

The USS Samuel B. Roberts Survivors' Association
NEWSLETTER



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

December 2001

Volume 11, Number 3



REUNION IN ALBUQUERQUE OCTOBER 25-28, 2001

For those of you with good eyesight, pictured above are those who attended the Farewell Breakfast on Sunday Morning, October 28th.

Back Row, Left to Right: Dudley Moylan, Sam Stewart, Mable Gentry, Morrie Dadd, Bill Wilson, Paul Rinn, Jack Yusen, Bob Bingaman, Norma Jean Bingaman, Elbert Gentry, Bob LeClercq, Billie LeClercq, Dick Rohde.

Second Row: Madeline Dadd, Audrey McMullen, Linda Fowler, Esther Wilson.

Third Row: Adolph Herrera, Mary Lou Herrera, Helen Rohde, Ruth Yusen, George Bray, Fran Goodrich, Vince Goodrich. **Seated in Front:** Don Young.

Others who attended but are not pictured include, Sam Blue, Tom and Virginia Stevenson, John Wukovits, Marshall Richards and Jim Hornfischer.

REUNION IN ALBUQUERQUE

All who attended would agree that this was a wonderful reunion. It is so great to see those familiar faces and even some that were not so familiar. Meeting with the members of the USS JOHNSTON/HOEL ASSOCIATION was the icing on the cake. We finally got to know some of our fellow swimmers from Leyte Gulf. Their stories and their memories are so much like our own. Too bad that we took so long to get acquainted.

Bill Mercer and the other officers of their Association did everything they could to make us feel right at home, and they were successful. Having one hospitality room and its being so large meant that we could have our own group but at the same time be one with the Johnston and Hoel family.

We look forward to rejoining our new friends in Biloxi, Mississippi in 2002 for our next reunion. Start planning now to be there.

Sorrowfully, I have to report
The death of our shipmate

JOHN W. CHALKLEY

Who went to be with God
on December 23rd 2000

MEMORIAL REMARKS

The reunion was officially underway at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 25, 2001 with breakfast and a memorial service. Speaking to the group, Shipmate Jack Yusen made the following remarks.

The captain of the USS Samuel B. Roberts DE 413, Rear Admiral Robert W. Copeland in his book, "The Spirit of the Sammy B" wrote, and I quote, 'Serving together anywhere makes friends of people, but there is nothing like a naval ship to weld friendship. Serving together and fighting together creates a bond that will stand for all time and eternity.'

You know when shipmates share an experience such as war, the battle does not end when the treaties are signed. Anyone who has been in combat must also battle with emotions. I know that I speak for all of us when I say that a day does not go by without our thinking of those times and places so long ago and far away, and of our shipmates. How ironic it seems as we gather this morning, that what the enemies of our country could not accomplish, time alone will accomplish until not a single survivor of the USS Hoel, USS Johnston and USS Samuel B. Roberts will remain on this earth.

All of us, past and present, who have gone down to the sea in ships, can perhaps appreciate these thoughts.

No man is an island" stated one author in referring to our paths on earth. Rather than traveling the road alone, we make the journey through life's highs and lows with the soothing knowledge that others step with us to share the joy and pain.

At an early age we formed bonds with family and friends. Those endured throughout our school years, after which some of us fashioned different bonds with loved ones with whom we raised or intended to raise families.

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**MEETING NOTES
BY DUDLEY MOYLAN**

Then came the war, and the apparent challenge of forging bonds. What benefit can possibly come from an endeavor which takes people away from loved ones and results in the death and maiming of so many thousands of individuals?

What at first glance appeared to be a major interruption of our lives, however, proved to be yet another bond-forming opportunity. Those days produced a rare camaraderie...

Men who have been in battle together, and the intensity of the camaraderie, these many years later, still defies any rational explanation. It is a bond so strong, so immediate, that it wipes away, at least momentarily, all of the normal barriers of class, politics and race.

Nothing in terms of friendship need precede it. Nothing need follow it. It exists of itself, nothing more asked, nothing more required.

In closing I would like to take a moment to recite a prayer in remembrance of the attack on America on September 11, 2001.

O Source of Mercy, give us the grace to show our strength to those who offend against us.

When the wrongs and injustices of others wound us, may our hearts not despair of human good. May no trial, however severe, embitter our souls and destroy our trust

When beset by trouble and sorrow, our mothers and fathers put on the armor of faith and fortitude. May we too find strength to meet adversity with quiet courage and unshaken will.

Help us to understand that injustice and hate will not forever afflict the human race; that righteousness and mercy will triumph in the end.

God Bless America.

Dudley Moylan, our intrepid custodian of the unwritten minutes and by-laws of our association was good enough to record the business discussed at our meeting. His notes, only slightly edited, follow:

**NOTES ON SAMUEL B. ROBERTS MEETINGS
IN ALBUQUERQUE, 2001, OCTOBER 24 AND
OCTOBER 28.**

Meeting opened with announcements concerning coming reunion events.

Notes on the business meeting of the Washington Reunion in 2000 were read. There was some disagreement as to the board members elected then, settled with the agreement that they were Comet, Goodrich, Harden, Rohde, Moylan, LeClercq and Stewart Jr..

Rohde reported on the 413 plaque at the Washington navy Memorial, already hanging with wording by Moylan approved by the board.

Goodrich delivered the Treasurer's report showing a balance of \$5,429.11 with inflows of \$2,181.81 and outflows of \$4,698.28. The largest expense was for the payment in full for the Navy Memorial Plaque.

There was discussion of our participation in the Hoel-Johnston raffle. It was also pointed out that our past reunion charges gave us some positive contribution to our general treasury account.

Rohde reported on the cap, shirt and jacket sales and supplies.

There was discussion of the omission of Wilson's name on the FFG 58's plaque and what might be done about it.

The board or co-chairmen elected were Goodrich, Harden, Moylan, LeClercq, Rohde and Stewart, with LeClercq as leader.

At the farewell breakfast it was decided to accept the Hoel-Johnston invitation for a joint reunion in Biloxi next October though there was no decision to merge organizations.

Reunion Ramblings

This was our first visit to the Southwest and it made us wonder why we had never been there before. Albuquerque is in a truly beautiful section of our country. The scenery is tremendous, the weather was perfect and the people could not have been friendlier or more helpful. We enjoyed the food - everything from bison steak to Mexican with many stops in between.

The flight from Orlando was uneventful, once we got on the plane. Southwest Airlines took good care of us and you could not beat the airfare. Only when we arrived did I learn about the altitude. Higher than Denver they love to say. That is all well and good but when you suffer from asthma, have a reduced lung capacity and try to push a wheelchair, it is then that you learn the difference from living at sea level or being "mile-high".

We arrived on Tuesday and had plenty of time to find our way around the hotel and to dine with other early arrivers. We were free all day Wednesday and got acquainted with our "kissin' cousins" from the USS Johnston and USS Hoel as well as renewing friendships with others from the Sammy B.

The meeting officially began with a breakfast on Thursday, October 25th in a very chilly Garden Terrace Room. Bill Mercer served as M.C. and welcomed the members of the Sammy B Survivors' Association. Chaplain Paul Miranda gave a very thoughtful Invocation. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag we had breakfast and then started into the program. Bill introduced the LeClercqs and the Rohdes with whom he had worked in setting up the reunion. Bob LeClercq then introduced all of the Samuel B. Roberts group. Jack Yusen then spoke to the group. See page 2 for his remarks. Following a reading of "I am the Flag of the United States of America" by Bill Mercer, the groups split up for their separate business meetings. For an account of the DE 413 business meeting, please see page 3.

At 11:00 a.m. we boarded buses for the Memorial Service at Veterans Memorial Park. We were led into this beautiful amphitheater by a bagpiper. The setting was superb, with awesome mountain ranges before us and sparkling clear blue skies.

Everyone rose and the Colors were posted by a Color Guard from Kirtland Air Force Base. Chaplain Paul Miranda offered a thoughtful, meaningful and stirring invocation, reviewing the events of 57 years ago on the same date. He referred to the despicable attack on our country by terrorists on September 11 and said that rather than demoralizing us, the attack served to draw us closer together.

He ended his remarks with the following statement. "The time is getting near when we must return to home port for that great liberty call. Captain Copeland said to his crew, 'Abandon ship men, well done.' If we live our lives right, we will hear our Lord say, 'Welcome home men, well done. My sailors are home from the sea.' Amen."

Names of departed shipmates during the past year were read including our shipmate, John W. Chalkley. Taps was then sounded by the bugler. Shortly following Taps, we saw a formation of planes approaching us from an opening in the mountains ahead of us. It was a fly-over by four F-14 Tomcats from Pensacola, Florida, honoring our departed. A more hair-raising and stirring event I have never witnessed.

Following the Retiring of the Colors we filed out of the amphitheater to the strains of "Amazing Grace" played by the bagpiper.

After luncheon at a very nice local restaurant, we visited the shops of Old Town and then saw some of the city of Albuquerque, including the University of New Mexico.

Dinner that evening was on our own and the facilities of the Hospitality Room were enjoyed by one and all

And so to bed.

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More Reunion Ramblings

On Friday, October 26th the buses departed for Santa Fe for a day of sight seeing, shopping, dining and fellowship. Since I was having a problem with the altitude, Helen and I did not make the trip since Santa Fe is even higher than Albuquerque. From all reports, the trip was well worth it and thoroughly enjoyed. We had an excellent barbecue dinner at Ruby's which is a local favorite spot. Enjoyed the communal trough for washing ones hands afterwards; should be a must wherever bbq ribs are served.

On Saturday morning, the 28th, we gathered in the Hospitality for "Authors Round Table". We were most fortunate in having the three authors who are currently writing books about our ships and the events which culminated on the morning of October 25, 1944. They were, Marshall Fredericks, Jim Hornfischer and John Wukovits. Henry Doscher had planned on attending but a last minute back injury prevented his attendance. Joining the authors was CAPT Paul Rinn, former CO of both the USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS, FFG 58, and the USS LEYTE GULF. The program was ably moderated by Jack Yusen. The panel responded to questions which had been submitted by survivors. It was a most interesting meeting. All did a wonderful job in responding to questions and in offering their comments on their feelings about their research, their books and some of their insights on what they had learned. Paul Rinn did a most admirable job in bringing us up-to-date on the current situation.

At 1:30 p.m. a more informal "Bull Session" was held with Jim Hornfischer as the leader. Members of the three ships were represented and much discussion was held and many stories told about that fateful day.

At 6:00 p.m. we gathered for the final banquet. An excellent meal was served following the invocation by Chaplain Paul Miranda.

Following dinner, we were treated to an outstanding speech by CAPT Paul Rinn. Drawing from his illustrious naval career, and his involvements since his retirement Paul kept us completely enthralled

with his stories, observations, humor and above all, his ability to relate the human interest stories about some of those who were under his command. His remarks were very well received and appreciated by all. Well done Paul.

The evening's proceedings continued with an introduction of the three authors, recognition of others and presentation of long stemmed roses to all the ladies present. A drawing was then held for door prizes which had been generously donated. The USS Johnston/Hoel Association raised \$1,096 from the event which will go toward the expense of future reunions.

Sunday Morning, October 28. The final event was our Farewell Breakfast. I hope that the picture on the first page is legible. Thanks to John Wukovits for taking it with my digital camera. We all went our ways, hoping that we will all meet again in October in Biloxi, Mississippi.

We were sorry that there were not more of you present. Unfortunately, but understandably, as the years roll by we are beset with more and more health challenges and it becomes more difficult to make the trips. I will not try to single out those who were not there. You know that we missed you and pray that you will be with us next year

At our sing along on Friday evening, we did the old favorites. Yes, Tom still knows the words to "Skin" and "The Muffin Man". It seems to me that singing "Auld Lang Syne" becomes more difficult at each reunion.

Sincere thanks to Bill Mercer and all of the officers and members of the USS Johnston/Hoel Association for inviting us and then making us feel so welcome. Things could not have been nicer - well - maybe I'm glossing over a few glitches by the hotel management - but you could not have been better hosts. We all look forward to joining with you in Biloxi next year.

Commercial Break

Just a reminder to all to let you know that our Association has some expenses and in order to meet those expenses, the only source of income we have is from your payment of dues. For survivors, dues are \$15 per year and for all others, dues are \$10 per year. Don't feel limited to that amount but at the same time if there are problems, any amount or no amount is always acceptable. Thanks for understanding and for your cooperation.

Now back to the main program!

Officers and Directors for 2002

Chairman/Director - Bob LeClercq
Director - Sam Stewart
Director - Dudley Moylan
Treasurer - Vince Goodrich
Co-Treasurer - Mel Harden
Newsletter Editor - Dick Rohde

**Don't forget to check out
our website**

WWW.DE413.ORG

USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS NEWSLETTER

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Please

I must rely on all of you to send news, notes, thoughts, health bulletins, news of new grandchildren, obituaries, interesting news articles or even your shopping lists. Just do not send me your bills. What I am saying is that I do want to hear from you and I want to share your information with others.

Also, please keep me up-to-date with any changes in address, telephone number or e-mail address. I'll try to get out a new address list in the next Newsletter....Thanks for listening.

Jackets, Shirts Caps and Books

Thanks to a lot of you, the boutique is almost out of items. All of the jackets have been sold. I have three shirts, all size XL and they do run large. There are about ten caps left and also a good supply of Captain Copeland's book, "The Spirit of the Sammy B". I also have a supply of patches with the emblem on them which can be put on a hat, shirt or blazer. Selling prices for these items are Shirts - \$14, Caps - \$8.50, Patches - \$3.00 and Books - \$10.00. Above prices do not include shipping.

Have an interest? Let me know.

Welcome to New Family Members

While in Albuquerque, Richard and Carolyn Rodriguez joined our Association. Richard is a nephew of Adolph Herrera and his father Cosme served on the Fanshaw Bay during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

On a personal note

Just have to share the good news. Our son Cliff and his wife Allison had a son on Sunday, December 9th. Ethan weighed in at 3 lbs. 12 oz. This does not sound like a lot, but his older brother Noah was only 2 lbs. 6 oz when he was born. Mother, father, baby, big brother and grandparents are all doing very well, thank you.

From Here and There

An interesting message showed up on our website last week from LTJG Dave Schwind who is currently serving as Fire Control Officer aboard the USS LABOON (DDG 58). He is a historical researcher and said that he had purchased the uniforms belonging to our Captain Copeland. He was very complimentary about our actions in the Battle of Leyte Gulf and thanked us for our service and for serving as an example of what it means to be a true Surface Warrior.

In a following e-mail he said that he had acquired the uniforms from someone who had purchased them at an estate sale in Washington. The owner didn't really care too much for them and so Dave was happy to give them a new home. He does not feel like an "owner" but rather a "caretaker" for them to be passed on to future generations. (I plan to ask him whether he might consider donating, or making them available to the folks at Copeland Hall which was just dedicated last year in Tacoma.)

He also added the following. "Wow - I still get choked up reading about the heroism of such men as Gunner's Mate Carr. Such dedication and heroism is something that makes me proud to serve in the navy. I have shared the story of the SBR with many of my fellow shipmates, and they too have come to know the heroism and sacrifice made by your crew. We stand in awe of your heroism and dedication."

Thank you Lieutenant Schwind. We wish you well in your naval career. Please keep in contact.

Another e-mail came from Bob Lambert of Louisville, Kentucky who says that he happened upon our website on the 57th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Bob's employment takes him all over the world for UPS and admits that his real passion is history. He has read a few books on the Battle of Leyte Gulf and feels that one of the best is

"The Battle of Leyte Gulf" by Thomas J. Cutler. He comments on Cutler's use of the historical parallel with "Charge of the Light Brigade". He goes on to say "His description of the Charge of the Johnston, Hoel and Samuel B., was -- well I cannot put it into words. Not to mix words - You guys were in one Hell of a street fight and because of your efforts, I'm here today. You see, my Dad, who just turned 80 this last Sept. was putting band-aids on army guys on the Island of Leyte. So once again, Well Done in protecting my Dad."

Bob will be in the Philippines and in Manila for a week. He promises to send a post card.

Again from the Website, Joseph Khourey wrote the following. "I recently stumbled upon your website. Joseph Khourey was my grandfather. I don't know if you are looking for him, or if you are curious as to his whereabouts. He was killed in an automobile accident in the mid 1950s. Thought I would let you know. If you know of anyone with a personal knowledge of my grandfather I would greatly appreciate an 'introduction'. I hope this information is helpful." Joseph was named after his grandfather. His e-mail address is << josephk@neo.rr.com >>

A few notes: Peggy Dodd was unable to attend the reunion because of health problems. Prayers are with you and let's hope we see you and Harry in Biloxi. Joe Fortier continues as Marie's caretaker and Helen is still using the walker and suffering with my cooking. We hope for changes during the coming year.

Time now to send all best wishes to one and all from the Officers and Directors of the SBR Survivors' Ass'n. We wish you a Happy Hanukkah, a Merry Christmas and hope that the New Year is not only one of your best, but a great year for our country. We send our good wishes and prayers to the men and women in our Armed Forces and hope that the terrorists are brought to bay and that our justice is swift and lasting.