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Dick Rohde, editor

Obituary

Shipmate Edward W. Driskill, Jr. died on Tuesday, October 12, 1999 at home in Forest, Virginia. He suffered a heart attack.

His son, Edward Jr., writes as follows:

My dad was so proud and honored to have served on the SAMUEL B. ROBERTS during World War II. That became the center of his life for the last few years and he talked endlessly about the new friends that he had made through contacts from the NEWSLETTER. He read everything he could get involving the "Sammy B". He loved the ship and was so PROUD to have represented her memory. I will miss my dad tremendously, but will always cherish the memories and stories about his experiences revolving around the great Destroyer Escort - The SAMUEL B. ROBERTS. Thanks for publishing and keeping the memories alive for the many surviving men and their families.

Sincerely,

Edward W. Driskill, Jr. [ask Dick Rohde for address]

A NOTE FROM CYBERSPACE

In my e-mail last week, I received the following letter from Dr. Rob S. Rice of The American Military University.

Dear Mr. Rohde, I read the story of that magnificent ship in "Little Ship, Big War," and was and remain deeply, deeply moved by the story of the Roberts and the

other vessels in action off Samar that day. I had no idea you had an organization until I stumbled across your page. I cannot easily put into my words the awe and reverence I have for the - Roberts - and her crew, but, quite some time ago, I did try to put them down. I hope that the appended poem at the least demonstrates that your gallant ship and comrades are not, not yet, forgotten, and in some place of the nation's heart, never will be.

DE 413 Samuel B. Roberts Lost off Samar, 25 October, 1944

by Rob S. Rice

The fish alone now see her lie
With empty guns that still defy
The enemy who laid her low
And died himself, so long ago...

Smallest of the ships that fought
One, of many, lost.
Sent down by all the shells she caught,
Slaughtered at a cost.

The enemy surged forth in might
And she stood in the way,
The 'Little Wolves' ran toward the fight,
Their charges slipped away.

And one by one, the escorts died,
Hulls torn apart, like men,
And deep, uncaring waters hide
The places they had been.

They faced a foe four times their size

The foemen thought them mad,
Wounds, pain and death the bloody prize
They bought with all they had.

In the darkness, in the hold,
Death held off by thin steel,
Ocean water, pressing, cold
Doom at hand, and real.

No way out, but burns and pain
Rewards for standing to.
And so they died, but not in vain.
What else could heroes do?

The memories fade, one by one,
Her hull rusts, day by day,
The - Roberts - crew knew what they'd done
But they, too, pass away.

Alone, forgotten in her grave,
And lost to sight and sun,
She knows she gave all that she gave
Please, let her know she won...

With my sincere respects, and completely unworthy thanks.

WWW.DE413.ORG

The above is, of course, the address, or URL for our website. Since it started, we

have had over 4400 "hits" or times that people have visited. That is an impressive number. The letter above, came from someone visiting our site. We have at least one new member who is on line. Say hello to Bob and Billie LeClercq. Their e-mail address is dbl@ev1.net

If there are others of you out there with e-mail addresses that you would like to share, please let me know. James M. Reid

In the last issue of the NEWSLETTER , I mentioned that I had been in touch with shipmate James Reid's daughter, Brenda Reed, and his granddaughter, Melanie Bartow. Melanie writes that she was in an automobile accident in September and suffered a herniated disc in her neck which gives her much pain and very limited use of her left arm and hand. We hope and pray that the treatments will work and that things get back to normal. Melanie and her husband are planning to be with us next October for our Washington reunion. Brenda Reed (yes, when she married her name changed from Reid to Reed) wrote to say that so often during the years she had thought how wonderful it would be to get in touch with survivors of the Samuel B. Roberts. She said, "Thank God for computers and my daughter. I cannot express the feelings I felt when she showed me your first response. I have all of them, and the Newsletter came on Saturday." (Sept. 25) "The sad part that breaks my heart is that Daddy never got to be in touch with any of the survivors. He would have been so thrilled and happy to have been able to have gone to a reunion. Someone called my mother's home only a few weeks after he died, July 13, 1975, about a Survivors' Reunion. He talked so many times about the time when his ship sank." Brenda adds that a young sailor wanted to trade places with him and it was o.k.'d. That was where the ship was hit and so she knew that God had a purpose for her daddy's life. He found a calling as a Sunday School teacher and continued with that until he died. James was in his late 20's when on the ship and was married with two children and a third on the way when the ship was sunk. She has all of the letters that her father wrote to her and will share them with us. If any of you remember James Reid, please write to her - Brenda Reid Reed. She would love to hear from you as would her daughter, Melanie Bartow. [ask Dick Rohde for address]

Joe Fortier Writes

Dear Dick,

Received the excellent newsworthy Sammy B's Newsletter today. Many thanks, a real shame we couldn't have been at the reunion. Probably won't make one unless it's close because of Marie's leaky heart valve. Certainly won't be able to fly. I've had her home for two months and monitoring 11 medications daily.

She's better but not completely well from depression. She's so much better it is a joy, hope she will continue her improvement. All of the prayers are working. She's been going to group therapy on Mondays thru Fridays which has been a great help. It

has allowed me to do my Red Cross volunteering at Madigan Army Medical Center which has helped my disposition as well. I try to be patient and understanding which I'm sure helps Marie as well. Of course I take a handful of pills in the AM and PM to keep up with all of my responsibilities.

I have had you in my thoughts and hope you haven't had losses in the storms we read and see about in Florida. Haven't taken the time to look at the map to be more knowledgeable of the area. Marie will have a cataract removed this month which takes much bravery on her part to go through with. Next on the program will be having two teeth removed, so you can see there's no let-up for her and me as her care person. That's what 56 years of marriage is all about.

In February I had my right carotid artery operated on which was successful. Thank goodness Marie was well enough to stay with me at the hospital during the pre-op and able to transport me. Thank you for your concerns and prayers for my Marie. With the many others as I said, they certainly have and are working.

My respects to you and your wife, regards,

Joe

Letter from Marty Davis

Dear Dick,

Please find enclosed my check in the amount of \$10.00 to cover my associate membership in Sammy B. As I have said before, your newsletter is one of the very best DE publications, and with it, you are making a further contribution to naval history. In discussing reunion locations, I suggest that consideration be given to going to Albany, home of USS Slater DE 766. Remarkable restoration progress is being made on the ship each day, 39 DE reunions have been held in Albany with a greater number scheduled for next year and I know that a Sammy B reunion at this location would be an item of major focus.

For your records, please list me as Director of DESA and DEHF, and change my E-Mail >>perspectives@prodigy.com<<

Please give my best regards to the members,

Marty Davis

OFFICERS OF THE USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS SURVIVORS' ASS'N. 1999 - 2000

Co-Chairman #1 Glenn Huffman*

Co-Chairman #2 Don Young

Co-Chairman #3 Dudley Moylan

Co-Chairman #4 Jack Yusen

Directors

Co-Treasurer Vince Goodrich

Co-Treasurer Mel Harden

Newsletter Editor Dick Rohde

*Glenn Huffman is Coordinator of Co-Chairmen.

More from the Mail Box

Vince Goodrich sent the following. As he says, "Kind of the opposite of 'Skin'."

A Little Boy's Essay on Anatomy

Your head is round and hard, and your brains are in it and hair on it. Your face is the front of your head where you eat and make faces. Your neck is what keeps your head out of your collar. It's hard to keep clean. Your shoulders are sort of shelves where you hook your suspenders on them. Your stummick is something that if you do not eat often enough it hurts, and spinach don't help none. Your spine is a long bone in your back that keeps you from folding up. Your back is always behind you no matter how quick you turn around. Your arms you got to have to pitch with and so you can reach the butter. Your legs is what if you have not got two of, you cannot get to first base. Your feet are what you run on, your toes are what always get stomped. And your fingers stick out of your hand so you can throw a curve and add up rithmatick. and that's all there is of you, except what's inside, and I never saw it at all.

Patti Anne Johnson ...Granddaughter of Jack Conway sent the following letter.

Dear Mr. Rohde,

I enjoyed the latest issue of the Newsletter. I was very disappointed that we were unable to make the reunion this year as we had planned. It sounded like a good time was had by all. My 2 year old, as I think I've told you, has cancer and we decided quite suddenly to do her Make a Wish trip to Disney World in early Sept. Our hopes were to still go to San Diego but she needed surgery and we had to postpone the Disney trip until late Sept. We had a wonderful time and were glad we went.

Two days after we got home we found out she relapsed. Although she is undergoing intensive chemotherapy she is doing quite well and is in good spirits. I am eagerly awaiting Reunion 2000. I've always wanted to go to Washington D.C. I still have not heard from anyone knowing my grandfather other than Dudley Moylan. I'm still hoping to - perhaps you can spread the word for me in the Newsletter. Enclosed are dues for the coming year.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and all.

Sincerely,

Patti Anne Johnson granddaughter of Jack Conway [ask Dick Rohde for address]

More Mail

LORRAINE MARTEL wrote a very nice letter after receiving her copy of the NEWSLETTER. She said that she enjoys reading Red Harrington's poems and enjoyed the "Just a Piece of Cloth" and forwards them along with other news to 15 members of her family who all have "packets" that Lorraine has made up for them. Nice idea. She has seen and read much about the World War II Memorial and wishes that it could have been built when there were more of those who fought in that war around to see it. Lorraine wishes each and everyone of the SBR Survivors' Association the Very Best of Holidays and Good Health in the coming year 2000.

PEGGY DODD sent me a note along with a clipping from the Checotah OK paper, THE MCINTOSH COUNTY DEMOCRAT. The first page article acknowledges the 55th Anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. It gives a full account of what went on that day, highlighting the heroic actions of Paul Henry Carr along with an accounting of all

of the honors he has received including having a street named after him and a large granite monument which has a portrait of Paul , in his Navy whites, etched in the stone. As most of you know, Paul received the Silver Star posthumously and the FFG 52 , USS CARR was named in his honor In the article, Peggy says, "All these years it's been like a brother went away and never came back. I remember Mama would receive letters from Paul who would write two lines of a song with some words that would tell her where he was in the war at the time." Peggy got a letter from her brother written the day he died, along with cookies she had sent him. "The telegram that he had been killed came to the depot and a lady delivered it to us." she said. "I was a senior that year." If you would like to visit the home page of USS CARR, FG 52, following is the address. <http://www.spear.navy.mil/ships/ffg52>

AND STILL MORE MAIL

HENRY DOSCHER sent the following note.

I just received the latest "Newsletter" and noted you all had a fine reunion in San Diego. Sorry I had to miss it due to my cataract surgery. I now see much better; in fact 20/20, uncorrected, with my "refurbished" right eye. I note that annual dues are now due. I enclose my check for \$10.00, and did not know to whom else I should send it.

My regards to Helen,

Sincerely,

Henry.

Note: It is o.k. to send the dues to me, payable to SBR Survivors' Ass'n. I'll see that they get to the right place. Ed.

RED HARRINGTON forwarded a clipping which he received from J. D. Luther, nephew of shipmate Shirley Macon. It is from the front page of the state wide paper of Delaware, The News Journal, on October 27, 1999. They feature a "Look Back" feature and this one had a news item from October 27, 1944 that is headlined "6 U.S. Warships Lost in Philippines" followed by "Airplane Carrier, 2 Destroyers and 3 Escort Ships Sunk". Names of Vessels Other Than Princeton Unannounced: Enemy Battle Loss Promises to Exceed Toll of 35 Ships Taken Off Guadalcanal in 1942. Additional information states that names of the vessels, except for the Princeton were not disclosed in the Navy's brief communique today, pending notification of next of kin of casualties aboard the ships.

LEON MCCOY of the DD 823 Shipmates Association sent me news of our namesake ship

and a report on their 3rd reunion which was held in August in the Annapolis/Washington D.C. area. They had a great time, an excellent reunion and some of the guests included CAPT Lee Geanuleas, CAPT Chris Wode and our own Mel Harden and Leona. We wish Leon and Florence well. They plan to be doing a lot of traveling. Best wishes also to the new President John Turner. Their next reunion is scheduled for 2001 in the Boston/Newport area.

USS JOHNSTON/HOEL ASSOCIATION will be holding its Year 2000 Reunion in Colorado Springs, Colorado from October 8 through October 11. Congratulations and best wishes to their new Officers headed by President Larry Morris.

BILL WILSON wrote to let me know that he and Esther were on their way to Sun City, Arizona for the winter. He enjoyed each and every day of the reunion and appreciated the time and effort that had been put into the planning. Bill says that the free time, visiting with old friends was wonderful.

Taps

In this month's issue of the Purple Heart Magazine I found the complete words to TAPS and thought I would share them with you.

Day is done, gone the sun,

>From the hills, from the lake,

>From the skies.

All is well, safely rest,

God is nigh.

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,

May the soldier or sailor,

God keep.

On the land or the deep,

Safe in sleep.

Love, good night, must thou go,

When the day, and the night
Need thee so?
All is well. Speedeth all
To their rest.

Fades the light; and afar
Goeth day, and the stars
Shineth bright.
Fare thee well: day has gone
Night is on.

Thanks and praise, for our days,
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'Neath the sky.
As we go, this we know,
God is nigh.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you all the joys of the holiday season and to hope that you will have a Healthy and Happy New Year. Helen and I will be spending Christmas with our son Cliff, his wife Allison and their son Noah in Washington D.C. We will be there from Dec. 22 to Dec. 28. After that, you can reach us at home in Ocala, Florida. God bless you all. The Spirit of the Sammy "B"

As many of you may know, Captain Copeland's book, "The Spirit of the Sammy "B" was published in a limited number at the time that the USS COPELAND, FFG 25 was commissioned. The books were made available to the known survivors and to those involved with the new ship. In the ensuing years, the available copies were all distributed and some mimeographed copies were all that was available. Bud Comet had a copy of the original manuscript which he made available to me and with the help of my son Cliff, we will have copies available in early January for those who are interested.

Thanks to a generous donation from Leah Felt, and she will probably be upset with

me for telling you this, the only costs involved will be for the mailings. They will be 8" by 11" and have a proper cover, but are not bound volumes. If you have an interest, please let me know and I will see that you get a copy. We are only printing 100 copies, but that should be sufficient for quite a while. Thank you, Leah, on behalf of the SBR Survivors' Association family.

History of the Destroyer Escort

The following was sent to me by Dudley Moylan and was made available to him by a friend who is part of the Minnesota WW II History Roundtable edited by Jim and Jon Gerber. We are grateful to them for their permission to print the following.

While Americans fought around the world in WW II, those at home contributed greatly to the war effort in many ways. It may have been putting up with shortages, growing victory gardens, buying bonds or working hard in the factories to produce what was necessary for the war effort.

Many ingenious ways were developed to improve and speed up production. One of these ways was written about in Invention and Technology magazine in an article about "The Little Ships That Could". The Battle of the Atlantic, the longest battle of WW II began in 1939. Early in the war the German U-boats sent allied ships, and therefore Allied supplies and troops to the bottom in great numbers. The standard convoys proved an easy target for the fast and maneuverable U-boats. The Allies realized that they needed a new weapon if they were to survive. In 1940, Churchill appealed to Franklin Roosevelt for "escort vessels" specially designed to destroy U-boats.

The Navy's Bureau of Ships developed a plan for what would be called the destroyer escort (DE). The sole purpose of the DE would be to seek and destroy U-boats. The Navy was not ready until May, 1941, and as soon as the first order was placed ADM Harold Stark changed his mind and the 50-ship deal was canceled. Churchill once again turned to Roosevelt and in August he approved an order to build 50 ships for the British. The first keel was laid in February of 1942 and the first DE for the Royal Navy was launched in November.

The US Navy's first DE was not commissioned until January of 1943. Had the Navy delayed much longer, the ships might have missed the war. The DE was armed with a battery of underwater weapons: two depth charge racks, eight depth charge projectors (called K-guns) and the Hedgehog, a cluster of 24 mortars that would fire forward at an underwater target. In addition, each DE had sonar and radar as well as three torpedo tubes and long and short range antiaircraft guns.

The DE was made up of spare parts and its basic design was simple enough to allow for mass production. The naval ship yard at Mare Island in California accepted the contract for building the DEs. It was already overburdened building other larger ships and so contracted the DE's to a factory in Denver, Col. Denver was a mile high and 800 miles from the sea but had two advantages: no existing war industry and a ready supply of labor and housing. Mare Island supplied the blueprints, schedules and the leadership and Denver would supply the steel and the sweat.

An army of untrained workers struggled to cope with the enormous demand for vessels of a new, untested design and with a new technique for putting them together - arc welding. Welding had a structural advantage and was faster and easier. It was the only way to mass produce ships. Builders could now use prefabricated parts assembled hundreds of miles away and weld those parts into a whole ship, thus greatly simplifying and speeding up the building process. Building an all-welded ship was like putting together a three dimensional puzzle except that some of the parts might weigh a ton or more. Sometimes multiple cranes, each able to lift 10 tons, were used in tandem to lift fabricated deck superstructures, equipment, and weapons onto and into the cavernous openings in the hull, to be welded together there.

As the workers learned their jobs, building times decreased; the first DE took six months, but before long they were being constructed in a matter of weeks. Competition between yards and cash awards fueled the increases in efficiency. Defoe Shipbuilding of Bay City, Michigan decided to try building ships upside down, from the deck up to the keel. It was felt to be easier to weld downwards and this sped up the work. The process virtually eliminated 90% of overhead welding. Once the deck was laid down, frames and bulkheads attached to it appeared bottom-side up.

The keel, floors and plating were dropped into position on top of the frames and bulkheads. On completion of the hull section, two semicircular steel wheels were clamped around the hull and cables were thrown around the vessel in opposite directions. This allowed two cranes, pulling on one cable and holding back on the other to roll the hull to an upright position. The whole process took no more than two and one half minutes. Once the hull was upright, cranes would then drop additional machinery in place and install the prefabricated deckhouse.

East coast shipyards also added their might to the DE program. Bethlehem Steel's Hingham Yard in Hingham, Mass. was able to deliver a DE in just 25 days by the end of the war. In contrast, the construction time for a fleet destroyer before the war had been 8 to 10 months. Hingham's claims to fame include launching one DE in 4 and one half days - a world record for building a major war vessel - delivering 10 DEs in one month and laying 16 keels on one day. The overall safety and efficiency of these ships guaranteed the future of welding, and the large numbers of identical vessels permitted economies of scale in the provision of assembly jigs, the adoption of repeatable procedures and material-supply planning.

The DEs finally plunged into the Battle of the Atlantic in the fall of 1943, each

about 300 feet long and 35 feet across, capable of a top speed of 20 to 24 knots. They carried 216 officers and men in cramped, no-nonsense quarters. As the Battle of the Atlantic wound down, the DEs made further history in the Pacific as transports, anti-submarine warfare platforms, radar picket ships and screens for Kamikaze attacks.

One DE, the USS England, destroyed six subs in 12 days during May of 1944. Of the 565 DEs built, 563 saw service before the war's end. The DE was built in less than half the time of a fleet destroyer and at a third of the cost. It was part of a massive war effort in which the number of ship ways rose from 130 to 567 at nearly 80 shipyards. The battles of WW II were won as much on the assembly line as on the firing line.

Some email

While we were in San Diego, the following E-mail was received from Steve Wade of Salem, Va. "Congratulations on a very moving and excellent site dedicated to the memory of the "Sammy B". My father served aboard DE 342 USS RICHARD W. SUESENS which was the flagship of your division during the Manus "Equator crossing ritual". There is an excellent description of this at <http://www.escortcarriers.org/bosamar/sammyb4.html>. My site honoring the DE 342 and crew may interest you: <http://members.tripod.com/DE342/>. Feel free to sign the guest book, as dad eagerly checks it on a daily basis. You might consider adding a free guest book to your site.

Some One Liners for You to Consider

- Two wrongs are only the beginning.
- All those who believe in psychokinesis raise my hand.
- Early bird gets the worm but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- OK, so what's the speed of dark?
- How do you tell when you run out of invisible ink?
- Support bacteria - they're the only culture some people have.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark
- Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
- 24 hrs in a day - 24 beers in a case - coincidence?
- Why do psychics have to ask you for your name?
- Dancing is a perpendicular expression of a horizontal desire.
- If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?
- What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
- If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving definitely isn't for you.
- The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the butter.
- Half the people you know are below average.

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