

## **Bob Kramer - USS OUTPOST AGR-10**

*This is one you guys who worked in an electronics-related skill can relate to: In 1961 the Radio shack on the Outpost was notified of an upcoming inspection that would review administrative records, procedures, and condition and operation of communications equipment. There were three of us RM's who had recently been assigned to the Outpost from "A" school and we really wanted to impress our fellow RM's, so we got together to discuss what actions we could take that would make the inspection a resounding success (besides "gun decking" POMSEE records).. During the discussion I jokingly suggested use of steel wool to put some shine on the innards of an old piece of UHF equipment. One of the guys actually took me seriously and, without anyone's knowledge, made the base of one of our TED's shine like brand new! Needless to say, when power was applied to it, there was a loud "snap, crackle, and pop". Thankfully, the inspection party didn't even look at this particular piece of equipment and we got a passing grade on the inspection. But when our fearless leaders learned of the situation, they went ballistic! There was even talk of sending the offending RM up to have a face to face meeting with the Captain, but thankfully this didn't come about. Believe it or not, our ET gang (arguably one of the best in the squadron) put in a lot of time and effort and got that equipment back in service. It was still operational when I transferred off the ship a couple years later.*

## **Jim Weekley - USS LOOKOUT YAGR-2**

*I came to Charleston in January 55 right out of radar school in Norfolk to be at the commissioning of the ship. I was a SA and helped inventory all of the parts and pieces for the ship stores. That even included the eating utensils. When we were ready for sea, I was assigned the port lookout for the sea and anchor detail. We were to take on ammunition. The captain told the pilot that the ship was slow to answer the helm but the pilot didn't take into consideration the outgoing tide. We hit the end of the ammunition pier and had to stay in port till repairs were made to our bow. There was a light tower on the end of the pier. When we hit, two men that were standing there, they were off the pier before the tower hit the ground. I held that port lookout position until one trip into port when we rounded the island going to Davisville and I reported a red light off the port beam 325 yards, 2 feet and 6 inches. After that I was relocated*

*to the CIC as a radar operator giving David "Tex" Ritter bearings and ranges. I finally got to go inside where it was warm. I left the ship in August of 57.*

### **Bob Buxton - USS WATCHMAN - AGR-16**

*The Watchman was my first ship assignment. I was just an 18 year old seaman duce right out of boot camp and Radar "A" school, Treasure Island, San Francisco. After working in the deck force for a month or two, I got to work with OPS CIC radar watches for a couple of weeks. Then, I was sent to the galley to be a mess cook for a couple more months. One of my fondest memories as a mess cook was taking a full garbage can up the ladder and to the stern to dump it overboard. We were on station 1 then and riding out a pretty rough sea. Just as I lifted the can the ship's stern pitched down to the sea level and water flooded the stern, knocking me down and soaking me from head to toe. The garbage can was lost overboard and I was grabbing anything I could get my hands on. The aft man overboard watch ran over to see if I was still on board, he saw that I had managed to stay on board and was okay. Then, he just started laughing his ass off. I went back down below decks and had to explain to the chief cook what had happened and that we needed a new garbage can. He just started laughing his ass off as well. After that, I got the nickname "water boy".*

### **R. E. Jones EM3 - USS SEARCHER AGR-4**

*I remember when we lost our screw that fateful picket after we made asses out of ourselves trying to rescue the survivors of that Liberian Freighter that broke in half. Our motor whaleboat crapped out and we almost lost those people. Did lose the whaleboat. Then we lost the screw. Those two happenings are related, I suspect. As we drifted, screwless, a storm came up and I was sure that we would sink and I was going to die. I was wrong, but I have never been so frightened before or since. (As was told to me - the motor whale boat's motor seized up because they had not used a gasoline/oil mixture. As the boat was being lifted on board, one of the lines broke and the boat slammed back into the water and was hit by the Searcher's screw, destroying the motor*

*whaleboat and probably damaging the screw enough to come off a week later. Another ship did rescue the sailors on that sunken freighter.....Ski)*

### **Jack Hargis - USS INTERCEPTOR AGR-8**

*One of my fondest memories was tying my fishing pole to the fantail rail (along with several others) to troll for albacore tuna. If you snagged one, the after lookout would notify the bridge, the bridge would pass the word for you over the 1MC, the OOD would then stop the ship until the fish was brought aboard, then continue on. We beat all the other AGR's on one trip by boating 431. We stuffed the largest to hang in the mess deck. Everyone on board ate pretty good back home for a while.*

### **Frank Pulaski - USS SEARCHER AGR-4**

*This is a true story that occurred in 1961. The Searcher was at a liberty port in Key West, Florida and the crew enjoyed swimming in the warm waters and taking liberty in Key West. This really helped us to put up with the boredom of picket duty. Two of us in the ET shack were scheduled to be discharged while the ship was in Key West. Bill Borthwick (everyone had a nickname and we called him Charlie) and myself (Ski). We had to be in Davisville, RI within two days of each other to be discharged. Of course, back then, we never had much money and it was safe and easy for a sailor in uniform to hitch hike. Charlie departed two days before I did, alone, hitching rides back to Davisville. I don't know what path he took, but I left hitching also and wound up at an Air Force Base in Georgia...can't remember the name. My goal was to get to the base and hitch a flight up north. All I remember about the base was that those "Flyboys" lived pretty good. I was given a berth to spend the night and it was a room with a double bunk and was very comfortable. The galley was open around the clock and the food was good. The next day I did catch a hop on a two engine "Puddle Jumper" that was headed to an Air Force base in New Jersey. I remember sitting on storage crates, as this was some sort of a cargo plane. The Captain allowed me to sit in the cockpit for a while and actually handed the controls to me. I had only ever been in a plane once and certainly never at the controls. This was fun. We landed in New Jersey and with sea bag over my shoulder I headed out to the highway*

*to start hitching a ride to Davisville. It didn't take long and I was soon in a car that, with luck, was headed to Rhode Island. Not too far down the road I spotted a sailor in the distance who was also hitching a ride with a sea bag. As I got close, I couldn't believe my eyes....it was Charlie. Of course we pulled over and completed our ride to the base at Davisville together. I wonder what the odds would have been to have this happen since we had never discussed which route we were going to take to get back to Davisville.*

**Andrew M. Guglielmo - USS SEARCHER AGR-4**  
(The engine room fire on November 13, 1955)

*I, as well as BMC Joseph Dymerski and CM3 Bob Henry, drove from the SEVEREN RIVER COMMAND at Annapolis, MD. to Charleston S.C. to become proud plank owners of a YAGR. No one knew what YAGR meant including Joe Dymerski. The ship was commissioned on April 3, 1955 and I believe we had a severe snow storm in the east two days prior. The commanding officer was LT. CMDR. James Paulick. When we had the engine room fire on November 13, 1955, I was bunked on the port side forward of the #3 hold which had been used during WW2 for armed guard personnel. I recall we were all Petty Officers assigned to the supply division. When the general alarm sounded, we got to our feet and there was a strong odor of smoke and oil. A great guy, CM2 Bodkins, would always have a cigarette the first thing even before getting out of the bunk. Two of us said "Hey Bodkins put that butt out". When he replied in his southern accent, "I ain't smoking", we knew we had a severe problem. As I left the cabin, the passageway was full of black smoke and the EXEC approached me and asked, "Do you have a watch"? I replied I do, so he assigned me to the Chief Corpsman. I believe his name was Loftus. The Chief assigned me to give injections and note the time and date on a tag attached to the severely injured shipmates. I noticed a German ship off to the port which had a sign indicating she was loaded with gasoline, and according to the Quarter Master, she was approaching to assist us but was asked to stand down. Then the US Coast Guard Cutter, I believe INGHAM, came up to the stern and ran two large fully charged fire lines to extinguish the fire. The ship was now listing. Injured personnel were air lifted from the ship via helicopter. I don't recall if it was the same day or the next day when we heard the USS CAPRICORNUS - AKA 57 was approaching to tow us to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When she approached our port side, she struck*

our port Gunwhale and caused same to sustain damage. We then were towed to Brooklyn backwards and faster than we had ever gone forward under our own speed (top speed was about 11 knots for a Picket ship). We were met at the shipyard with all types of medical assistance and buses and were transported to the barracks on Flatbush Avenue. That night we had a fire in the barracks and had to evacuate same. The ship was tied up alongside the BB WISCONSIN. She was having new barrels installed. I lived in New Jersey at the time and life was great. Went home on the subway to moms cooking and handling the laundry. And one day it came to an end. The scuttle butt was we were going to take the ship to Boston, MA. to have her refitted. Not being Admiral material I suggested, "Hey why not bring the plans down here from Boston and fix her here, nah that makes too much sense, I will go get the plans now at my own expense". Several days passed. I chided the deck force and snipes - they should have a great trip being towed to Boston from Brooklyn in a carcass of a ship with no heat, no water, nothing typical Navy. They made remarks about me and my heritage but we all laughed, except three days before the movement of the ship to Boston I was notified that I would be part of the skeleton crew, the only member of the supply division. They took us out past the AMBROSE LIGHTSHIP which is no longer there. Then a sea going tug took us in tow on the trek to Boston, MA., no heat, no lights, no food, and no beds, and during the night the cable either broke or came loose and there we were on the round bottom of the SEARCHER rolling and pitching and listing until they connected us again. Boston was cold and damp and the people were hostile and we lived in the Fargo Building which I now hear is a high end condo. I made one last patrol with the SEARCHER and was transferred to OGU in Newport, RI and was discharged on 9/5/56. The men I met in the Navy were good people and loyal Americans. I thank god for them and I really thank god for our youth of today being in the forefront for our nation. The only thing I can't square away is when I see the reunion pics, who the hell are these old folks? The guys I was with were tough and ready guys. Again, thanks to Ski and Harry and the rest of you for taking the time and effort and expense to keep the tradition going. In conclusion, I would add that I had one or two conversations with ENG 1 Buzbee (he was one that was killed in the fire) in the mess hall, and he was preparing for retirement prior to that horrific day of Nov 13, 1955. He was a gentleman and a loyal American, and told me when he retired he just wanted to sit on the porch and have the mailman put the check in his pocket.

### **Pete Bowman (EM2, AGR-11, 1960-62)**

***I joined the Protector in early 1960. I was an 18 year old FA with an electrician rating. I grew up on Long Island Sound and thought of myself as a boating person. In other words I already felt like “an old salt.” We left the dock in Davisville and started to steam toward the Atlantic. I was stationed in the aft emergency generator room. As we sat around talking, I started to feel a little funny. So I asked the real old salt in the room if it was always this rough. He laughed and said “kid, go outside and see where we are.” We were still in the harbor steaming past Newport. The swells were causing the ship to roll up and down and I was definitely going south fast. Soon I was sick as a dog. My shipmates were very thoughtful. They hung my ditty bag on the end of my bunk so I could see it sway back and forth. They also talked about dinner and told me it was oysters on a string so if I didn’t like them, they could be pulled back out. For the next two days I prayed for death.***

***Alas I survived and we steamed to our picket station off Nova Scotia. Here is where I hope my memory has not created a fantasy or that this memory was really from my first picket. My recollection is that we hit a terrible storm. The ship sustained some serious damage and opened up an 80 foot hole from the 1<sup>st</sup> hold into the 2nd. It took us something like several days or a week to steam back to Davisville. We had to strap ourselves into our bunks with life jackets to sleep. I have a vague memory of a DE that was in our area losing its forward gun mount.***

***Welcome to the NAVY at sea***

### **Ted Wilming (AGR-10)**

***Every two weeks was payday on the AGR's and Paul Duffley, DK2 would work late getting the payroll ready. After he finished, Paul would go down to CIC and lay down on the vertical plot bench until chow at 0600. This had gone on for quite a while, and someone came up with the bright idea to warm his toes a little...paper matches buried in the wetting fit the bill just fine..alas, the conflagration of say 5 match heads spaced around ye ol brogan toe warmed things up and of course no culprit was around when Paul started to move and holler. Payback is a b&\$?!@@***

***and several of the RD types after Paul was transferred, found their pay records missing, after several long days of looking they all were found down in the fold down part of his desk. At one of the reunions, Paul stated that he had told that story several times in his 20 year career, but no one believed him until he saw the story in an old YAGRGRAM ...adage don't mess with the DK or the Cook. BTW I know nothing..***

### **Ted Wilming (AGR-10)**

***In 1965, Outpost went into Key West, Fla and then to sta 20 off Dog Rocks, a British island of very small size. Outpost CIC was on port and starboard watch because of crew members being transferred and no new arrivals (decommissioning). The ships rec. fund was being used up, and a large amount of beer was purchased which was iced down and put on said island that had a confederate battle flag raised on it.....if you had 8 hours between watches it was permissible to go ashore and have a brooski or two.....CIC was unable to partake unfortunately. But no international incident over the invasion of a British protectorate by an elite unit of the US Navy was entered in the log or brought before the United Nations..***

### **Ted Wilming (AGR-10)**

***On either station 14 or 16, Outpost was in the vicinity of a Russian Elint trawler and our Captain, Robert Hamblin decided to have some fun. being from Mississippi, he ordered the stars and stripes to be retired and the stars and bars to be raised on the mainmast. All of this procedure was captured for posterity on color film. Would have loved to hear the reaction on the trawler as they looked thru the flag recognition book! Lt. Cdr R. N. Hamblin was killed in a helo accident in Vietnam in 1966. His name is on the Wall.***

### **Bruce Bailey (AGR-5)**

***I served in the USS Scanner, AGR-5, from 1959 to 1961. Sometime in 1960 we went from San Francisco to San Diego for two weeks of underway training. We had no Geiger counter on board so during the nuclear explosion drill we used a short piece of lumber with dials and knobs painted on it. As a QM3 I was assigned to go through the pilot house holding this piece of wood and saying "tick-tick-tick-tick." And***

***whenever I came to a designated "hot spot," I was to yell "Tick-Tick-Tick," in a loud voice. You can only imagine how I felt and nearly all on the bridge, captain included, barely concealed a laugh at my antics. Boy did I feel foolish and for weeks after my new nickname was "tick tick."***

***I hope you can use this story, I hadn't thought of that incident in many a year. There were several other humorous incidents during that training period as YAGRS simply didn't fit into any exercise FTG had. For example, whenever we tried a precision anchor test we usually missed the complete anchorage because after dropping anchor we were supposed to back down to set the hook but by the time the OD could get that old tub backing down we were nearly hundreds of yards out of the anchorage already. It wasn't easy to back those ships, as you probably recall. And as for live gunnery drills, again as our guns had not been fired in over a year there were several problems with elevation and training the gun. We received low marks on that exercise, too. But what really upset the Fleet Training Group most was the fact we had many of our hatches removed for ease of travel, such as our crew's lounge and movie hold. So setting "condition zebra" during GQ was impossible. So again, low marks. But our captain didn't really mind as our main mission, radar searches, was A-1 so we sailed back to San Francisco and went on another patrol off the coast.***