

# USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association Newsletter

**Fredericksburg, Texas Reunion  
December 2009**

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 2010

Our arrival in San Antonio on December 4th, 2009 was uneventful despite the threat of snow in Texas. Really and truly, we did not bring that weather with us from Chicago!!

We were soon met in the hotel lobby by Patti Hedgeman (daughter of Shipmate Jack Conway). After a quick trip to the North Star Mall where Patti purchased a coat ("It's not this cold in New York" she said) we caught up with Sam Stewart (son of shipmate Earl Stewart) and were off to Ruths' Chris for dinner... always a good way to "kick off" a reunion!

Saturday morning we were greeted by the smiling face of Bob LeClercq (brother of Shipmate John LeClercq). Bob and his wife Billie had done all of the "leg work" up to that point so Sam, John and I were ready to motor up to Fredericksburg with Bob to set up the Hospitality Room at the Inn on Baron's Creek. After getting the room organized, we proceeded to view the Samuel B. Roberts Pavilion and to take a quick look inside the new George H.W. Bush Gallery at the newly remodeled Nimitz Museum.

Meanwhile, back in San Antonio, more of the "Roberts" group were gathering at the hotel including Mel (Survivor) and Leona Harden, Survivor Bud Comet, his son J.C. and daughter Jamie, Joe and Marianne Donovan (daughter of Shipmate Robert Cummings) and Chris Cooley (son of Shipmate Pete Cooley).

After introductions were made, everyone agreed it was time to eat! A short cab ride later found us at the Riverwalk in downtown San Antonio which was beautifully decorated for Christmas with Luminarias lighting the entire way. We all dined at a Mexican Restaurant and called it a night after realizing that the Reunion hadn't even officially started and we needed to have plenty of energy for the days ahead!



**SAMUEL B. ROBERTS PAVILION**

*The Pride and Joy of the Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association and a focal point of The Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas*

THIS NEWSLETTER IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
IN MEMORY OF  
SHIPMATES  
WHIT FELT AND DICK ROHDE

## Quotable Quotes or "Voices From the Past"

"Heart of my heart, how I love that melody" Dick Rohde

"Do you KNOW the difference between a DE and a DD?" Vince Goodrich

"Patti, I want a DETAILED account of that reunion in Texas" Dudley Moylan

"I really wanted to get me a pair of them calypso britches" George Bray

Some people just take a piece of your heart the first time you meet them." Lil Comet

## WEBSITES:

John Wukovits has posted information regarding the DE413 to his website. You may view it or comment at:

[Johnwukovits.com](http://Johnwukovits.com)

Also, Jim Glassman (son of Esther and Shipmate Bill Wilson) has posted some great photos at:

<http://omnidreams.com/fredericksburg2009.swf>

*The first piece of steel for the  
USS Samuel B. Roberts DE  
413 was laid on Dec. 6, 1943*

## Taps

We mourn the loss of two prominent members of the Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association.

Following a brief illness, Shipmate Dick Rohde passed away on June 4, 2009. Words cannot express the loss that this organization feels without his presence.

Shipmate J. Dudley Moylan passed away on December 25th, 2009.....another great loss to our organization.



Pictured from L to R:  
Survivors and VIP's  
Mel Harden  
Glenn Huffman  
Tom Stevenson  
Bud Comet  
Bill Wilson

## Reunion Timeline

Sunday Dec. 6th: Group was joined by Author John Wukovits who is working on a book about the DE413 as we speak. We gathered in the lobby and boarded the van for the trip up to Fredericksburg. Bob and Billie LeClercq and their friends R.C. and Norma Williams joined us at PoPo's Restaurant for an early lunch. Bob boasted that PoPo's had the best fried chicken in Texas. After lunch, everyone agreed!

Upon our arrival in Fredericksburg, we proceeded to the Nimitz Museum for the WWII Submarine Memorial Dedication Ceremony in memory of RADM Charles D. Grojean, USN. Admiral Grojean was the Executive Director of the Nimitz Museum and a dear friend of the Samuel B. Roberts Association for many years.

Sunday evening we enjoyed dinner at Mamacita's Restaurant. Great evening...great food with a surprise birthday cake for Glenn Huffman who turned 84 (or was that 48?). Glen was very grateful to his wife JoAnn and Bob LeClercq for arranging the event. Glen noted that both he and the ship Samuel B. Roberts had the same birthday as the first piece of steel for the DE 413 was laid Dec. 6, 1943.

Also joining us at the restaurant were Jim Hornfischer (author of The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors) and many members of the Carr family including Juanita Carr Rush and Lucille Carr Siefert, sisters of Shipmate Paul H. Carr.

Monday Dec. 7th: Dedication of the George H.W. Bush Gallery at the National Museum of the Pacific War. Cold, rainy weather could not stop over 5,000 people from attending. Master of Ceremonies was General Mike Hagee, Executive Director of the Nimitz Museum (and another great friend to the Samuel B. Roberts Association) Other speakers included Texas Governor Mike Perry and President George H.W. Bush .

At 5 p.m. we attended a viewing of the History Channel's "Hero Ships" featuring both the Samuel B. Roberts DE 413 and FFG58. After the movie, a panel discussion was held with Survivors Mel Harden, Bud Comet, Tom Stevenson and Glenn Huffman moderated by John Wukovits and Jim Hornfischer.

Tuesday Dec. 8th: Tour of the LBJ Ranch and lunch at the Wildseed Farm. Delightful day!

Wednesday Dec. 9th: Memorial and Dedication of the Samuel B. Roberts Pavilion. Colors posted by the ROTC Group from Fredericksburg High School.

2 p.m. Business Meeting: Highlights on page 4.

Wednesday Evening: Banquet at The Navajo Grill. Bob read a letter from Leah Felt, widow of Shipmate Whit Felt, who expressed her regret of not being able to be at the reunion with us. We miss you too, Leah! We also had a moment of silence for Shipmate Dick Rohde.

John Wukovits reported on the status of his upcoming book about the ship. We are all looking forward to a wonderful story from John.

Everyone then had a chance to talk about how the SBR Reunions or any individual has had an effect on their life. Most were very touching.

Thursday Dec. 10th: Breakfast, Hugs, Goodbyes.

Just a note: Tom Stevenson attended our reunion accompanied by his sons Jeff and T.J. His "boys" also took Tom to Austin to meet his first Great-grandchild. T.J. shared his musical ability with us by playing his bagpipe at the Banquet. Thanks, T.J.!

Esther and Bill Wilson also joined us a little late due to the death of Esther's sister. Our sympathies, Esther. We were so happy that your son Jim saw to it that you and Bill made it to Texas.

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**A big "Thank You" goes out to Helen McDonald and Marti Kaderli of the Nimitz Museum for always being right where we need them for tasks big and small!**

## Business Meeting

On Wednesday December 4th at 2p.m. we held our Business Meeting in the Hospitality room at The Inn on Baron's Creek. First order of business was the election/appointment of a new Board of Directors. The members are Mel Harden (Survivor) , Bill Wilson(Survivor), Sam Stewart, Patti Hedgeman and John Walsh, all children of Survivors.

### Bronze Plaque

The Bronze Plaque was originally going to be placed over the existing Taffy 3 Memorial at Fort Rosecrans in San Diego. Permission was denied and the plaque will now be placed in the Samuel B. Roberts Pavilion at the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas. It was agreed that the Association will pay for shipping of the plaque from San Diego to Fredericksburg plus reimburse the Museum for the cost of installation.

### Memorial Walkway

It was also agreed upon to install a concrete/brick walkway connecting the SBR Pavilion to the Memorial Walkway. The cost of this will be \$1,500 to be paid by the SBR Survivors Association.

Note: This may be a great time for family members to honor Shipmates with a Commemorative Brick placed in the Memorial Walkway adjacent to the Samuel B. Roberts Pavilion. Individual bricks cost \$100. Forms are available through the Museum

Another Note: A most generous donation in the amount of \$1,500 was received courtesy of Mel and Leona Harden with a note saying:"to be used pay for the walkway leading to the Pavilion" Thank you Mel and Leona!

Just one more!: speaking of Leona Harden: Leona spent a week in the hospital with Congestive Heart Failure after the Texas reunion. All of that walking and getting in and out of taxi cabs definitely takes a toll! Take care, Leona and we hope you are feeling better!

### Newsletter

John and Sue Walsh agreed to take over the Newsletter. Please let us know how you are doing! Any items of interest can be mailed, phoned in or e-mailed to:

suzieq3657@yahoo.com or

jtwalsh4552@yahoo.com

Our phone number is 815-478-5444(home) or

815-592-0697 (John's Cell).

Mailing address:24945 Marian Avenue

Elwood, IL 60421

### Reunions

Sam Stewart( who has attended every reunion since they started in the 1980's!) has agreed to coordinate future reunions.

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Our Texas Reunion was well-attended with so many members of the Carr family joining us. Now I know what Helen Rohde was talking about when she said "Oh, we used to have so much fun with those Carr sisters!" I also have to echo JoAnn Huffman's comment to Lucille Carr Siefert and Juanita Carr Rush "You have completely blown my image of the Carr sisters!" (in a good way of course!) Lots of laughs with those girls.

Carr Family attendees included: Jeff and Jane Rush, Mike Rush, Elaine and Lester Culpepper, Brenda and Ralph Webb, Carol and Larry Lohn and Carolyn Ayers (friend of Lucille Carr Siefert.....in my next life I am going to Corpus Christi and learn to quilt with these two ladies. Do you know that they made their own quilt rack? Impressive!!)



**A Note from Tom Stevenson**

We received the following story from Tom Stevenson entitled: Roberts 1st Voyage

We took delivery of the vessel from Brown Brothers shipyard on the Houston Ship Canal. All the shipyard workers and the distinguished guests were gathered on the end of the pier as the ship began to back into the main canal. Captain Copeland had always worked with diesel powered vessels and he did not realize that the reversing of a turbine driven ship required much more work and time than a diesel which is like a car. He gave the order to back full speed and the vessel did so. I was the officer of the deck and I told the Capt. that we were approaching shore very fast. The shore was a marsh land full of cows grazing. He gave the order to reverse and full ahead. Before the propellers could bite we were up in the marshland among the cows who were stampeding. Then the propellers began to bite and we headed full speed towards the dock and all the workers and guests panicked and ran full speed to get off the dock. Finally after two more back and forths we straightened out and with a blast of the horn and a sigh of relief we began our 50 mile voyage to Galveston. We arrived without further incident.

\*\*\* Thank you, Tom, for sharing this story and as always for keeping us entertained at Reunions with your wonderful adaptations of "The Muffin Man" and "Skin"

**More Reunion Notes**

Jack and Ruth Yusen were signed up to join us in Fredericksburg but had to cancel at the last minute. We missed you, Jack and Ruth!

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During our Business Meeting, some of us talked with Dudley Moylan on the phone. We tried to get his input on a few things but he was on his way to therapy and didn't have time to visit via phone. Rest in peace, Dudley, we miss you.

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As I have worked on composing this Newsletter, my thoughts have frequently wandered to the time when Dick Rohde said to me " I kind of have you pegged to take over the Newsletter some day" I never thought that day would be now and here I am trying to fill his shoes. We miss you, Dick, and John and I are ever grateful that we were able to visit with you and Helen in Florida last February.

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Georgia VanVoorst(Patti Hedgeman's sister) was also among the missing at our reunion. Just so you know, Georgia, we kept an eye on Patti and made sure she didn't drink too many Margaritas!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thank you to Bob LeClercq for coordinating every last detail of our Texas Reunion.**

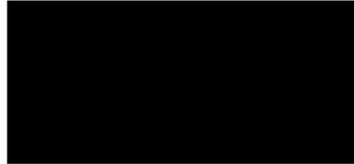
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Bud Comet was joined by son J.C. and daughter Jamie at the reunion. Now that we have met all of your kids, Bud, we are really going to be able to keep track of you!

*Association Dues are \$10.00 per Year*  
*Payable to:*  
*Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association*  
*c/o John T. Walsh*  
*24945 Marian Avenue*  
*Elwood, IL 60421*

Samuel B. Roberts DE 413  
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We would like to update our lists.  
Please e-mail, call or write with any new  
Information!  
Thank you.

