



Radar Picket Ships

YAGRGRAM #36

Spring 2005

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YAGR'S 10th Reunion

San Francisco, CA

May 19, 20, 21, 2005

Our host hotel will be the:

Marriott San Mateo
1770 South Amphlett Boulevard
San Mateo, CA 94402

To make your room reservations, call
1-800-556-8972

Make sure you tell them that you are with YAGR'S military reunion group to get the group rate.

Our group rate is \$79.00 a night for a single/double room.

The Marriott is all set up for receiving room reservations for YAGR'S at this time. We ask that you reserve your room as soon as possible. Doing so will enable us to arrange for more rooms to be set aside for YAGR'S, if needed.

The San Mateo Marriott has 476 guestrooms and plenty of space for our hospitality room and banquet room, so once again we will not have to worry about any space limitations. Parking is free for overnight guests. The hotel has a free shuttle from the San Francisco Airport to the hotel. We will also be able to utilize the hotel's free shuttle to take us to nearby locations of the hotel and also to connect us with Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), which will get us into downtown San Francisco.



Group Tour.

Friday May 20, 2005.

The group tour is part of the reunion and the cost is included in the reunion registration cost.

See what the locals see up close. Once around town, hitting all the hot spots, from Fisherman's Wharf to the Palace of Fine Arts, including the Presidio, Golden Gate Bridge, Cliff House, Seal Rock, Twin Peaks, Mission Dolores, Nob Hill, Union Square, Chinatown and North Beach.

Once the San Francisco tour ends, we will go on board the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien for a tour of the ship. While we are on the O'Brien, we will have a box lunch. The O'Brien is tied up at pier 45 (Fisherman's Wharf).

YAGR'S is looking for someone who lives in the San Mateo area to help out at the reunion.

We need someone who lives in or is familiar with San Mateo. What is needed is someone with a truck or van to help get all the boxes and beverages. This will involve going to the various stores in the area along with other men, picking up and delivering the items back to the hotel.

The pick up and delivery will take place on Thursday morning, but we will have to get together before that so that we can discuss what we will be getting in the various stores.

If you would like to help out, please get in touch with me (Harry Miller) so that we can discuss our needs in greater detail.

The projected reunion schedule

Wednesday May 18, 2005: (Optional)

Pre-reunion tour.

Thursday May 19, 2005:

Day one of the reunion, hospitality room opens at noon.

Friday May 20, 2005:

Reunion group tour with

Bus tour of San Francisco.

Tour of SS Jeremiah O'Brien with lunch on board.

Saturday May 21, 2005:

Mens meeting.

Spouses/Guests breakfast/penny social/contest.

Evening banquet.

Sunday May 22, 2005: (Optional)

(A) Post reunion cruise on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien, or

(B) Post reunion tour of Sausalito, CA.

Don't forget, make your room reservations now!!!!

Registration Cost Covers.

Hospitality room (all snacks and beverages)

Friday tour, with lunch

Saturday breakfast (spouses and guests only)

Saturday night banquet

For dues paying members, their spouse and guest, the cost is \$95.00 per person

For those who have not paid their dues, the cost will be \$105.00 per person. If a non dues paying member brings a spouse or guest the cost is also \$105.00 per person.

Optional Post Reunion Tours.

Sunday May 22, 2005. (Option A)

Cruise on the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien. The cost is \$125.00 per person, which includes a day cruise on the O'Brien, bus transportation to and from the hotel, an onboard continental breakfast, and Bar-B-Que lunch. Also a band plays throughout the day for your entertainment.

While onboard the O'Brien, visitors have full access to the ship, engine room included.

Sausalito, CA Tour. (Option B)

As an alternate to those of you who do not want to take the O'Brien cruise, we have arranged a tour to Sausalito, CA. Sausalito is across the bay from San Francisco, and I am told is very picturesque. The cost of this tour is \$40.00 per person.

Our bus will take us from the hotel to pier 41 to pick up the ferry for a short ride across the bay to Sausalito.

Sausalito offers the Mediterranean-style charm of a seaside village tucked amongst the hills on the Bay. Step aboard a Blue & Gold Ferry for a smooth, quick ride to this delightful community. Art galleries, shops and gourmet restaurants provide hours of browsing, shopping and dining (lunch is on your own). Experience the uniqueness Sausalito is known for around the world.

Return trip is again by ferry to Fisherman's Wharf where we will pick up our buses for the trip back to our hotel.



Optional Pre Reunion Tour.

Wednesday May 18, 2005.

We will board a luxury motor coach for a narrated tour of Marin County and the Cameros wine region in Sonoma and Napa Counties. The Cameros region is host to a dozen wineries and more than 6,500 acres of vineyards. Sonoma and Napa counties' Mediterranean climate makes them the premier wine grape growing provinces of North America.

To provide you with as broad an experience as possible, we are scheduled to be visiting 3 wineries: Gloria Ferrer, Madonna Estates and Viansa, where we will have lunch (included). The cost of this tour is \$66.00 per person.

Alcatraz

To pass along some information to those of you who plan to take a tour to Alcatraz, I have been told that you should plan to get your tickets 30 days or so in advance.

One of the tour companies that goes to Alcatraz is

Blue and Gold Fleet

Web site: www.blueandgoldfleet.com

Phone number: (415) 705-5555



NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL

Spouses/Guests

There is somewhere to go while your husband or friend is at the mens meeting. Don't sit in your room. Join us for the spouses/guests breakfast - penny social. All the spouses and guests of the YAGRMEN are invited to this function. The cost of this is included in the reunion registration.

We have a buffet breakfast, a penny social raffle and this year a contest to see who can decorate a tote bag the best. And loads of other people to get reacquainted with or to meet for the first time.

We are asking each spouse/guest to bring an inexpensive gift (hand crafted items are welcome) that will be raffled off. Tickets for the raffle will be supplied to you at no cost. As for the type of gift, it should be something that you would like to win.

**The theme for this year's contest will be
The "Fabulous Fifties."**



Decorate a tote bag for this year's contest. Not only is it easy to pack while bringing it to the reunion, it also gives you a good pallet to work on.

Also, you will have that extra bag that is always needed to bring all of you raffle winnings and souvenirs home in.

Start to plan your entry now. You could be the winner!

A confirmation of payment has been sent to everyone who has signed up for the reunion. If you have not received a confirmation and you have sent in your reunion registration, get in touch with me right away.

New e-mail address.

**My new e-mail address is
yagr@cox.net**

Please update your address book.

e-mail messages.

In the past I have asked everyone who sends me an e-mail to put something in the subject area that indicates it is coming from someone associated with YAGR'S.

Some have not and the e-mail has been deleted because I did not know who it came from. This has caused a few problems. I do not know everyone's e-mail address by memory so it is important to have something I can recognize as coming from a member.

Because of all the viruses being sent in e-mail, I don't open anything I can't identify.

Change of Address.

Please remember, when you move get your new address and phone number to me.

4 former crewmen failed to, so their names have been removed from our mailing list.

Dues.

Dues for this year

June 1, 2004 to May 31, 2005

are now due. If you have not paid your dues yet, please do so.

If you have paid your dues there will be a date above your name on the mailing label this YAGRGRAM came in.

Dues are \$17.00 the first time you pay them, \$15.00 every year after.



Sea Stories Needed!!!

We are always looking for sea stories to publish in the YAGRGRAMS. If you feel you have something of interest, send it in.

We hope that you will take this opportunity to send in any articles that relate to your time spent on the radar picket ships. And, as a side benefit, you just might hear from some of your former shipmates who decide to get in touch with you and talk about old times.

50 Years

2005 marks fifty years since the first radar picket ship, the USS Guardian YAGR-1, was commissioned. Also in 1955 the USS Lookout YAGR-2, USS Skywatcher YAGR-3 and USS Searcher YAGR-4 were placed in commission. (You all know the YAGR was changed to AGR in 1958).



U.S.S. SEARCHER (AGR-4)

LIBERTY SHIP: SS JAMES W. WHEELER

BUILT BY:	J.A. JONES CONSTRUCTION CO., PANAMA CITY, FL
KEEL LAID:	11 DECEMBER 1944 (HULL #2338)
LAUNCHED:	23 JANUARY 1945
SPONSORED BY:	MRS. R. D. TURNAGE
PLACED IN SERVICE:	05 FEBRUARY 1945
PLACED IN RESERVE FLEET:	29 OCTOBER 1945



U.S.S. SEARCHER (AGR-4)

CONVERTED:	14 SEPTEMBER 1954 AT CHARLESTON, SC
COMMISSIONED:	02 APRIL 1955 AS YAGR-4 AT CHARLESTON, SC
HOMEPORT:	16 MAY 1955 AT NEWPORT, RI 01 OCTOBER 1957 AT DAVISVILLE, RI
RECLASSIFIED:	28 SEPTEMBER 1958 AS AGR-4
DECOMMISSIONED:	01 JULY 1965
DISPOSITION:	07 AUGUST 1970 SOLD AS SCRAP FOR 82,796.00

Searcher served as a member of the Naval surface forces contiguous radar coverage system along with her sister ships of RADRON TWO, while taking up stations off the east coast of the United States and Canada.



YAGR'S Exhibit

Onboard the Battleship Massachusetts

Fall River, MA



Since our last work weekend, Roland Cote (AGR-10, 1961-63), John Hemminger (AGR-2, 1960-61) and Harry Miller (AGR-11, 1962-64, YR-65, 1964-64) have been going on the Battleship Massachusetts on weekdays to work on various projects for our exhibit.

One of the projects involved was working on the addition to the radar room that will house the video display dealing with the history of the ships. The actual bulkheads were built a while back, but we took them down so that we could detail them. This work involves building a door that will be installed on the back side of the addition. While we considered a couple of options that we had, we opted to build our own door. We also started work on a watertight vent frame and door that will protect and disguise the video monitor we will be using for the video that is in the process of being put together. We could not locate one, so once again we had to build one to meet our needs. What parts we could not scrounge up, we made.

While both of these projects are labor intensive, it will be well worth the effort. When done they will further enhance the illusion of the main deck area of a ship that we are trying to project.



John machining parts on milling machine parts for vent cover.



John and Roland cutting out new door.



Roland and John installing hinges on door frame.



Harry and Roland mortising hinges on door.

Special Project

Roland Cote, John Hemminger and Harry Miller found another project to tackle on the ship. They took on the job of installing a water tight door in the compartment that is just forward of the YAGR'S exhibit.

The ship needed this work done as they are in the process of planning an exhibit for that space and this work is the first item th had to be done.



Opening in bulkhead before door frame was set in place.



John Hemminger working on WTD frame.



Watertight door frame, tack welded in place.



Watertight door and frame in place.



Charles Farmer (AGR-5, 1955-59)

Harry, being an old West Virginia Hillbilly, we kind of liked our homemade brew. I had learned from my Dad at an early age how to make a little spirits. I decided on one of the trips out to sea to do a batch. I went on liberty the night when a Lieutenant JG I knew was on deck watch. I had informed him what I was planning to buy—that he would have to let me on board. He told me okay, but told me I was crazy.

I went to downtown San Francisco, purchased a five-gallon crock, five pounds of sugar, and one cube of yeast. I placed the crock as far up in the ship as I could, next to the boiler stack, mixed all the ingredients with five gallons of water, added a few grapes and potato peelings, tied a cloth around the top, secured the crock to a

handrail, then prepared to wait the ten days for the brew to ferment.

Things went just fine until we were out to sea for about three days. The Captain asked me about a smell outside his State Room. He had every one trying to locate the odor. I began to think, "Oh, hell—I must have placed the churn of brew too close to the stack." After another day, someone found the crock of brew. It had blown the cloth from the crock, spewing brew on the stack. My buddy told me later the grapes had swollen to the size of peaches, potato peelings were hanging from the grating two decks down. The crock cracked; brew had leaked out. No one was found guilty. After 50 years, I, Charlie Farmer confess.

YAGR'S 10th Annual Reunion

San Francisco, CA

May 19, 20, 21, 2005

Please Return As Soon As Possible, But No Later Than April 1, 2005

Send your checks to Harry Miller and make payable to YAGR'S

Name _____

Name Of Spouse/guest _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

Ship Served On _____ Date On Board _____ Rate _____

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

Reunion Registration	San Francisco, CA	May 19-21, 2005	Please Print
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	Cost per person	X	Number of People	=	Sub Total
<i>EXAMPLE</i>	\$95.00	X	4	=	\$380.00
Dues paying members, spouses/guests	\$95.00	X		=	\$
Non dues paying members, spouses/guests	\$105.00	X		=	\$

Optional Tours	Please Print				
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Pre Reunion Tour					
Wednesday May 18, 2005	\$66.00	X		=	\$
Names of people going on tour					
Post Reunion Tours					
Sunday May 22, 2005					
Option (A) Jeremiah O'Brien Cruise	\$125.00	X		=	\$
Names of people going on tour					
Option (B) Sausalito tour	\$40.00	X		=	\$
Names of people going on tour					

Reunion Shirts

	Small	Medium	Large	X LARGE	
\$18.00 each					
Number of each, times \$18.00					=\$
\$20.00 each				XX- Large	
Number of each, times \$20.00					=\$
				Total	\$

Subject: May 22, 2005 Cruise Information

18 January 2005

On May 22, 2005, at 10:00 A.M. the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien will be commemorating Memorial Day, Merchant Marine Day, D-Day and May 8th the end of World War Two in Europe with a special day cruise sailing from Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco, Ca.

Pier 45 was used by Liberty Ships sailing the Pacific during World War Two, loading the essential supplies for the wartime effort.

There will be many international guests and diplomats from France, Great Britain, Canada and the United States. Many of these people will be veterans of World War Two. There will be honored guest speakers from these countries. A special presentation of a fully restored Dodge 6 x 6 ammunition truck, used at Normandy will be donated to the new ship's museum. This truck is being restored in France and given as a gift to the Jeremiah O'Brien by a private French citizen.

As you board the ship a Continental breakfast will be available on the starboard side after deck. The entire ship is open for your inspection. Go to the engine room and watch the triple expansion reciprocating engine build up steam for the cruise.

Tour through the crew quarters and remember what it was like to sail on these great ships. The best view is on the flying bridge or up on the bow. There will be a band playing 1940's music on #3 hatch to bring back the mood of the era. With a mighty blast of the ship's whistle, Captain Moloney will promptly undock the ship at 1000 and head towards the eastern side of Alcatraz and then out of San Francisco Bay under the Golden Gate Bridge to Bonita Cove. At the cove, a beautiful tranquil scenic area, the Memorial Services will be held.

Upon completion of the ceremonies the O'Brien will head back under the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco Bay. At this time a Barbecue lunch will be served. Capt. Moloney will take the ship to either Port Richmond, where Henry Kaiser built Liberty Ships or under the Bay Bridge to the Oakland Estuary to Jack London Square. The ship will then proceed along the San Francisco waterfront back to Pier 45, arriving between 1600 -1630 for docking.

Sailing the beautiful San Francisco Bay on the Jeremiah O'Brien is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity not to be missed.

We are looking forward to having the YAGR's aboard with us.

Best regards,
Chet Robbins
Administrative Director
S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien

Dear Harry: This is for your consideration for the next YAGRGRAM.

Like so many others, the YAGR reunion has become one of my great pleasures in life. Surely it is because of the memories we all share, the camaraderie we feel and the great friendships we have made. The San Francisco reunion will mark my 50th anniversary as a "YAGR Alumni," one that I anticipate with great joy. The fact that so many of my former shipmates will be there, and that my former Commanding Officer, Tom Patterson, will be our host is indeed the "icing on the cake" for me.

However, this reunion will be even more special for us all. The opportunity to sail again on a Liberty Ship makes it so. My own visits to the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien did indeed awaken fond memories of those extraordinary days at sea on the U.S.S. Guardian (AGR-1) and I'm sure all those sailing with us on May 22nd will experience the similar joy as we pass under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Admiral Patterson has designated our May 22nd sailing as "Our International Memorial Cruise" commemorating the cessation of hostilities in Europe (May 8, 1944), the 61st anniversary of D-day (June 6, 1944), U.S. Armed Forces Day (May 21) and National Maritime Day (May 22). Our YAGR reunion dates and location could not have been scheduled at a better time or location.

The French Consul General Desagneaux has been invited to sail with us and is expected to head a contingent of French citizens coming to the United States for this event. The fact that so many former Liberty Ship crew members will be on board makes this cruise even more special - one that should not be missed. Let's turn out in force!

Ken Charon
Former XO: U.S.S. Guardian (AGR 1)
Pre-Commissioning - July 1956