

The USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association

NEWSLETTER

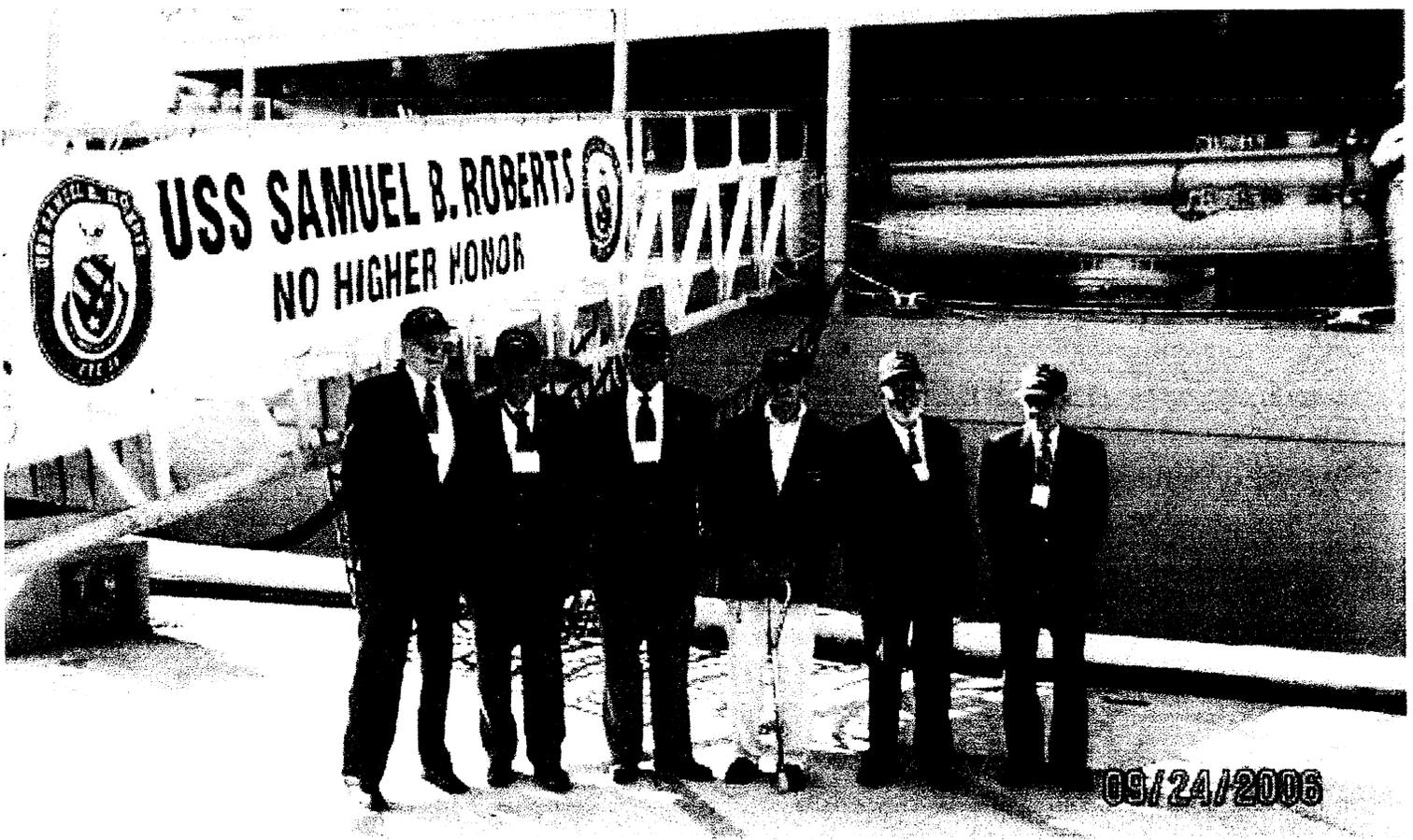


Dedicated to the memory of our shipmate and friend, Whit Felt.

November 2006

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Jacksonville Florida September 2006



Bill Wilson, Mel Harden, Dudley Moylan, George Bray, Dick Rohde, Bud Comet

Jacksonville Reunion Memories

Our thanks ring out for Sam Stewart and his committee of Patti Hedgeman Suzie Walsh and John Walsh for the excellent reunion which was held in Jacksonville from Sept. 24 to 28, 2006. We had a great time! The facilities of the hotel, the program, the tours, the Memorial Service and the weather were excellent. Bravo Zulu to you all. Well Done, in English.

There were twenty-nine of us present with some new faces and some of the regulars. We missed some familiar faces such as the Gentrys, Tom & Virginia Stevenson, the Bingamans and Leah Felt. Perhaps with Bob Hope and his Memorial laid to rest we may expect to see Ruth and Jack Yusen again. We had a good sampling of the second and third generations this year with Rhonda & Bill Wilson, Tonya Comet, Karen McGowan, Georgia Van Voorst & her son John Conway, Allicia Briant, daughter of George Bray, Linda DeCubellis Huttsell & husband Monty, Ray Conway and of course Patti Hedgeman & her guest Janet Kaiser, Suzie and John Walsh and Sam Stewart. We can't forget to mention Billie and Bob LeClercq, Leona and Mel Harden, Maxine Sinclair & Becky Roebuck, Dudley Moylan, Lil & Bud Comet, and Helen & Dick Rohde. That's a group to be reckoned with.

Although the reunion did not officially start until Sunday, there were many of us who arrived on Friday and Saturday; anxious to begin renewing old acquaintances and making new ones.

Patty did her usual fine job of getting the Hospitality Room set up, with Georgia's help of course.

Sunday was mostly devoted to catching up on all the news and explaining how we were finally able to find the hotel and then shared the secret of how to find your car once you parked it in the parking lot - easier said than done - ask Dudley, Bud, John or Dick.

Promptly at 9:00 am on Monday morning, we boarded the bus for our trip to Naval Station Mayport for our visit to USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, FFG 58 for our Memorial Service. There is no way that I can adequately express our thanks, our appreciation and our admiration to the men and women of our namesake ship. From the sailors who carried my wife aboard in her wheelchair to the CO, CDR Marc Weeks, everyone made us feel so welcome. It was like coming home.

Special thanks go to Command Master Chief Keith Taylor for his advance preparations and advice and suggestions for making this visit so special. Keith, you made Sam Stewart our hero and it is appreciated. The remarks, the tour of the ship, the refreshments - everything was perfect - even the unexpected fly over, or was it a flyaway. We all came away from our visit feeling so proud of our ship and its crew. We know that the ship and our Navy is in good hands. May God bless all of you. Please know that your backup crew sails with you wherever you go.

Following our time aboard ship we enjoyed a fine luncheon at The Officers Club, The Ocean Breeze. We then returned to the hotel and made good use of the Hospitality Room.



Jacksonville Reunion

Tuesday morning found us back on the bus and heading for St. Augustine. This city was founded in 1565, 55 years before the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. We learned much about this beautiful city and visited the old fort, the market place, and the most beautiful Flagler Memorial Presbyterian Church. We spent a great deal of time in the market, visiting the variety of shops and restaurants. We must have received some of the benefits of the Fountain of Youth. How else do you explain the fact that we were all eating ice cream cones. Another evidence of the effects of the Fountain became evident that evening when the word was passed around that there was a beautiful blonde young woman in the pool who had apparently misplaced the upper part of her swimming suit. Sam Stewart had obviously partaken of the magical waters because we could not drag him away from the pool. Ah youth!

We gathered again in the Hospitality Room and solved many of the world's problems but could not solve the problem of not having Tom Stevenson with us to tell us once more about the Muffin Man. We're counting on you next year Tom!



On Wednesday we gathered for our annual business meeting with our Chairman Dudley Moylan presiding. Oh how I wish that I had taken notes of what went on, but alas, I did not do so. Following is what I recall. Please let me know of any errors of omission or commission and I will set them straight. Here goes for what I remember.

1. The minutes of last years meeting were read.
2. The following actions by the Board during the past year were reviewed.
 - a. The proposal for disposition of our treasury, should the Association disband was approved.
 - b. The decision to go ahead and solicit donations for the placing of bronze plaques on the monument at Fort Rosecrans was approved.
3. Dick Rohde reported on the collection of moneys to pay for our portion of the expense of installing bronze plaques on the monument. Our share was \$7,225 which has been received and is in a separate account. He reported that the Johnston - Hoel Association would rather paint the letters instead of installing plaques. Bob LeClercq was authorized to write a letter encouraging them to go for the bronze plaques per the John Ibe plan, as the other ships have done.
4. With the death of Vince Goodrich, the position of Co-Treasurer is vacant. Dick Rohde was appointed to fill the vacancy.
5. John Walsh was appointed Director.
6. Sam Stewart offered to plan the next two reunions and suggested that Washington D.C. be the site for next year. There was complete agreement to proceed as outlined above.

Jacksonville Reunion

Wednesday evening signaled the time for our closing banquet and the realization that our time in Jacksonville was nearing an end.

Following a social hour and excellent dinner prepared and served beautifully by the hotel staff we were privileged to have as our speaker, CDR Michael L. Elliott, Commanding Officer of USS DOYLE, FFG 39. His most interesting and informative presentation was quite comprehensive. We learned of some of the adversity that he faced as a young man to be accepted in the Navy including his fight and victory over cancer. His theories on command and management are exciting. The official motto of DOYLE is "Valiant Mariner" but his unofficial motto is "Done Deal". That gives a little insight into the man. We wish him and DOYLE all success.

We presented him with an autographed advanced reading copy of the new book, "Ship of Ghosts" which author Jim Hornfischer had presented to our Association. Mike Doyle then presented us with a plaque with the engraving of USS DOYLE, FFG 39. He wrote an inscription on the reverse as follows, "To the best Ship in World War II history from the best ship in Commander Destroyer Squadron Fourteen." signed Michael L. Elliott, Commanding Officer USS Doyle (FFG 39). "Done Deal!"

[Aside to CDR Marc Weeks] You're entitled to equal time and space in the Newsletter and rest assured, our money is on you.



Thursday, September 28, time to pack up, pay up and head for home. Our farewell breakfast is always a bit hard to take. As the years roll on relentlessly, we realize that we are not immortal and on one of these occasions we may not be there for the hugs, kisses and tears. So be it. We have been blessed with all of these extra years which our fallen shipmates never got to enjoy. They continue to live in our memories and so shall it ever be.



Officers and Directors Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association

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

Newsletter Editor
Richard K. Rohde
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Lillian Comet

I am deeply saddened to inform you of the death of Lil Comet, wife of shipmate James F. "Bud" Comet. She died peacefully on November 10th, 2006 in their interim home in Benton, Arkansas. Bud was with her at the time. Our deep and heartfelt sympathies go to Bud and their family.

Lil was a big part of the heart and soul of our Association. Her contributions of love, labor and friendship will never be forgotten. Rest in peace Lil, we'll be along in a little while.

Sick Call

BOB BINGAMAN had a serious stroke in September. He is recovering but it is a slow process. Norma says that he is in a wonderful rehab hospital and has started to talk. I am sure that he and Norma would appreciate your cards and more importantly, your prayers. He is at:

Rosewood Care Center
850 Dunham Road
St. Charles, IL 60174

He is facing surgery to have his colon removed and will have a colostomy.

BILLIE LECLERCQ has a new left knee and is busy learning how it works. I don't know that she has tried directing any high kicks to Bob where it would do the most good but I'm sure he's keeping a wary eye on her.

TOM STEVENSON has been having a lot of trouble following his hip replacement. The trouble does not seem to be with the hip. The last word I had was that he was hoping to be

examined at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. One of Tom's concerns is that his voice is weakening and we all want him to be back in fine voice for the next reunion. His problems are serious and I know that your prayers would be welcome as would your cards.

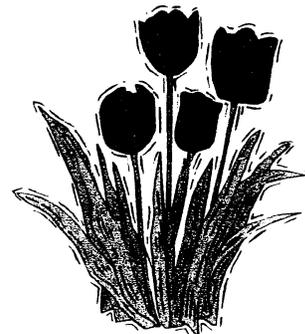
Tom Stevenson
636 Dawson Drive
Melbourne, FL 32940

EVERETT E. "BOB" ROBERTS, our XO is not doing very well at all. His daughter says that he is in the final stages of Parkinson's Disease, completely bed bound. He is on hospice, could go any day or not for a year. Please send your prayers his way.

SAM BLUE says that he and Louise are getting by the best they can. Both sitting up and taking nourishment I would suspect. Sam suffered a broken ankle and because he has diabetes it had to have a special type cast. The cast however, rubbed Sam the wrong way and he got an ulcer which became infected. He was in the VA Hospital in Gainesville for a while but is now back home. Again, those prayers and cards will be appreciated.

Sam and Louise Blue
4201 J J Blue Road
Perry, FL 32347

I know that I have missed some of you who are under the weather and apologize to you. Mea culpa.



This and That From Here and There

Forgive me if I completely change the subject and think about the football game on last Saturday. As some of you may know, I was employed by Ohio State for 16 years and really got into football. Woody Hayes started at OSU about the same time that I did. When I started as Manager of the Faculty Club, he said that he heard that I was on the Samuel B. Roberts and told me all about our battle. He knew more about it than I did and loaned me his copy of Morison's Naval History of World War II. Many of you may not know that Woody served in the Navy from 1941 to 1946 and was Commanding Officer of the Destroyer Escort, USS RINEHART, DE 196.

When we moved to Michigan in 1969, the family retained its allegiance to the Buckeyes and I do so today, in Gatorland.

OSU 42 - MI 39. Go Bucks!

Oh, and speaking of football, I did enjoy meeting some of the Dallas Cheerleaders while in Jacksonville. They were staying at our hotel and I rode the elevators with them several times. I even helped them with their bags. Poor tippers - good lookers.

A new printing of "The Spirit of the Sammy B" will soon be available. We have sold the last copy. Details will be posted on our website << www.de413.org >>.

Any dues payments will be gratefully received. Make payable to SBR Survivors and send to me.

Books and TV

"No Higher Honor" is the story of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, FFG 58, highlighting the striking of the Iranian mine in the Persian Gulf in 1988. Author Brad Penniston allows us to follow the ship from before the launching in December 1984 Bath, Maine to the Gulf, to its return to active duty. We learn about the crew and its Captain and how the months and months of damage control training paid off. It is hard to put down once you start reading. I recommend it to you highly.

"Sea of Thunder", written by Evan Thomas is another story of the Battle of Leyte Gulf told through the viewpoint of four commanders who are familiar to all of us. They are Admiral William Halsey, Admiral Takeo Kurita, Commander Ernest Evans, CO of USS JOHNSTON, and Admiral Matome Ugaki, the last kamikaze whose plane plunged into the sea. Although I have not yet read this book, after all of the words of praise I have received, it is #1 on my list.

"Death of the Japanese Navy" is the title of a new documentary on The Battle Off Samar to be presented by The History Channel on December 15th at 10:00 p.m. EST. This part of their "Dogfight" series will use computer generated images of all the ships on both sides. Jim Hornfischer says "It is sure to be a striking and dramatic recreation of the mayhem of October 25, 1944." Jim and veterans of the battle were interviewed for the show. Mark it on your calendars.

"Hero Ships" is the title of a new series to be presented by The History Channel. The series is being produced by Lou Reda Productions who produced the program "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors". They plan to include an episode on the history of our ship. You may be contacted .



Monument Repair

As many of you know, our fund raising program for the placement of bronze plaques on the monument at Fort Rosecrans was a success. We raised the amount we wanted and even a bit more. When we solicited for the funds we were under the impression the the Johnston - Hoel Association was in agreement. We have now learned that they do not feel that bronze plaques are the way to go, but rather painting the letters. At their meeting in October they were to make their decision and let us know the results. As of this date, November 21, we have not heard from them. Your donations are being maintained in a separate fund as agreed. We will keep you informed as information is received.

No News is Bad News

I have truly enjoyed writing this Newsletter and passing along the news of members and their families as well as pertinent information regarding our affairs with occasional forays into other areas, such as football games. Some of you are very good in sending articles or thoughts or pictures and I have tried to use them although I realize that sometimes I have misplaced or forgotten your offerings. Also, I have not gotten out as many issues as I would like. No excuses are offered nor are they requested.

There are some of you survivors who only exist as names on a list and I would love to hear from you as would our second generation in our families. You are all so special. You have all lived your lives, raised your children, had your joys and sorrows and we know nothing about you. How about breaking down and getting out that pen and paper, or computer or telephone and tell me about yourself and your family so that I can share it with others. Following is the complete list of living survivors that I have and you know whether the foregoing applies to you. Pete Cooley, Oliver

Coyle, Elbert Gentry, James Griggs, Mel Harden, Glenn Huffman, Bill Katsur, Adred Lenoir, Harold McCarl, Dudley Moylan,, Jim Myers, Thomas O'Hara, Robert Olson, James Roberson, Bob Roberts, Dick Rohde, Albert Rosner, Tom Stevenson, Everett Tomlinson, Ed Wheaton, Bill Wilson and Jack Yusen.

That's the lot. If just five of you silent ones responded I would feel it to be a howling success.

Winding Down

The time has come to head off to the printer with this issue of the Newsletter.

I hope that you all had a nice family time together on Thanksgiving Day. We all have much to be thankful for. I am thankful for our country and for the men and women who are in far away lands standing between us and the forces of terrorism. We ask a lot of them. Let us never forget them nor fail to thank them.

The Christmas Season will soon be with us, even though the stores have been "celebrating" since before Halloween. I wish for you all, (as you celebrate Christmas, the birth of Christ or Chanukah, the festival of lights,) a time of love, happiness, sharing and peace. For some it will be much harder this year and for others, maybe this year will be easier. And so, God bless you, shalom, and be sure to hug one another.

