



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

November-December 2000

Dick Rohde, editor

We Had a Reunion!

On Saturday, October 21, about 50 members of the USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413) Survivors' Association gathered in Washington, D.C. for their annual reunion. The Days Inn, Crystal City was the headquarters hotel.

Included in the group were thirteen survivors along with their families and families of our shipmates who went on before us. Representatives from USS COPELAND (FFG 25), USS CARR, (FFG 52), USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58) and USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DD 823) who are members of our Association were also represented. Families from five newly found shipmates also joined us for the first time.

Aside from the good times and camaraderie, the story telling, the reminiscing, the laughter and the tears, we had a most interesting formal program. Saturday was a free day with time to get reacquainted and to meet new family members. We were on our own for meals and spent quite a bit of time in the hospitality suite.

Sunday started out with a buffet break-fast followed by the annual business meeting. New Chairmen were elected for the coming year. Chairman #1 is Bud Comet and he will be assisted by Bob LeClercq, Sam Stewart and Dudley Moylan.

Co-Treasurers Vince Goodrich and Mel Harden along with NEWSLETTER Editor Dick Rohde will continue as Directors. Discussion was held concerning sites for next year's reunion. Sites discussed included Seattle and Everett Washington, Branson Missouri, Albany and Buffalo New York, Miami Florida and New Orleans Louisiana. The new board will discuss these and other sites and then recommend and/or seek input from the general membership. Further discussion was held on the possibility of joining with other Taffy 3 groups for our reunions. No decision at this time.

Sunday afternoon we went to Arlington National Cemetery and toured this beautiful and peaceful final resting place of so many of America's heroes. While some of us were viewing the changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we were approached by a woman whose uncle had served on our ship and was

killed during the battle. This was her first contact with anyone from our ship. Thus, for the first time, we met relatives of shipmate James K. Weaver. We hope that his niece, Jackie Weaver Dennison of Bristol, Virginia will be with us for future reunions. We then visited the most impressive Viet Nam Wall and then returned to the hotel.

Monday morning, we were off to Annapolis. We survivors were privileged to have luncheon with the Midshipmen after watching them parade into the building. We were each assigned a Midshipman Escort and sat at separate tables throughout the hall. What a thrill it was when we were introduced and received a round of applause from the 4000 officers-to-be. The rest of the group were treated to a fabulous luncheon at Loews Hotel and then joined the rest of us for a tour of the Naval Academy led by two Naval Officers. Then it was back to the hotel for dinner and more catching up in the Hospitality Room. Needless to say, Tom Stevenson entertained with his traditional version of "Skin". Singing, story telling and catching up with the events of the past year went on well into the evening. Yes, we did do "The Muffin Man" but it is harder and harder to balance the glass on your head with less and less hair on top.

On Tuesday morning the bus picked us up and we arrived at the Navy Memorial for a truly magnificent Memorial Service provided by Admiral McKinney and his staff. As the names of our shipmates who lost their lives in the Battle of Leyte Gulf on October 25, 1944 were announced, the bell was tolled - 92 times. Remarks were given by Admiral McKinney and by our own Jack Yusen. When Taps was sounded by a bugler from the US NAVY Band there were no dry eyes. A contingent of Naval Officers from the Pentagon were present to do us honor and we had an opportunity to speak with them after the ceremony. We then toured the Navy Memorial Building and viewed the excellent movie "At Sea".

Tuesday evening was devoted to our Annual Banquet which was held at the hotel. Our perennial Master of Ceremonies, Jack Yusen, introduced our principal speaker, Lt. Cdr. Thomas J. Cutler, author of many books but best known to us as the author of "The Battle of Leyte Gulf, 23-26 October, 1944". We also heard from Captain Chip Seymour, commissioning officer of the USS COPELAND (FFG 25) (who was our tremendous host at Annapolis) and from Captain Paul Rinn who was the commissioning officer of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58). Their inspiring words will stay with us for a long time to come. New members were introduced along with special guests and Don Young was thanked for his efforts in making this such a special reunion. The evening ended with our traditional presentation of long stemmed roses to all the ladies present.

At Wednesday morning's Farewell Breakfast there was general agreement to present a plaque at the Navy Memorial. We look forward to our next meeting, wherever it may be.

Our Family is Growing

How nice it was to see some of our newly found relatives of former shipmates, most of whom were discovered by Judy Brady Bruce. The following were at the reunion, some for only the final banquet and others for the entire time. Those present are as follows:

1. Robert and Norma Bingaman. Bob is the brother of Richard A. Bingaman, Fireman 1/C.
2. William and Ann Natter. Bill is the brother of Charles W. Natter, Signalman 3/C.
3. Elizabeth and Leonard King. Elizabeth is the daughter of John J. Newmiller, Seaman 2/C.
4. Pete Mudre. Pete is the brother of Steve Mudre, Seaman 1/C.

5. John Macon. John is the nephew of Shirley A. Macon, Chief Gunners Mate.

We hope that you enjoyed meeting us as much as we did meeting you. How wonderful it was that some of the survivors present remembered your loved ones and could tell you a few stories about them. We hope to see you again at the next meeting, and next time, bring along some more of the family.

A FINAL WORD ON THE REUNION

As in most happenings in life, things do not "just happen". Many people shared in the planning and execution of this past reunion along with Don Young, and we would be remiss if they were not acknowledged. Thanks to Chip Seymour for the arrangements at the Naval Academy and to his daughter, the Executive Chef at Loews Hotel. Thanks to LCDR Bob Chambers for his advance work in seeking a hotel. Thanks to Admiral McKinney and his excellent staff for our truly impressive Memorial Service. We appreciate Tom Cutler's thoughtful keynote address and last but not least, the staff of Days Inn including their ambassador of good will, "No Problem" Mohammed, the waiter in the dining room.

Editor's Note

For those of you who were not at the reunion but may find yourself in our Nations Capital at some time in the future - a word of caution. If you are tempted to park in a spot that says "Reserved Parking. Cars Will Be Towed Away", believe them. You'll save yourself \$75.00 plus cab fare.

LETTER FROM FRAN GOODRICH

Dear Dick and all of the Sammy B. survivors and friends,

I can't tell you how happy I was to be able to attend the reunion this year. My treatment was finished just in time! I want to thank all of you for your thoughts, cards and prayers. They are what helped me get through the surgery, chemo and radiation. It has not been a "fun year", but we are doing fine and taking one day at a time. Still hoping for thick and curly hair. Am looking forward to seeing you all where-ever next year. Vince sends his thanks for your thoughts and prayers for him also.

Love to you all,

Fran Goodrich

LOOKING BACK

Vince Goodrich sent me the following Message for the Fleet Sailors, written in April 1986 by J. Metcalf III, then Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Surface Warfare).

In no other profession is tradition as significant as it is in the military and especially in the Navy. It is the bedrock of our professionalism; an anchor to windward. Our naval tradition has emerged from battles fought and acts of self-giving heroism and valor by warrior sailors.

Ticonderoga, Yorktown, Vincennes, Valley Forge...these names are associated with significant battles in our revolutionary War. These great events are now commemorated as names of U.S. Navy ships, Aegis cruisers. It is significant that these Aegis Cruisers are associated with a revolutionary tradition as they are a revolution in

naval warfare.

Another significant event associated with tradition will occur on 12 April of this year [1986] when we commission USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58). On this date, three surface warriors will again be together in the fleet as they were on 25 October 1944 in the Battle off Samar in the fight to control Leyte Gulf. On that historic day, LCDR Robert W. Copeland led USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413) into battle against an enemy of vastly superior numbers and firepower. With him on board Roberts was 19-year-old Third Class Gunner's Mate Paul Henry Carr of Checotah, Oklahoma. The battle was won and our landings at Leyte Gulf assured through superior leadership, courage and expertise of LCDR Copeland and the extraordinary bravery and performance of Petty Officer Carr. But the price was high. Petty Officer Carr and many of his shipmates did not survive. The "Sammy B." was sunk but not before she earned the accolade as "the destroyer escort that fought like a battleship." It is now fitting that the ship, the captain and an inspirational member of the crew return to the fleet as USS Copeland (FFG 25), USS Carr (FFG 52) and USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58).

What does this mean to surface warriors today? What is the relation between these fighting frigates and Aegis cruisers? Quite simply, it is the surface warriors' link to the past...the tradition of warfighting and revolution. As we explore new tactics for Aegis, we must embrace a revolution of ideas even if it means breaking old molds. We must give up those practices which are embedded only in "old ways". At the same time we must maintain our fighting tradition. Surface warriors of today must remember both the heroism and fighting spirit of those who have fought and died in the past as well as look ahead and recognize that another revolution is at hand. It is our responsibility to build on a tradition of warfighting excellence for in doing so we are assured of remaining the greatest Navy in the world.

Editor's Note

After rereading the above and thinking about our reunion, I realized that in attendance at our final banquet we had the former commanding officers of not only the Copeland, the Carr and the Samuel B. Roberts but CAPT Paul Rinn was also the Commanding Officer of the Aegis cruiser Leyte Gulf. Additionally, Paul Henry Carr's sister Peggy Dodd was with us with her husband, our resident Pastor, Harry. And then there was our speaker, Thomas J. Cutler who wrote the definitive narrative of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. I like to think that our fallen shipmates were with us that evening and that they know in what high regard they are held by all of us and by today's Navy.

DAN PHILLIPS WRITES

Dear Mr. Rohde,

My deepest gratitude to you and the extremely brave men who served on the Samuel B. Roberts. If not for your courage, I know not what my future would hold.

I am the nephew of Samuel Blue who is mentioned on page 43 of the book detailing the heroic and gallant efforts during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Although a quiet man who does not like to dwell on his past, my Uncle Sam has always served as an inspiration to me for his courageous service while a member of Gun #2 on the Sammy B. We in my family look upon Sam as a true American hero for his time spent defending our great country and its friends in the Pacific. I for one am extremely grateful as my wife is Australian, and who knows what the Japanese may have done should they have been successful pushing southwards. Your efforts surely rewarded those in Australia and other parts of Asia with freedom.

In 1998 I was stationed at the Pentagon and by chance I noted a gentleman sporting a Samuel B. Roberts t-shirt while exercising in the Pentagon Athletic Gymnasium. I accosted him and he told me that he had been the skipper of the Sammy B. I relayed to him that I was the nephew of a man who served on her valiantly during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He looked at me in amazement and asked if I knew that my uncle was a hero. "Absolutely" I replied.

Thank you and Godspeed to every member of the crew.

Signed:

Dan Phillips, Colonel, USAF

Headquarters North American Aerospace Defense Command and US Space Command Inspector General

p.s. Sorry I did not choose the Naval Academy over the Air Force Academy, but, I'd rather take off and land on land than a ship bobbing in the ocean.

NAVY MEMORIAL PLAQUE

At the final breakfast, there was general agreement that our ship should be represented at the Navy Memorial with a plaque. In order to accomplish this, we are requesting donations from our membership and friends. We are not recommending any particular dollar amount because we know that all of us have different limitations on what we can do in this regard. Our plan is to go ahead with the plaque based on donations already received and pay for it from our treasury. Donations will then replace the amount paid from the Association funds. We urge you all to consider making such a donation. We will continue to honor our fallen shipmates by making their exploits known to as many people as possible. Checks can be made payable to SBR Survivors' Association and sent to Vince Goodrich, 7 Brown Avenue, Bradford PA 16701.

Combat Action Ribbon

Navy and Marine Corps veterans who served in combat in or after World War II are now eligible to receive the Combat Action Ribbon (CAR). Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig has recently authorized this award for those who served in combat, but never received their CAR.

"At a time when we are focusing on the contributions of these great Americans, this seems especially fitting." said Danzig.

In order to be eligible for the CAR, veterans must have participated in ground or surface combat after December 6, 1941, but before March 1, 1961 and cannot already have been recognized for the same.

Under Public Law 106-65, Danzig can award the CAR to veterans retroactively. The time period requirement for submission is being waived in all cases. Two blocks of time have been designated by Danzig for eligibility of the CAR; World War II: December 7, 1941, April 14, 1946 and Korea: June 27, 1950, July 27, 1954.

Navy Veterans who served during these periods may write directly to the Navy Awards Branch for settlement at:

Combat Action Ribbon

Chief of Naval Operations
(NO9B33)
200 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

The following information must be provided.

1. Standard Form 180 or a cover letter with - full name, social security number, service number (if applicable), period of eligibility, unit assigned at the time and mailing address.
2. Copy of Naval Personnel Form 553 or Defense department (DD) Form 214/DD 215 (if applicable).
3. Any additional documentation (optional): copies of combat awards; copies of evaluations; master sheets or orders showing assignment to the unit for the period requested.

A special section will handle these requests, but no other awards may be requested in conjunction with the CAR. Only CAR requests dated after March 15, 2000, in accordance with the prescribe guidance will be forwarded to the board for decision. Any prior requests must be resubmitted.

If a veteran cannot provide the required documentation, a request for personal record information must be submitted to the St. Louis Records Center before submitting the request to the Navy Awards Branch.

Navy Liaison Office
Room 3475
Nat'l. Personnel Records Center
9700 Page Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132

Shirts, caps and Jackets

According to Jack Yusen, we should be able to order some of those Samuel B. Roberts shirts, caps and jackets before very long. Jack is working with the same supplier as last time and as soon as I have information on styles, sizes and prices I will contact you all. It is amazing how many new contacts were made by people seeing the name of our ship on a hat. Most recently, of course, was Jackie Weaver Dennison, niece of James K. Weaver, at Arlington National Cemetery. She had never had any contact with anyone from our ship until that time.

NEXT YEAR'S REUNION

While it may seem a bit premature to think about the site, date and format of our reunion in 2001, time seems to move so fast, especially at our age, and we'd best give it a bit of thought. As those of you who were present will recall, we considered many different places across the country and we also talked a bit about our joining up with

another Taffy 3 group for reunions. St. Lo and Gambier Bay were mentioned as was the USS JOHNSTON/USS HOEL ASSOCIATION. Someone noted that we will probably have to join up with another group in the future, since our numbers keep decreasing, but that we can probably continue on our own for a few more years. Nothing was really decided.

Co-Chairman Bob LeClercq has contacted Bill Mercer of the Johnston/Hoel Association to get an idea of their feelings. Chairman Bill Mercer has issued a formal invitation for The Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association to join with them at their next reunion. It is all arranged and set for Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center (room rate of \$60 + tax) from Wednesday, October 24 through Saturday, October 28. They plan a trip to Veterans Memorial Park for a Memorial Service, a trip to Kirtland Air Force Base and tour of the Atomic Museum, an excursion trip to Santa Fe and of course the final banquet on Saturday evening.

This is a request to get an expression of your feelings. Please let me know, or any of the other officers: Bud Comet, Bob LeClercq, Sam Stewart, Dudley Moylan, Vince Goodrich and Mel Harden. Your input is very important.

Mail Call

Mike Davis, CAPT, USN "I've been off FFG 58 for about 6 months now, and will soon head back to sea in USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) as Reactor Officer, but not before a quick trip to Washington D.C. this weekend.

Much to my surprise, I have been selected as the east coast recipient of the Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Inspirational Leadership Award for commanding officers for this year!! As you might guess, this is a huge honor - - but not as great as that of serving as a "Sammy B" captain. As you well know, no CO can be successful without having a great crew, and I consider that this is yet another signal that today's SAMMY B crew is one you can and should all be proud of.

Best wishes and of course, 'NO HIGHER HONOR'."

Ian Mcleod (Ed: The following arrived after I had left for Washington but maybe some of you can help fill in the blanks.) If you will send me the information, I will forward it to him.

Hi Dick, My name is Ian Mcleod, I am currently finishing my research on the Samuel B. Roberts. Please could you ask relatives and/or friends of the following at the reunion, for the middle names so that I can complete my research. Unfortunately the muster roll was not very good. John L. Conway, Lin S. Ferris, William C. Alexander, Anthony J. Blaszczyk, Charles H. Cronin, Jr., James W. Griggs, John F. Keefe, Archie W. Killough, Albie R. Pryor, John G. Roberts, William M. Sokol, Chester F. Zaborski, Luther A. West, and Jack K. Moore. Your cooperation would be deeply appreciated. Kind regards and best wishes for your reunion.

Chris Wode, CAPT, USN Chris reports that he has been accepted for a Federal Executive Fellowship at the Brookings Institute in Washington. He will leave the Naval Academy in July and report in August for one year. From there he should head off to his major command. (Many of you will remember that Chris Wode was the CO of the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58) and hosted our 1998 reunion Memorial Service in Norfolk just days after returning from deployment to the Persian Gulf.)

More Communications - Some New and some Old

Olga Macko was sorry that she could not attend the reunion but wanted to send her best regards to everyone.

Madeline Dodd said that they had a very busy year but she and Morrie would be with us next year.

Merle Mazura Giacoletto is the niece of shipmate Thomas J. Mazura who was lost in the action of 10/25/44. She and her husband Thomas live in Palmdale, CA but spend about 5 months of every summer in the community where Tom Mazura was raised; Blanford Indiana. They hope that they will be able to join us for our next reunion. They are now members of our Association.

Maggie Hayes has called and written and wants to be remembered to all. She is sorry that she missed our meeting in Washington but will be with us for the next one.

Address Lists

The last page of this NEWSLETTER will be an address list of the survivors as I have them today. If there are corrections, please let me know. Also, if you have an e-mail address, please pass it along.

As a separate insert, you will find the address list for our other Association Members and friends. Again, if there are corrections or additions, please let me know. I know that the type is small and that our eyes are not getting better, but in the interest of saving on postage - here they are.

As I write this, we are one week away from Thanksgiving and we will be visiting our daughter and her family in Indianapolis for the occasion. Our son Cliff, his wife Allison and our grandson Noah will be with us for Christmas. Helen and I wish all of you all of the joys of the season. HAPPY HANUKKAH, MERRY CHRISTMAS and best wishes for a JOYFUL AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

On this Thanksgiving Day, let us remember to thank our Lord for all of the blessings which he has bestowed upon us.