

The USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association NEWSLETTER

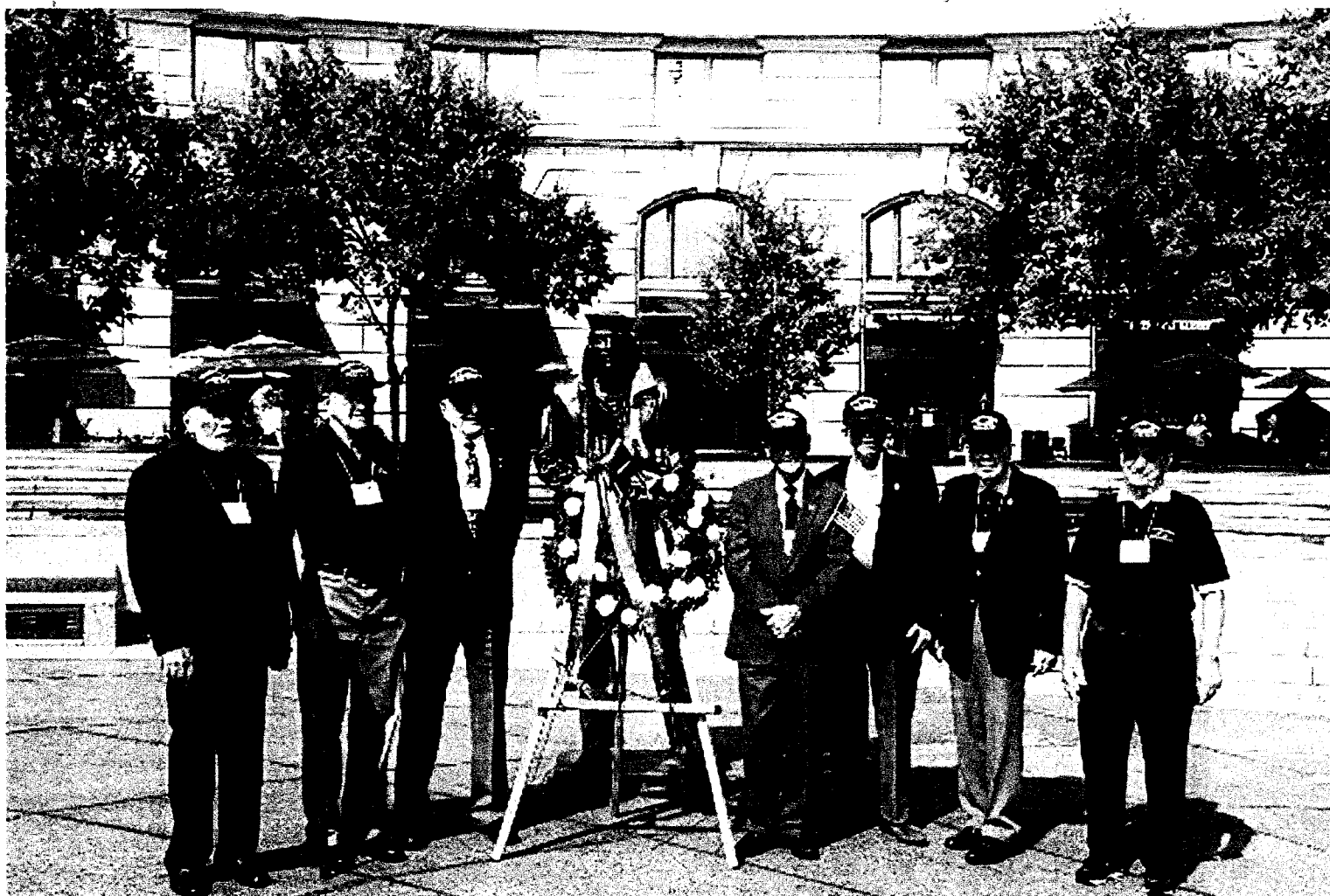


Dedicated to the memory of our shipmate and friend, Whit Felt.

November 2007

Volume 17, Number 2

Washington DC Reunion, September 26 to September 29, 2007



From left to right
Dick Rohde, Tom Stevenson, Bill Wilson, Lone Sailor, Bud Comet, Dudley Moylan, Mel Harden, Glenn Huffman

Reunion Review

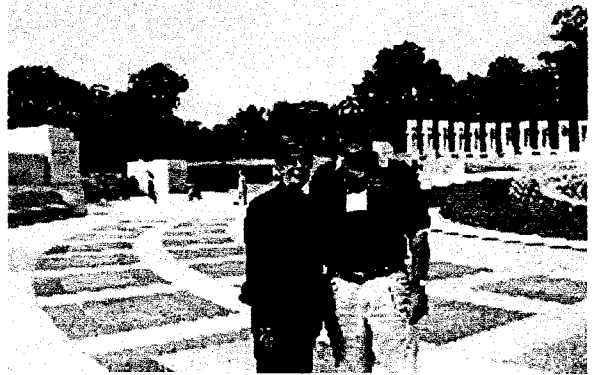
Everyone agreed that this reunion was well done. Accommodations were just great, yes the price was high, but we were in the DC area. The weather cooperated beautifully and the tours were quite interesting. The Memorial Service at the Navy Memorial, honored the memory of our fallen shipmates properly and respectfully. Our banquet speaker, Brad Peniston, did a fine job in bringing to life the story of the mining of FFG 58, USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS. What did I leave out? Oh yes, to quote a line from Carousel, "The vittles we et were good, you bet, the company was the same."

Wednesday, 9/26 - The early birds arrived, checked out the rooms and restaurant and decided that they would stay.

Thursday, 9/27 - At 9:30 a.m. we were on the bus and headed for the Navy Memorial. We had time to tour the facility, check our names on the log and also view the plaque which we donated several years ago. The service went off very well. It is a very popular place and an ideal setting for various Navy events. Acting as MC, I welcomed our group. Glenn Huffman sounded the bell for our shipmates Bob Roberts, George Bray and Sam Blue who passed away since our last reunion. In the absence of ADM Richard A Buchanan, the Assistant Director, CDR Virgil Allen, USCG (RET) welcomed us and gave a fine talk on the Memorial. We appreciate his kind remarks about our ship and the battle. Bud Comet and Bill Wilson along with CDR Allen presented the Memorial Wreath.

Following picture taking and luncheon,

we were back on the bus to visit the World War II Memorial. This Memorial is truly magnificent and I would recommend a visit to anyone who has any ties or interest in the history of the United States of America.



Following our return to the hotel, we gathered for our Annual Business Meeting. Tonya Comet served as secretary and thus the following minutes are presented. Dudley Moylan called the meeting to order and then turned the meeting over to Dick Rohde.

1. A proposal to use the name of our ship in a fictional story was denied.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
3. Co-Treasurer Mel Harden presented a financial statement of the Association as of 8/24/07. His report was approved.
4. A report was given on the status of the bronze name plaque for the Fort Rosecrans Memorial. It should be completed before end of year.
5. Motion to hold 2008 Reunion in San Diego for dedication of plaque approved.
6. Motion to send letter thanking Lorraine Martel for SBR Monument in New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery and place article in DESA News was approved.
6. Following various announcements regarding balance of reunion and many other items of interest, Motion to adjourn was made and carried.

We made good use of the Hospitality Room thanks to Susan and John Walsh and Sam Stewart.

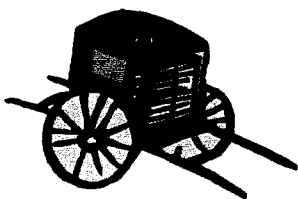
Reunion Review Continued

Friday, Sept. 28 - We were back on the bus and on our way to Arlington National Cemetery. Although we had been here before, the beauty, serenity and immaculate condition of the cemetery never ceases to impress. We were present for the changing of the guard. The demeanor and dedication of the guards and the solemnity and precision of the ceremony never ceases to remind us of those "unknowns" who represent so many of our fallen comrades.



We then drove to Mount Vernon and enjoyed luncheon at the Mount Vernon Inn. We were on our own to explore this beautiful property with the many exhibits, displays and magnificent gardens. I have always wanted to visit Mount Vernon but then discovered that physically I was not able to tour the house. I did reach the road in front of the home and could look longingly up to it but I had just run out of steam (or breath). Helen, fortunately enjoyed John Walsh's kindness in pushing her wheelchair up the hill. She did give me glowing reports on the beauty of the house and its furnishings.

Someday I will return and find an easier way to reach the house.



Following our return and dinner, we all gathered in the Hospitality Room and enjoyed one another's company and told and listened to all the stories as though we had never heard them before.

Saturday, Sept. 29 - Since nothing formal was scheduled during the day, many took advantage by visiting some of the sights and memorials and exhibits that make up our impressive National Capital. Some others were known to take a nap or watch a bit of television.

Our closing banquet will long be remembered by those present. We were honored to have many distinguished guests including CDR Mark Metzger and his wife Dalia. Mark is the Prospective CO of the USS CARR, FFG 52. (NOTE: Mark has since taken command of the CARR.) We were happy to meet Tom Stevenson's daughter Sue Boyle and her son Sean. John Macon (nephew of Rudolph Macon) and his son Garrison were with us as were Elizabeth and Leonard King. Elizabeth is the daughter of shipmate John Jacob Newmiller. Our speaker for the evening was Brad Peniston, author of the outstanding book, "No Higher Honor" which tells the story of the mining of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, FFG 58. As mentioned previously he related the story in a way that kept all of us spellbound. As I surveyed the audience, I did not see any signs of dozing off. That says a lot for a group of our age.

Sunday, Sept. 30 - We gathered for our farewell breakfast and welcomed CDR Ned Bagley, USN (RET), former CO of USS CARR. We left for our trips home with plans for seeing one another again next year in San Diego.

We hope that as many of you as possible will join us next year as we gather to honor our lost shipmates in the beautiful surroundings of Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. See you there!

Late Breaking News..... The Gazebo is back..... by Bob LeClercq.....

Last year we successfully raised funds to place a bronze plaque over the face of our one-third share of the monument at Ft Rosecrans National Cemetery. We later learned that the two destroyers that share the monument with the Roberts were not interested in restoring their part of the memorial. Then we were told by the director of the cemetery he would not allow the Roberts to cover only a partial section of the face. Our contributors were interested in exploring other possible alternative uses of the funds for further venues to enhance and pay tribute to the Samuel B Roberts DE 413.



Living nearby and being an enthusiastic supporter of The National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg Texas; I approached Admiral Charles Grojean, the Executive Director of the Nimitz Foundation with an offer. After asking him, what a \$10,000.00 contribution to the foundation would buy at the museum, we went to lunch. While he reflected on what I had just said, we returned through the completely remodeled Nimitz Hotel that was just days from its grand reopening after a two year closer for total refurbishing. We exited from the hotel into the Memorial Garden and the Veterans' Walk of Honor. This one-half acre of grounds is surrounded by old stone walls that served as the corral for the hotel in the late 19th century. On these walls hang memorial plaques acknowledging

the contributions of individuals, ships, and units during the war in the Pacific. Over one thousand plaques are on every side of the visitor and the peace, quietness and serenity is duplicated as in Arlington Cemetery, both being in the heart of a city with all its activity outside. The middle of this garden is a lush, green, and well manicured lawn with newly planted native Texas oaks around the edges. At the far end of the area is a fountain with its trickling water sound and an Essex Class carrier propeller on top covering the entire area of the pool. At the other end, at the beginning of the Memorial Garden the museum has constructed an oversize gazebo (now in use for various functions). Admiral Grojean stopped and pointing toward the gazebo, said that it would belong, for naming purposes, to the Roberts, for their contribution. Realizing the importance of the gazebo's location and prominence on the grounds of the museum, I became very nervous as I thought about the meaning of this offer to the Survivors Association and the heroic story of the Roberts. I have long been aware of Adm Grojean's fondness for the Roberts, not only because of his association with the Navy for so many years, and live knowledge of the battle while a student at Annapolis, but his friendship and many contacts with authors, Doscher, Hornfischer, and Wukovits, a two day symposium on the Battle of Leyte Gulf and its survivors, along with Dick Rohde's successful money raising letter for the foundation. I began to understand his most generous offer toward the ship and making all efforts to contain my enthusiasm, came home to notify the board of directors of what I had just learned.

The next step in the process was one more phone call by Dick Rohde to Ft. Rosecrans and its director confirming that it would not be possible to cover our part of the monument. Much to our surprise a new interim director was in place and he gave his thumbs up, as did his superior, that we could proceed with the plaque for our names on the memorial. That is what the money was raised for and that is where it was spent.

At our reunion in Washington D.C. in late September along with the great affection and caring that exist with each of our members we had our usual business meeting. We learned that a bank balance in excess of \$8,000.00 existed and that all invoices were paid and that no other debt existed.

Gazebo, continued

After returning home about one week later I received a phone call from John Walsh. He told me that he, and his wife Sue had considerable discussion about the opportunity of the gazebo in Fredericksburg and if the Roberts survivors organization would contribute \$5,000 of the money toward Adm. Grojean's offer they would match it to have that naming opportunity. His most beautiful explanation as to why he wished to do this was, " I really do not know the whole story of what happened those 50 hours that the survivors were in the water but someone may have grabbed my dad's hand or pulled on his life jacket and helped keep him afloat and if that had not happened I would not be here today. This is a way to express my appreciation." I have no idea of what my reply was as I was shocked and emotionally overcome by his philanthropy. Immediately I contacted by mail and phone the board of directors and all agreed that the money was of no benefit to us sitting in the bank. They voted to graciously accept John and Sue's most generous gift and proceed with the donation to the Nimitz Foundation.

On Tuesday November 13th I handed the two checks to Adm. Grojean. and now a significant structure at the Gallery of the Pacific War will be dedicated to the Samuel B Roberts DE 413.

As I stated in the second paragraph of this article I am an enthusiastic supporter of this museum. I have seen some of the plans for their 40,000 square ft. expansion to begin in January '08. There will not be a venue as modern and with all the new technology that exist today as this one will be. It will take two years to complete with every existing display being reworked and moved, Many new exhibits will be made and a major exhibit will be the battle of Leyte Gulf. This museum will serve generations to come and continue to tell the story of the Pacific war. I know that someday your children and grandchildren will show their children this complex and be most proud of their relationship to each of you and your organization having a substantial role in telling your story to the many visitors that arrive each day.

We are extremely grateful to the Walsh's for

their contribution and acknowledge that without their help this would not have been possible. There are many ways to express our appreciation but the best and simplest is to say we all thank the two of you from the bottom of our heart.

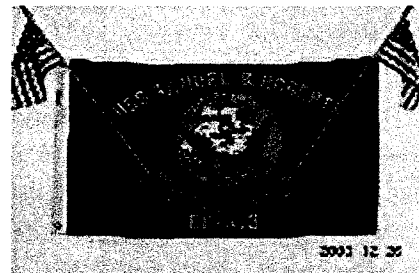
I can not wait until 2010 and for each person that reads this Newsletter to make every attempt to come to our reunion and experience the National Museum of the Pacific War. I know you will leave with the same understanding and appreciation of what Admiral Grojean and his dedicated staff have worked so hard to achieve.

My special thanks to all and to the board of directors for their support and confidence. I hope that you are as excited as I am. I know you will be proud of your participation in this outstanding museum.

Bob LeClercq

Editors Note

This is truly a wonderful bit of news. The National Museum of the Pacific, under the leadership of RADM Charles D. Grojean, USN (Ret) has continued to grow and prosper. It is the only institution in the continental United States dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific Theater battles of World War II. Bob LeClercq deserves our thanks for his hard work, his perseverance and his dedication to this worthwhile project. Thanks also to John and Susan Walsh for their most generous contribution. As many of you know, John is the son of shipmate Robert L. Walsh, Firecontrolman 3/C and has been very active in the affairs of our Association. We also thank our membership and friends who have encouraged and supported our efforts through the years. Without your help and generosity, none of the above would be possible.



Richard K. Rohde, Editor
9045 SW 91st Circle
Ocala, FL 34481-8404
Telephone: 352 861-0616
Mobile: 518-852-0368
Email: rkr6@cornell.edu

This and That from Here and There

Norma Jean Bingaman called to bring me up to date with their situation. Bob is making a good recovery from his stroke but it has been a long and difficult time for both of them. Bob spoke to me and I was so pleased to hear the progress he has made. They hope to be with us at the next reunion but only time can tell. Norma said that they miss us all and appreciate the cards, calls and prayers.

Bernice Griggs wrote to tell me that her husband and our shipmate **James W. Griggs, SoM 3/C**, passed away over a year ago. They had gone to Santa Barbara for a checkup and he fell and broke his hip, developed pneumonia and died ten days later. She mentioned that he enjoyed the reunions that he attended as well as the Newsletters. I'm sure that she would appreciate a card or note. Her address is 340 Valencia Drive, Exeter, CA 93221.

Elbert Gentry sent me a note saying that they would have enjoyed being with us but he has been diagnosed with a benign pituitary adenoma. He has been having MRIs done every 6 months to check on size increase. He says that no surgery is planned for the present but that his thought processes seem slower. We wish you and Mable well. You were missed as was your daughter, Linda Fowler.

Christopher Cooley, son of shipmate **Pete Cooley** advised me that his father died on November 23, 2007. He had Parkinson's disease and was suffering from memory loss. I believe that the last reunion he attended was in Pensacola in 1994. Cards and notes may be sent to his wife, Katherine Cooley, 2056 Welch Court, Ann Arbor, MI 48103-6136.

Maryanne Cummings Donovan was present for a ceremony held aboard USS SLATER, DE 766, honoring her father, our MIA shipmate **Robert P. Cummings, MM 3/C** on September 13, 2007. Our son Cliff Rohde attended.

Fort Rosecrans Monument

Word has been received from Peggy Haleen at Seaman-Poe Monument Company in San Diego that the long awaited bronze plaque with the names of our shipmates who were lost in the Battle off Samar will be shipped to San Diego on December 14. She has assured me that as soon as it arrives, it will be affixed to the Memorial. This has been a long wait but will be well worth it. We look forward to the rededication of our portion of this beautiful and venerated monument in October of next year.

Board of Directors Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association

Dudley Moylan, Chairman
Mel Harden, Co-Treasurer
Dick Rohde, Co-Treasurer
Bill Wilson, Director
Bob LeClercq, Director
Sam Stewart, Director
John Walsh, Director

News from USS CARR

Hello CARR, family members, spouses, and friends,
Greetings from the the Middle East on this Veterans' Day 2007. Please let me introduce myself as the new Commanding Officer. First and foremost, I am glad to be here on this ship and my third frigate (FFG). Previously I served tours on GARY (FFG 51) and NICHOLAS (FFG 47). My first ship was TICONDEROGA (CG 47). Other tours of duty included engineering duties on two nuclear carriers. Most recently, I finished three years of shore duty which included two staff tours at the Pentagon. It is good to return full-circle back to Norfolk where my family and I were stationed from 1992-1997 for three sea tours.

I want to recognize the previous Commanding Officer, Commander George Lang. He turned over a great ship and a superb crew, and I would like to thank him, his wife, and their family for their service and dedication.

We are expected to be here in Bahrain for another up to a week due to a repair that requires importing heavy equipment and specialized technicians from the United States.

Furthermore, I want to thank those veterans, the active duty, those currently deployed and the families of those that have served and are serving. And on this Veterans' Day, we especially remember those who have gone before us. Those like Paul Carr and the crew of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DE-413), sunk by the Japanese at the Battle off Samar in 1944. Prior to arriving on CARR, my wife and I had the unique opportunity to meet some of those brave men who survived the sinking of that ship and over 50 hours afloat in the lonely sea. Now in their 80's and early 90's, these men are still heroes to the CARR crew, and we will honor them through Courage, Will, and Determination.

I wear the badge of this frigate with honor on my uniform, and I firmly believe that we all have the obligation to live up to the heroism and dedication of the ship's namesake Paul Henry Carr and his shipmates on DE-413. These Sailors are continuing that. They are the finest in the Navy on the best ship in the Navy, and I am proud to be their Commanding Officer.

Very respectfully,
Mark V. Metzger
CDR Mark V. Metzger, USN
Commanding Officer
USS CARR (FFG 52)

(Editors Note: I have taken the liberty of excerpting from CDR Metzger's letter.)

Retirement Congratulations to Master

Chief Keith Taylor on his retirement from the Navy after 30 years. He has been a good friend and we wish him and wife Kathy well in their new adventure. Keith was very helpful to us when we held our Memorial Ceremony aboard USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, FFG 58. We certainly enjoyed visiting with the two of them in our Hospitality Room. Fair winds and following seas.

Greetings Mary Lou Herrera called and asked me to pass along her best wishes for the Holiday Season and her thanks for all of your expressions of sympathy. She misses Adolph but is learning to get along as best she can.

Thank you

I would like to to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to all of you men and women serving in our armed forces and in particular to you aboard USS CARR AND USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS. I know how difficult it is to be away from your families, your friends and loved ones, especially at this time of the year. Your service and sacrifice is appreciated far beyond my ability to give it expression. We love you, we miss you and we know that you realize how important it is for you to be there, making it safe for those of us who are at home. May God bless you all.

To our members and friends in the Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association, I wish you all the very best. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah or simply Joys of the Season. May the coming year bring you good health and bring peace and love to all the world.

Don't forget to hug one another!