

Sea Stories

Submitted by Walt Hartfield, USS Investigator AGR-9

I'm Walt Hartfield. I was on the original crew of the Investigator (AGR-9). I went aboard in October 1956. We put the ship into commission in January of 1957. We took a cruise down to Jamaica and then back up to Newport.

I was on board until August of '57, and then was discharged. I was an ET3. We had but two ET's on board. The other guy was from out in the mid-west somewhere and was in love with country music. While he was away on a weekend, I put a filter into our shop radio and it no longer played the country music he was in love with. It drove him crazy!! But I was in heaven. That's my story, and I'll stick to it.



Submitted by Donald L. Swanson, USS Skywatcher AGR-3

I served on the USS Skywatcher 55-June 58 when I was discharged as a RM2. I was going thru old boxes in my storeroom and found this poem written by a shipmate. I couldn't find him in the crew register so I figured that you could publish it with his name and someone would know him and let him know that he is remembered by at least one of his shipmates. I would really appreciate a copy of the YAGRGRAM for my records. Thanks and smooth sailing....Donald L. Swanson

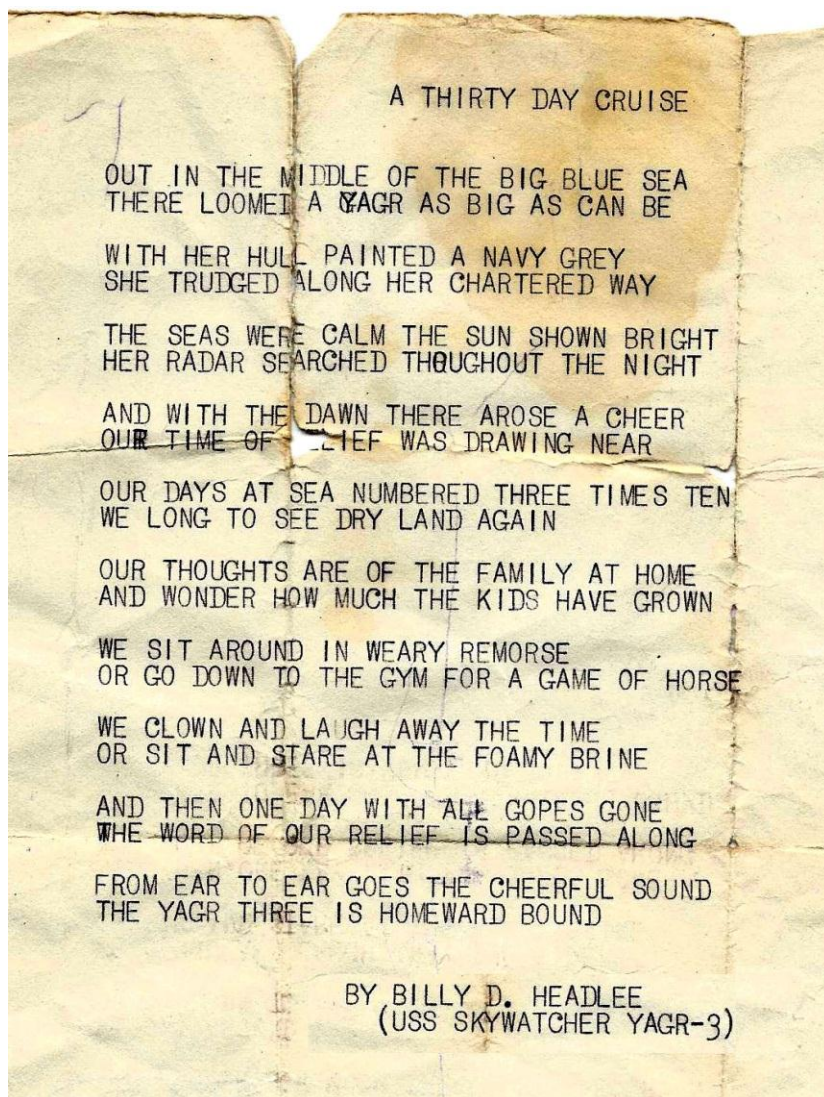


Donald Swanson - radio shack

Jan Murray and the Hot Pepper

Bill Ivie USS Vigil AGR-12

I had a shipmate on the USS Vigil AGR-12 named Jan Murray. I had an apartment in Providence, RI, with my new bride and Jan came for a visit. We had an ornamental pepper plant on the dining table with several very red peppers. Jan saw the peppers and said, "I love hot peppers" and before I could warn him he woofed down a whole pepper. I honestly believe I could see smoke coming out of his ears as he spent the next ten minutes drinking cold water to put out the fire.



A THIRTY DAY CRUISE

OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BIG BLUE SEA
THERE LOOMED A YAGR AS BIG AS CAN BE

WITH HER HULL PAINTED A NAVY GREY
SHE TRUDGED ALONG HER CHARTERED WAY

THE SEAS WERE CALM THE SUN SHOWN BRIGHT
HER RADAR SEARCHED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT

AND WITH THE DAWN THERE AROSE A CHEER
OUR TIME OF RELIEF WAS DRAWING NEAR

OUR DAYS AT SEA NUMBERED THREE TIMES TEN
WE LONG TO SEE DRY LAND AGAIN

OUR THOUGHTS ARE OF THE FAMILY AT HOME
AND WONDER HOW MUCH THE KIDS HAVE GROWN

WE SIT AROUND IN WEARY REMORSE
OR GO DOWN TO THE GYM FOR A GAME OF HORSE

WE CLOWN AND LAUGH AWAY THE TIME
OR SIT AND STARE AT THE FOAMY BRINE

AND THEN ONE DAY WITH ALL GOPES GONE
THE WORD OF OUR RELIEF IS PASSED ALONG

FROM EAR TO EAR GOES THE CHEERFUL SOUND
THE YAGR THREE IS HOMEWARD BOUND

BY BILLY D. HEADLEE
(USS SKYWATCHER YAGR-3)

sea stories cont.

Pete Bowman

AGR-11 (USS Protector) 1960-1962, EM2

I served in the engineering group headed by Strafford Morse from 1960 –1962. After all these many years, there is an event that is important to me. I have read that there are about 10 things that occur in one's life that are significant enough to not only remember but that have an important impact. Lieutenant Morse was involved in one of my 10 and I wanted to share this with my fellow YAGR mates☺.

No it's not the time we sailed down to Key West to be the radar lookout during the Bay of Pigs (next sea story maybe). I had been on several picket cycles and the shipboard process was fairly routine. We sailed into our Davisville dock sometime during the day. I had drawn the midnight to 4 am watch. I was awakened and did my 4 hours. However, I did something that I had never done on all the watches. I had crawled down the ladder into the shaft alley many times and never found a thing wrong. So this night, I decided to skip that part of my watch duty. Apparently so did the people that had the 4 pm – 8 pm and the 8 pm to midnight. A very scared sailor sometime around 5 am awakened me. He told me the shaft alley was full of water. Apparently, the bearings had not been tightened after the ship made it into port. I got dressed and went to the forward shaft alley door, opened it and found water almost to the top of the alley. For those sailors that don't know what a shaft alley is or how big it is, it is a very large compartment that runs from the exit point of the shaft to the prop and forward to the engine room. It also runs from the bottom of the ship to the

lower deck (a tall height). I called for all the bilge pumps to be turned on and went out onto the dock. I saw that the ship was very low in the water. Actually it was extremely low, well below the line when the ship was full of supplies and fuel just before sailing.

In the morning, I can't recall what actually happened. However, as the ranking member of the watch that night, I had to face Strafford and tell him what had happened. I assumed that I would be sent to Siberia or something worse. He crawled down into the shaft alley and surveyed the oil slick all over the walls and equipment. I recall that all he said to me was "make sure you get this mess completely cleaned up." That act of forgiveness and not throwing the book at my fellow watch people and me stuck with me all this time. I think I have "paid-it-forward numerous times."

I have a related memory but can't be sure it is not just my imagination related to my own near-sinking experience. At some time when we were tied up at the dock in Davisville, a DE was docked across from us. In the morning, only some radio antennas were visible above water as it sank during the night. OY!



Lancaster Reunion Photos Available - received from Mike Nesmith, USS Investigator AGR-9

Mike here, just to let you know several have ask for pictures from Lancaster reunion. I will be more then glad to make them available. I just need a chip of no less then 4gb and a return address with a 65 cent stamp to mail. There are over 490 pictures to pick from. About 30 came out bad SORRY. If you do not have a computer, any Walmart or store like it can make prints. The store will also show you how to pick the ones you want. I also can put them on a DVD -R; again, I will need a return address and 65 cent stamp. Please feel free and call anytime if you should have a question or JUST TO SAY HI.

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