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## YAGRGRAM #68 - FEBRUARY 2014

Lee Doyel, 2315 Bavarian Court, Pensacola FL 32503 (850) 433-6930  
 view, download & print this YAGRGRAM in full color at [yagrs.org](http://yagrs.org)

## 19th Annual YAGRS Reunion - San Antonio, Texas May 20 - 24, 2014

Please sign up **EARLY** as possible. It greatly helps in the logistics of the reunion.

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### **YAGR Books Available - from Joe Maurer, USS Vigil**

I have 10 glue bound YAGR books to sell. These books (total 10) were purchased from "keep the change money" of previous book orders and the printer donated several. Therefore, when these ten books sell I will order ten more and continue to do so into the future.

### **The Guardian Class Radar Picket Ships**



*"Sleep Well My Country,  
 We Will Watch."*

*mel Harder ASR-9*

### **YAGR'S BOOK ORDER**

Glue Bound Book (\$17.00 each - Tax and Postage Incl.)

No. Ordered \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amt. Due \_\_\_\_\_

Ship to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Detach and keep for receipt:

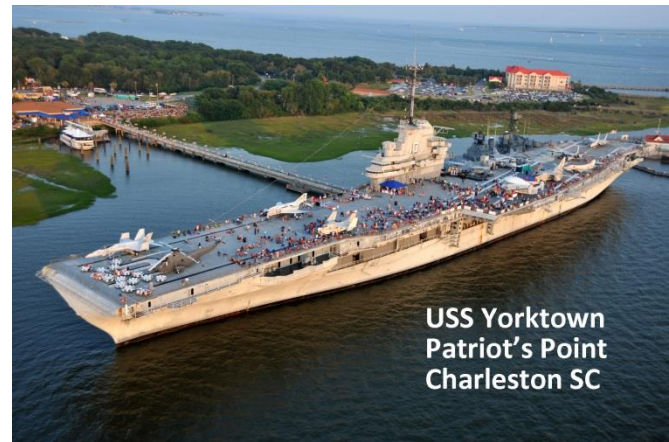
Paid to: Joe Maurer, 2127 S. Bristol Drive, Marblehead, Ohio 43440

E-mail: [runinmuck@yahoo.com](mailto:runinmuck@yahoo.com)

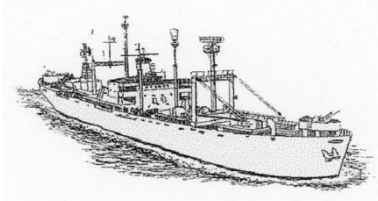
phone: 419-734-0580/419-341-0960

### Message from Lee Doyel, Chair - 2015 Reunion, Charleston SC

We have a contract with a hotel in Charleston, SC for our 2015 reunion. The dates are April 30, May 1 & 2, 2015. The rate is \$100.00 a night plus 13.5% room tax and is good for 3 days prior and post reunion dates. I have not listed the name of the hotel as they have not yet set up an account for YAGRS. The above is for planning purposes. There will be pre-reunion tours as normal on April 28 & 29. Those are yet to be determined. It took some effort to get a \$100 rate as I discovered Charleston is, according to the hotels, the most desired destination city in the US. Also April & May are the most desirable and active months of the year for Charleston. Most hotels started at discount rates of \$140 and up for groups. I will furnish additional information/details at the San Antonio reunion.



USS Yorktown  
Patriot's Point  
Charleston SC



## Sea Stories

email sea stories to [mel.harder@snet.net](mailto:mel.harder@snet.net). Would like to hear about the Cuban missile crisis.

### submitted by Terry Hart (USS Lookout):

I served on the USS Lookout, AGR-2, as a Radarman out of Davisville, RI from late 1960 until late 1964. In 1960 or 1961 we were on station about 300 miles due South of Otis. In the middle of the night we were contacted by an RC 121 out of Otis. He was at the time of initial contact some 80 miles Southeast of us and was descending through 5,000 feet. He had lost two engines and was unable to maintain altitude. He informed us he was going to ditch and requested we vector him alongside and prepare to pick them up. The weather that night was terrible. We had 20 to 30 foot seas, 40 to 60 knots of wind, and zero visibility. We replied that there was zero chance of survival if he ditched. Following some discussion it was decided that possibly he would be able to remain airborne after he passed below about 100 feet on the ground effect. Fortunately that turned out to be true. His ground speed after setting down on the ground effect was only about 90 knots! He also informed us that he had dumped as much fuel as he could and still make it back to Otis. Also that they were throwing everything out a door that they could to reduce their weight. As I recall they had between 39 and 59 (don't remember the exact number but it ended with a 9) souls on board which surprised me. We were communicating on 121.5 and 243.0 and a Mats C-133 returning from Europe overhead what was going on and contacted us. He said he had plenty of fuel and if we would vector him for an intercept he could escort the 121 back to Otis. This is what we did. I remember them discussing the fact that Otis was several hundred feet above sea level and wondering how they would be able to climb enough to clear the cliff and be able to land at Otis if they made it back. Fortunately by the time they got there they had burned off enough fuel weight and thrown enough additional stuff out the door and were able to make a successful landing. I am now 72 and will never forget what happened that night. I would very much like to know the tail number of that aircraft, who those folks were in that airplane, if any of them are still alive, as well as any other details of that extraordinary event.



[www.yagrs.org](http://www.yagrs.org)

Yours truly

Terry M Hart SR

608B South Potomac Street

Waynesboro, PA 17268

(717) 377-3977 [tmhartsr@outlook.com](mailto:tmhartsr@outlook.com)

**On 10/11/13 Mel Harder wrote:**

to: Ralph Rappuhun, ship's coordinator for Lookout.

Ralph: Could you please send this along to Lookout crew members? Perhaps someone can add to the story.

**On 10/12/2013 10:08 AM, [RRAPPUHN@aol.com](mailto:RRAPPUHN@aol.com) wrote:**

Hello Shipmates. I guess we got tasked with this and I find it very interesting. If any of you have anything to add to this story please let us all know. I think I was the last crew member to check aboard before we were decommissioned in 1965 but I never heard of this. Thanks. Ralph Rappuhn

on 10/12/13 Harold Pazourek wrote:

To: RRAPPUHN@aol.com

Subj: Re: Fwd: RC 121 that lost two engines 300 miles south of Otis in 1961 or 1962

I left the LOOKOUT in December, 1957. This is new to me. We did have an incident in the winter of 1956-57 when we received a call from a P2V. They had a fire on-board and requested we rendezvous with them. Our ETA to their position was ten hours. They managed to get the fire out and returned to base with no assistance as far as I know. We were also on station when the Andrea Doria went down but too far away to render assistance.

Was the weather in that area ever nice in the winter? If so, we missed it. In 1956 we sailed on December 21 and returned January 25. As far as I can remember we had at least a sea state 5 the entire time. But that was a long time ago and memory tends to exaggerate things.

Harold Pazourek

**submitted by Joe Maurer, USS Vigil**

It was January 9, 1962 and I was going on my first cruise on a Navy ship since I joined the Navy one year earlier. I had just graduated from Aerographers mate "A" school and was assigned to the Vigil as my first permanent duty station. I joined the Navy to see the world and requested sea duty coming out of "A" school. I was the only graduate in my class to be assigned to sea duty and it was not a nice day for my first day at sea. As we left the pier in Davisville, I was beginning to experience sea sickness while we were still in Naragansett Bay. It was not a good time for captain's inspection of the AG shack area which was scheduled to take place soon as we were under way. Esters AG2 was at the hatch to announce the captain for the inspection.

Levesque AG2 along with myself were there to salute the captain as he entered. As the Captain started to enter I was unable to stand and salute. The reason being I was holding a mop bucket while barfing into it. He saw this and made a about face and did not enter. I was sea sick for five days before my stomach settled. Furthermore it took two more patrols before I got my sea legs.

Joe Maurer AG3, 1962-1963.



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**Dues Payment - make checks out to YAGRS ASSOCIATION**

**mail to Armand Lamarche, Treasurer, 3 Finnway St., North Billerica MA 01862**

Dues are \$17 per year. The current membership year ends May 31, 2014. The highlighted date on your address label is the date your membership is current to. If that date is **5/31/13** or earlier, please update your membership by making a dues payment. Upon dues payment, you will receive a new 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: \_\_\_\_\_



# Duty on Navy's Sky Watchers

**A** FEW HUNDRED MILES off our coasts, slow-moving merchant-type ships plod their way—apparently on no particular business, bound for no particular destination and certainly in no hurry to get there.

They were there yesterday, and the day before. They'll be there tomorrow, and the day after—watching, waiting.

They are YAGRs—the latest Navy word in watchdogs.

YAGRs are ocean radar station ships (see *ALL HANDS*, September 1956, p. 25). Recently converted from World War II "Liberty" cargo vessels, they are now on stations in the Atlantic and Pacific defense system.

The first YAGRs joined the Fleet in the spring of 1955, after being converted at Norfolk, Va., and Charleston, S. C. Others joined the group early in 1956, and there are still more to come. They carry such names as *Skywatcher*, *Guardian*, *Scanner*, *Locator* and *Interceptor*—to mention a few.

Their names describe the vital role they play. The YAGRs operate in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, helping to form a protective radar screen ringing the continent to seaward.

Equipped with the latest improvements in electronic detection and communications devices, the ships are on the alert to intercept, warn and spread the alarm in case of unexpected attack on U. S. shores.

Actually, their job goes beyond a simple warning. For example, if an air or surface attack should come, the YAGRs would be on the job to alert interceptor planes, then help them in keeping tabs on the enemy.

The Navy's role in Continental Air Defense (CONAD)—and the job of the YAGRs, along with the radar picket ships and planes, was covered in detail in the September 1956 issue. But here is a brief description of what life is like on a typical YAGR.

Because they must stay at sea for long periods, YAGRs are comfortable ships. And, of importance

to the taxpayer, they are economical to operate. The Navy had all this in mind when the vessels were plucked from rows of "useless" cargo ships in the Maritime Administration's Reserve Fleets at Wilmington, N. C., and Mobile, Ala.

A YAGR has a complement of 15 officers and 168 enlisted men. Since the role of each ship is vital, and the duty on the monotonous side, much of the \$3,500,000 that went into converting each was spent on "habitability."

All personnel are berthed above the waterline in spacious, well-ventilated quarters—probably the most "livable" afloat.

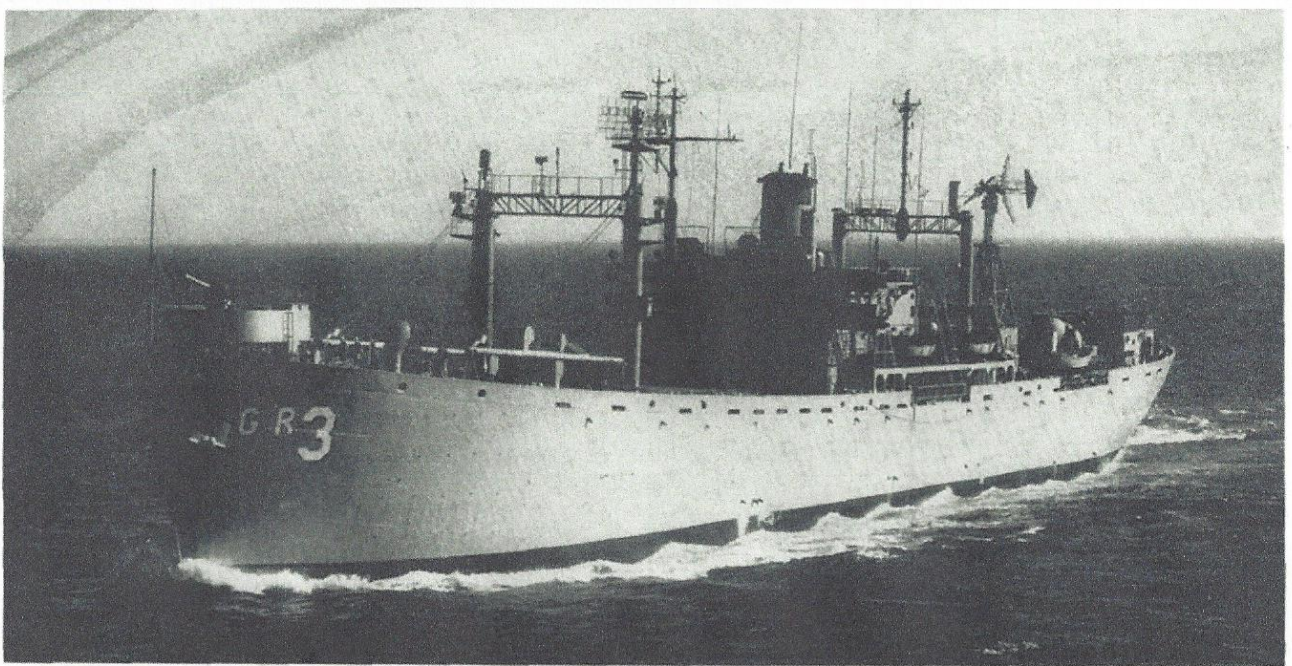
Each officer has his own private stateroom, and the old-type seaman's bunk has given way to three-quarter size "CPO" beds for all enlisted men. Each man has his own bed lamp.

Living space is allotted according to rate. Chiefs live one or two to a room; first class, four; second class, eight or ten, and the remainder sleep in roomy quarters in double-stacked beds. In enlisted quarters (one could

**INFORMATION CENTERS** on ocean radar station ships are in constant use. Shown below: the eyes and ears of a YAGR.







hardly call them "compartments") eye-pleasing, delicate shades of green and cream have replaced the traditional white paint on the bulkheads. Officers' staterooms are often paneled in mahogany or pine.

Long periods at sea aboard the YAGRs call for an intensive program of recreation and entertainment to ward off boredom, which could easily become a ship's most dangerous "bogey." Like most other ships, the YAGRs have night movies and a library, but their recreation programs go beyond those usual in Navy ships.

Standard with the YAGRs are hobby shops, disc-jockey programs, large lounges for crew, CPOs and officers, plus a gymnasium. The gym is a converted cargo hold, and usual facilities include mats for wrestling, boxing and weight-lifting, ping-pong and volley-ball equipment. Some YAGRs have extended the program to include archery, golf, badminton and handball.

At least one of the YAGRs has a basketball court.

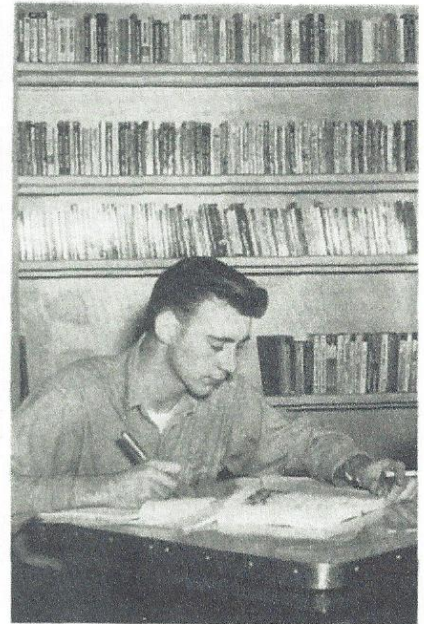
In addition to food comparable

with the best in the Navy, the mess halls of the YAGRs would be the envy of any civilian cafeteria owner. The long tables and hard benches of old have been replaced by four-place dining tables and seats cushioned with foam rubber. On the serving line, crew members help themselves. After a meal they can light up a smoke, chat, and have an extra cup of coffee. Ashtrays and napkins are often standard equipment.

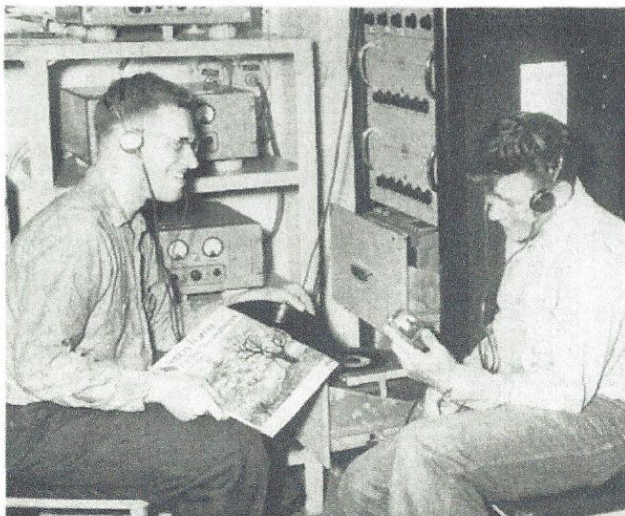
One thing that may puzzle Navy-men who are familiar with these vital sea-going ships; why are the craft listed in a miscellaneous category? "YAGR," spelled out—"YAG" means a miscellaneous auxiliary and "R" stands for radar—points up the fact that this important ship is classified as a service craft.

There's an answer: the ship is supposed to look about as miscellaneous as a ship can get. Inside, it's a different story—perhaps, one day, the most important story of watchfulness ever told.

—Haywood Mitchell, JO2, USN



QUARTERS aboard YAGRs are very livable. Above: Relaxed in 'library.' Below left: 'Disc jockeys' entertain crew. Below rt: Spacious living qtrs.





## Ship's Coordinators

The following is a list of current ship's coordinators. Still need coordinators for AGR 7, 8, 11 & 13. If your ship does not have a coordinator, contact Lee Doyel and volunteer. Ship's coordinators maintain an email list of crew members and forward communications from the chair. Crew members receive advance notices of current YAGR news, activities etc. If you wish to be included, send an email to your ship's coordination requesting to have your email address added.

### Ship's Coordinators

AGR-1 Frank St Mark [smarks117@hotmail.com](mailto:smarks117@hotmail.com)  
AGR-2 Ralph Rappuhun [rrappuhn@aol.com](mailto:rrappuhn@aol.com)  
AGR-3 Chuck Parker [chuckparker@gmail.com](mailto:chuckparker@gmail.com)  
AGR-4 Steve Mierzejewski [smjm@bex.net](mailto:smjm@bex.net)  
AGR-5 Bob Wrestler [rdwerst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rdwerst@sbcglobal.net)  
AGR-6 LeeDoolittle [tleedoo@u.washington.edu](mailto:tleedoo@u.washington.edu)

AGR-9 Frank Mahaffey [bnf@att.net](mailto:bnf@att.net)  
AGR-10 Paul Langenus [plangenus@cox.net](mailto:plangenus@cox.net)  
AGR-12 Jesse Germany [jgermany31@gmail.com](mailto:jgermany31@gmail.com)  
AGR-14 Joe Jackson [jacksonj@pldi.net](mailto:jacksonj@pldi.net)  
AGR-15 Lee Doyel [mldoyel@cox.net](mailto:mldoyel@cox.net)  
AGR-16 Frank McNamara [ec2sc1@comcast.net](mailto:ec2sc1@comcast.net)

## **Membership Report - Mel Harder, Secretary (USS Investigator)**

As of 11/11/13 YAGRS has 501 active members. Most are paid up to 5/31/14 or beyond. Active members are on the mailing list for YAGRGRAMS and can sign up with a ship's coordinator for email notifications. A handful are tardy with dues payment. If a member falls more than two years behind in dues, they are removed from the active member list. If dues are made current, they are reinstated as an active member.

Crew lists - Member names are never removed from a ship's crew list. The crew lists list the names of any crew member that is or has been an active YAGR member. These lists are updated as address changes etc. are received. If I receive information that a crew member is deceased, a notation is made on the list. The total number of ship's crew members and active members, by ship, is broken down as shown to right.

The reason the total of active members by ship is greater than total active YAGR membership is that some members served on more than one ship.

AGR	SHIP	ACTIVE MEMBERS	NAMES ON CREW LIST
AGR-1	USS GUARDIAN	50	190
AGR-2	USS LOOKOUT	43	164
AGR-3	USS SKYWATCHER	39	183
AGR-4	USS SEARCHER	48	178
AGR-5	USS SCANNER	27	117
AGR-6	USS LOCATOR	17	118
AGR-7	USS PICKET	17	109
AGR-8	USS INTERCEPTOR	29	136
AGR-9	USS INVESTIGATOR	29	154
AGR-10	USS OUTPOST	51	158
AGR-11	USS PROTECTOR	36	187
AGR-12	USS VIGIL	43	152
AGR-13	USS INTERDICTOR	12	86
AGR-14	USS INTERPRETER	13	91
AGR-15	USS TRACER	33	169
AGR-16	USS WATCHMAN	20	103
YR-65	RADRON 2	17	61
		524 TOTAL	2,356 TOTAL

## Message from Nell Doyel

> ALERT ! SATURDAY BREAKFAST: PENNY AUCTION (suggested limit \$10)  
> BREAKFAST PARADE OF CREATIONS: feature yourself in the fun of your life!  
> What is your passion; who is your passion; what makes you laugh; what makes you  
> cry? You think it up, then show us!!! What fun is comin' ! See you all SOON! Nell

LADIES! Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc. is the only shelter in Bexar County (where San Antonio is) for battered women and children. In 2012 YAGR ladies decided to support a local shelter such as this with contributions. If you wish to participate, check [www.fvps.org](http://www.fvps.org) to see items they need, read their history and news. They stay at or near capacity so all new or gently used items from clothes to play items for adults and children are greatly appreciated! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to receive and organize the donations. Can I count on you? [nellee@cox.net](mailto:nellee@cox.net)

ITEMS NEEDED - from the Family Violence Prevention Services website

Back to School Supplies  
Baby Items  
Personal Hygiene  
Linens and Bath  
Kitchen

Non Perishable Food  
Cleaning Supplies  
First Aid  
Clothing/Shoes  
Household Item

# Reunion Details & Registration

**San Antonio Double Tree Hilton Downtown**

**502 W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.**

**San Antonio, TX 78207**

**Reservations: Hotel Direct - (210) 224-7155**

**between 8am - 5pm**

**Nationwide Reservation Center - (800) 222-8733**

Rate: \$99.00 plus 16.75% room tax. Good 3 days pre and post reunion dates.

## Schedule

### **Tuesday, May 20 - San Antonio River Walk (pre-reunion tour)**

Bus leaves hotel at 5:00pm. A private barge (with guide) will give us a historical tour of the river and drop you off at the Mexican Mahatten Restaurant for a Mexican dinner buffet on the patio overlooking the river walk. Dinner will include a non-alcoholic drink and desert. Tour is 3 hours long.



### **Wednesday, May 21 - Fredericksburg Tour (pre-reunion tour)**

Bus (with guide) to the crown jewel of the Texas Hill Country with its shops, restaurants and the Pacific War Museum. Lunch is on your own. The tour is 9 hours long.

Thursday, May 22 - Registration and hospitality room opens

### **Friday, May 23 - Group Tour**

Bus (with guides) includes SAS Factory, Missions, lunch, Tea Garden, and Alamo. Cost is included in the reunion registration fee.

### **Saturday, May 24**

morning: men's business meeting

women's breakfast meeting

evening: banquet

The hotel is downtown and within walking distance of the River Walk and other activities. Additionally a shuttle stops by the hotel to downtown. The airport is about 15 minutes from the hotel. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle, but there are taxis and companies that fill this void. Cost from the airport to the Double Tree is about \$25.00. We get free self parking, free buffet breakfast and internet, pool, weight room, etc. Again we plan to offer at least one free room night drawing to early sign ups. Be sure to say you are with the Navy group YAGRS. You can also make reservations at the hotel's web site [sanantoniodowntown.doubletree.com](http://sanantoniodowntown.doubletree.com). If you have a problem registering call Brian Forrester, YAGR'S reunion planning coordinator, at (480) 998-1112.



# YAGR'S 19th Annual Reunion - San Antonio TX

## May 20 - 24, 2014

Return completed registration and check as soon as possible **but no later than April 20, 2014**  
to Armand Lamarche, YAGR'S Treasurer, 3 Finnway St., North Billerica MA 01862. Print exactly  
as you want your name to appear on your name tag. Also, indicate your choice of meat,  
chicken or fish for the Saturday evening banquet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ banquet choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ banquet choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Ship: \_\_\_\_\_

Reunion Registration - Thurs. May 22 - Sat. May 24 2014			
Includes Fri. May 23 tour & Sat. eve. banquet	cost/person	# of people	total
dues paying member, spouse/guest	\$95.00		\$
non-dues paying member	\$112.00		\$
<b>pre-reunion tours</b>			
Tues. May 20, 2014 - San Antonio River Walk			
names of people on tour	cost/person		total
	\$69.00		\$
			\$
Wed. May 21, 2014 - Fredricksburg Tour			
names of people on tour	cost/person		total
	\$73.00		\$
			\$

Reunion Shirts	# of shirts X cost	total
small @ \$18/each	\$	\$
medium @ \$18/each	\$	\$
large @ \$18/each	\$	\$
X-large @ \$18/each	\$	\$
XX-large @ \$20/each	\$	\$
total for all shirts		\$