is the date your current membership expires. If that date is **5/31/17** or earlier, your membership is expired. Please update your membership by making a dues payment. Upon dues payment, you will receive an updated membership card and crew list. Please complete the information below and send with dues payment. You may pay for more than one year.

Name: _____ Ship: _____

Address: _____

amount enclosed: _____ Phone: _____ email: _____

AGR Books Available - from Joe Maurer, USS Vigil

The cost of the books has gone up. The printer I had been using has gone out of business. The new print cost is \$15.35 each and postage (USPS) is \$6.65 for a total of \$22.00.

YAGR'S BOOK ORDER

Mail order is \$22.00 each, that includes postage.

No. Ordered _____ Total Amt. Due _____

Name _____

Address _____

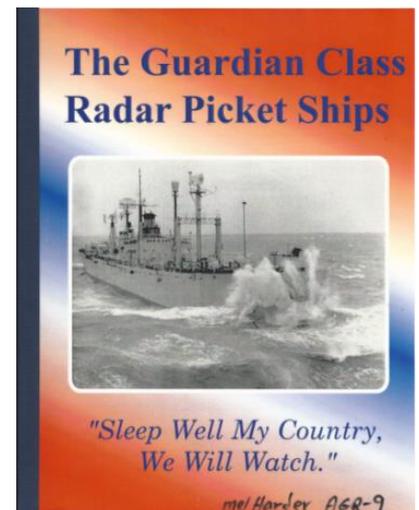
Phone _____

email _____

Detach and keep for receipt:

Paid to: Joe Maurer, 2127 S. Bristol Drive, Marblehead, Ohio 43440

E-mail: runinmuck@yahoo.com

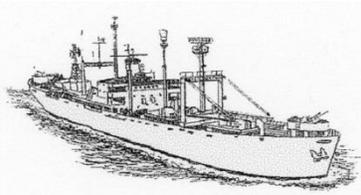


USS Massachusetts

The YAGR Association Plaque designed by Lee Doyel has found its permanent home in our exhibit aboard the Battleship Massachusetts. Plaque was installed by John Hemminger, AGR-2 and Roland Cote-AGR-10. An image of the plaque is on the last page of this YAGRGRAM, along with an instructions for ordering a copy.

Sea Stories

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



From: Ken Kohlstedt (former LTJG)
Subject: USS Interpreter and the bridge

I read with great pleasure Lawrence Arrington's story in the recent YAGRGRAM (nbr 78) about the adventures of the Interpreter (AGR-14). I was particularly interested in his comments because I was the CIC officer at the time of the incident and I can add a couple of notes. The story is quite accurate in that the fog was so heavy that the bridge personnel could not see the Richmond-San Rafael bridge until it was almost too late. We were outside of the marked channel and, in turning hard port to miss the bridge, we ran over a channel buoy. My memory is that we actually got tangled up in two buoys but that was a long time ago. We didn't actually hit the bridge or, if we did, it was so gentle that no damage was done.



Captain Beaty did report to the Commodore the next day but, as the screw was ok, no damage had been done, and we were due to leave on patrol almost immediately, the whole affair was classified a "misadventure" and Captain Beaty returned to the Interpreter to continue as commanding officer.

from: Ted Muller (USS Guardian)
re: Cuban Missile Crisis

The last sentence under the YAGRS ASSOCIATION shield "They served with honor, and the East Coast ships performed a vital function in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962". As the Guardian's log would clearly show, we were there in the frontline barricade for several days among several destroyers, including the Robert Kennedy, DD, who made one of the last intercepts of a merchant ship leaving the area. Also, we stopped a Japanese freighter with the help of P2V's out of Jacksonville.

Was the Guardian awarded a medal along with any other AGR's down there at the time, as were the participating destroyers and cruisers awarded?

Lee Doyel responds

Guardian along with all the other East coast ship were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for their performance in the Cuban missile crisis. The USS Outpost AGR-10 was additionally awarded the Navy Expeditionary Service Medal. The only medal the West coast ships are authorized is the National Defense Service medal.



from: CDR Joe Kimble
eMail: njkimble@comcast.net
My Location: Muskegon, MI
My Ship: USS Guardian AGR-1



Comments: I served on the Guardian from October 1961 to September 1963 (deck force, BM striker). I just saw the following post:
During the month of June 1961, Guardian was ordered to take station south of Key West, FL and to track and report all aircraft inbound to, or outbound from the United States. In October 1962, Guardian was again ordered to take a southern station, this time off the eastern coast of Florida. This was part of the "Cuban Blockade", and during the entire Cuban Crisis, radar picket ships performed important roles.

I was on the Guardian during the blockade duty. We were ordered to be part of that blockade in November, 1962. LtCdr Ellis actually ordered us to fire a round from our 3" x 50 forward gun over the deck of a Russian freighter that was refusing to turn around and head back east. We fired the round, the freighter turned around, and we did not need to board her or take any other action. In 2003, I received the Navy Expeditionary medal for this blockade, an award that all the ship's crew should have received in 1962.

Just found this web site. Great work.

from: James L Poole Jr
eMail: jimpoole@juno.com
My Ship: USS Searcher
Date: Sept. 22, 2017

Comments: My father was killed while serving on the Searcher. I would greatly appreciate any information on him as I was just over 1 year old when he died. It would mean a lot to hear about my Dad.



(NY14-NOV.14)BURNING NAVY RADAR SHIP--Smoke pours from ventilating stacks as rescue boat approaches the burning navy radar picket ship, the Searcher, yesterday after explosion ripped the craft southeast of New York City. Most of the blaze appeared confined to ship's engine room section. The Searcher is one of a number of surface craft spotted off the coast to signal the approach of unidentified planes. This picture was made by Coast Guard Warrant Officer W.H. Becker of the cutter Ingham which removed three seamen from the Searcher. (U.S. Coast Guard Photo via AP Wirephoto) (see story) (pr/hrm20810aag)1955

Frank Pulaski responds: James thanks for signing our guest log. Your comments and picture of your dad have been posted on page 4 of the guest log. This terrible engine room fire occurred on November 13, 1955 not long after the USS Searcher was commissioned. Your father as well as the other three who lost their lives at that time are memorialized on my USS Searcher website. It can be viewed at <http://www.classypages.com/searcher/inmemory.htm> and many of the ships logs pertaining to the fire are documented on the Searcher site at <http://www.classypages.com/searcher/engineerroomfire.htm>. There are 4 links on this page describing all the events that took place. I sincerely hope someone who served with your father will respond.

If anyone served with Chief Poole please contact his son at the email address above

from Lee Doyal

These are the images that have been designed and can be obtained on high quality photo paper suitable for matting and picture framing.

YAGRS Association photo is 16" x 22" and cost 35.00 including postage.

The AGR Legacy photo is 12" x 16" and cost \$25.00 including postage.

Send orders to Lee Doyal at yagrs16@cox.net with a mailing address.

YAGRS ASSOCIATION



- USS GUARDIAN AGR-1
- USS LOOKOUT AGR-2
- USS SKYWATCHER AGR-3
- USS SEARCHER AGR-4
- USS INVESTIGATOR AGR-9
- USS OUTPOST AGR-10
- USS PROTECTOR AGR-11
- USS VIGIL AGR-12
- YR-23 YR-65



- USS SCANNER AGR-5
- USS LOCATOR AGR-6
- USS PICKET AGR-7
- USS INTERCEPTOR AGR-8
- USS INTERDICTOR AGR-13
- USS INTERPRETER AGR-14
- USS TRACER AGR-15
- USS WATCHMAN AGR-16

Sixteen Ships That Served As Radar Picket Ships During The Cold War 1955 to 1965

There were 8 ships on the West Coast and 8 ships on the East Coast that served as the seaward extension of the Distant Early Warning System (DEW line) of Canada and the United States. Patrols ranged from 25 to 45 days, and the ships were controlled by and reported to the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). The ships were equipped with the very latest electronic and radar equipment. They were converted World War II Liberty cargo ships. Although the patrols were long and boring, the ships, with all that room, had above average living conditions for Navy ships. In addition to the detection duties, the ships performed navigation assistance to commercial aircraft as well as scientific sea and fishing research. The ships were a stopgap measure until over-the-horizon radar and satellite capabilities could be developed. They were "on the point" and would have been the first to know about hostilities from the Soviet Union. They served with honor, and the East Coast ships performed a vital function in the Cuban missile crises of October 1962.



The AGR Legacy

The radar picket ships noted in this museum were in commission over a 10-year period from the mid 50's to the mid 60's. The ships we were on "were out there" on the ramparts watching and waiting. Waiting for something that, thank God, never came.

In retrospect, you always wonder if you really had much effect in the big picture, especially since the Navy was never enthusiastic about the barrier program. Our tours were in what was termed a "cold war" although there were "hot areas" like the Cuban crisis, recon planes shot down, Vietnam, etc. Some have labeled the cold war, and I believe appropriately so, as WWII. It was worldwide and covered a span of 40 years. WE were out there on the barrier waiting for WWII to begin, not realizing we were in WWII.

How significant were we in keeping the cold war cold? Who knows. Perhaps in the future as the Russian archives become more open and available we will learn exactly where we were on their priority list. Because we were early warning, I suspect it was near the top. I would like to think we were a big deterrent at the time. Anyway, we can claim it. To my knowledge no Russian aircraft got through undetected.

Out there on those lonely patrols and endless night watches, you could do some serious thinking. When it came down to it, deep down most of us knew we were expendable. If we disappeared, you knew the war was on. You

realized how vulnerable you were when on a midwatch a surface radar contact would come close aboard and couldn't be seen and then disappear. You soon learned that those mysterious contacts were probably submarine snorkels... whose, we never knew.

It is appropriate that the exhibit be on a battleship. A battleship is at the other end of the ship spectrum from a cargo ship and as such, this exhibit will be exposed to more people. The purpose of the exhibit has several purposes. One is to let people know how critical radar was and still is. Radar was a most powerful and persuasive weapon in WWII and crucial in the Battle of Britain. The exhibit also pays tribute to those men who were the lonely sentries in the back waters of the Navy and whose purpose was to sound the first alarm.

The space also allows those sailors and officers who served aboard these ships to share memories and efforts and to acquaint others with the ships and the cold war warriors that manned them. Additionally, it serves as a "Bravo Zulu" (well done) testimonial to those men who stood those long and lonely vigils on the Pacific and Atlantic barriers between 1955 and 1965.

It also allows us to pass on a legacy and be remembered. Surely we have earned the right to be remembered.

Lee Doyal (Captain, USNR)

