



Excerpts from USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association Newsletter

Vol. 10, No. 2, June-July 2000

Dick Rohde, editor

REUNION - 2000

Don Young has really been working diligently since the beginning of the year putting together our Washington DC reunion in October. Most of the plans are in place, such as the survivors having luncheon with the Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis on Monday, October 23rd. At the same time, spouses and other guests will have luncheon in Annapolis in the Corinthian Room of Loews Hotel. On Tuesday, we will hold our Memorial Service at the Navy Memorial and will follow that with a viewing of the movie "At Sea". Our final banquet will be held at our hotel, the Days Inn Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. Our keynote speaker will be Thomas J. Cutler, author of "The Battle of Leyte Gulf 23-26 October 1944". We are privileged to have him address us on Tuesday evening. Many have indicated their intention to be present for this reunion. We hope that you will be with us.

[At this link, you will find the official registration form for the reunion.](#) Be sure to fill it out completely and send it back to me as quickly as you can. The information is as complete as possible at the present time. There might be a change having to do with the tours but we can handle that later. If we need more money, we will let you know, but the amount would be minimal. Please bear with us.

Reservations for the hotel should be made directly with the Days Inn Crystal City, 2000 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia, 22202. Their telephone number is 703 920-8600. The central reservation office number is 800 329-7466. They are holding rooms for us with a guaranteed rate of \$109.00 plus 9.75% tax for a total of \$119.63 for 1-4 persons per room. They are 3 blocks from the metro station, 3 miles from Washington, D.C. and 1 mile from Ronald Reagan Airport. It looks like we will have a good attendance and it would behoove you to get the reservations in early.

From the survey that was sent out earlier in the year, the following indicated that either they would attend or would probably attend: William Branham, George Bray, Bud Comet, Madelyn Dadd, Leah Felt, Wiley Fields, Elbert Gentry, Vince Goodrich, Lou Gould, James Griggs, Rita Grove, Mel Harden, Red Harrington, Maggie Hayes, Patti

Hedgeman, Patti Anne Johnson, Bill Katsur, Frank Kupidlowski, Bob LeClercq, James Luther, John Montgomery, Dudley Moylan, James Myers, Bob Roberts, Will Rogers, Dick Rohde, Al Rosner, Ken Saunders, Tom Stevenson, John Walsh, Don Young and Jack Yusen. The above list represents 71 individuals and we know that many of the newly found families are planning to be with us. Sounds like quite a group.

If you have questions on anything, please let me know, one way or another. Dick Rohde at rkrohde@aol.com.

ALDEN "BUTCH" ROBINSON

I received word of the death of our shipmate. Alden died on Monday, May 10. He was buried in his home town Smyrna, Delaware, on May 14.

Fair winds and following seas on the final journey, old friend.

FAMILIES OF SHIPMATES FOUND

Since the last NEWSLETTER we have made contact with many families of our shipmates. Some of you may know that Red Harrington has made it a quest to find relatives so that he can see that they receive a certificate from the President of the United States acknowledging their service to their country. The certificates are issued to all veterans who have passed away. Red enlisted the aid of Judy Brady Bruce who is the daughter of shipmate Norbert Brady and Judy really went to work with her computer. Others have been found through our website, www.de413.org, and others through DESA News. She found Jackson McCaskill's brother and sister and his oldest daughter. She also located a brother of Leonard Gallerini. Additionally, through our website (www.de413.org) I have heard from a nephew of Steve Mudre S1C and a nephew of William E. Stovall S2C. I also heard from a fellow church member of James K. Weaver EM2C.

Jackson McCaskill S2C, who was awarded the Silver Star, has at least four family members living in South Carolina. A brother, Billy McCaskill, lives in McBee; sister Lois Nell lives in Charleston, SC. Jackson's oldest daughter, Joyce and her husband Bob Horne live in Hartsville. Joyce indicated that she and her Aunt Lois are very interested in attending the October reunion.

Leonard Gallerini's brother, Alphonse, lives in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

I received the following e-mail from Mike Donovan in Titusville, Florida. "I watched a show about the Battle of Leyte Gulf tonight on the History Channel. My uncle Steve Mudre was killed on October 25th 1944. He was part of Taffy III on the Samuel B. Roberts. He was a 1st Class Gunners Mate. I really don't know much about my Uncle Steve. If anyone has served with him, it would be great to hear from you. My brother is named after my uncle. Please send me an e-mail on any info about any reunions in the future. Thanks. Mike Donovan"

Mike's e-mail address is: mhdonova@bellsouth.net

A list of our fallen shipmates whose families have been found follows:

- Russell Abair, Jr.
- Wilbur Edward Anderton
- Harold Barrett
- Fred Wilson Bates
- Richard A. Bingaman
- Lloyd George Braun
- Vernon Ray Butler
- William F. Butterworth, Jr.

- Joseph W. Caddarette, Jr.
- Robert Peter Cummings
- Ralph Decubellis
- Elroy Downs
- Albert H. Freye
- Leonard N. Gallerini
- Woodrow Wilson Harris
- Donald Richard Hausman
- Troy Thurman Hodges
- Chester P. Kupidlowski
- Lewis Cleveland Kyger
- Joseph Lecci
- Herman Joseph Levitan
- Thomas J. Mazura
- Jackson McCaskill
- Herman E. Meyer
- Steve Mudre
- Charles W. Natter
- John Jacob Newmiller
- Melvin Louis Spears
- William E. Stovall
- George P. Ulickas
- Eugene Wagner
- Percy Harry Wallace
- Cloy Wethington

Hopefully, some of you will have memories of the above named shipmates and will want to contact their relatives. Rather than list all of the addresses in the NEWSLETTER, if you will contact me, I will send you the names and addresses of the relatives.

An Open Letter to our New Found Families There is just no way that I can express the delight in the fact that after all of these years, you have been found. We thank Red Harrington, Judy Bruce and the marvels of the Internet for the fact that you have been found. We hope that this will mark the beginning of a new experience for you in reaching out and meeting your loved one's shipmates and perhaps learning more about what happened on that October 25th so many years ago.

As you will learn elsewhere in this NEWSLETTER, we are having a reunion in Washington, D.C. in October. We all sincerely hope that you may be able to attend. While the Presidential Memorial Certificate, inscribed with your loved one's name is very nice, the more important reason for you to attend is that you will be able to meet some of the shipmates of your loved one. You will hear the stories of what went on that day and the ensuing days in the life rafts. You will hear the "sea stories" that we relive and you will meet the people who have gone through the same aches and pains that you have suffered through the years. We have found that it is best to talk about what happened instead of bottling things up. Personally, I still have emotional problems talking about those events of the past, as do many others. You will, however, find that you are now a part of a new family. The family of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS SURVIVOR'S ASSOCIATION. We look forward to meeting you, to sharing our experiences with you, and to make you feel welcome. Please try to attend. Not to receive an award, but to join a most unique group. Please call me if you have any questions.

The Spirit of the "Sammy B"

As you will remember, we reprinted copies of Captain Copeland's book, The Spirit of the Sammy B. The charge for a copy is \$10.00. I have mailed out sixty five copies of

the books including some to individuals who read of the book on our website (WWW.DE413.ORG). We are about to order additional copies, so, if you are interested, please let me know and I'll see that you receive a copy.

SAMUEL B. ROBERTS SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

- 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

*Coordinator of Co-Chairmen.

SOME NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE.

Tom Stevenson called to tell me that he had read Bob Roberts story about how calmly he had gone down below to the safe to destroy the secret publications. Tom said, "I would like to go record that I was so scared that it took me three times to open the safe and I was so anxious to get out of there that I forgot my college ring and my wallet which were right there in my room, but, I sure didn't forget to pick up my life preserver which was hanging on the bulkhead."

Lou Gould sent an e-mail with great news. Let me quote from his letter. "Barbara works for a local glass company and I needed a window replaced. When I finished talking about the window I asked her if she was married and she said no, had been a widow for 12 years. I asked if she would go to dinner with me and she said sure. We ended up in Reno, single on Nov. 11th and later that day, MARRIED. Of course we visited my son in California and made a few side trips, Wine Country etc. If we come to the reunion it won't be much of a strain from here, 150 miles.

Congratulations and best wishes to the bride and groom and we do expect to see you both in Washington for the reunion!

Edward Burmila read about our ship on the website and sent me the following e-mail. "I am a 49 year old Illinois attorney, the son of a deceased WW II veteran who served in the 13th Arm. Div. in France and Germany. I am a student and observer of the military history of our nation. Having recently finished a book about the battle of Leyte Gulf, I sought out this site for no other purpose than to offer my thanks as a grateful citizen for the service to our country of each and every man who trod the deck of that ship on October of 1944. Such courage cannot be forgotten."

James Cagle sent an e-mail with the heading Debt Owed. "I was born Nov. 1939 and I just want to thank all the people of your ship and indeed all those who served to help make America what it is today and to allow me to grow up in a country that is free. THANK YOU."

MORE NOTES.....

Commander Michael D. Davis sent the following announcement:

The Commanding Officer, USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58) takes pleasure in announcing
the Change of Command at which

Commander Michael D. Davis, United States Navy

was relieved by Commander David A. Labarbera, United States Navy On Saturday,
the 22nd of April 2000
aboard USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58)
while deployed to the Arabian Gulf

An enclosed note indicated that Commander Davis' next assignment will be as Reactor Officer in USS George Washington (CVN 73). We wish all success to both of the above named officers.

From "Tides & Currents", the letter from the CO of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58) dated May 31, 2000 I learned that they were back in the Mediterranean Sea after spending two months in the Mideast region. Among other events, they had an exercise with the Egyptian Navy in the Northern Red Sea. Captain Labarbera does not mention whether they were with the former USS COPELAND. They also participated in another exercise with the Jordanian Navy. While in Aqaba they hosted a reception on the flight deck for dignitaries from Aqaba and the Jordanian Navy. He mentions that on May 18th, they celebrated the halfway point of the deployment. "Hump Day" was celebrated with a cookout on the forecastle complete with hamburgers, chicken, steak, beans, salad, cookies and all the condiments.

I quote his final statement. "I am extremely proud to be the Commanding Officer of USS Samuel B. Roberts and to serve with such a great crew. This ship has a tremendous history and a solid future. You can always rest assured that your men are vigilant, ready to go and will always be ready to answer the call. It is a great time to be in the U.S. Navy and serving onboard Sammy B!"

A Trip to Fredericksburg

Early in May, Helen and I, along with our five children were in Austin, Texas to attend the wedding of our granddaughter. While there, we drove to Fredericksburg on a Sunday afternoon to visit the Nimitz Museum. Unfortunately, we had some time constraints (the wedding was that evening) and we were not able to spend much time there, but, we did see the new plaque which is prominently displayed on a wall in the garden. The kids were most impressed with the museum and with our plaque. We did take some pictures while there. For all of our new found "family" I do recommend that you make it a point to spend some time there if you are in the area. The museum covers the war in the Pacific with much space dedicated to the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The exhibits and artifacts are plentiful and very interesting.



(Survivor Dick Rohde and son Cliff (de413.org webmaster) at the plaque commemorating the DE 413 on the grounds of the Nimitz Museum, Fredericksburg, TX.) [[here for close up of plaque](#)]

Meet William Rupp

Back in March, I received an e-mail from William Rupp. He introduced himself as a sixth grader in Washington D.C. and told me that he was participating in the National History Day Competition and that he had chosen the topic "The Battle of Leyte Gulf". The theme for this year's competition was "Turning Points in History" and he felt that Leyte Gulf was one of the biggest turning points of the war. The focus of his display project was Halsey's mistake and Taffy 1,2 and 3. [[here for a picture of William and his display](#)]

William said that he found our NEWSLETTER on the Internet and that it had helped him a great deal. He wondered if he could use some quotes from Bob Robert's autobiographical essay and whether I would be willing to be interviewed over the telephone. He also expressed a strong interest in meeting me and others when we were in Washington for our reunion. Needless to say, I told him that I was sure that Bob Roberts would be happy for him to quote parts of his story since he had written it mainly for his children and grandchildren and also that I would be honored to be interviewed. In his research he read "The Men of Gambier Bay", "Admiral Halsey's Story" and "Decision and Dissent" and of course, "Little Wolf at Leyte". I sent him a copy of "The Spirit of the Sammy B" and a photograph of our ship.

William won the Division Contest and then went on to the City finals. [[close up of](#)

[display at the City finals](#)] Although he did not win and go on to the Nationals, he won the best overall entry for World War II and received a \$500 savings bond as well as a set of books on the history of World War II and some World War II stamps. Our son Cliff and his wife were present for the awards and of course met William and his parents. I have invited the Rupps to be with us for our banquet as my guests and they were delighted to accept.

Through our website, through our organization and others like it, and especially through the upcoming generation and young people like William Rupp, our story and the stories of all who went before us will not be forgotten. Thanks, young man, we are all looking forward to meeting you.

FAVORITE HYMNS FOR PEOPLE OVER 50

- The Old Rugged Face
- It Is Well With My Soul (But My Back Hurts)
- Nobody Knows the Trouble I Have Seeing
- Amazing Grace (Considering My Age)
- Just a Slower Walk With Thee
- Blessed Insurance
- Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah (I've Forgotten Where I Parked)

Some Notes from Here and There

Tom and Virginia Stevenson are back in Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, escaping Florida's heat. According to Tom, they have been cold and wet.

Bob Roberts has moved to Lewistown, Pennsylvania to be with his daughter. He visited Sam Stewart's Restaurant much to Sam's surprise.

Life has been interesting for me lately. I have a new iMac computer, however, the program for this NEWSLETTER is in my old Mac Performa. You know about two car families, well

I will be getting out a new address list for everyone once we feel that we have found most of the relatives of our fallen shipmates.

Newsletters to John Moore, son of Ens. Jack Moore had been returned with no forwarding address and I was afraid that we had lost him but Judy Bruce came up with a telephone number. I called him and we had a nice conversation. He may join us in October.

Wiley Fields, brother of shipmate Clifford Fields wrote to correct an error in our address list. Clifford's correct middle initial is G, not C. The full name Clifford Garfield Fields. Wiley sent in his dues and money for a copy of "The Spirit of the Sammy B" and passes along the following message, "From me to you and every member of USS Samuel B. Roberts DE 413, May GOD BLESS YOU."

Had a nice note from Clint Rogers who served on the USS Conklin, DE 439. When we were in Norfolk, on our way to the Pacific, Clint was assigned to our ship but was on liberty in Newport News and could not get back in time due to fog. He has always wondered what would have happened to him had he made it back in time.

I'm currently reading a very interesting book called "I Boat Captain" by Zenji Orita. a Japanese submarine captain. He provides a lot of information on the miniature submarines which were carried aboard their subs. Some were so large that they could carry six of these small ships. They were not designed as suicide boats. In discussing the Battle of Leyte Gulf he says that the center force managed to break through but beat a hasty retreat after sinking two destroyers, one destroyer

escort and one carrier.