



**Excerpts from USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors Association
Newsletter**

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Dick Rohde, editor

Time to Think REUNION

It just does not seem possible but it is time to start making plans for our next reunion. Your Board of Directors has decided that we will join forces with the USS Johnston/USS Hoel Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The dates are October 24 through October 28, 2001. The headquarters hotel will be the Radisson and rooms have been reserved. Events planned include a Memorial Service at the new Veterans Memorial Park, a trip to Kirtland Air Force Base for lunch and a tour of the National Atomic Museum. We will also travel to Santa Fe and visit Saint Francis Cathedral & Loretto Chapel, site of the mysteriously constructed spiral stairway to the Choir Loft.

We will have our own Hospitality Suite but will join the "Big Boys" for the final banquet. We will have our business meeting on our own following the opening breakfast. The rest of the events will be together with the Johnston/Hoel group.

Our Chairman Bob LeClercq and I have been in touch with Bill Mercer of the Johnston/Hoel family. Bill has done an excellent job in putting the program together. We are indebted to him and we thank their membership for making us feel so welcome. The following is excerpted from their Newsletter and was written by their Editor Bill Mercer.

I am happy to report that the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS group will meet with us in Albuquerque in October.

I believe this will be an excellent opportunity for the crews of the three ships to finally get to know one another.

Certainly we have known of their organization for years and they have know of ours but it will be the first time

for us to meet together. We were sort of together at San Diego in 1996 for the dedication of the down-town Memorial Monument that was dedicated to the thirteen ships of TAFFY III but were scattered about and it was difficult for many to get together and really get to know each other. Hopefully, in the four days or more that we will be together in Albuquerque we will change that.

We have really been a part of the same "FAMILY" for many years. I look forward to the reunion and I'm sure that you join with me in saying, "WELCOME" to the group of the "SAMMY B".

Thanks Bill, we also are looking forward to getting to know our old friends from so many years ago. Do you think that any of us may have changed? I doubt it!

More on the reunion appears later on in the NEWSLETTER.

AUTHOR AUTHOR

By now, some of you have been contacted by either Marshall Richards or Jim Hornfischer or perhaps both. These two gentlemen are hard at work gathering information on the Battle of Leyte Gulf from survivors. Both gentlemen have excellent credentials and are approaching their books from different aspects, which in turn, are different from the book which John Wukovits is coming close to completing. (From the above sentence you can see that you'll never see a book written by yours truly.) Please help these two gentlemen when you are called. Through them and with the books from John Wukovits and Henry Doscher, the Taffy 3 story will never be forgotten.

I have met with both of these men and feel that they are really dedicated to the task they have chosen. Marshall Richards has resigned his position at Fairfield College in Connecticut so that he can work full time interviewing survivors of the ships in Taffy 3. He has been on the west coast but will now be calling SBR survivors who live in the east. He is very dedicated young man who feels that he must write this book. Please, if you can, give him some of your time and memories. It will benefit not only our children and our children's children but those of us who have gone on before.

Jim Hornfischer is also a most dedicated individual and all wrapped in our (Taffy 3) story. He made the following statement to me which is worth sharing with you. "I intend to do this the right way. That's a pledge I will make to any of the veterans of Taffy 3 who agree to talk to me about their experiences during 25 October 1944 -- that I'll get the story right, and do them proud. I intend this to be the definitive book on the battle."

I also have the following letter from Tracy Devine, Senior Editor, Bantam Books.

"To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing with regard to Jim Hornfischer's upcoming book about the Battle off Samar and the heroic exploits of the men of Taffy 3. Samar is, of course, one of the great chapters in the history of the U.S. Navy and in the rolls of valor anywhere, and we are pleased and privileged to have the opportunity to publish this important new account. Our hope is that it will bring to a new generation the experiences of the men who fought there, as our recent bestseller *Flags of Our Fathers* did for the story of the marines on Iwo Jima. As the daughter of a marine and the niece of a career Navy quartermaster, both of whom fought long and hard in the Pacific Theatre, I feel deeply that these stories must never be forgotten and am gratified to participate in even a small way in bringing them to the widest possible audience.

Jim is a gifted writer and a well-known publishing professional, who has been passionate about the story of Samar since childhood. I anticipate a stirring, thoughtful, and worthy narrative from him. We would appreciate any cooperation you might extend to Jim as he goes about the important work of interviewing the officers, crew and aviators from the thirteen ships that made the difference at this critical moment in history.

Thank you for your assistance.

With all good wishes."

The Bantam Dell Publishing Group
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Navy Memorial Plaque

THE USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, DE 413 will soon have a plaque on the Navy Memorial Commemorative Wall, located inside the Naval Heritage Center. We have paid \$1,250 and reserved the space. Donations have been a bit slow coming in and so if you do plan to contribute toward this project, this would be a good time.

Many of you saw the wall and the 80 plaques already in place at our last reunion in Washington, D.C. You will recall that the decision was made to be represented. Many of you have already made donations and the project will be completed. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Any amount that you can give is acceptable. Please make your checks payable to SBR Survivors' Association and sent them to me or to: Vince Goodrich, Treasurer, 7 Brown Avenue, Bradford PA 16701.

It's Been a While

Nobody knows better than I that this edition of the NEWSLETTER is long overdue. Unfortunately there have been a few events in our lives recently that have kept me away from the job at hand. My wife Helen had surgery for a spinal fusion on January 10th. For the first few days, all seemed to be well but then the bottom fell out. She was suffering extreme pain and not able to do much of anything. After an agonizing week at home, she had to go into a Rehabilitation facility for therapy and was there for almost a month. We later found out that she had suffered a fractured vertebrae sometime after the surgery. She has now gone from a "clamshell" brace to a corset and is able to get about some using a walker. In the meantime, I have been doing the cooking, cleaning, laundry and etc. This is not in the nature of a complaint but it has really shown me what she has had to do for all these years.

The next setback was in late February when the hard drive on my computer "froze" and I lost everything. A prudent person would have everything backed up, but, unfortunately I was not prudent. I have been trying to reconstruct my files, including the address list for the NEWSLETTER. That chore has now been completed, but, unfortunately there were corrections to the lists that I mailed out in the last issue of the NEWSLETTER and those have all have been lost.

Please bear with me and if there are errors in the address, please give me the proper one. I also had received some changes in rank and title, and connection to the Association and those were lost also. Additionally, I lost my e-mail address list and would appreciate receiving those addresses. You might like to know that I purchased a Zip Drive and am now backing up everything weekly. Here's hoping that the "Happy" in Happy New Year catches up with us soon.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mel Harden

Balance on Hand, 10/3/00 10,741.46

Income:

Reunion 605.75

Donations 572.00

Plaque 355.00

Books 110.00

Dues 75.00

Interest 28.45

Total Income 1,746.20

Expense:

Day's Inn Banq. & Bkfst. 2,964.06

Loew's Annapolis Hotel Luncheons 508.61

Newsletter, postage 296.81

Hospitality Room 228.41

Refunds 196.50

Banquet Roses 174.29

Judy Bruce, telephone 125.00

USNA Food Service Luncheons 54.40

Total Expense 4,548.08

Balance on Hand, 12/25/00 7,939.58

LETTERS

I received the following letter which I think will be of interest.

You don't know me, but I know of you. My dad and his twin brother were in the Battle of Leyte Gulf and were protected by the EXTREMELY COURAGEOUS guys on the Samuel B. Roberts. They were on the USS Gambier Bay that got sunk by gunfire by the USS Yamato and her escorts. As you know, the Gambier Bay was sunk along with the Samuel B. Roberts and many other ships. The Gambier Bay still remains today, the only US Aircraft Carrier to be sunk by (only) enemy shellfire. (Others were torpedoed also and bombed.)

My Dad and his brother are still alive today and continue to share with us countless examples of bravery that the SBR and her other sister ships performed to try and protect the Gambier Bay that was crippled by one of the first salvos (it hit her engine room) and fell behind as the rest of the CVE's tried to evade the massive Japanese force coming at them. The History Channel (TV) recently had an excellent segment on this battle.

I want to extend a sincere "Thank You" to the brave men of the USS Samuel B. Roberts who might still be alive today. Without their courageous actions, my dad and Uncle (Al and Ed Krzemecki) might not be alive today.

If anyone in your organization is interested in corresponding with my Dad to talk about their experiences - please let me know and I'll send you their address.

Sincerely,

Tom Krzemecki, e-mail: tkrzemecki@ameritech.net

Another Letter

I believe I told you earlier that the church that Uncle Kenneth (Weaver) attended was dedicating a plaque to the five men that it lost from its congregation during the ar. My husband, sister and I attended the dedication service and a friend of mine that attends the church taped the service. I made a copy of that tape and sent it, along with photos from Arlington and a copy of the last Newsletter, to Uncle Kenneth's widow. She called me as soon as she received it and was thrilled to receive all of the information. I had not passed on her address because I did not want to do so without asking her first. A couple of weeks ago I did receive a letter from her and she asked me to ask you to please put her on the mailing list. She is now living in Oklahoma and actually she said that she and her husband are going to try to come to the next reunion. She has been having some health problems but she hopes she will be improved enough to attend. She has been remarried for many years now and has 2 sons. Mrs. Carol W. Scoggins [contact Dick Rohde if you have interest in reaching Ms. Scoggins]

Carol also stated that she would love to hear from you or from any of the other men that served with Kenneth (James Kenneth Weaver).

I hope that your year is off to a good start. Sincerely, Jackie W. Dennison

Stepping Back into History

Bob LeClercq was kind enough to provide the following from an old family scrapbook.

US Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas Press Release, Sunday, November 19, 1944 (Editor's Note: following is an eye witness account by a naval observer. It is stressed that this is only one man's unofficial impression of the great battle.)

"Aboard the escort carrier Natoma Bay, 24 October. This was one of the strangest sea battles ever fought. The victors were running away from the losers. The losers had heavy odds in their favor. From my notebook, hour by hour, I can recount it.

At about nine o'clock this morning, the situation was simple, and ominous. A Japanese force of 4 battleships, 6 heavy cruisers, and about 10 destroyers was already shelling our "baby flat tops". They had been shelling us for more than two hours. The big Jap warships had superior range. They had armor against which our carrier guns were little use. They had swarms of land-based bombers aiding them. And worse, the Japs had the speed. They were overtaking us, bringing carrier after carrier into range.

We had no protection other than our aircraft, our manoeuverability, and a gallant destroyer screen." After listing the 16 carriers, he states, "Down the line of these many carriers the order had flashed 'Launch all available planes', and to some of the destroyers the message, 'Go in and attack.'

Some of our fliers perhaps saw the brave end of two destroyers who were among those attacking the great Jap ships and who took mortal wounds: The JOHNSTON and the HOEL, dead in the water and swept backward in the tide of battle. And some of them saw the gallant little destroyer escort SAMUEL B. ROBERTS when she was sunk on her courageous torpedo run."

The materials which Bob sent, include an article from the HONOLULU ADVERTISER dated November 17, 1944 which quotes Rear Admiral Thomas L. Sprague who commanded Task Force 77.4 which consisted of the 18 CVEs and the escorting destroyers, as follows:

"To the officers and men of the escort carriers and to the kin of those who were lost: These carriers have participated in one of the decisive battles of this war. The aircraft of these carriers not only have met and defeated enemy attacks in the air but they have turned back a large enemy fleet composed of his most modern ships.

The intrepid courage, skill and fighting spirit of the pilots and aircrewmembers were superb. Never have fighting men had a greater task, and never have fighting men performed their duty with greater determination and distinction. The seamanlike handling of the vessels, the brilliant offensive and defensive work of the screen, the cool accuracy of the gunnery, the sustained and imperturbable handling of planes on deck, the calm singleness of purpose of the rearming and gasoline details, the prompt and efficient action of the damage control parties and engineers - all contributed to turning the tide of battle to victory.

Against such teamwork the enemy could not prevail. I am proud to have been privileged to be present and observe your achievements. May God bless every one of you and may the citizens of your country forever remember and be thankful for your courage.

To the mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, wives and sons and daughters of those who were lost I say: Do not be sad. Be comforted and inspired in the thought that the victory for which these men so freely and courageously gave their lives has contributed immeasurably to the final defeat of the enemy."

Start Over

When you've trusted God and walked his way
When you've felt his hand lead you day by day
But your steps now take you another way... Start over.

When you've made your plans and they've gone awry
When you've tried your best and there's no more try
When you've failed yourself and you don't know why... Start over.

When you've told your friends what you plan to do
When you've trusted them and they didn't come through
And now you're all alone and it's up to you... Start over.

When you've failed your kids and they're grown and gone
When you've done your best but it's turned out wrong
And now your grandchildren have come along... Start over.

When you've prayed to God so you'll know his will
When you've prayed and prayed and you don't know still

When you want to stop cause you've had your fill... Start over.

When you think you're finished and want to quit When you've bottomed out in life's deepest pit When you've tried and tried to get out of it... Start over.

When the year has been long and successes few When December comes and you're feeling blue God gives a January just for you... Start over.

Starting over means "Victories Won" Starting over means "A Race Well Run" Starting over means "God's Will Done" Don't just sit there..... START OVER.

The foregoing was sent to me by my pastor and I thought that you might appreciate it.

Reunion Details

Our reunion will be held in conjunction with the reunion of the USS JOHNSTON/USS HOEL Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Headquarters Hotel will be:

Radisson Hotel and Conference Center
2500 Carlisle
Northeast Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110
Telephone: 505 888-3311

Please make your own reservations with the hotel. The rate will be \$60.00 + 8.8125% (\$65.29). Tell them that you are a part of the Johnston/Hoel/Samuel B. Roberts Reunion Group.

Dates are as follow:

Wed. Oct.24
Arrival and check-in.

Thu. Oct.25
Breakfast (cost \$12.00) and Business Mtgs. Samuel B. Roberts will hold separate meeting.

11:00 am Buses depart for Veterans Memorial Park and Memorial Service. This will be a joint service with both groups participating.(\$20.00 per pers.)

12:15 pm Buses depart for Kirtland Air Force Base where we will have lunch and then visit the National Atomic Museum.

Evening free.

Fri. Oct. 26
9:00 am Buses depart for Santa Fe (\$28.00 per person)

Lunch will be on our own in Santa Fe.

Sat. Oct. 27

Free during the day.

6:00 pm Banquet & Door Prize drawing Combined Beef and Chicken Dinner (\$24.00 per person)

Sun. Oct. 28

Farewell breakfast (\$12.00) for Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association

President Bob LeClercq and all of the Officers and Directors ask that you please mark your calendars now and plan to attend what should be an outstanding reunion. It will be great to be reunited with our former comrades at arms on the 57th anniversary of Our Time in History.

You will receive a reservation form and further details in the next issue of the NEWSLETTER.

Your Officers and Directors Bob LeClercq, Chairman Sam Stewart, Director Dudley Moylan, Director Vince Goodrich, Co-Treasurer Mel Harden, Co-Treasurer Dick Rohde, Newsletter Editor

DESA NEWS

I hope that most of you saw the latest issue of the DESA NEWS. Featured on the front page is a story of our reunion in Washington D.C. Pictured thereon are Sam Blue, George Bray, Jack Yusen, Harry Dodd and yours truly. Also pictured is Rear Admiral Henry C. McKinney, President of the Navy Memorial Foundation. There is one typo, however, Pastor Harry Dodd was renamed Harry Godd. If they had to make a mistake, they could not have made a better one. Our thanks to John Cosgrove, DESA representative in Washington for the pictures.

If you are not receiving the DESA NEWS, why not send a check to: Destroyer Escort Sailors Ass'n. at P. O. Box 3448, DeLand, FL 32721-3448. The cost of membership is \$20 for one year, \$38 for two.

Caps and Jackets

Thanks to Jack Yusen, we have some price estimates for new caps, shirts and jackets. If any of you would be interested purchasing them, will you please let me know. A telephone call, a fax, an e-mail or the old reliable U.S. Mail will all be acceptable. If none of the above work, please stop by the house. It is important to have some idea of how many I should order. The sooner you let me know, the sooner I can put in the order. While the prices are not yet firm, they would be somewhere close to the following.

- Caps \$ 9.50
- Shirts \$18.00
- Jacket \$45.00

Please Let Me Know If You Have An Interest.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

RICHARD K. ROHDE

E-MAIL: RKROHDE@AOL.COM

Also, when you are contacting me, please let me have your e-mail address as well as any changes in the address on the front of your NEWSLETTER and any change in your telephone number. It will be greatly appreciated.

Tribute to Bob Hope

Shipmate Jack Yusen is President of the Taffy III Organization and they are in the process of raising funds for a memorial to Bob Hope which will be located in downtown San Diego, very close to the Taffy 3 Memorial. I believe that they are making great progress with this project but need lots of financial help. Please visit their website at: [HTTP://www.HopeTribute.org](http://www.HopeTribute.org) to learn all about this project and to find out how you can contribute. I know that Jack and his committee have been hard at work for quite a while and am sure that it is worthy of your consideration. I hope to have more information for you in the next NEWSLETTER.

MEMORY LANE

See whether any of these bring back some fond memories:

Hide and go seek at dusk; Simon Says; Kick the Can; lunch boxes with a thermos; going home for lunch; penny candy; skates with keys; wax lips and moustaches; Mary Janes; saddle shoes; Coke bottles with the names of cities on the bottom; running through the sprinkler.

When around the corner seemed far away and going downtown seemed like going somewhere. Climbing trees; making forts; backyard shows and lemonade stands; playing Cops and Robbers and Cowboys and Indians; white gloves; walking to church; sitting on the curb; staring at clouds; running until you were out of breath; being tickled to death; laughing so hard that your stomach hurt.

When it took 5 minutes for the TV to warm up; when nearly everyone's Mom was at home when the kids got home from school; when nobody owned a purebred dog; when you'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny; When your Mom wore nylons that came in two pieces; when all of your male teachers wore neckties and the female teachers had their hair done everyday and wore high heels. When you got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, all for free, every time - and you didn't pay for air - and you got trading stamps to boot.

When any parent could discipline any kid, or feed him or use him to carry groceries, and nobody, not even the kid, thought a thing of it; when they threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed - and did; when the worst thing you could do at school was smoke in the bathrooms, flunk a test or chew gum.

Remember lying on your back on the grass with your friends and saying things like "That cloud looks like a"; and playing baseball with no adults to help kids with the rules of the game. Back then, baseball was not a psychological group learning experience - it was a game; remember when stuff from the store came without safety caps and hermetic seals because no one had yet tried to poison a perfect stranger.

Remember when being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited a misbehaving student at home. Basically, we were in fear for our lives, but it wasn't because of drive-by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc. Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we all survived because their love was greater than the threat.

Remember to hug one another.

Editor, Dick Rohde (rkrohde@aol.com)