



YANCEY MEMORIES

COORDINATORS MESSAGE



Well it's been an interesting time since our last newsletter and I hope this finds everyone safe and well. The news many have been waiting for is in regards to the reunion in Annapolis in September. The decision was made last week to postpone the reunion until September 2021. Although disappointing this was the right call since most of us are in the high-risk category. Since plans were already underway for a reunion in Colorado Springs in 2021, that has been moved to 2022. This is the first year without a Yancey reunion since 1996. A pretty good run.

I want to thank those that responded to our annual funds request. We added \$1,690 to our treasury which will allow us to keep publishing the newsletters. Also, thanks to those that provided us with interesting stories and profiles. These are the things we need to keep the newsletter interesting. Keep them coming.

Let's hope and pray they develop a vaccine soon so we can start to get back to our normal lives. As always feel free to contact me with any questions.

George Clifton
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PROFILE JERRY NICHOLS

I graduated from High School in '59 in Beaumont, TX, wasn't ready for college, so I joined the Navy, wanted to see the World. Boot camp was in San Diego, then 6 months of Radio school also in San Diego, graduated top of my class. Our instructor told me last year the top graduate got his choice of duty, but they stopped doing it with my class, just my luck. I was a Radioman aboard the Yancey, I was an RM2, the radio shack was directly behind the bridge. As a Radioman we were responsible for all communication on the ship, incoming and outgoing. Communication takes place via morse code for long distance, voice for short distance, and teletypewriters for all distances. During the Cuban Crisis our ship patrolled the waters between Florida and Cuba protecting our coast, I was on duty in the shack when the message came across the teletypewriter from President Kennedy saying, If Russia fires one more shot then he was going to retaliate by telling Congress he wanted to declare war, the same message was sent to Russia. I delivered this message directly to the Captain personally, he immediately called GQ. They never fired another shot and all of their ships left the area. Unfortunately I wasn't on board the Yancey at the time, I was transferred to a Helicopter carrier, we were directly involved in the Crisis on that ship. But getting back to the Yancey, I'm sure everyone remembers the music you listened to while laying in your racks, or eating chow in the mess decks, it was me and the other radiomen who piped that music directly to your speakers.

One other thing that happened, in the summer of '62 while tied up at the pier in Norfolk a Japanese ship was also there, they wanted to send a few of their sailors over to take a tour of the Yancey, and also wanted to tour the radio shack. I was their tour guide, in the shack only, showed them our transmitters, receivers, teletypewriters, where we sat when sending and receiving Morse code. They said their radio shacks were set up similar to ours, including their teletypewriters could receive messages at 100 wpm just like ours. One thing they had that we didn't, they could drink rum, but in their mess decks only, they were allowed 2 glasses of rum per day. Bummers, we couldn't drink alcohol aboard any US Navy ship, not legally that is.

One advantage we had over all the other ships, our Captain, Gordon Keating, was the most senior Captain in the Navy, when we sailed into port, it didn't matter what port, if there was another Navy ship tied up at the pier, then they had to leave, go anchor out, and we tied up in their place.

After 4 years my enlistment was up, hopped in my '55 DeSoto I bought at a used car dealer in Norfolk, drove straight to Beaumont, TX, my home town, took a little vacation of 5 days, then went to work. I only had 2 career changes during my working career, was a branch manager at an insurance inspection company, stayed 12 years there, hated every day of the 12 years. After developing high blood pressure and stomach ulcers I decided to make a change, also made a vow to never work at a job I hated again. Entered the flatbed trucking business, became the sales manager, then on to operations manager, stayed in the trucking business for 30 years or so, then formed my own company as a transportation.....

JERRY NICHOLS cont.

broker, specializing in moving heavy equipment, dozers, excavators, things like this. After a year, I brought our oldest daughter on board, taught her the business, we worked together for about 10 years or so, then I retired, I was pushing 70 at the time. Gave her the business, she operated it for another 5 years then shut it down, her kids didn't want it, they had their own jobs they liked.

One thing I left out, when I entered the trucking business we had just moved to Oklahoma City. That was about 40 years ago, still here, guess you could say we're Okies now, our 3 daughters grew up here, married Okies, their kids grew up, married Okies, and now we have great grandkids, Okies of course.

That's been my life, before the Navy, during the Navy, and after the Navy. I'm 78 now, my wife and I are in good health, both retired, I build furniture in my garage, end tables, coffee tables, entertainment centers, dressers, things like this for our kids and grandkids. Keeps me busy, but I think I'll semi-retire from this too.

That's my story, hope you enjoyed it

Jerry Nicholas, Oklahoma City, OK 4/22/20

INSIDE THE WARDROOM

This article came to us from a former officer Ensign Lindsey of the USS Rankin and confirmed as being pretty much ditto on the Yancey.

The wardroom was a pretty strange place. Very structured by rank. I had forgotten those details, and I'm guessing that a lot of enlisted wouldn't know anything about them.

The napkin rings were unusual. The napkins were table linens, but they were only washed once a week or so. After a meal, you just rolled them up and returned them to the napkin ring. We dined in the wardroom, which also served as an off-duty lounge and living room. The wardroom was nicely appointed and equipped with a couch, a few comfortable chairs and a television set. Most importantly this was the only cabin on the ship that was air conditioned, which became a place of refuge on hot muggy days spent in the Caribbean and summers in Norfolk. All officers, except for those on duty, dined at the same time. We were seated according to rank (denotes official position in armed forces). The XO—president of the mess—sat at the head of the table, then department heads, then Lieutenant Junior Grades (LTJG) and Ensigns seated according to rank.

On board Rankin LTJGs and Ensigns were referred to as “junior officers,” thus providing a degree of separation from the “senior officers” (department heads). Technically they weren't senior officers, as this term is reserved for Commander, Captain and Admiral ranks. Meals were formal, served on china, real silverware, tablecloths and cloth napkins. To find my place at the table all I had to do was locate the “Ensign Lindsey” napkin ring placed at my appointed place at the table. As the newest man on board, and the most junior, my seat was at the far end of the table. I gradually moved up as officers above me transferred and officers junior to me reported on board. Stewards served meals, like a waiter in a restaurant.....continued on page 4

USS Yancey Reunion Group



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A Newsletter Exclusively
for Former USS Yancey
(AKA-93) Sailors & their
Families

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THE WORLD IS OUR BEACHHEAD

Shipmates Who Have Passed

Ben Hunter Signalman 1944 -1945 Deceased 4/21/2020	John A. Landwehr Seebee 1946 Operation High Jump Deceased 5/12/2018	Marshall Lundberg LTJG 1965-1968 Deceased 11/24/2019	Jere Retallack SN 1963-1965 Deceased 6/17/20
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INSIDE THE WARDROOM continued

Steward is the rate, i.e., title of enlisted rank whose job it was to maintain the wardroom, cook & serve meals to officers and clean officer country. It felt surreal—I wasn't accustomed to having "servants." There was almost a "class distinction" between officers and enlisted, which by tradition and practice was the way Navy ships were. It had to do with respect for authority and discipline, so the regulations said. On board Rankin the distinction between senior and junior officers was distinct and clear, although not formally stated. We junior officers referred to department heads as senior officers because they enjoyed privileges we didn't have, like not having to stand underway or in port watches. Senior officers were all "lifers," the term used to denote a career officer. Most of the junior officers served a three-year tour, then back to civilian life.