

A newsletter exclusively for former USS YANCEY SAILORS

YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 10, Issue 1

April 2006

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS YANCEY AKA-93



Special Points of Interest

- *Yancey's history continues as the cover story. If you remember any of these events, please tell us about them.*
- *Hank Diebel tells about getting "side tracked" while getting his quarters ready for the arrival of his wife and children. See Mail Call on page three.*
- *Ted Semprini wasn't such a popular guy with his shipmates! Find out why in his letter to Mail Call on page three.*
- *On page four George Rohrman shares his correspondence with a former shipmate's daughter.*
- *Two stories of best and worst memories are on page five. Let's hear your memories too!*
- *Rick Chester sent in a picture taken on Iwo Jima in 2006. See page five.*

WRECK OF THE YANCEY (AR-302)

Continued from January 2006

Yancey reached Port Chalmers, New Zealand, on 22 February and departed that port on 5 March, bound for Samoa. Subsequently departing Pago Pago on 27 March bound for Hawaii with YTL-153 in tow, the attack cargo ship arrived at Pearl Harbor on 14 April. She soon got underway for the west coast of the United States and reached Port Hueneme on 2 May 1947. There, Yancey disembarked a unit of a construction battalion ("Seabees") and discharged TF 68 cargo. Her duty with TF 68 thus completed on 15 May. Yancey reported for duty to Commander, Service Division (ServDiv) 12.

Shortly thereafter, Yancey shifted to San

Pedro before heading to Terminal Island, Calif., for restricted availability on 20 May. After that period of repairs and alterations, Yancey returned to Port Hueneme to load cargo earmarked for shipment to Pearl Harbor and Guam.

Over the next decade, Yancey operated between west coast ports and advanced bases in the Western Pacific (WestPac), including ports in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. During that period, she also supported United Nations (UN) actions in Korea, operating in support of the initial attempts to fight the North Korean aggressors; in the first UN counter-offensives in early 1951; and in the final phases of activity that preceded the armistice in the

summer of 1953. Finally, after having served continuously since 1944, Yancey was deactivated at San Francisco in December 1957 and placed out of commission in March 1968.

Her sojourn in reserve, however, proved short. On 17 November 1961, as part of President John F. Kennedy's bid to build up the United States Navy, Yancey was recommissioned at Portland, Oreg., Capt. Gordon R. Keating in command.

Soon to join the Atlantic Fleet, Yancey departed San Diego on 12 January 1962 and reached Norfolk, her new assigned home port, on 2 February, there becoming the newest member of Amphibious Squadron (PhibRon) 12.

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Over the ensuing months, Yancey took part in a varied slate of exercises and maneuvers.

Yancey participated in Operation "Philbex" in the spring of 1962, operating off Roosevelt Roads and Vieques, Puerto Rico. She later paid a port call at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands before she returned to Roosevelt Roads and reloaded equipment and embarked marines slated to return to Morehead City, N.C. Subsequently returning to Norfolk on 2 May, Yancey touched briefly at Charleston, S.C., to take on additional landing craft before returning to the Tidewater region to spend the remainder of May.

Subsequently visiting Boston, Mass., and Rockland, Maine, Yancey participated in amphibious boat exercises at Provincetown, Mass., before she got underway on 24 July for Davisville, RI. There she loaded a Seabee unit and their equipment and headed eastward, bound for Rota, Spain.

Offloading one Seabee unit and unloading another, Yancey then paused briefly at Gibraltar before touching at Lisbon on the return leg of her voyage to the United States. Disembarking the Seabees and unloading their equipment at Davisville, Yancey headed back to Norfolk reaching her home port on 18 August 1962.

On 17 October, Yancey again sailed from Norfolk and proceeded to Morehead City, NC to load ma-

rines and equipment for Operation "PhiBrigLex" (Amphibious Brigade Exercises) slated for Vieques, Puerto Rico. Upon arrival, the attack cargo ship loaded immediately and set out to join the rest of the ships in the squadron. She soon was fighting her way through Hurricane Ella, which caused her to alter her course to avoid the most severe part of the storm.

Meanwhile, a crisis was brewing in the Caribbean. American reconnaissance had disclosed the presence of Soviet offensive missiles on Cuban soil. Accordingly, on 23 October 1962, President Kennedy ordered a naval quarantine of Cuba to make sure that no more offensive weapons were taken to that island. Yancey supported the ensuing naval operations in waters near Cuba as the United States and the Soviet Union stood, in Secretary of State Dean Rusk's words, "eyeball to eyeball."

After the removal of the offensive missiles, tension relaxed, and Yancey resumed her former routine of operations along the eastern seaboard and into the Caribbean. Over the next eight years, Yancey deployed regularly to the Mediterranean, where she joined in multilateral NATO exercises and supported the United States 6th Fleet's presence in that area of the world.

To be continued in the July 2006 issue.

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The YANCEY MEMORIES is the official publication of the USS YANCEY AKA-93 Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the YANCEY. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of article submitted for publication. It would be a monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the submitter to research each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space and grammar limitations.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

A NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVELY FOR
FORMER USS YANCEY SAILORS

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**USS YANCEY
2006 REUNION**

NOVEMBER 2-5

CHICAGO, IL

HILTON LISLE HOTEL



WELCOME MAT

The following shipmate has been located since the last newsletter. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

Roger Sutman
8979 Quailridge Rd
Port Orchard, WA 98367
360-876-6520



TAPS

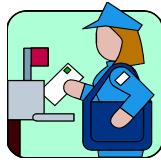
The Yancey Memories was notified of the following shipmates' deaths. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the families of the deceased. Anyone who knows of a deceased shipmate, or learns of one, please notify ML & RS, Inc so their names can be included in TAPS and be added to the Honor Roll.

Gayle Ellis
(1951-55) SHSN Ship Service
Died October 17, 2005

Paul Meador
Died November 12, 2005

Bryon Emery
(1944-46) SN 3rd Div
Died January 21, 2003

NAVY TRADITIONS EXPLAINED
Between the Devil and the Deep: In wooden ships, the "devil" was the longest seam of the ship. It ran from the bow to the stern. When at sea and the "devil" had to be caulked, the sailor sat in a bosun's chair to do so. He was suspended between the "devil" and the sea—the "deep"—a very precarious position, especially when the ship was underway.



MAIL CALL

Yancey Memories,

I reported aboard the Yancey on 23 January 1957 as a YN1, and stayed to put her out of commission and was transferred 1 March 1958 to Taiwan.

I remember some wild liberties we had in Alameda and Oakland. That is until my wife arrived. (That's another story). I found quarters in the Navy Housing in Berkley. When my furniture arrived I asked a couple of shipmates to help me move in. We did get the furniture in the house. Things were going fine until we started on the beer. When my wife arrived that same day she found out that the refrigerator wasn't plugged in and that there was no milk or food for the kids. Also the washing machine was filled with beer and ice. Not only that, but the bed was only half together and the toys that needed to be put together were not properly done. Things were a mess. Needless to say my wife was in no mood for a proper greeting, especially with a 2-year old daughter and one that was only a few months old. It took a couple of days for me to get things organized. Eventually she forgave us. Years later she joked about it. Things turned out well for we were together for 55 years and had four daughters. If any of you shipmates can remember this event let me know. (They call this age)...

I wish I could make the Chicago trip, but too far for me, as I live in Los Angeles, CA...and too cold.

Henry "Hank" T. Diebel, YN1 (Ret)

ML&RS, Inc.

I served on the USS Yancey (AKA-93) from 1964 to June 1965, on the USS Krishna (ARL-38) from June 1965 to June 1966, and on the USS Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. (DD-

850) from July 1966 to July 1967 in Operations Division as a Radioman.

Question please. Do you or anybody else out there know where I can get a plastic model kit (about 12—15 inches) of any one of these ships, or at least their sister ships?

For many years I did not give it much thought, but now my grandchildren are asking questions etc, and I can only show them pictures. I would be very grateful and gladly pay for these kits (within reason).

Respectfully,
Jack Snow
73 New Portland Rd
Gorham, ME 04038

Hi,

My name is Ted Semprini. I served during the Korean War on the Yancey, 1951 to December 5th, 1953. When I served aboard the Yancey, Ken Groom was on the ship at the same time. During inspection, my first, the Captain checked where the mess cook's department was and decided that my bunk and locker were outstanding. So, he told someone with him that I would get 7 extra days leave and 7 extra days liberty. Also, he ordered that everyone's bunk and locker on this ship will look like this bunk and locker. The Ensign in charge of our division told me on the trip to Japan, which was coming up, "Don't stand too close to the railing!!!"

In May 1953, Ken gave me the extra 7 days leave to go home and get married. Fifty-three years later, I still haven't forgiven Ken!!!

The picture I am enclosing happened on a Sunday afternoon. (See page 5) I was standing next to the sailor taking the picture. He took the film into Sasebo to be processed. The Japanese were selling the picture to everyone. So, the fellow who took the picture decided he should get something out of it, and they made a deal.

I crossed the BIG pond 5 times over and 5 times back, stopping at

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Hawaii 10 times. Each time we loaded up with pineapple. To this day I cannot look a pineapple in the eye.

Yours truly,
Ted Semprini, GMSN

Editor's Note: The following two e-mails are from George Rohrman's correspondence with the daughter of a former Yancey shipmate, Lt. Thompson.

Dear Mr. Rohrman,

Thank you for writing. I had just about given up on receiving a reply to my posting on the Korean War Project site. My father passed away in 1972 from acute leukemia. My mother passed away 2½ years ago from lung cancer and I guess I am looking for another source to learn about my father since she is gone. My father's sister is still alive and she and I discussed trying to attend the reunion this last fall, but her health restricts her travel at times. She is 85. I also have a son (age 14) who would love to learn more about his grandfather and his contribution during the Korean War. He is interested in history and really studies all of the previous wars intently. Of course, the war in Iraq has all of us thinking of the men and women who are serving now as well as the contributions of the many men and women before them. Their sacrifice and yours is appreciated here.

My father was a good and decent husband and father. I remember some stories about the time he served on the Yancey. My family was living in Japan when my father became sick in 1972. He was working for American International Underwriters at that time and our family was embarked on a fantastic adventure. My father loved living overseas and returning to Japan. We lived there for 2½ years. We had some time to hear about the trips the Yancey took back and forth from Oakland to Japan. I also remember a story when my father just came

aboard the ship (I think as an engineering officer) and I guess he helped it run into the dock. He told us he knew it was going to happen, but there was no convincing the captain. There was also a story about a sister ship that caught fire one day as it was docked along side of the Yancey. My father said there were explosions and many were tragically burned. It must have been frightening. My mother woke up from a startled sleep and claimed she saw this happening as my father was experiencing it. They were far away from each other, and she had to wait for his return before she knew he was OK. There was a story about a time when the ship traveled through waters containing mines and of the sense of camaraderie among the men when challenged with difficult situations. I can't imagine being as young as you and my father were back then and facing so much. But these are stories told by a father to his child. I don't know if I remember them correctly.

I thank you again for sharing your information with me. I would love to hear anything else anyone could remember about serving on the Yancey during the time my father was there. I also have some pictures I could copy and pass on. I would love to know who his buddies were and if you loved the sea as much as my father did. We are a family who can't live anywhere unless we can get to the ocean. Best wishes to you and your family.

Valarie Thompson
VTH57@aol.com

Editor's Note: Our attempts to get a mailing address and Lt. Thompson's first name did not get a response. If we get any more information, we will share that with you in the next issue.

Mr. Rohrman's reply:

You mentioned trying to go to the reunion, so I take it you already know about the Reunion Service that sponsors the get-togethers.

The last one was in Norfolk, Vir-

ginia on Nov 10 to 14. I attended and there were about 35 men there who were on the ship from 1950 to 1956+/- and about that many more who were on board at different times from 1946 till 1970.

You and your son would be welcome at a reunion. The next one will be in Chicago in November. Many family members attend—some with shipmates and others just as family. I was talking to someone (I forgot who now) about your dad at the last reunion.

The Korean War was the forgotten war. There is a twenty page history of the Yancey from 1946 till it was sunk as a barrier reef off the North Carolina coast and only two paragraphs were about the Korean War period which lasted over three years. We were responsible for delivering A LOT of food stores and even refreshments for the Officers and Enlisted men's clubs in Japan and Korea. The ship received two battle stars—one relating to the "mine" thing and the other for just being there I think. There were no battle stars issued for running into a dock, running over another ship, or being hit by a submarine or anchoring out in the Admiral's Office Building parking lot off Treasure Island in San Francisco Harbor or some other things of interest.

We were not as young as you might think we were. I joined when I was 19 years old, but I was a lot older when I was discharged in 1954. It was the greatest learning experience of my life. That is saying a lot since I have been considered as someone who has had many life experiences. The best thing was, of course, the GI Bill.

My brother and sister were in college by the time I got out of the Navy, and my parents were not poor, but three kids in college at the same time is a burden. I worked and paid my own way, but every time I visited my folks my car would have new tires and be filled up with gasoline and the trunk would be full of canned goods.

Did I mention that I attended the

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School of Architecture at the University of Texas? Maybe you have heard of that school. Perhaps on television Wednesday night the 4th of January—say at the Rose Bowl.

It was a pleasure hearing from you and I hope that I have provided something of interest for you and your family.

George Rohrman

The following stories are responses to our e-mail request for your best or worst memory of your time on the Yancey. Thank you to Leo McCluskey and Dale Hall for their participation. We would love to hear more favorite or worst memories for the next issue. Please send them to ML&RS, Inc at our address on page two.

Best memory onboard the USS Yancey would have to have been the night I returned from liberty in Malta around 11:00 PM, showered and hit the rack. No sooner had I fallen

asleep when the messenger of the watch came down and woke me saying the captain wanted to see me in the wardroom right away. When I looked at my watch I saw it was after midnight. I found a clean pair of dungarees and headed to the wardroom. The captain, executive officer, combat cargo officer and my division officer were seated around the table. I figured I was in deep trouble. The captain invited me to have a seat and passed me the paper that showed my advance to Chief Radioman. Greatest day of my life.

Leo F. McCluskey
RMC USN (Ret)

Since I already mentioned my New Years Eve in San Francisco in the last issue, perhaps my favorite memory is when we would “borrow” several cases of beer from the cargo hold. Someone in the shipfitter’s shop on the fantail had the keys as we had to weigh the CO2 bottles stored down there. At that

time I believe the “Mighty Yancey” was reduced to carrying booze and cars to Japan. Anyway, we’d ice the bottles with CO2 and have a great party in the shop.

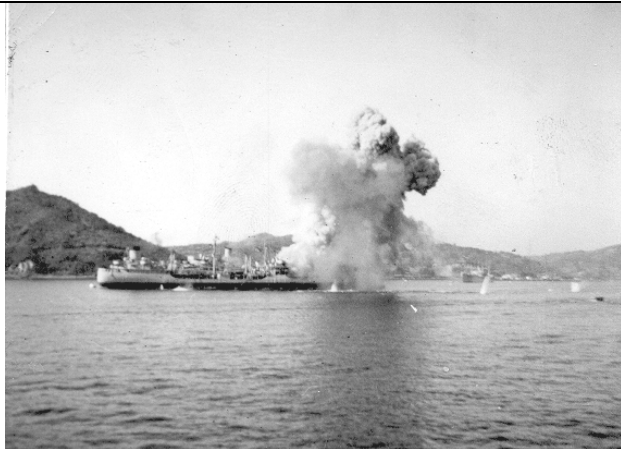
Certainly my worst memory is my first mid-watch coming back from Japan. First I couldn’t see a thing and reported to the boson instead of the OD. He said, “Not me, stupid. He’s over there.” Then I shined my flashlight on the logbook and everyone yelled at me. I didn’t know you should cup your hand around it and shield their eyes from the light. But worst of all was when the ship rolled and I fell against a switchboard on the bulkhead and sounded general quarters! The boson threw me out of the way, swore at me while switching off the alarm and announced “All clear” to the ship. Needless to say, the next hour I stood quietly until my eyes adjusted, found the OD, reported “All secure” and wrote the same in the log book. I took a lot of ribbing for a while after that.

Dale Hall DCFA ‘56-57



Here is a picture taken from Iwo Jima in 2006 of a wrecked Maru (ship) off the western beach.

Rick Chester



Ted Semprini’s picture from his letter on page three.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance remaining after 01/06
\$209.53

Funds received since 01/06
\$369.50

Funds available for 04/06
\$579.03

Funds expended for 04/06
\$354.60

Remaining balance for 07/06
\$224.43

Funds will be needed for the next newsletter. Contributions to the Yancey Memories can be made to ML&RS at the address on page 2. Be sure to state that the donation is for Yancey Memories newsletter.

LIST OF UNOFFICIAL US NAVY CERTIFICATES

Through the years, the wish to mark other seagoing milestones has given birth to certificates for all kinds of distinctions. Most of them are variations on the shellback theme; they document, typically in salty language, passing certain places for the first time. Some of these time-honored traditions that have come to light include:

Antarctic Circle

Crossing of the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude). Also known as the "Royal Domain of the Penguin" or "Blue Nose."

Arctic Circle

Crossing of the Arctic Circle (66-32 North latitude). Also known as the "Northern Domain of the Polar Bear" or "Blue Nose."

Blue Nose

Crossing of the Arctic Circle (66-32 North latitude). See also "Arctic Circle," "Frozen Stiff," and "Northern Domain of the Polar Bear."

Caterpillar Club

Anyone who had made an unscheduled parachute jump from a disabled plane. *Caterpillar* denotes use of a silkworm's product in parachute construction. Club members wear a gold caterpillar on civies only, the color of the caterpillar's jeweled eyes is determined by the circumstances, i.e. ruby eyes show that the wearer has survived a midair collision.

Century Club

Pilots who have completed their 100th carrier landing. Also applicable to hurricane hunters who have flown through winds of 100 miles per hour or more.

Deep Dive Diploma

Presented to crew members for first dives, last dives, etc.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning of a ship, land unit, or squadron.

Deep Dive Diploma

Issued to crew of USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) during the boat's first dive.

Double Centurions

Pilots who have completed their 200th carrier landing.

Emerald Shellback

Crossing of the Equator at the

Greenwich Meridian.

Frozen Stiff

Members who have crossed the Arctic Circle and are entitled to all privileges of this frozen realm of blizzards, including freezing, shivering, starving and any other privileged miseries that can possibly be bestowed.

Golden Dragon

Crossing of the 180th Meridian (International Date Line).

Golden Shellback

Crossing of the Equator at the 180th Meridian.

Goldfish Club

Pilots who ditch and have to take to a life raft. If they spend more than 24 hours on the raft, they become "Sea Squatters."

Great Lakes

Cruising the St. Lawrence Seaway and Great Lakes.

Icelandic Domain

Commemorating service in Iceland.

Mossback

Traversing around Cape Horn.

Neutron Owners Certificate

Plank owner certificate issued to crew of USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) on 17 Jan. 1955 at latitude 40 20' 46.

Northern Domain of the Polar Bear

Crossing the Arctic Circle (66- 32 North latitude). See also "Arctic Circle" and "Frozen Stiff."

Order of Magellan

Going around the World.

Order of the Ditch

Transiting the Panama Canal. See also "Panama Canal."

Order of the Nuclear Navy

Designates the bearer of this wallet-sized card as an honorary member of the USS *Nautilus'* ships company. It was issued to personnel outside of the crew who had "performed feats underwater" while aboard the vessel for a visit.

Order of the Rock

Transit through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Order of the Square Rigger

Service on any square rigger ship.

Panama Canal

Transit through the Panama Ca-

nal. Also "Order of the Ditch."

Persian Excursion

Persian Gulf service

Plank Owner

Commissioning a Ship or Shore Command Special Honorary title for those certificates requiring it.

Pollywog

Member who has not previously "crossed the Line" (Equator).

Realm of the Czars

Cruising the Black Sea.

Red Nose

Member who has crossed the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude).

Royal Domain of the Emperor Penguin

Crossing the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude). Also "Antarctic Circle" and "Red Nose."

Royal Experiment of Guinea Pigs at Bikini Atoll

Operation Crossroads, 1946

Royal Order of Whale Bangers

Crew members who accidentally fired at a whale, unfortunately mistaking it for a submarine.

Safari to Suez

Transiting the Suez Canal.

Sea Squatters

Member who takes to the water and spend more than 24 hours on a life raft.

Shellback

Crossing the Equator. Special Gold Shellback title for crossing at the International Date Line, special Emerald Shellback title for crossing at the Greenwich Meridian.

Spanish Main

Cruising the Caribbean.

Suez Canal

Transit through the Suez Canal. Also "Safari to Suez."

Note: If you are a Navy veteran who has received a certificate not listed above, and would like the certificate considered for inclusion in this list, send a photocopy of the certificate with a brief explanation concerning its issuance to:

Web Site Committee
Naval Historical Center
805 Kidder Breese Street
Washington Navy Yard
Washington DC 20374-5060