

# U.S.S. MARS (AFS-1)

NEWSLETTER NO. 4

SPRING 1999



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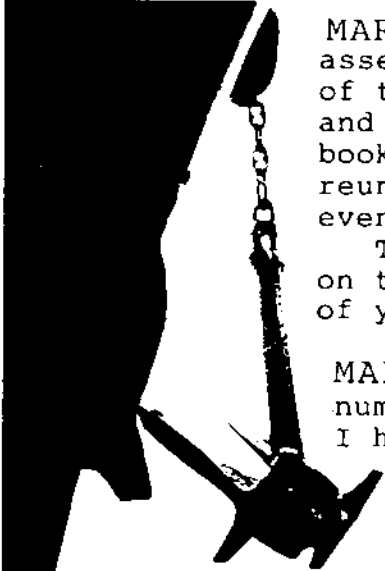


## MARS SHIPMATES

Gentleman, our organization continues to grow, as I mail this newsletter to 215 past shipmates on the mailing list. I am trying to keep up and now have the use of e-mail, via my daughter. Our latest reunion notices have been published in the American Legion and VFW magazines. As this newsletter goes in the mail, the Mars reunion notice should appear in Shift Colors, the Navy retired newsletter. This notice will bring a big response and we should have a substantial amount of new names in the next newsletter. If you are trying to make contact with a past shipmate, let me know. I will inform you if I have a address. We also have members who are willing to search out names through the inter-net services.

Up-dated reunion information is on pages 2 and 11. Will have newsletter NO.5 in the mail the first week of September. This will allow everyone time to make their final reunion plans.

Mail continues to come in for the enjoyable "MAIL CALL" section of the newsletter. If we haven't heard from you yet, drop a few lines and let us know how you are doing.



MARS HISTORY With the help from many of you, I now have assembled a substantial amount of information and pictures of the Mars and her crews. This has been arranged by dates and placed into three ring binders. I have other cruise books lined-up, that I hope to copy and have at our up-coming reunion in October. Please continue to send information of events that took place on the Mars. Pictures are most welcome.

The last four pages of this newsletter, starts a section on the ship's history. Hope this brings back some memories of your days on the Mars.

MAILING LIST Over this past year, I have received numerous requests for a mailing list of the ship's crew. I have held off on this list until we have made contact with as many past shipmates as possible, before the reunion. The next newsletter (September), will contain all the names, addresses, phone numbers, E-mail, for everyone on the mailing list. If you have E-mail and want it listed, make sure to let me know. Please let me know of any additions or any deletions to your address/phone number before August 1st.

USS SYLVANIA (AFS-2) REUNION: Once again, the crews of the Mars and Niagara Falls are invited to the Sylvania reunion in Gatlinburg, TN, on 17-20 June. Contact John D. Pierce (517) 886-5629 for information. John has sent out joint reunion notices for the AFS-1,2 and 3 over the past year to veterans organizations and 30 of the most populated states in the U.S. John's efforts have helped us locate some of our crew members.

ERNIE (DUTCH) MUELLER  
515 Hawthorne Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45205  
(513) 921-0310

**October 15 - 17**

**Welcome**

**Cincinnati/Covington**

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As this newsletter goes in the mail, it's just five short months before our reunion. For those who plan to attend and have not sent in your registration, please do so by 31 August.

Dutch will need some idea on how many plan to attend and what days you plan to be in town.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME:

Pack a bag, buy a ticket and find your way to the Riverview Hotel. The airport is a short ten minutes from the hotel. Registration or not, feel free to stop by anytime the weekend of the reunion.

We have had some requests for information on the sharing of rooms at the hotel. If you want to share the cost of a room, write or give Everett a call and he will help coordinate this for you.

BUSINESS MEETING: We will have a meeting at the reunion. Plans for the Mars organization will be discussed.

Do we have someone who would like to coordinate a reunion? At this time, about 50% of the crew live on the West Coast. WE NEED YOUR IN-PUT.

If you are unable to attend this reunion, send your comments to Dutch or Everett.

**Reunion Headquarters**



**Riverview  
Hotel**

668 Fifth Street  
Covington, KY  
(606) 491-1200

RIVERVIEW HOTEL reservations cut-off date is September 21.  
1-800 292-2079 Booking #4239.



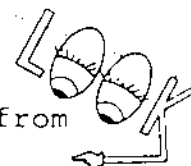
Frank Hart (1963-67) will have a Mars slide presentation. He has many pictures of a much younger crew. If you have slides to share, make contact with Frank. See page 11 for more information.

**Make Waves On The Ohio**



EARLY REGISTRATIONS

have been received from these shipmates.



- Earnie & Caroline Breeding (1963-65)
- Michael J. Ciaccio (1973-75)
- Steve & Judi Grossman (1963-65)
- Frank R. Hart (1963-67)
- Dennis M. Hatfield (1963-65)
- Ron & Yukie Henning (1967-70)
- George E. Johnson (1963-66)
- Everett & Teruko Jones (1965-68)
- Elmer & Colleen Kaiser (1973-76)
- Gerald & Carol Kessinger (1963-65 (1963-65))
- Bill & Eleanor Lada (1965-67)
- John & Sharon LaPage (1965-67)
- John Milliken (1968-69)
- Ernie & Betty Mueller (1968-69)
- Terry & Teresita Prinner (1969-75)
- Frank Rawl & Judy (1965-67)
- Robert E. Samson (1963-66)
- Walt & Sue Sirman (1963-66)
- Michael R. Toy (1963-65)
- George C. Watkins (1965-66)

An order for T-shirts and ball caps, with the Mars picture/logo is being worked on. Prices will be close to cost. Contact Dutch to place your order.

# mail call

-3-  
COMMENTS . . . . . from the crew



Tex Western was much too modest in his letter. He was Mr. Mars. He was in Long beach during the pre-commissioning detail and after fitting out he was the advance man in Yokosuka. In addition to being the Supply Department advance man, he was responsible for finding housing for those whose dependents went to Yoko. I had asked that my car be carried aboard the ship. This was denied until the day we sailed. Thus my wife was in San Diego, without transportation. We left Sept 1, 1964. On September 20, I received a message that she would be in Japan on the 21<sup>st</sup> and asking that I meet her. When we pulled in on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, she was standing on the pier with Tex and several other wives who had already arrived.

Tex was in Yoko to receive material from various far eastern sources. We were taking the place of three types of ships. AKS, AF and AVS. Budgets were so tight that we had to take aboard the store that had been on Jupiter, the last AVS. These were all over Japan. There was a mobile support activity in Sasebo. It was based on several barges. Tex and a small detachment had to round up and pre-stage all these stores. Then just as we got everything on Board USS Ranger burned up her boilers. She was brought into SRF Yoko and moored at the next pier from Mars. An umbilical cord was rigged with steam lines and electrical cables. Our Snipes ran a full steaming watch round the clock for three weeks, until Ranger could get her on plant back on line.

Earnie R. Breeding 1963-65

\*\*\* Leaving the MARS in November 1970, I reported to Naval Regional Medical Center Oakland (Oak Knoll) for duty. In June 1976 I was then transferred to Kue (Kuwa) Army Hospital Okinawa, which was changed to Naval Regional Medical Center Okinawa. In late spring of 1979 I received orders to the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB) in Colorado Springs (located at the USAF Academy). On April Fools Day, 1984 I retired as HMCM. \*\*\*

In 1986 I became a Colorado State employee and since then have worked as an Unemployment Representative, handling unemployment claims, employment services, Disabled Veteran's Programs, and for the past 4½ years have worked exclusively with dislocated (unemployed) veterans in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program.

My wife Takako (June) and I call Colorado home and we will be celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary this fall.

We were surprised quite recently with a telephone call from a MARS shipmate. John Willis (BTC) and his wife Tsuyako (sue) are living in nearby Woodland Park. Everett Jones thought we might be fairly close neighbors and he was right. It was good to see an old shipmate. They joined us to watch Denver and Atlanta in Super Bowl XXXIII.

Theodore L. Riddle (1966-70)

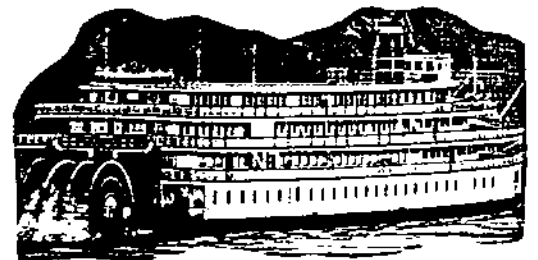
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**DON'T MISS IT!**

## REUNION

USS MARS Reunion and TALL STACKS celebration on the Ohio River.

Reunion Headquarters-Riverview Hotel  
Reservations ----- 1-800-292-2079  
Mars booking #4239



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Served on USS Mars, 1963-Dec.1965. Assigned to A Division. After the best duty of my naval career; was transferred to Naval Support, Da Nang, Vietnam till December 1966. From Vietnam to first and only shore duty in Davenport, Iowa, 1966-1970. Served as Naval Instructor for Naval Reserve's. From there to Little Creek, VA. aboard U.S.S. San Marsios LSD-25, until discharged.

After military, worked as Hospital Engineer at Napa Valley, California. Worked over seas as support personnel for oil company in Libya and South America.

Coming back to the states, stopped in Florida and made Sarasota my home. Needing some kind of employment, started small air conditioning company, still at it the present time.

Looking forward to the ship's reunion. Your shipmate.

G.Jerry L. Kessinger (1963-65)

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I continued to serve as a Navy Chaplain until the end of 1983, when I retired. Spent six weeks in Israel, then served as Deputy Director of Operation Blessing at CBN for five years.

Still do volunteer ministry. During the summers, for example, I hold religious services for the Norfolk Tides Triple A baseball team and their opponents.

I was unable to make the reunion in 1983 and didn't know about the others. I would love to have made the one in Branson, as that's where my wife and I had our honeymoon almost 50 years ago (June 1949).

Marvin E. Snyder, Chaplain (1963-66)

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Dear Everett,

Thank you for the mailing of the Mars Newsletter. What a yeoman's job of putting together all this information. I wondered whether another reunion was forthcoming, and would hope to be able to make it to Cincinnati in October.

After sea duty of 15 months on the Mars from August, 1965 until October, 1966, I was assigned to the Naval Dispensary in Yokohama. I completed active duty in July, 1967 and resumed my residency in Internal Medicine in Cleveland. I continued my military activities by working at the Naval Recruiting Station in Cleveland until I completed my residency and fellowship in Pulmonary Diseases. I was then recruited to come on the faculty at UCLA at Wadsworth V.A. Hospital in West Los Angeles.



In 1972, I was married to Mary Jo DiCello. We have 2 sons and a daughter. I left the V.A. in 1975, and began a practice in Pulmonary Medicine in Santa Monica. Two of the kids are out of the house now, but I have remained busy in practice, and Mary Jo has resumed her career in nursing. We still live on 19<sup>th</sup> street in Santa Monica. Aside from work, I have taken up fly-fishing, and like to ski in the winter.

It was a pleasure to read remarks from so many shipmates, and hope it will be possible to join with some of them at the next reunion.

Enclosed is a check for \$25.00 for mailing and publication expenses.

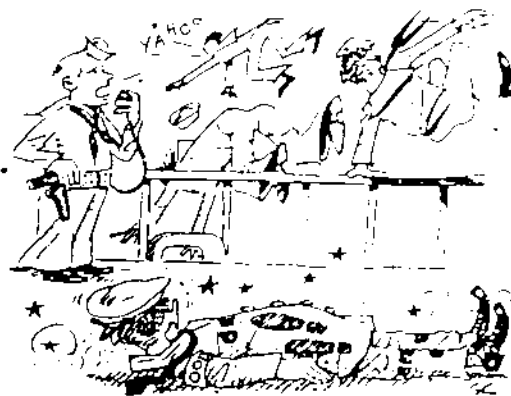
John W. Dalton (Doctor 1965-66)

PASS THE WORD ON TO YOUR SHIPMATES!

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Thanks for the back copies of the newsletter, it certainly jogged my memory. I found some paper work that indicates I arrived on the Mars in the Fall of 1968, not the Spring. I am sending you some pictures for the history book. I am also sending you what I believe is the first "official overnight pass in Olongopo, PI for a fleet sailor. I also contend that it is the first overnight in the port of Olongopo, granted to a Mars sailor. Maybe our readers can challenge that claim.

I specially enjoyed being the duty Gunners-mate every time they put a boat in the water while in country. I remember I "almost" made it to a Bob Hope Show, but got "bumped" somehow. I currently work for a major East Coast utility as an engineer in their nuclear program.



"Liberty call" Lib

H.E. (Don) Donovan (1968-70)

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After leaving the Mars, I reported to the USS Hornet CVS-12, and after a year, was transferred to NTC San Diego. Retired from active duty in October 1969. Moved to Rogers, AR and started a second career working for Union Carbide. Retired again in 1981.

I imagine the responsibilities of A Division were basically the same as it was then. With the ship being new, we were kept very busy because of machinery breakdowns. Being the first ship of it's kind, we had a lot of design and manufacturing problems, and still fulfilled our mission in Vietnam.

Sorry that I missed the first reunion in San Diego, but could have made it to Branson for the second one. I hope to be able to make this next one (Depending on the date).

Robert E. Samson (1963-66)

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Started working Civil Service at Kelly AFB in Jan. 1967, as a specialized apprentice. I am currently a Engineering Data Management Specialist still at Kelly AFB, which is scheduled to close in July 2001. I attended night school for ten years, eventually earning a B/S from Southwest Texas State Univ. I have also been active in various civic organizations, school board, parrish councils, Lions Club and Sunday School Teacher. I have many fond memories of my time on the USS Mars. I also think from time to time of my fellow shipmates and plankowners. I am enjoying the newsletter and here is a small donation to help keep it going.

Claude A. Rankin (1963-66)

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A  
"FRIENDLY"  
REUNION  
REMINDER

SEND IN YOUR REUNION  
REGISTRATION NOW.  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME.



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I have retired from the Naval Reserves as a CWO-4, with 30 years total service. I am now serving with the California Army National Guard as a Data Processing Tech; via a inter service transfer. I will continue to drill with the National Guard till age 60 and then permanently retire.

I am also currently the president of the "National Military Brokers Network", ERA Real Estate.

Blake Broadway (1969-70)

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I'm not sure whether I'll make it to the reunion in October. In any event, enclosed is my check for \$25.00 to assist in mailing costs and whatever. I sure appreciate all your efforts. Please make sure that you keep me on the mailing list.

L.M. SAPPANOS CAPT, SC, USN (RET) Supply 6/66-7/68

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After decommissioning the ship I was on, I requested and received orders to the Mars. Upon completion of moving my family to Yokosuka, the search was on to locate my new ship. I reported aboard in July 1965, via highline off Pratas Reef. The Mars was on special assignment in connection with the salvage of the USS Frank Knox, grounded on this reef.

I had the good fortune to serve with many of the Plankowners who were still aboard at the time. A great group of men who had worked hard to make Mars the ship she was. The crews that followed, continued to achieve these high standards over the years I severed on board.

My memories and details of events on the Mars are quite vivid. I made many lasting friends of my fellow shipmates, and have stayed in contact with them these past thirty years. Still looking for others who have gone their way.

You always remember when you are advanced to Chief Petty Officer. In October 66, upon returning to Yokosuka, I was informed that I had been advanced to E-7. My initiation at the CPO Club the next day was one of the few events I don't remember the ending. EMC Robert W. White, My friend, where are you? Hope to locate Robert for this up-coming reunion.

I delayed my over due shore duty and received a one year extension on my tour of sea duty. Half way through this extension, I received orders to Vietnam. All efforts failed to remain on the Mars, and transferred

I was. On very short notice, moved my family back to San Diego.

Only a good wife would put up with this kind of life.

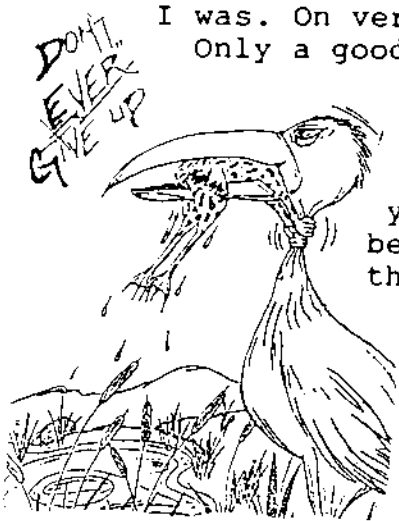
I severed a year in the Mekong Delta with the Mobile Riverine Force as a boat captain on a Command Control Boat. We operated with the Army's 9th. Infantry Division, and it was an experience. Over the past few years, I've been trying to locate my boat crew and have been successful in finding two of them. All young kids at the time, who did one hell of a job.

Transferred to San Diego in 1970, to NTC in the Recruit Training Command. Trained recruits for the next three years, and it was a very awarding experience for me. Had the opportunity to influence the lives of a lot of young men. Also had the good fortune to serve with two of my former Mars shipmates, BTCS John Willis (1966-68) and EMC Augusto Martinez (1965-68).

Received ship-board orders in 1974. Some-what shocked with the attitude of the new navy, turned down advancement to E-9, and transferred to the Fleet Reserve in September 1974, with a total of 24 years, 2 months service. This past November 1998, made 24 years and 2 months of retirement from the navy.

Worked the next 20 years for my local school district, and made my last retirement in July 1995, at the age of 62. Find that this retirement is one thing I do real well. Keep very busy with my hobbies and the organizations I am involved with. My two children live in the San Diego area and my better half and I will be celebrating our 43rd wedding anniversary this coming December. Blessed with good health, hope to make this retirement thing last a long time.

Everett R. Jones (1965-68)





# Moving? Let us know.....

COMMENTS . . . . -7- . . . . from the crew

Sorry we missed out on the Branson reunion, since we are only 200 miles away. I was on the same plane to Japan with Bill Stansberry and have talked to his wife a couple times when going thru the Joplin, MO area.

Got sick on Mars, spent last 6 months of enlistment in hospitals, Yokosuka, Scott AFB, ILL and Great Lakes Hospital, where I got disability discharge. Spent 5 years with Gould Inc, (industrial battery division). Then 15 years in the plumbing business. For the last 10 years, have worked for Kimberly Clark (kleenex), here in Oklahoma. Really interested in finding "old" shipmates. E-mail addresses would be a great addition, I think. Send me any names, I'll look on the computer to see if I can find some folks.

Please send past newsletters. We seen the Mars in Pearl in 1981 or '82, boy what a thrill then. Thanks and keep up the good work.

Robert A. (Bob) Schorfheide (1967-68)

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Left Mars while it was loading in Oakland. Went to NAAS Chase Field, Beeville, TX. Served as Material Officer until RAD, August 65. Returned to education and taught at university level for 20 years (Mid TN State University and Berry College, GA). Earned doctorate in education in 76.

Stayed in reserves for 22 more years and had many interesting tours of ACDU TRA. Hit the big "six oh" (60) last month and enjoying the navy pay again. I'm now enjoying teaching technology (computer, CAD, etc) at middle school.

I was the ships store officer and crews mess officer aboard the Mars. Had some great chiefs to set the operation up and make me look good. I live about a mile from another plankowner, LT Andy Burton. Looking forward to the 99 reunion in Ohio.

Michael Bachler (1963-64)

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Hello to all, I won't be able to attend this year, but will be looking forward to future reunions, retiring for the second time next year in June and have motorhome will be traveling.

Reported on board USS MARS AFS1 in Feb 1968 as SK1 and transferred in July of 1972 as SKC. Had a great Navy career and a lot of fun throughout my various duty stations, retired in 1983 as CWO3, SC, USN while stationed at NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA, "god's country". Went to work for the SupplyDept. here at NAS WI in 1987 and am currently a GS13 doing the same job I did in the Navy only getting paid more and still not getting underway. Going to retire in June of 2000 again and go traveling in our new motorhome and plan to make the future reunions, as long as they aren't in the middle of winter in tim buck two nowhere. Looking forward to seeing some of the NOW OLD shipmates, Course Ed Fourrie and Dutch Mueller were old then, so must be really OLD now. Anyway, ~~that is it from the~~ beautiful state of Washington and the more beautiful Whidbey Island.

Philip L. McGarr (1968-72)

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I was only stationed on the Mars for a short period of time. I was transferred to here from the U.S.S. Staten Island (AGB-5), when she was returned to the U.S. Coast Guard. From the Mars, I was transferred to the U.S.S. Tanner (AGS-15) out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Upon being released from active duty, I was active in the Naval Reserve at N.A.S. Moffet Field and N.A.S. Alameda for about two years.

I do remember Frank Rawl. He was promoted to QMC when I was on board. I have remembered a number of crew members that have been listed in the newsletter. Enclosed is a check to help with the Mars newsletter and mailing.

Tony Gaulis (AG-3 1966)

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Hello Boats. I got your packet in the mail today and wow...does this stuff ever bring back some memories. I sure hope we all appreciate all the work that has to go into such an undertaking. Boy you have done a bang up job as far as I can see. I just talked to Bill Stansberry... up the road from us in Missouri.

Found a few names that ring bells. Would like to know where more of them are, so we could check them out during our travels.

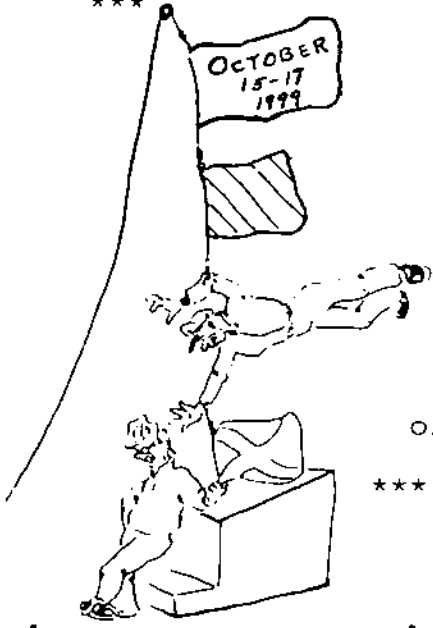
E-mail is a great way we could all renew old friendships too. I have a web site where I show off some of my photographic work...a sideline/tax dodge business. Check it out when you have time, and sign the guest book if you will. (bobfifty@webzone.net).

Keep up the great work. Waiting to hear more. Thanks again.

Bob Schorfheide (1967-68)

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I retired June 15, 1973 at U.S. Nav Fac, Coos Bay, OR. Moved to Ferndale, California and worked at Pacific Lumber for 10 years. Then was owner of a small restaurant for 7 years. Sold that and worked for Chico Drain Oil Service for 10 years, driving a tanker truck. Retired October 9, 1998 from that job and bought property here in Grants Pass, Oregon. Moved here in Nov. 1998.

I am a plankowner of the Mars. So far I have been unable to attend any reunions, but am hoping now that I'm retired, will be able to attend and meet old acquaintances.

Carl G. Trotter (1963-64)

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"SIGNAL IN THE AIR - MARS REUNION"



REUNION 1999



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I will be holding my breath for the next 8 months. I think the people that get to the reunion will be impressed with Tall Stacks. It has gotten better each time they have held it (this is the 4th), and the crowds have enjoyed it all. A lot of history is on display. (The American Queen seems as big as MARS, and mucho posher).

I have a lot of slides I took on MARS, many of them closeups of various crewmembers. If others have slides like that, it would be an idea for them to bring them and we can set up a continuous slide presentation. If there are slides out there, bring them to the reunion.

I probably said it before, but shifting the reunion to Covington was a great idea. Given the construction of the new Bengals stadium, possible construction of a new stadium for the Reds, and the construction of a refurbished I-17 through downtown, it would be a nightmare for a visitor.

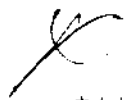
Another draw for visitors is an aquarium in Newport which opens this coming spring. It is going to be a world class attraction, and it's big feature is going to be a shark tank packed with all kinds of nightmares.

All in all, I'm waiting for the reunion. It will be my first and I can't think of a better one. MARS was my first and only Plankowner tour, and although I had good and bad experiences on the others, the experiences on MARS stand out. See you in October.

Frank R. (Squirrley) Hart (1963-67)

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I was assigned to the USS Mars in April 1963, at the National Steel Shipyard in San Diego. In November of that year I was temporarily assigned to the Naval Shipyard, Long Beach, as PO in charge of the Precom detail, under CWO Tex Western. We were to receive the AEL items and supplies for the operation of the ship prior to the Commissioning date of December 21 1963.

Shortly after that date, in March 1964, I was then assigned to Naval Supply Center, Oakland, Ca. as PO in charge of the Fill Loadout detail, under Lt jg. A.J. Burton, to receive, inventory and store all items in a Mock-up of each storage location, similar to the actual layout of the ship itself. Another detail of men, with SK1 William O'Reilly in charge, prepared IBM Inventory, Location cards, for each item, in preparation for on-loading aboard the Mars on its arrival in Oakland. It was a large, sometimes problematic, operation that went smoothly in just a few around the clock working hours.

I also recall CSC Jim Doyle, as a very dedicated Comm Chief, so stated by Frank Hart in his letter, fed the crew the best chow in the fleet. Deck Officer Ltjg. A. Singer and I, of course with Chief Doyle's permission, we would Taste Test his soup of the day, tomato based especially, prior to serving it to the crew. We were both addicted to this particular delicacy, and sorry of hearing of his passing, would surely agree with me wholeheartedly.

I was also fortunate to have shared a good rapport with CDR E. M. Morris, Assistant Supply Officer, during my final "short timer" days aboard ship. Looking back, I can honestly say that he was one of the finest Officers that I had served under in my 20 years of service.

In November 1964, PCI Joe Dale and myself along with 4 or 5 other crew members, returned to the States, to our requested final stations, for retirement to the Fleet Reserve.

Soon after my retirement, in May of 1965, I was employed by the California Dept. of Agriculture, as a Fruit and Vegetable Quality Control Inspector. Don't ask how an Aviation Storekeeper could qualify as an agricultural inspector, as that is a story in its self. During the 22 years that followed, I subsequently was promoted to District Supervisor of the Ventura, Oxnard area until my retirement in May 1987, following a mild stroke that fortunately was not severe.

Enjoyed many deep sea fishing trips from then on, until I fell off my roof, after completion of a second story addition to my home. Now I spend my hours and days in my woodworking shop, building clocks, furniture and other wood projects for sale or gifts to friends and family.

After 34 plus years of Navy retirement, I have certainly beaten the predicted odds for death, that I often hear about. Who was it that claimed five years was the average lifetime after military retirement?

Am enclosing a copy of the Commissioning pamphlet and also a donation for you to help in the future newsletters that I look forward to receiving. Please include me on your mailing list along with a few other former crew members that I will list below.

Earl Longworth (1963-64)

**PASS THE WORD ON TO YOUR SHIPMATES!**

**TWO NEARLY-DEADS BECOME NEWLY-WEDS AND THAT'S NO APRIL FOOLS JOKE**

NEXT



On April first, 1999's April Fools Day, retired Chief Radarman Ray Gillman (68-70) tied the wedding square-knot with the former Ms Betty McLean Tackett in the tropical paradise of Sebastian, Florida. Both being avid fisherpersons Ray and his

lovely bride spent part of their honeymoon deep-sea fishing in Florida's azure atlantic coastal waters aboard their twenty-four foot yacht "STARRY AYED". Ray's new first mate is a Kentucky girl but in view of her fishing and southern cooking skills we won't hold that against her. What luck finding a mate who prefers fishing tackle over jewelry as birthday and Christmas presents.



# Thank You

YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE NEWSLETTER  
IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

John W. Spargur	\$100.00
Earnie Breeding	21.00
Raymond P. Gillman	25.00
Michael R. Bachler	25.00
Peter F. Warncke	25.00
William E. Lada	20.00
Claude A. Rankin	20.00
Harry E. Donovan	25.00
Gerald L. Kessinger	25.00
Frank R. Hart	20.00
Everett R. Jones	25.00
Marvin E. Snyder	25.00
Robert E. Samson	25.00
John W. Dalton	25.00
Louis M. Sappanos	25.00
Earl Longworth	50.00
Anthony J. Gaulis	20.00
Elmer S. Kaiser	25.00



## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

Fall 1998 Balance	\$617.46
New Donations	<u>526.00</u>
Total	\$1,143.46

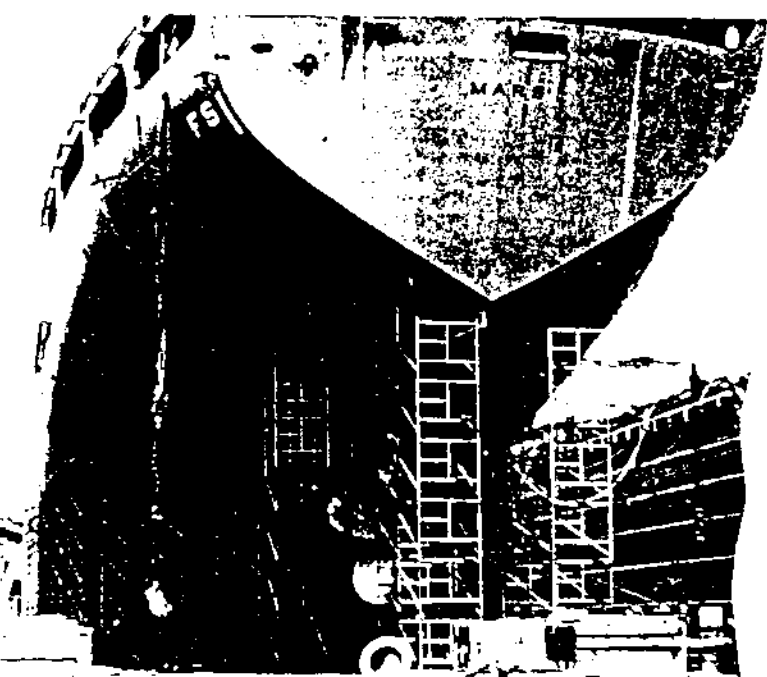
Envelopes/labels and the  
printing of past  
newsletters. \$142.29

Print/mailing of the  
reunion registration. 70.31

Postage. 159.20

Printing/mailing of  
NO.4 newsletter 222.82

Spring 1999 Balance	<u>\$548.84</u>
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### WE MOURN THE PASSING OF A SHIPMATE

MA3 Milton L. McFarren

Passed away in December 1998.

Milton was a Mars plankowner  
and served on board till 1964.





MARS  
Reunion  
INFO



Frank Hart (1963-67) will coordinate a Mars slide presentation at our up-coming reunion. Frank has many slides taken during the 1963-1967 period on the Mars. If you have slides you would be willing to share, contact Frank by mail. If you are not coming to this reunion and have slides we can use, (to be returned), put your name on them and mail to Frank Hart, 631 Cleveland Ave; Taylor Mill, KY 41015-1904. If you would like to help Frank, let him know.

In newsletter NO.2, we published an article by Frank, on the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial. For those who would like to visit this memorial, while attending our reunion, we will have brochures in our hospitality room. If you would like a brochure mailed to you, contact Frank at the above address.

**REUNION** registration fees will be used by Dutch Mueller to stock our hospitality rooms with the goodies that will make for an enjoyable and relaxing sociable event. Additional donations have been received from Charles Cuson and Frank Rawl, to be used for this reunion.

NEWSLETTER DUES The subject of dues keeps coming up. Dues are not being requested at this time. Donations are keeping the newsletter funded and I would like this to continue. A considerable amount of time and effort is spent on making contact with our past shipmates. Many of us are still working and putting children through school. Retirement is still in the future. To drop someone off the mailing list because of non-payment of a few dollars is unnecessary. Besides, less book keeping. I now have the cost of the newsletter down to about .97¢ per mailing. A lot of information for \$2.00 a year. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and this will be discussed at the reunion during the business meeting. Your in-put is needed.

### MAN OVERBOARD !



Man overboard drills are designed to: (1) Train junior officers how to maneuver the ship to facilitate rescue. (2) Train everyone else to never set foot outside the skin of the ship.

\*\*\* We have the Mars crew living in 42 different states, with about 50% living in the Western States. Over 60 in California.

The USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63) is the oldest ship in the fleet. The distinction allows the 38 year-old carrier to display the First Navy Jack in place of the Union Jack. The Kitty Hawk is now homeported in Yokosuka.

The man who was said to have "given birth" to the H-46 Sea Knight helicopter, Loyd Mc Cracken retired in 1998. Mc Cracken's specialty, the Sea Knight, is one of the oldest helicopters in the Navy's inventory and has served the fleet for more then 30 years.

The USS Jarrett (FFG-33), home-ported in San Diego, made Naval history last December. For the first time, a woman took command of a man-of-war. Commander Kathleen McGrath, had served four tours on a variety of ships, before taking command of the USS Jarrett.

*Navy News*

A little news and information from the fleet for those who are living in-land and have no contact with salt water and the big pond.

1962

USS MARS (AFS-1)

1963

**O**n May 9, 1961, the Bureau of Ships, Department of the Navy awarded a contract to National Steel and Shipbuilding of San Diego, California to build two ships of a complete and revolutionary design and concept. The first to have it's keel laid was the U.S.S. Mars (AFS-1).

**C**onstruction on the Mars began on May 5, 1962, as Captain O.M. Butler, Commander Service Squadron One, struck the first arc at the keel laying ceremony.

**T**he special six blade propeller was installed on May 1 followed by the rudder on May 10, 1963.

**A**t 1729 on June 15, 1963 the USS Mars was launched. The ships christening was by Mrs. Clyde Doyle.

**C**aptain Russell C. Medley, USN was assigned as the first commanding officer.

**M**ars made her first sea voyage on October 14, 1963.

Commander Howard C. Wellsman was assigned as the first Executive Officer.

Commander Charles A. Gardner was assigned as first Supply Officer.

**M**onday, November 4, 1963, approximately 430 officers and enlisted men commenced five weeks of extensive training at the Fleet Training Center in San Diego.

**O**n December 15, the Mars got underway for the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. Selected crewmembers got the ship underway. The remainder of the crew was transferred to Long Beach on December 20.

**T**he Mars was commissioned at the U.S. Naval Base Los Angeles, Long Beach, California on 21 December 1963.

Welcoming remarks were given by Rear Admiral Kenneth L. Veth, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Base Los Angeles.

The main speaker at the event was Rear Admiral William D. Irvin, USN, Commander, Service Force U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Reading of Navy Department orders to commission was made by Rear Admiral Veth. The Ensign, Jack, and Commission Pennant were hoisted as the band played the National Anthem.

**C**aptain Russell C. Medley, USN assumed command of the U.S.S. MARS (AFS-1) and the Executive Officer set the FIRST WATCH.





## Commanding Officer

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CDR. H.C. Wellsman

Captain R. C. Medley

Supply Officer

CDR. C.A. Gardner

**M**ars remains at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for some ship modifications while the crew continues to out-fit the ship.

The Mars is underway on 16 March for her shake-down cruise to Acapulco, Mexico. She returns to San Diego on Easter Sunday.

Training and local operations keep the crew busy during the next few months. Mars spends four weeks at the Oakland Naval Supply Center, loading and stocking her 47,000 bins and drawers with general supplies.

**I**n August, the three newest supply ships, USS Sacramento (AOE-1), USS Mars (AFS-1) and USS Sylvania (AFS-2) held operations off San Diego to test and train the crews in the use of the FAST AUTOMATIC SHUTTLE TRANSFER (FAST) systems of underway replenishment.

The last few days of August were spent loading dependents household goods, automobiles, and pets on board for the ships home-port change. Mars is underway from Broadway Pier in San Diego, on September 1, for her new home-port, Yokosuka, Japan.

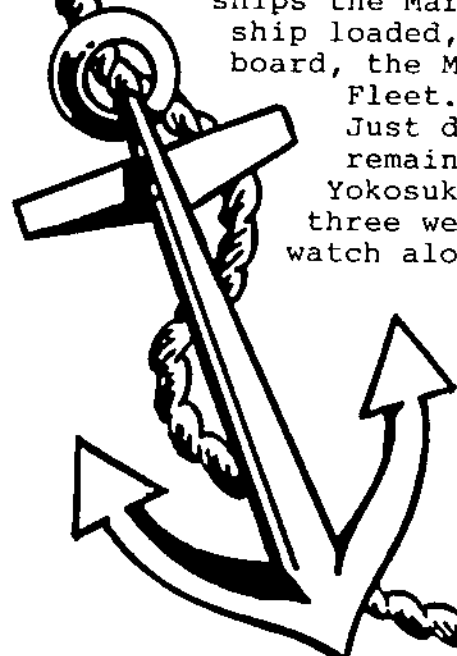
A few days were spent in Pearl Harbor before arriving in Yokosuka on September 23RD. The next day, the Mayor of Yokosuka and city officials were given a tour of the ship. A painting of Mt. Fuji was presented to Captain Medley.

**S**everal busy weeks were spent loading the supplies from the three ships the Mars was replacing (AK, AKS and AVS). In November, the ship loaded, Detachment 47 of Helicopter Utility Squadron One on board, the Mars was ready to get underway in support of the 7th Fleet.

Just days before departure, the ship received orders to remain in port. The USS Ranger (CVA-61) was on her way to Yokosuka with seven of her eight boilers down. For the next three weeks, the Engineering Department ran a full steaming watch along side the pier, as Mars supplied power to the Ranger.

It can be said that the Engineering Department supplied the first services to the Seventh Fleet.

**A**s the year ended, Mars was in the waters off the coast of Vietnam. She was to become a common sight to the ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet for the next five years.





## Commanding Officer

Captain R. C. Medley

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CDR. H.C. Wellsman  
CDR. H.J. Wertin

### Supply Officer

CDR. C.A. Gardner  
CDR. J.M. Baumgardner

Market Place, later named Market Time and Yankee Station were the working areas for the Mars.

As the Viet Nam War effort was building up, an ever increasing number of ships that needed supplies were off the coast of Vietnam. During these swings south the crew was kept busy day and night.

The ship was now in a routine that was to become normal for the crew. Five to six weeks on the line off Vietnam and three to four weeks in Yokosuka for back-loading. Subic Bay now became our second home port for back loading before another swing south.

In March, the Mars was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, for service in the combat zone off Viet Nam.

A ships party and the printing of the Plankowner, the first cruise book made the trips back to Yokosuka enjoyable. More new faces were now reporting aboard, as plankowners were starting to be transferred.

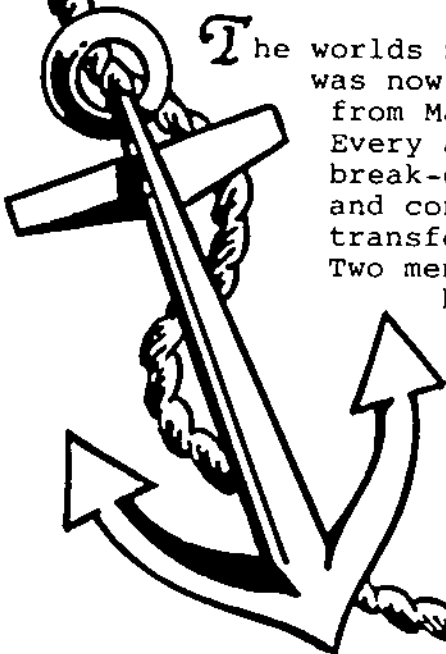
Commander James M. Baumgardner relieved CDR. C.A. Gardner Jr, as Supply Officer in June.

During July and August, Mars was on special assignment in connection with the salvage of the USS Frank Knox (DDR-742) grounded on Pratas Reef. Mars was continuously at sea and on the scene for 38 days. Her helicopters were ideally suited to the task of lowering equipment and personnel to the stricken ship and delivering hot meals and other supplies to her crew.

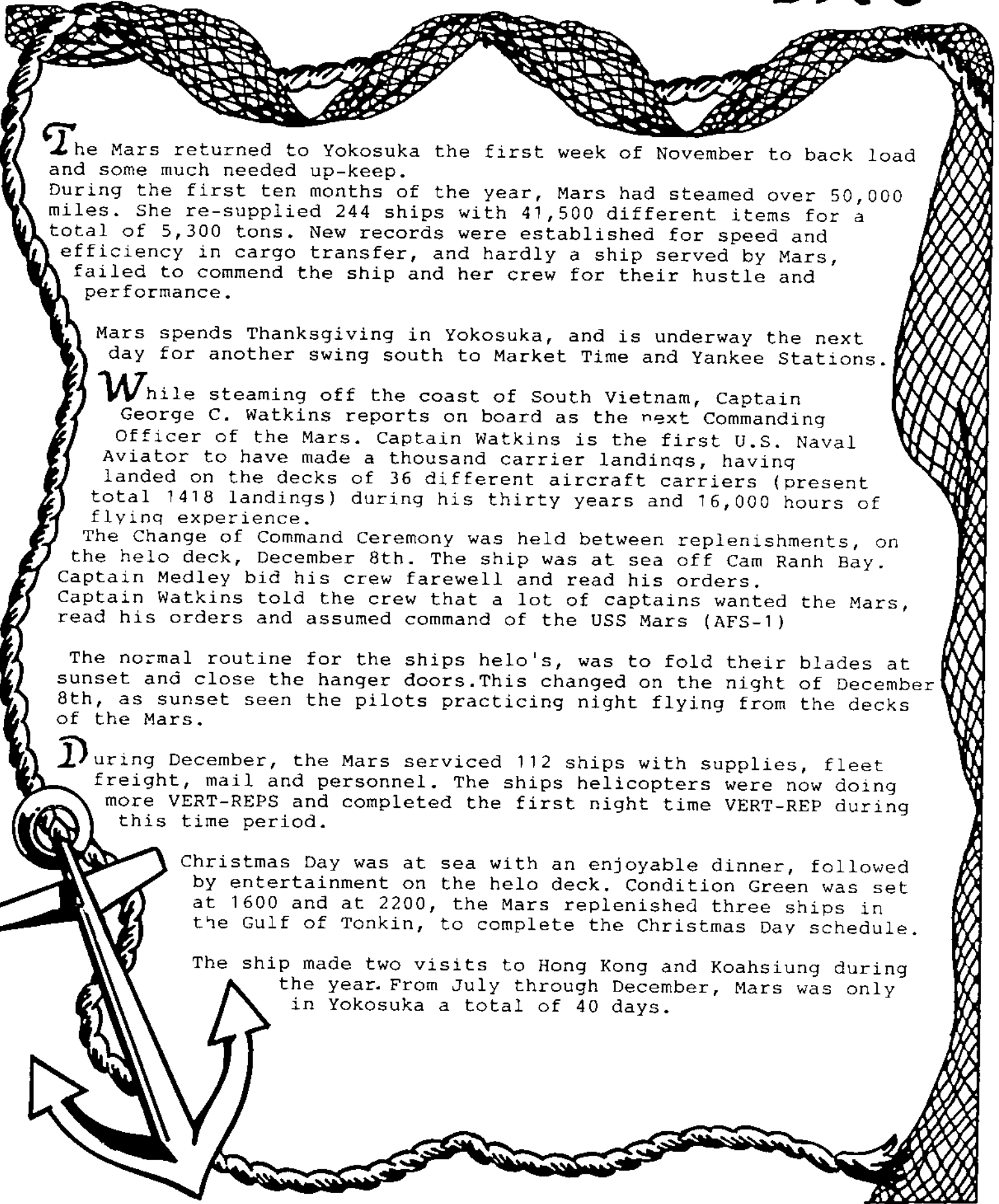
On August 24th, the Knox was re-floated and the Mars escorted her to the port of Koahsiung.

The worlds newest and largest carrier, the USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) was now on Yankee Station. She received her first supplies from Mars. Preparation for the transfer took thirty-six hours. Every available spot on the main deck was used to store the break-out. This replenishment began shortly after 1900 hours and continued at the rate of eighty tons per hour, using four transfer stations for a total of 436 tons of provisions. Two men were knocked over board off the Enterprise, recovered by escorting destroyers. Before the night was over, the inexperienced crew of the "Big E" had a good break-in, thanks to the effort of the crew from the Mars.

During September, Commander Henry (Hank) J. Wertin, relieved CDR. H.C. Wellsman as Executive Officer.



# 1965



**T**he Mars returned to Yokosuka the first week of November to back load and some much needed up-keep. During the first ten months of the year, Mars had steamed over 50,000 miles. She re-supplied 244 ships with 41,500 different items for a total of 5,300 tons. New records were established for speed and efficiency in cargo transfer, and hardly a ship served by Mars, failed to commend the ship and her crew for their hustle and performance.

Mars spends Thanksgiving in Yokosuka, and is underway the next day for another swing south to Market Time and Yankee Stations.

**W**hile steaming off the coast of South Vietnam, Captain George C. Watkins reports on board as the next Commanding Officer of the Mars. Captain Watkins is the first U.S. Naval Aviator to have made a thousand carrier landings, having landed on the decks of 36 different aircraft carriers (present total 1418 landings) during his thirty years and 16,000 hours of flying experience.

The Change of Command Ceremony was held between replenishments, on the helo deck, December 8th. The ship was at sea off Cam Ranh Bay. Captain Medley bid his crew farewell and read his orders. Captain Watkins told the crew that a lot of captains wanted the Mars, read his orders and assumed command of the USS Mars (AFS-1)

The normal routine for the ships helo's, was to fold their blades at sunset and close the hanger doors. This changed on the night of December 8th, as sunset seen the pilots practicing night flying from the decks of the Mars.

**D**uring December, the Mars serviced 112 ships with supplies, fleet freight, mail and personnel. The ships helicopters were now doing more VERT-REPS and completed the first night time VERT-REP during this time period.

Christmas Day was at sea with an enjoyable dinner, followed by entertainment on the helo deck. Condition Green was set at 1600 and at 2200, the Mars replenished three ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, to complete the Christmas Day schedule.

The ship made two visits to Hong Kong and Koahsiung during the year. From July through December, Mars was only in Yokosuka a total of 40 days.