

YANCEY MEMORIES

Volume 16, Issue 3

July 2012



YANCEY CO's HIANA HARBOR ENTRY DURING DOM.REP '65

By Win Bryson

The 'Yancey Memories' stories of the 1965 Dom.Rep. operations sure prompt more Yancey recollections. As a junior officer, quarters now move to under the stars on the '04 deck. My strongest remembrances however, are of our CO, Capt. Tofalo. Unlike some '4-strippers' whose year in-command of the Yancey was their first 'deep draft' experience, Capt. Tofalo was one of those rare birds - a real shiphandler. It's the stuff that inspires crews.

Dom.Rep. accounts don't really include the drama (and risks), as the (big) Yancey approached the (tiny) Hiana Harbor at Santo Domingo. It's one thing to leave loved ones dockside in San Juan and reverse course for an emergency, but it's quite another thing being 'enjoined' in that emergency. The channel into

Hiana Harbor at Santo Domingo looked no wider than the Yancey's length, and there were no tugs or pilots available. And the turning-basin inside the harbor looked about 2-Yanceys long and 2-Yancey's wide, surrounded by shallows on one side, piers on the other, a few buildings then jungle dead-ahead - plus the river, down which bodies were reported to have been seen floating.

Approaching Santo Domingo, I believe I recall a 'huddle' for 'the mooring plan', which included notifying Engineering to expect rapid, extreme bell-changes. Then Capt. Tofalo off-loaded several LCMs outside the harbor and waited for them to take position together inside the harbor. He then took the Yancey dead-center - and fast - into the channel. Once inside,

he dropped (the port?) anchor on the fly; backed down hard-enough to bounce the stern and bring the yellow bottom mud roiling up around her, then ordered the LCMs to push her bow with full power. The Captain had stopped and pivoted the Yancey almost in place in the middle of the harbor. Settling her with bow to the sea, and maintaining all boilers for 'ready to go' at a moment's notice.

Then the embarkations and off-loadings began.

Capt. Tofalo took the Yancey into that Hiana Harbor twice like this. That's not 'luck'.

As a side-note, had the Yancey anchored outside the harbor, both the material off-loading and evacuee boarding would have been much more hazardous as well

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

YANCEY STORIES	1 - 2
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	3
MAIL CALL	3
SHIP'S STORE PHOTO	3
PHOTOS FROM 1962	4

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"Our Reunions Work So You don't Have To"

(Continued from page 1)

as time-consuming. So the risk of entering Hiana proved well worth it, even though being moored just a stone-throw from shore (and the jungle) had its own risk - I believe we had at least one 40mm mount armed and manned, and I think (but not sure) the Deck Watch carried side-arms. No picnic.

(OTHER) TOUR HIGHLIGHTS OF YANCEY'S CO, CAPT. F. TOFALO

The ship's radar routinely had problems or breakdowns - constant headaches for ETs and Techs. Then Capt. Tofalo 'went to Washington'. Soon, the Yancey actually got a new one installed...much to the relief of those ETs and Techs'.

During a refueling exercise in the Caribbean while in formation, the Yancey had a DD [destroyer] alongside with both fuel lines and bos'n's chair rigged between the ships. All of a sudden the Commodore ordered a formation turn. Instantly, Capt. Tofalo (senior to the DD's Commanding Officer), grabbed the bull-horn and rushed to the starboard wing of the Bridge and ordered the DD to make her turn in small 5-degree increments, on Capt. Tofalo command, and as he ordered the Yancey's helm's increment turns. Everyone held their breath...for about 15-minutes...until finally the two ships, still attached, settled on their new course together. It worked perfectly. Once on the new course, the exercise concluded normally...except that the Commodore (who ordered the turn) radioed his sincerest apology.

Mid-Watch [mid-night - 4am] while underway in the Caribbean and steaming independently, CIC radar tracked a 'constant bearing' [collision course] contact approaching off the port bow. The Capt. was called to the Bridge as the contact drew close. The Yancey, now

having to maintain course and speed under International Rules of the Road, Capt. Tofalo repeatedly tried to raise the other ship by radio, signal light, and searchlight (to have it change course in compliance with those same International Rules of the Road). No response. At some point, the Collision alarm sounded, and along with blasts of the Yancey's whistle, I 'hit the deck' running (from a deep sleep) and could feel the Yancey bouncing violently from backing-down hard. While running to my emergency station I looked forward and saw 'ship' on both sides of our bow, low in the water, passing to starboard and VERY close ahead. In extremis, Capt. Tofalo had saved not only the Yancey, but that other \$\$\$@# ship - the Yancey's reinforced bow (for Antarctica) would have neatly cut it in half. Afterwards, the scuttlebutt was that the Yancey's searchlight beam revealed there was no one on the other ship's bridge. A report was made but I never heard of any action or reply.

WHERE'S THE YANCEY'S SHIP'S BELL AND BUILDER'S PLATES?

August 1, 1990, the Yancey was sunk off North Carolina as 'Artificial Reef 302', her permanent environmental duty. Mid-1990s, I spoke to the North Carolina Wreck Diving Webmaster about his great underwater pho-

tos of the Yancey, and chatted about what parts of the Yancey his photos showed. (His 'vent' was actually the main deck ladder enclosure to the Mess Deck (portside, #3 hold). I asked if the Ship's Bell or Builder's Plates were still 'aboard'. He didn't know.

The Ship's Bell (forecastle behind the anchor windlass) and the two Builder's plates - one on the 01-level forward bulkhead (outside the Wardroom), and the other on the forward Engine room bulkhead above the watch station & board - where I had stared at it 100-times while on Engine room Watch: brass, about 6-inches x 12-inches, with engraved text painted black: "Hull 280, Moore Drydock, Oakland, Calif., launched July 8, 1944".

Later, I read that the Washington Navy Yard archives U.S. Navy ships' bells and manufacturers' plates when ships are scrapped. Inquiring, the Washington Navy Yard Archives replied neither bell nor plates were there.

In 2008, I learned the Washington Navy Yard 'loans-out' ships' bells, and presently, the USS Yancey's bell is at the Naval Technical Training Center in Meridian, Mississippi. 'Still working on where the plates are.

Does anyone have any ideas how to get to photo the Yancey Bell, and maybe video it striking 8-bells?

Win Bryson
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Yancey Bell

A Word from Your Coordinator

This is the last newsletter until after the 2012 reunion in San Diego. Since we were close to not having the reunion last year because many waited until the last minute to sign up, I want to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to attend if possible and sign up sooner rather than later. The previous reunion in San Diego in 2001 was terrific with great attendance so let's try to do the same or better this year.

I hope everyone is well and enjoying the Spring and Summer. If I can answer any questions you have about the reunion or anything else please feel free to email me or give me a call. Otherwise I will see you in October.

Thanks,
George Clifton

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

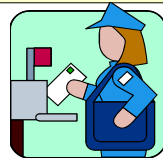


Balance after 04/12	\$246.34
Funds received since 04/12	\$10.00
Funds available for 07/12	\$256.34
Funds expended for 07/12	\$406.69
Balance for 10/12	- \$150.35*

***Funds will be needed for the next issue.**

This newsletter is being mailed to everyone on the mailing list along with the reunion registration packet. You may also access the newsletter on line at www.mlrsinc.com/yancey. Next issue will again be mailed only to those who have requested a paper copy.

Send your contributions to Premier Reunion Services at our address on the cover of the newsletter. Make checks to Premier Reunion Services and be sure to note that is for Yancey Memories.



MAIL CALL

Hello,

I just ran across your website and I have found it very interesting. I was stationed on board the Yancey on January 21, 1970, the night it went into the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Since I was right out of A School and on board for only a couple of weeks, I went through an experience that was unbelievable, to say the least.

New to the Navy and really anything maritime, I was too dumb to be afraid. Our division officer, Warrant Officer Radcliff, noticing this about me recruited me to help rig temporary lighting on the main deck. We struggled in the wind, it was really howling at 60 mph, because it was so necessary for the bo'suns mates to allow them to see as they struggled to tie the ship to the bridge. Without their efforts the ship was headed for disaster as it was being pushed by the wind and waves toward one of the rocky man-made islands where the bridge went under and became a tunnel. The

bo'suns were successful, the ship's forward progress was stopped, and that at least saved the ship and crew from a real maritime disaster involving loss of life and the ship.

Of course, the ship did eventually knock down the section of the bridge that it was now pounding incessantly, which led to that section of bridge eventually giving way, which was a disaster of sorts, but which did not, thank God, cause any loss of life. It was quite a night, to say the least. We all breathed a huge sigh of relief as we swung through the section of bridge that was knocked down, because it meant we were now on the open sea and able to get underway to safety.

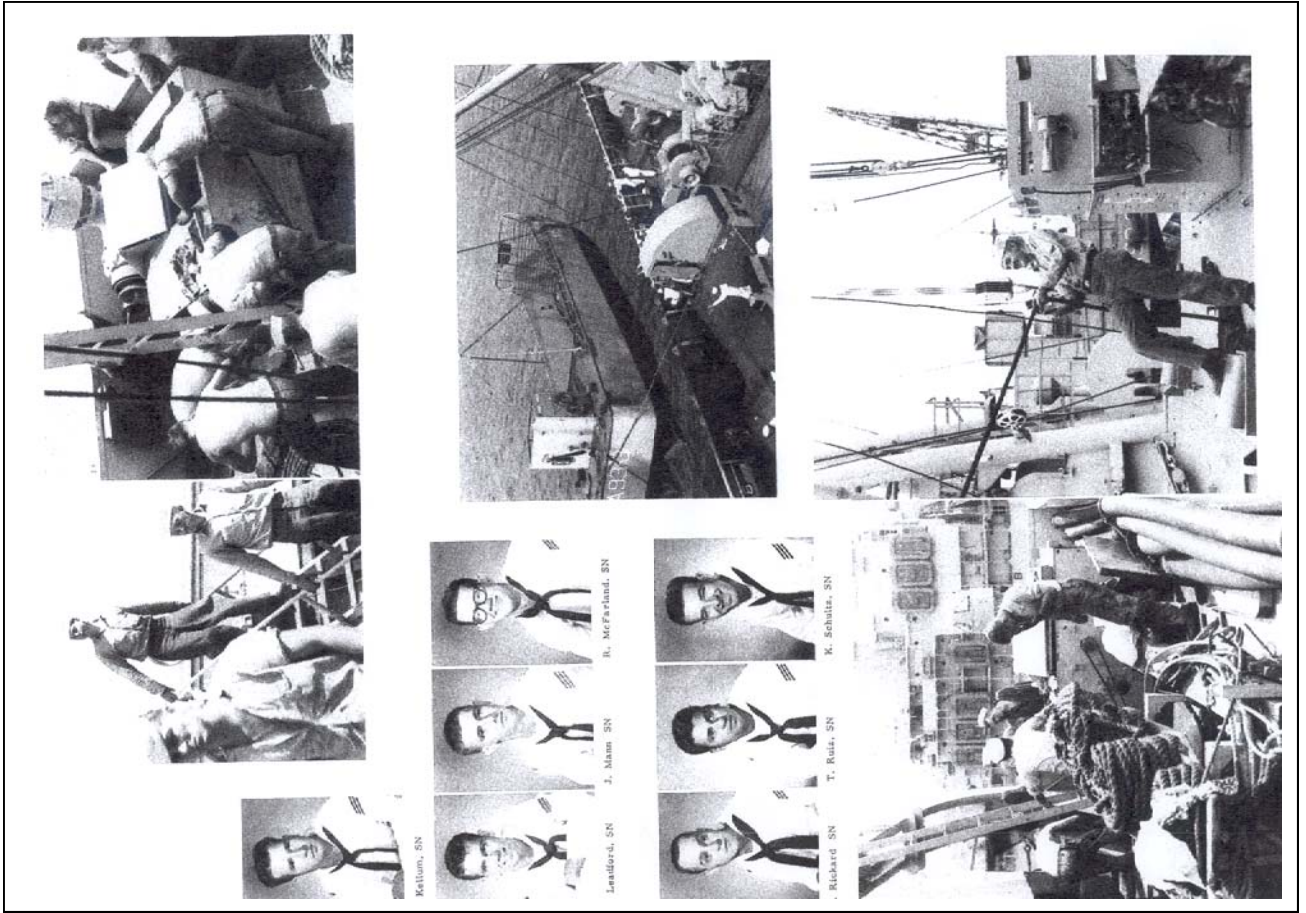
I have often thought about that night and maybe trying to connect with my old shipmates, who really were quite a bunch of interesting guys, but I never got around to it until now. Just too tied up with career and raising a family, I confess. I would really like to connect with my old shipmates. I still chuckle to myself when I think of our experiences on the beach once we got over to the Med.

Yours truly,
Steve Lynch



From Ship's Store, Sept. 1966 from Win Bryson

FROM THE USS YANCEY AKA 93 MED CRUISE 1962
Submitted by Phil Messer EN2 Then, Retired 1979 as ENCM



McIlroy, SN

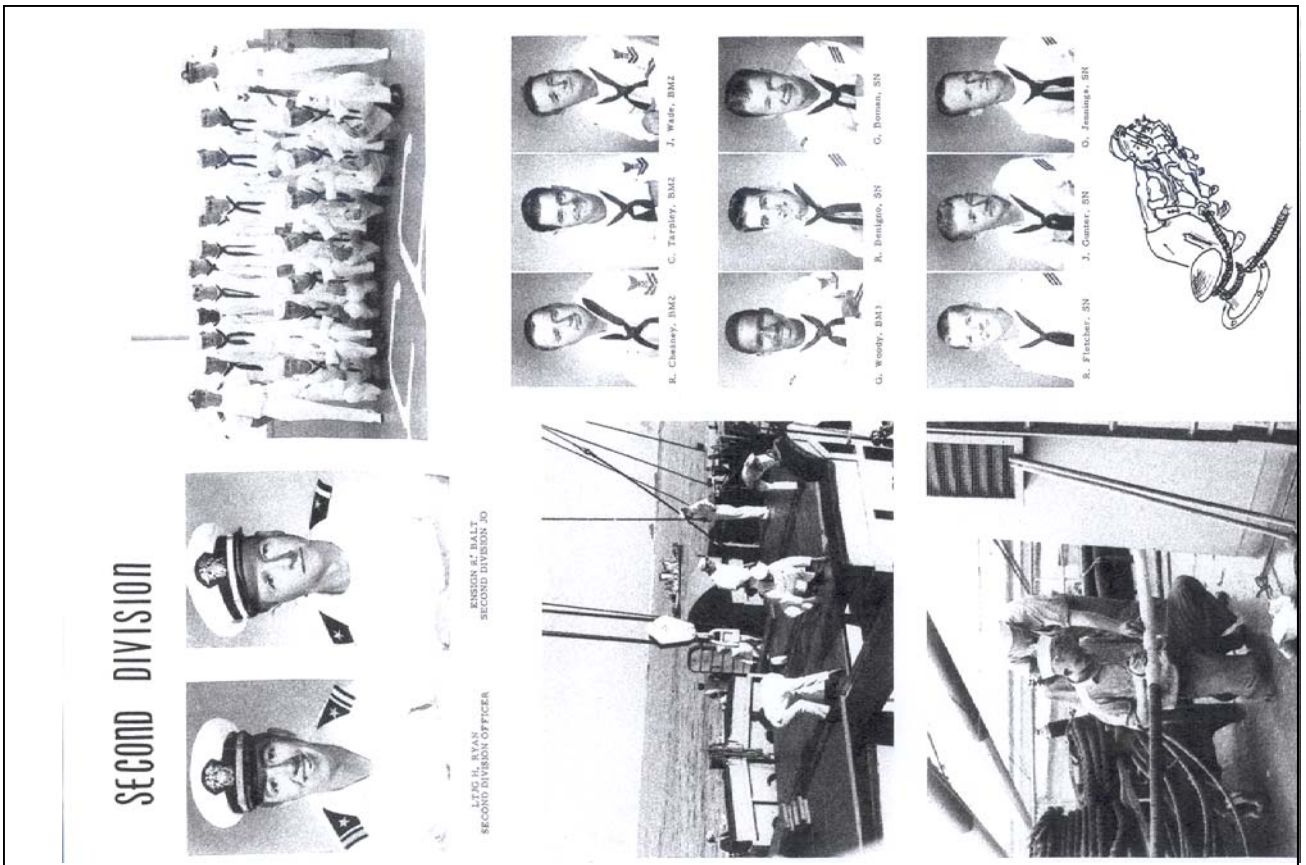
Leathers, SN

J. Mann, SN

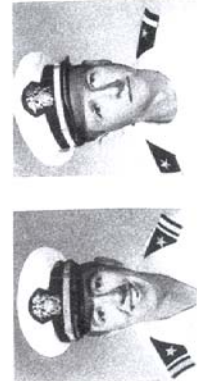
Rickard, SN

T. Rusk, SN

K. Schultz, SN



SECOND DIVISION



LTJG H. RYAN
SECOND DIVISION OFFICER

ENSON, R. BALT
SECOND DIVISION JO

B. Chausery, BM2

C. Tarpley, BM2

J. White, BM2

G. Wrenley, BM1

R. Benington, SN

G. Thomas, SN

R. Finckler, SN

J. Gorman, SN

G. Jennings, SN

