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Maritime Visiting Russian scientific ships is getting to be a habit for some students on the Texas Mar-

itime Academy summer cruises. itime Academy summer cruises. Last year, the A&M students and crew of the "Texas Clipper" training ship exchanged tours and meals with Soviet scientists on a 50-staff Russian oceanogra-phy and meteorology ship, the "Dullie"

Page 8

It occurred at Las Palmas, Canary Islands. This year at the same port a 2,000-crew Russian space tracking ship was at Las

Palmas when the TMA cadets arrived.

Several attempts to exchange friendships met with quick "nos" from the Soviet officers, but two freshmen enrolled in the summer school at sea chanced upon an opportunity to be probably the first Americans to see the in-terior of the giant Russian ship. John Black of Conroe and Guy Kingsley of San Antonio were in a cafe, started a conversation with one of the ship's crew who coud speak English, and finally

were invited to come aboard the tracker. The ship, built four years ago, was the "Yuri Gaga-rin," named in honor of the dead

Soviet space hero. Black, who will be a freshman chemical engineering major at TAMU this Fall, said the two Americans and five Russians piled into one cab and were welcomed aboard the ship, described as top heavy with antennas and receiving equipment.

"I like to do things other peo-

ple don't do, or get a chance to do," Black said on the Clipper returning to Galveston from

ggies visit Russian

Freeport Sunday. "For the most part, the Rus-sians were the friendliest people — as a group — that I saw on the trip. Everyone had a smile and those who could speak English had a fantastic sense of mor," Black said. Kingsley, who had left the

ship early to return to San Antonio to prepare for freshman studies at Penn State, was familiar with some scientific instruments and radar, Black remarked.

Kingsley asked a number of questions, all answered by the Russians except one. Black said when asked if one of the receiver units wasn't a submarine sonar unit, the Russians acted like they didn't understand.

"They understood, all right," Black insisted. Some of the modern instru-

ments on the ship were a com-pletely automatic navigation sys-tem and an infrared periscope that the pair was told could see up to three miles in a heavy fog.

THE BATTALION

Facilities on the ship were a large indoor gym and swimming pool, several large radar rooms, scientific laboratories and an in-door movie theatre with 255 permanent seats.

Black noted a game room had a standard pool table with balls the size of ostrich eggs, yet with normal cues.

The crew included men and

Black and Kingsley spent about three hours on the vessel and were treated to Russian snacks and drinks.

"All the fellows who tried to get on couldn't understand how we did it," Black related. "I guess it was just a case of being at the right place at the right time."

LAKEVIEW CLUP

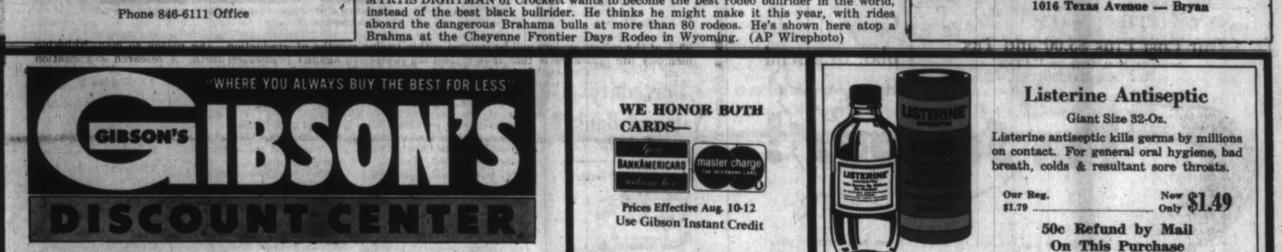
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