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YAGRGRAM #87 - FALL 2021

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Colorado Springs Business Meeting Report

YAGR Chair Lee Doyel reported in opening remarks that there were 42 men and 36 ladies present for the reunion for a total of 78. Originally there were 96 signed up but due to cancellations that number was reduced. Fifteen of the 16 ships were represented which had not occurred for several years.

The Secretary, Mel Harder was not present and has not been since the 2017 Charleston reunion due to being a full time caretaker for his wife's medical needs. Lee expressed his appreciation about Mel doing the newsletter and reunion responsibilities (name tags, attendance list, etc) in spite of his demanding responsibilities.

Treasurer, Ray Ostrowski, gave financial report and the Association is in excellent financial shape.

Webmaster, Frank Pulaski, gave a video presentation about the web site, showing the various areas and the extensive information available concerning our organization and associated web sites. He said if anyone has relevant information (sea stories, sister organizations, NORAD, etc) please submit it. There is plenty of space on the site, and we have paid for a 10 year time period.



This past year Joe Maurer had to give up handling the YAGRS book. The book had pretty much run its course with few copies ordered lately. The few remain copies are in Lee's possession and can be obtained from him. Over 200 copies have been sold and a dozen or so have been donated to various museums and historical societies.

Last year 3 Ships Coordinators, (Guardian AGR-1, Picket AGR-7 and Interdictor AGR-14) had to give up their positions. Howard Oberstein graciously took over the Interdictor. So AGR-1 & AGR-7 need coordinators.

There is some inventory left in the ships store consisting of a few patches, couple of hats and numerous ship hat pins as well as enlisted collar devises. A detailed inventory was published in a recent YAGRGRAM.

Roland cote emailed that the museum onboard the Massachusetts is in good shape. The ship was closed during the pandemic, and the only maintenance was some burned out light bulbs.

Lee emphasized the need for the 30 day cut off period for reunion registration forms. The registration forms go to Ray who then sends the names to Mel for name cards, attendance lists etc. That takes time. Also most tour companies require a 30 days notice on the number going on a tour. That information goes to Lee who then prepares the registration packets. Also, the shirt vender requires a 30 day minimum on orders.

The date the registration form is received by Ray determines the priority of individuals if cuts or reduction in tour capacity is required. This was a problem with this reunion. We initially kept running up against tour capacities. But due to cancellations and no shows, we were able to accommodate everyone at the reunion.

Individuals are issued colored tickets for their choice of the entree for the banquet. We have to notify the kitchen 72 hrs. ahead of time how many of each entree is expected. Once submitted, you entrée choices cannot be changed.

On my emails I always start them with YAGRS. I do that so you can program your computer to accept the message instead of it going to junk. Also so you will know it is from me.

Every year I am asked by a few individuals to supply them with the names of the people from their ship who have signed up for the reunion . I don't have that information until late in the game. Also I don't have the time to go through 16 ships looking for names.

During the reunion Lee was asked by several members how they could show their appreciation to the reunion benefactor (who remains anonymous). Suggestions ranged from donations to a signed T shirt or plaque. It was finally decided that cards, letters or emails of appreciation would be best. Send them to Lee and he will forward them to the benefactor. Lee's address and email is in the letterhead of this YAGRGRAM.

At the New Orleans reunion we changed Treasurers which put us on the IRS radar, forcing the Association to have documentation setting up the organization. It had to be done before the 2020 reunion, which was cancelled. Lee, Mel and Ray worked the better part of three months creating a set of by-laws , budget, etc. They did a good job as when submitted to the IRS it was approved on the first submission. The by-laws were approved. by the membership at the Colorado Springs reunion. A copy of the by-laws was published in a previous YAGRGRAM.

The past couple of years we have been looking to possibly team up with another military reunion group in order to have a better bargaining position with hotels and tour companies. The Mariner/Marlins Association (MMA) looks like a good possibility. Therefor the benevolent benefactor agreed to invite them to the YAGRS reunion so each group could have a "look see" at each other. A Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up and provided to each member of YAGRS and MMA for review and comment. Both groups voted to join. It will be inevitable that there will have to be some give and take by each organization. However this does not at present seem to be an impediment. That will be worked out by head of YAGRS and MMA.

The 2022 reunion will be held at Nashville with MMA. Originally YAGRS was to be in Buffalo, NY. MMA had scheduled their 2021 reunion in Nashville but had to cancel. They had not renegotiated a contract with their hotel and decided not to when offered to be YAGRS guest at Colorado Springs. Since they gave theirs up, YAGRS voted to go to Nashville with them in 2022. It has been 10 yrs. since YAGRS was there and everyone was well pleased with it then. Date and place will de determined and promulgated when know. While not written in stone it may work out that YAGRS picks one year and MMA picks the next.

Memo from Lee: OLD YAGARGRAMS

I have a copy of all past YAGARGRAMS published. If any one wants a past copy (or two) I will be glad to copy and mail it to you. Let me know the newsletter number or at least the year and time frame (fall, spring, summer, etc) so I can locate it.

Ladies Breakfast report from Pat Reichling

Hello Ladies,

A short note on the 2021 ladies breakfast. Sadly I was unable to attend this year so the info I am posting is through conversation with those ladies that did attend.

The generous ladies donated \$571 in cash and gift cards to a local VA facility along with some new clothing. Keith Anderson, a representative of the VA came to our meeting room to accept our donations and to give a talk about what services they have to support our veterans in Colorado Springs.

Many thanks to Gloria Carlin and Connie Biggs, who stepped up to oversee our breakfast this year in my absence. I understand that approximately 11 women from the M/M Navy reunion group joined the YAGRS for our breakfast fun and we were delighted that they did. Thank you to every lady that also helped!

I sure wish I knew who our anonymous benefactor was this year so I could give him a great big hug! But you know who you are and we wish you many Blessings in all the days ahead. It was a wonderful act of kindness.

NASHVILLE HERE WE COME!

Pat Reichling



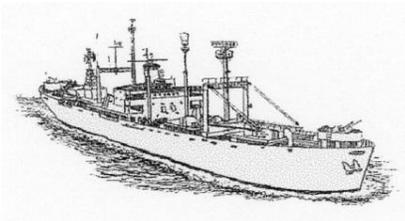
YAGR presentation to reunion planner Brian Forester

In appreciation of his service to Yagrs over many years of reunions, this stained glass gift (pictured at right) was given to Brian at the Saturday banquet.

Hi Lee,

I wanted to THANK YOU and the YAGRS Association for the beautiful stained glass chili pepper. Brian hung it in our dining room area for all to see! I LOVE IT!

Susan



Sea Stories

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

The Last Cruise: from David Livingston, USS Scanner

I was a 2nd class ET on the USS Scanner AGR5 from 64-65. This was the last cruise before they shut down the picket line and decommissioned the ships, June 1965. Just before we got underway, it was reported that one of the pumps used in making fresh water was inoperable. The Captain was not going to let the ship fail in completing our assignments. He said we had enough fresh water on board and we could fix the pump at sea. We had barely passed under the Golden Gate when it was reported that one of the freshwater tanks was contaminated. He said we could sanitize it and refill it after the pump was fixed. We went on water rations with the fresh water turned on only during mealtimes and a shower once a week for all except the cooks, medical and some of the engineering people. Showers were monitored by an MAA to be sure we took an honest Navy shower.

Since we were clean on Saturday, we had an all hands inspection in a different uniform each Saturday morning. I remember during our Dress Blue Uniform inspection, as the Captain started down our line, a seagull flew over and landed a big one on the shoulder of the guy next to me. When the Captain came by, he didn't say anything, but I could tell he had a hard time not laughing.

We did get the pump fixed and started making fresh water, but we were to stay on water rations until the freshwater tank was refilled, which never happened. As we were approaching the Golden Gate on our way back, the Captain ordered a complete fresh water wash down of the exterior of the ship. He wanted to enter port on our last trip looking bright and shiny.

This was the last trip for the ship and the end of my enlistment. I was to be discharged on June 20, but that was a Sunday and the day we entered port. I was discharged the next day on the 21st. It gave me 4 years and 1 day on my enlistment. That meant that all my unused leave was paid at the higher pay of over 4 Years.

I didn't stay out long. I reenlisted about 2 and half months later. At the end of my 2nd enlistment, I was finishing my shore duty tour, was married with a new son. I didn't feel like going back to sea, so I took my discharge. There was something about the Navy I couldn't get out of my system. I enlisted in the Reserves and spent another 20 years with them and retired as a Senior Chief.

Sea story from USS Vigil about USS Outpost Submitted by Donald N. Thompson USS Vigil AGR-12

The last Sea Story about the USS Outpost brought back a story of my service on the USS Vigil AGR-12. I served on her from June of 1961 to May of 1963 as an Electronic Technician coming on board as a Seaman and leaving as Second-Class Electronic Tech. Once you made third class as we all knew you stood quarter deck watch while in port. That was a normally boring slot of time of four hours, standing there with the officer of the deck. This one morning as I was on duty and the Outpost was leaving to go stand her next picket. I was ordered by the officer on watch to go to the captain and inform him that the Outpost stood out in the harbor at what ever the time was as required to keep the captain informed. Well! Sorry fellow sailors we had a nick name for the Outpost – it was the Outhouse! So, do you know what I said as I Saluted the captain; "The Outhouse stood out in the harbor at such and such time". That was a oh carp moment. The Captain returned my salute, had a frown on his face and I quickly left. Well needlessly to say, it did not take long for the captain to go to the XO and to my division officer to me, to explain that it was never to happen again with some rather strong, loud language.

THE SEARCH FOR THE TWO 3" 50s FROM THE USS VIGIL AGR-12 Henry MacKay BT-2 USS Vigil (Dec 1962 -Dec 1964)

At the recent Colorado Springs reunion I mentioned the fact that the two guns of the USS Vigil had been removed from the ship and placed in front of American Legion Post 15 in East Greenwich Rhode Island by Harry Miller and some Seabees. I was asked if I could take some pictures of them for our yaggram newsletter. I replied affirmatively as I knew exactly where they were located. Little did I know the journey of discovery I was about to take.

My search for the guns that came off Vigil that were located in front of American Legion Post 15 in East Greenwich Rhode Island turned into a major hunt. A few years back I stopped at this legion hall and actually laid hand on these two beauties and read the plaque that told of their origin being from the good old USS VIGIL but low and behold when I went back to take pictures of same, they were gone! The Post was closed and barricaded the guns nowhere to be seen. The only clue that they were ever there were two pits of broken concrete and slag from a cutting torch used on the bolts that secured the guns to their base plates.

With a little google research I found out the post had shut down and surrendered their liquor license after a woman had spent about five hours there drinking and killed another woman in a head on accident in North Kingston after leaving the legion post. The post lacked sufficient insurance and the post shut down and is selling the property for development. In an article from an older issue of The Providence Journal about this incident, I was able find the name of the post commander and then searched his name in East Greenwich and found a phone number for him.

I called him identified myself as a legionnaire and a member of YAGRS and told him of my hunt for these guns. He was very forthcoming with all the information about his travails in trying to get a home for the two guns. He tried twice to give them back to the US Navy only to be told they did not want them back. The Navy suggested he scrap them. He was not willing to do so and he initiated inquiries around American Legion circles and found a willing recipient in the "VETERANS GARAGE" of Posen Illinois. This organization finds and restores military artifacts and hardware on a fully volunteer basis.

This led me to the Veterans Garage who contracted with local Rhode Islanders to remove the guns and load them onto a flatbed trailer. Well according to the post commander, the contractors were ill prepared for the job and what followed can only be described as a comedy of errors. Finally, after many attempts the guns, each weighing about eight

thousand pounds were loaded up and sent to Illinois. (*Apparently Harry Miller and some Seabees from Davisville made very sure these guns were very securely anchored.*)

I spoke to a Mr. Joe Werner whose name was given to me by the very cooperative post commander in Rhode Island. He stated that both guns are in Illinois and have been grit blasted to bare metal, primed, and all rusted and missing parts have been repaired or replaced and the next step is to put a two-part epoxy finish coat on them. One is going to be displayed in a museum and the other ones' fate is as of yet was undecided. I have inquired of my American Legion post if they would be interested in getting the second gun for or post and got an affirmative response. I am now awaiting the big "IF" being the cost of the restoration. In the universe of AGRS there is to my knowledge the two guns in Illinois and one complete engine from the USS Protector in the Newport News, Virginia Maritime Museum still in existence. Joe Werner has promised to send me photos of the two guns in the near future as well as a cost of the restoration so my American Legion post can decide if the cost benefit is worth it. I will keep all informed of the final outcome and forward any pictures I receive.

If anyone has any knowledge of any other parts, pieces or artifacts of the YAGRS it would be interesting to hear about. A very extensive photo history of this gun relocation is on the Veterans Garage.com web site veteransgarage.smugmug.com/artillery-restorations/MK22-3-Naval-Deck-guns-from-Rhode-Island

ship's coordinators : Lee Doyel

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. Due to various circumstances, I now need coordinators for AGR-1 & AGR-7. Howard Oberstein recently stepped in as coordinator for the Interpreter. I can supply group lists to anyone who takes one of these ships. Duties are not extensive. Primarily forwarding that I put out to the ship's email list.

AGR-1
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 tloedoo@u.washington.edu
AGR-7
AGR-8 Ron Stasiak ronstasiak@rocketmail.com

AGR-9 Frank Mahaffey franknbets@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 Howard Oberstein
howardoberstein@sbcglobal.net
AGR-15 Lee Doyel mldoyel@cox.net
AGR-16 Frank McNamara ec2sc1@comcast.net

Dues Payment Form - dues are \$17/year

Make checks out to YAGRS. Mail to:

Ray Ostrowski, Treasurer

123 Barbara Dr., Newburgh, NY 12550

Ray can also be reached at: e-mail: rayrosie@hotmail.com

phone: 845-565-6243 cell: 845-245-5707

Current membership year ends May 31, 2022. Highlighted date on address label is the date your current membership expires. If that date is **5/31/2021** or earlier, 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 mail to Ray Ostrowski with dues payment.. You may pay for more than one year.

Name: _____ Ship: _____

Address: _____

amount enclosed: _____ Phone: _____ email: _____

2022 Reunion

Based on the results of input and comments received from the membership I have signed a contract with the Radisson Hotel Airport Nashville. I appreciate all the comments and insight that members set forth. There were some against the hotel but the majority was for going ahead with it. Some also were neutral saying to go with the consensus. I was pleased with the reasoning by all concerned of their decision and it showed concern and realization of what is happening in the nation.

The Hotel is:

Radisson Hotel Nashville Airport
1112 Airport Center Drive
Nashville, TN 37214
615-889-9090

Reunion date:

Tuesday 4/26/22 thru 4/30/22

Room rate:

Room rate is \$119 a night plus room tax of 15.25% & city tax of \$2.50 a day which totals \$139.35. The rate is good 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion dates. Rate includes breakfast for two and 15% off food items in the onsite restaurant.

Free self parking and airport shuttle.

Cut off date for room registration is Thursday, March 10, 2022. The "new normal" of 45 day cut off period.

Tours:

Tours are to be determined. A registration form with tours, times and cost will be promulgated when determined.

I am making Tue 4/26/22 as registration rather than the usual Thursday. It worked well in Colorado Springs. You can still get your registration if arriving after Tuesday as was the case in CS.

As from previous memos this reunion will differ from past ones in several ways. As I said with run up to the Colorado Springs, the same applies to this reunion. Be prepared to be flexible. You were and I now you will be this time.

A YAGR ship model is now in the NORAD Museum at Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs CO.



Colorado Springs pics - pictures by Suzanne and Frank



Colorado Springs pics - pictures by Suzanne and Frank

