

Radar Picket Ships

YAGRGRAM #16

April 10, 2000

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

Mailing List

In order to update the mailing and crew list for each ship, we are asking everyone to send in the Information Request Form that is enclosed. Please complete this form even if you recently sent one in.

After receiving numerous phone calls asking about phone numbers or addresses that are on the list and found to be incorrect, it was decided to ask everyone to update their information. We realize this is an inconvenience, by a must octone!

At this time we have over 1, 200 on Call and List. We have not heard anything from some all contact. We have tried to keep ev Lappenings of the Anat some of you no longer wish to Call and Lappenings of the Anat some of you no Lappenings of the Anat some of your notation.

plea. that is enclosed and return it. If you conceive the YAGRGRAM assume you no longer wish to receive the YAGRGRAM.

We do not want to cut anyone from our mailing list so please return the form. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

To run down the reunion schedule, **Thursday June 1st** will be for checking in to the Hotel and meeting others in the hospitality room. **Friday June 2nd** we will go on the group tour, which is a river boat cruise with lunch on board, then spend some time in Stillwater, MN, the oldest town in Minnesota. While in Stillwater, there will be time to explore on your own Stillwater's historic houses and its streets which are lined with many galleries and boutiques. Then once back at the hotel the hospitality room will again be open for light snacks and drinks. **Saturday June 3rd in the morning** our membership meeting will be held. While the meeting is going on, our spouses/guests will have their breakfast/penny social with the crazy T-shirt/sweatshirt contest. **Saturday night** we will hold our farewell banquet. Men usually wear a sport coat or suit. Women wear a dress or suit.

We try to keep the hospitality room open as much as possible. As we mentioned in the last YAGRGRAM this is where everyone gathers during our stay, just to renew old friendships and make new ones. The hospitality room has light snacks (chips, pretzels etc.) along with soft drinks, juices, drinks, beer and wine. It has a very relaxed atmosphere and naturally this is where all the sea stories are passed along.

For those of you who want to tour the area on your own, you can contact the

Minnesota Office of Tourism

121 East 7th Place

St Paul MN 55101

(800) 657-3700

And do not forget that the Mall of America is only a couple of minutes away from the hotel.

Minneapolis, MN Reunion

Before you know it June 1st will be upon you, so don't hesitate to get your reunion registration in. Enclosed you will find the reunion registration form. As noted it must reach me by May 10, 2000, but getting it in earlier makes it much easier for us. Receiving it by this date will give us the time needed to finalize the tour, the needs for the hospitality room and the count needed for our Saturday night banquet.

Our host hotel is the Minneapolis / St Paul Airport Hotel, 3800 East 80th St, Minneapolis, MN 55425, (800) 637-7453. You can call this number to reserve your room. Let them know that you are with the YAGR'S reunion to receive our **special room rate of \$89.00**. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible, as this will helic is with planning.

ilton offers free shuttle service to and from the airport and als the Mall of America which is only two minutes from the hotel.

The cost of this year's reunion is \$69.00 per person. This pays for the tour/with lunch, hospitality room and the banquet.

Spouses / Guests Breakfast.

Once again we will have a breakfast for the spouses/guests on



Saturday morning, June 3. As in the past, we are asking everyone to bring an item for the penny social raffle. Whatever you bring should cost in the \$5.00 range. Handcrafted items are always welcome. Please do not wrap the items that you bring.

To see how creative we can be, we are having a "Crazy T-shirt/sweatshirts Contest" this year. There isn't any spe-

cial theme. Just be crazy and have fun making the creation that you bring.

While a prize will be given, the whole idea is just to have fun. Also you can brag to everyone that you won the contest.

USS Tracer AGR-15

Thanks to Al Mendoza of UNISEA for sending me a copy of the survey report dated April 4, 1984 that was done while she was in Dutch Harbor, AK.

This is a continuation of the report on Tracer that was started in the last YAGRGRAM.

HATCH & DECK OPENINGS

All main cargo hold hatches have been permanently closed by plating over and welding.

Two (2) hatches, 6' x 6' and 7' x 12' have been installed in the starboard side of No.1 hatch.

A booby hatch with a watertight door located on the starboard main deck, just forward of the house, provides access down to No. 2 tween deck.

A 6' x 6' hatch is located on the main deck just forward of the house, aft of the mast house.

A booby hatch with watertight door is located on the main deck aft for access to crews quarters below.

Watertight steel doors provide access to the house on all three decks.

BULWARKS AND HAND RAILS

42" high steel reinforced bulwarks are located around the main deck port and starboard and pipe rails are located around the remainder of the upper decks.

FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Portable 10# CO2 fire extinguishers are located strategically throughout the vessel. These are examined by "UNISEA" personnel each week for condition.

Fifteen (15) fire hydrants with hoses and nozzles are located throughout the vessel at strategic points. Sprinklers are located through all public areas. The sprinkler system is pressured at all times from the city main as are all the fire hydrants. Should the city main fail for any reason, a dual hydrant is located on the starboard side of the vessel, just aft of the entrance to the mess hall, for connection from a portable or exterior pump to pressurize all systems should the need arise.

LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT

Eight (8) 30" diameter life rings are located throughout the vessel's exterior decks.

REFRIGERATION

Main refrigeration is by an ammonia system consisting of four (4) three cylinder and three (3) four cylinder filter ammonia compressors driven by 40 hp 460 volt electric motors, along with ancilliary valves, controls, coolers, receivers and condensers. Blast freezer compartments are located on the lower No. 1 and 2 holds with capacity of 1500 lbs. product per hour. Storage space is located under the blast freezer space and is

Remember To Return Your Information Request Form

accessed by an elevator located to port.

CONDITION

All crew accomodations were examined as far as possible and state rooms, bathrooms, toilets, all found well painted, clean and in good condition. Note: accommodations are presently being used by the crew of the "unised the "Unisea" processing line is not being used at present

All galley and messing and public spaces, alleyways, etc. were examined as far as possible and found well painted, clean and in good condition.

The house exterior bulkheads, main decks and sideshell plating were examined as far as possible with the vessel afloat and all found rust free and well painted.

Machinery, working, processing, storage, laundry spaces, etc. were examined and all found well painted, clean and in good condition. All machinery was examined as far as possible and found in apparently well maintained condition.

The shaft tunnel was examined as far as possible and found dry with much scale and rust. The storage compartment in the No. 4 starboard ballast tank was found dry with much bulkhead rust.

SURVEYOR'S NOTES

- 1. The vessel has not been dry-docked since being converted in 1976.
- 2. The vessel's underwater body has not been examined.
- 3. None of the vessel's storage, service, settling, deep, ballast or bottom tanks have been examined internally at this time.

VALUATION

Estimated present day market value, approximately \$4,200,000.00 (as is, where is, and engaged in its present operation, by the present owners and operators.)

In the opinion of the undersigned, it is not practical, due to the unavailability of this type of wartime vessel, to state a fair replacement cost. It is reasonable to state that such cost would be more than the present day market value.

In the opinion of the undersigned, as may be ascertained by a general examination afloat, without making removals or opening up parts ordinarily concealed, or testing for tightness or trying out machinery, this vessel is in satisfactory condition for continued operation as a seafood processor at its present location.

YAGR'S Web Page

http://members.tripod.com/~YAGRS/index.html



Note: when you go to access the web site, the Letters YAGRS are casensitive.

g h January 15, 2000 Stretch Moss (AGR-11), John Hemminger (AGR-2), Al Nannini (AGR-15) and Harry Miller (AGR-11, YR-65) were on board the USS Massachuetts to go over some of the details for the exhibit.



John Hemminger (AGR-2) Al Nan

Al Nannini (AGR-15)

Work Begins

On the 26th of February the okay was given for YAGR'S to start work on our Radar Picket Ship exhibit on board the Battleship Massachusetts that is in Fall River, MA. As stated before, the compartment is 55 feet wide by 20 feet deep. We will have plenty of room.

March 18th and 19th saw the first work detail get started on the exhibit area. Harry Miller (AGR-11, YR-65) John Hemminger (AGR-2), Al Nannini (AGR-15), Bill Hinman (AGR-4), Tom Giardina (AGR-3), Mel Harder (Harry the hat) (AGR-9).

Tom came up from New Jersey, Bill and Mel arrived from Connecticut. Arrangements were made for those of us who were staying onboard to be bunked in staterooms. Saturday was a busy day with some working on the removal of various equipment and stores that were stored in our compartment. Others busied themselves with the removal of frames, stanchions and other misc. items that were welded to the deck. This first weekend of work was just to get the compartment in order so that we can get down to the serious business of setting up the Radar Picket Ship Exhibit.

While we did accomplish a great deal, I think that we all enjoyed ourselves as for most of us it has been quite a while since we worked aboard a ship.

If you would like to be part of the crew that will be putting our exhibit together, let me know and I will add you to our list of workers.

Work that will be going on in the future will include painting, carpentry (rough and finish), electrical, welding and cutting and, naturally, we will need people to assist as needed. So don't hesitate if you feel that you do not have any skills. We can find something for you to do.

Work To Be Done

Seeing that our compartment hasn't been used for anything except storage for who knows how long, we have a lot of work ahead of us. Besides the removal of stored materials, cutting off all deck and bulkhead fittings, we have to prep and paint the compartment.

Once the painting is done, we can get down to the set up of the Radar Picket Ship Exhibit. This will consist of building walls for the mounting of the signs and also for the mounting of the model of the USS Guardian AGR-1. These walls will either be painted or covered with formica. It all depends on the funding available. In conjuction with the walls, lighting will be installed to focus on the signs and model.

Display cases will be built. The size and shape will depend on what we will have to put on display. The Massachusetts has onboard a display of the history of radar that was donated to the ship which is no longer set up. We are planning to incorporate it into our exhibit.

We have not set a date for the completion yet as a lot depends on how many people will assist in the building and in getting the funding needed to buy the materials that will be needed.

You will be updated on the progress of the project in future YAGRGRAMS. Hopefully we will be able to give a date on its completion in the very near future

The Exhibit

The donations for the exhibit to date total \$3,184.20. As you know from past YAGRGRAMS the signage cost alone is \$3,300.00. While the 50/50 raffle will more than cover the difference it will cut into our funds for the renovation of the compartment and the building of displays. If you would like to make a donation, please do so as soon as possible as you can see we have started the work already.

The 50/50 raffle is moving on. Over 240 former crewmen have taken a book of tickets. If you have not returned yours, please do. Also if you would like more tickets, let me know and I will get them out to you. A thank you to all of who have taken a book of tickets so far.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the Minneapolis reunion on June 3, 2000. The winner will receive half the proceeds from the sale of these tickets and the other half will go towards the display. You do not have to be present to win.

The following was printed in the last YAGRGRAM, but as we are constantly adding new crewmen to our mailing list, I am including it again so they will have an idea about the signs.

These signs are of museum quality and to get this quality you have to pay for it. The twenty signs will cost YAGR'S \$3,300.00. Once you see these signs, you will agree they are well worth the cost.

We considered using picture frames as a means of display, but with the cost of the special paper and matting plus the heavy duty frames with safety glass we found it was only a few dollars more to have them done professionally. We opted to go professional.

As a means of keeping the signage cost down, I managed to get professional graphic and word processing programs donated to us. This way we can do most of the computer work ourselves and not pay someone else to do it. The graphic's company that will be doing our signs is being most helpful in passing along information on how best to set up everything.

At this time we are looking for the following items for the exhibit. Shoulder Patches (Ship Names)

Cigarette Lighters

Pictures that show the ships in rough seas or covered with ice

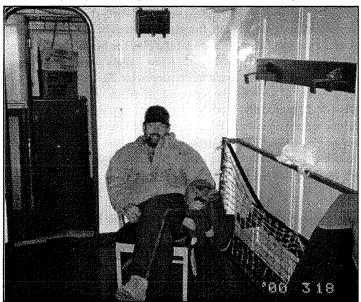
Have You Rembered to Fill Out Your Information Request Form!



Harry Miller (AGR-11, YR-65) cutting brackets off.



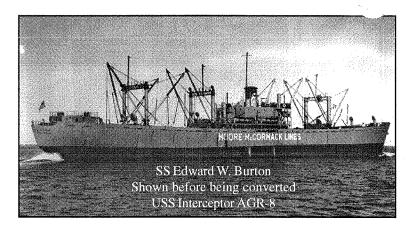
Bill Hinman (AGR-4) Tom Giardina (AGR-3) Opening a water tight door that has been closed for years.



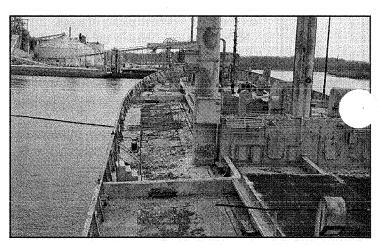
Mel (Harry the hat) Harder (AGR-9)

Pictures of interest.

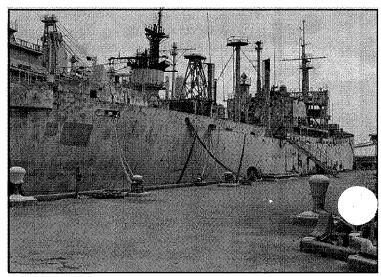
In all future YAGRGRAMS we hope to have a few pictures that will be of interest to everyone. As more and more pictures become available to us, we will try to publish them.



The USS Protector AGR-11 shown sitting in Norfolk, VA In June 1999. Photo's courtsey of Frank McNamara



Looking forward from the bridge



View from dockside

Long Distance Help

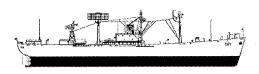


To give as many people the opportunity to have a hand in building the exhibit, we have a way for you to help.

There are a few things that can be done off site. First we will be needing some small shelves (shadow boxes) built to hold the cigarette lighter display that we hope to have. Making these shelves will take finish carpentry skills and tools. 2nd, we have 6 ship emblems that need to be

painted and then mounted onto a wooden plaque. This work will naturally involve painting of the emblem, making the wooden plaques and then finishing and mounting the wood to the ship emblem.

These things can be done off site and we can get these items back and forth by mail as size will not be a factor. If you feel that you would like to do this, please get in touch with me and we can discuss the details.



YAGRGRAMS

Thought You Would Like To Know

he computer programs that we secured for use in setting up oo, ons for the YAGR'S exhibit have also allowed us to do more in regards to the YAGRGRAMS.

With one of these programs we can have the printer print right off of their computer and, in effect, get an original copy every time. This will allow us to include photo's that will be clearer than photo copying. But as the photo's being used are 40 or 45 years old, only so much can be done with them. As time goes on and I get more familiar with these programs, we will be able to send out a YAGRGRAM that hopefully will be more interesting and informative.



As the YAGRGRAM is put together quite a few things have to be considered. Foremost is the size or how many pages. One of the deciding factors is what if anything will be sent along with it, such as membership cards and/ or crew list. This affects the cost of postage. Second, and as far as you are concerned is the context. This comes about by information that I receive. This information comes from vari-

ous sources, such as in the case of the Tracer survey, which came from an outside source. I also try to have something that includes both the east coast ships and the west coast ships, but this is not always possible. The more information you send to me the more information will be in the YAGRGRAM. So a lot depends on you on included. While I cannot guarantee that what you send will lish, at least if gives me options.

Things to do to relive your Navy days

- 1. When you take a shower, make sure you shut off the water while soaping up.
- 2. Everytime there is a thunderstorm, go sit in a wobbly rocking chair and rock as hard as you can until you're nauseous.
- 3. Put lube oil in your humidifier instead of water and set it to high (for that shipboard smell)
- 4. Leave your lawnmower running in your living room 24 hours a day for the proper noise level (mandatory for ex-engineering types)
- 5. Wake up every night at midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread.
- 6. Set your alarm clock to go off at random times during the night. When it goes off, jump out of bed and get dressed as fast as you can, then run out into your yard and break out the garden hose.

The Liberty Ships

Boxed Aircraft Transports Z-EC2-5-C5

Of the 40 Boxed Aircraft Transports ordered during the war, 36 were actually completed. 28 of the ships were built by J.A. Jones Construction Co, Panama City, FL and New England Shipbuilding Corporation, South Portland, ME built the other 8 ships.

Of the 28 built by J.A. Jones, 16 of them were converted to use as a Radar Picket Ship.

USS Guardian	AGR-1	SS James G. Squires
USS Lookout	AGR-2	SS Claude Kitchin
USS Skywatcher	AGR-3	SS Rafael R. Rivera
USS Searcher	AGR-4	SS James W. Wheeler
USS Scanner	AGR-5	SS Edwin D. Howard
USS Locator	AGR-6	SS Frank O. Peterson
USS Picket	AGR-7	SS James F. Harrell
USS Interceptor	AGR-8	SS Edward W. Burton
USS Investigator	AGR-9	SS Charles A. Draper
USS Outpost	AGR-10	SS Francis J. O'Gara
USS Protector	AGR-11	SS Warren P. Marks
USS Vigil	AGR-12	SS Raymond Van Brogan
USS Interdictor	AGR-13	SS Edwin M. Duff
USS Interpreter	AGR-14	SS Dudley H. Thomas
USS Interrupter/Tracer	AGR-15	SS William J. Riddle
USS Watchman	AGR-16	SS Vernon S. Hood

Attention...Attention...Attention...

Information Request

To keep receiving your YAGRGRAM please fill out.

We will be making cuts in our mailing list. If we do not receive a request form from you, we will assume you no longer want to receive information about YAGR'S.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME					
ADDRESS					
CITY	STATE	ZIP			
PHONE NUMBER					
Do you want it listed YES					
SHIP SERVED ON					
DATE (SUCH AS 1961 TO 1964)					
RANK/RATE ON SHIP					
SHIP SERVED ON					
DATE (SUCH AS 1961 TO 1964)					
RANK/RATE ON SHIP					

YAGR'S

1,328 and growing

Since the last YAGRGRAM, 57 others has been added to our list of found crewmen. This brings our total of found crewmen to 1,328.

The USS Searcher AGR-4 is the latest ship to go over the 100 mark of found crewmen. We have a couple of others in the high 90's, ready to reach the 100 mark.

If you have information on anyone who has served on any of the ships, please pass it along to me and I will try to locate them.

DUES

Have you paid your dues yet? All you have to do to find out is look on the mailing label. If the first line shows a date such as 5/31/00 you have paid. This date shows that you have paid your dues through the date that is shown. If there isn't a date, you have not paid your dues.

It is hoped that those of you who haven't will do so. Your dues support YAGR'S. Without them, nothing will get done. Also when you pay your dues you will receive the updated list of found crewmen from your ship/ships.

If you have paid your dues and you do not see a date on the mailing label or you have not received your membership card or a crew list, please get in touch with me.

Dues are \$17.00 the first year you pay, and \$15.00 a year thereafter.

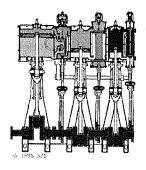
MOVING?

If you have moved or are planning a move remember to send your new address to YAGR o include your new phone number. Without you updating us we will lose track of you.

Note

In all of the YAGRGRAMS I have asked that if you have paid your dues, bought a pin or logo and not received your membership card or the item you bought to let me know.

Recently it came to my attention that two men sent in their dues and did not receive a membership card or the crew list for their ship. On checking further it was found that the check never reached me nor did it ever clear the bank. Mail gets lost sometimes. So if you send your dues and do not receive your card or a crew list in a couple of weeks, let me know. The same goes for pins and logo's. When I receive your dues or order it usually goes out in a day or so. The only exception is hats, which takes a little longer.



Hats

We will be ordering hats again. If you wish to order a hat, send me your name, with ship wanted, how many hats you want and \$16.00 for each hat. Make checks payable to YAGR'S.

If you have ordered a hat and not yet received it let me know.

NOTE: The \$16.00 is our new cost. I was informed by our supplier that shipping rates have gone up, supposedly because of the high cost of fuel.

Hat orders will have to be received by A₁ 21, 2000. Any hat orders received after this date will be placed on the next order which will be sometime in July of 2000.

Sea Stories

Guy E. Noble (CO, AGR-11, 1960-62)

In early April 1961, the Protector was on station in the southernmost About 1000 on Saturday, the Communication Officer informed me e had just received a garbled FLASH message ordering the ship and south at "maximum speed". (Note: This meant about 13 knots with a strong tail wind and all hands over the fantail kicking!) We did as ordered but I was a little skeptical of the message. My radioman said whoever sent the message appeared to be nervous or aggitated.

It was a couple of hours before an amplifying message was received. We were to proceed to a point 60 miles north of Cuba and establish a picket station. On arrival, we would be briefed as to our mission. Shortly after our arrival on station, a helicopter with two Air Force Officers and a CIA rep came aboard for a briefing.

We were told we would have 2 to 4 combat aircraft overhead 24 hours a day during the Bay-of-Pigs invasion. When ordered, we would send them in to fly air cover and support for the invaders.

The invasion started on the 17th of April, 1961. No word was ever received to send in the aircraft and the invaders were defeated. The CAP was ordered to return to base shortly thereafter.

A few days later, we spotted a sail on the horizon and proceeded to investigate. On arrival in the area, we could see 8 or 9 heavily armed men dressed in combat gear. Not knowing whether they were part of the invasion force or Castro's men, I ordered an armed crew to be put in the whaleboat to investigate further. At the same time, I ordered the forward 3" gun be loaded and aimed at the boat. I instructed Lt Jim McDermott, who was leading the party, not to hesitate about shooting if the boat people made any threatening move.

Fortunately, the boat people were part of the invasion force. They If the latest equipment in rifles, pistols, radios, etc. It had been nission to land a few days before the invasion and attempt to gain support from the Cuban people. Their mission failed because someone squealed on them and they had to make a hasty exit! They stole the rickety old boat in which we found them. An attempt was made to tow the sailboat but it was in such poor shape it fell apart and sank.

A few days later, we were ordered into Key West for R and R and the invaders were turned over to the State Department reps. After 10 days in Key West, we departed for the picket line and then returned to Davisville in late May.

There was a surprise waiting for us in Davisville......of course, all the dependents and lady friends were there to greet us but, hung on the outside of the Commodore's headquarters, was a huge banner with the words----- "WELCOME HOME NOBLE'S WARRIORS"!!

Don Steinkuehler (AGR-6, 1963-65)

During a mail-drop pickup on January 4, 1964 the motor whaleboat being used was lost in high seas. All personnel were recovered thanks to Lt J.H. Foster who dove off of the fantail to rescue a crewman who was being swept away from the ship. It took long enough to carry out this rescue that both Lt Foster and the crewman (unknown) were suffering from hypothermia when both were safely aboard. This was a heart -wrenching experience for all hands. We all prayed while it was happening and rejoiced when it was over. The entire event was re-

d upon with awe and gratitude. The already favorite Lt Foster ooked upon with even greater respect. He received some kind of medal for his heroic act, but I don't know what it was. I can still vividly envision the events of that day and I thank God often for the outcome.



USS Vigil AGR-12

SS Raymond Van Brogan, Hull #2339

Keel Laid:

14 December, 1944

Launched:

27 January, 1945

Commissioned:

US Navy as USS Vigil YAGR-12

5 March, 1957 Philadelphia, PA

Reclassified:

USS Vigil AGR-12,

28 September, 1958

Decommissioned: 3 March, 1965

Status:

Scrapped

Sea Stories

If you have any interesting stories you would like to pass along, send them in and share them with the rest of us.

Pre reunion tour

With the last YAGRGRAM, information for a pre-reunion tour that will be held on Wednesday May 31, 2000 was enclosed. If you need another copy of this information please get in touch with me and I will send it out to you.

All payments are to be made directly to the tour company as this tour is not part of your reunion registration or YAGR'S offical reunion.

If you have sent in your reunion registration and not received a confirmation, let me know.

Reunion Refund Policy

Regarding reunion refunds, if YAGR'S doesn't have to pay, you will receive a refund

We reach a point when a number is given to the tour company or the hotel banquet facilities and we are locked into that number and have to pay for that person whether they show up or not. If we receive your cancellation early enough we can change these numbers without a problem.

Northwest Airlines

Northwest Airlines has set up a promotional offer for crewmembers (and their guests) who will be flying in for the YAGR's Reunion. This offer covers round-trip flights taking place between May 25 and June 7, 2000, and only applies to the Northwest portion flight. The cost for connecting flights (on other airlines) does not apply.

If the round-trip cost (less tax, airport charges, other fees, etc.) is between:

\$200 to \$299 - - - - you receive a \$30 discount \$300 to \$449 - - - - you receive a \$50 discount

\$450 to \$749 ----you receive a \$75 discount

\$750 or more - - - - you receive a \$100 discount

When purchasing your ticket(s), simply give the ticketing agent this Worldfile Number: NELL9

You may purchase your tickets from any of the following:

- * Northwest on-line at www.nwa.com/travel/reser/. You must enter the Worldfile# in the electronic certificate box.
- * Northwest Reservations 1-800-328-1111
- * A Travel Agent of your choice. If you have any questions about this promotion or any restrictions, call 1-800-328-1111 for information.



YAGR'S
5th Annual Reunion
Minneapolis, MN
June 1,2,3, 2000
REUNION REGISTRATION
\$69.00 PER PERSON

PLEASE RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN MAY 10, 2000 PLEASE PRINT

NAME				-
NAME OF SPOUSE/GUEST	- Anna Anna Anna Anna Anna Anna Anna Ann			
SHIP SERVED ON	DATE ON BOARD		RANK/RATE	
SHIP SERVED ON	DATE ON BOARD		RANK/RATE	
Number of people attending	X \$69.00 =	Enclosed \$		

Make all checks payable to YAGR'S

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