

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 11, No. 4

November 2000



Committee:

*John Reynolds, President; Jack Timmons, Secretary/Treasurer;
Al Jefferis, Assistant Secretary; Jerry Craig, Reunion 01 Chairman;
Jack Conmery, Newsletter Editor; Ken Noble, Web Master*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Y'all come! Hear?

Another great reunion has come and gone. Just when you think they can't get any better they do. We now look forward to another great one in the Deep South. We are getting ready for Atlanta 2001 and Atlanta is getting ready for us.

All systems are go. Jerry Craig has nailed things down, and the reports are looking good so start making your plans to be with us in October. Our Web Master has been busy signing up new members. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new members and to extend this special invitation to you to join with us in the family fun at the October 2000 bash. Mark your calendars now, and let's make reunion 2001 the greatest reunion yet.

John Reynolds

IT'S ATLANTA IN 2001

We have signed a contract with the Crown Plaza Atlanta Airport Hotel to host our 2001 reunion October 10-14. Put those dates on your calendar now. Jerry Craig is our reunion coordinator, and says "we ain't seen nothin' yet."

Included in our package is a 1200 square-foot hospitality room, which we will stock with our goodies. The Crown Plaza, located one-half mile from the airport, is at 1325 Virginia Ave.

The hotel will provide free shuttle to/from the airport and to the Atlanta metro transit system (MARTA). Room rates are guaranteed at \$89 a night, good for the period October 7-14 if people want to come early.

Food will be aplenty with 20 restaurants within walking distance.

**MOVING? MOVED?
WAS YOUR NEWSLETTER FORWARDED?**

Then drop a card to Jack Timmons and let him know your new address.

TAPS

John W. Boyd Jr. (1965-68), Johnson City, TN, January, 1993.

NEW MEMBERS (SINCE AUGUST 2000)

Eddie Sowards, MM3 (59-61) Santa Cruz, CA
William "Bill" Flaherty, FN (67-68) Bremerton, WA
Billy Hennessee, SO (68-69) Topeka, KS
Patrick Johnson, FTM3 (66-69) Ridgely, TN
Hank Wojcicki IC2 (59-63) Hollywood, FL
Peter Houseknecht, Midn1/C (64-64) Miami, FL
Joseph Lind, FN (68-69) Morrisville, PA
Hubert Harper, FN (67-68) Bellflower, CA
Antonio Gomez Jr., E4 (64-66) Fresno, CA
Daniel Long, RD3 (67-68) Plymouth, MN
Ronald Goff, YN2 (61-63) Atlanta, GA
Thomas Alesi, RD3 (59-62) New Fairfield, CT
Dan Kish, CS3 (64-68) Winston Salem, NC
Gary Campbell, MM3 (68-69) West Frankfort, IL
Larry Groves, MM3 (64-67) Redmond, WA
Aaron Martin, BM3 (67-68) Fargo, OK
Bob Erpelding, BM2 (68-69) Metamora, MI
Robert "Bob" Keating, SM3 (67-69) New York, NY
Roy Denio, RM2 (60-63) Janesville, WI
John Erpelding, BM3 (68-69) La Grange, KY
Arcade Hebert, BMSN (66-69) Delcambre, LA
Ronnie Hughes, MR2 (67-69) Oak Hill, OH
Donald Carmichael, SN (61-62) Greenbank, WA
Michael Thomas, SN (62-65) Sherman, IL
Richard "Bud" Eichelberger, SKSN (61-63) Denver, CO.

LAUGHLIN MINI 2001

Let's do a "mini" in Laughlin, Nevada, Sunday, March 4 - departing Tuesday March 6. Ruth and Dudley Cass will host the get-together. They will be staying at the Flamingo Hilton. (The rates there are \$17-\$34, depending on the view.) But stay at any hotel you like. The room rates are cheap Sunday thru Tuesday!

Completely informal and casual. BYOB and snacks; Happy Hour at the Casses' will be Sunday and Monday at 4 pm. Then we'll go to dinner somewhere, and maybe take in one of the hotel stage shows.

Please call or email Dudley or Ruth if you can join this rowdy SoCal bunch. More to come in the February newsletter.

LETTERS

Dear Ed:

My name is Dave Clink and am good friends with Gary Campbell, another Topeka shipmate who contacted me by email. Gary and I were on the Topeka together in 1968 and 1969.

I can write more later. Just wanted to touch base. I am now an engineer with the Navy in Washington, DC, and work in Tomahawk Missile Test and Evaluation. I have shot missiles off the submarine Topeka.

Will be back in touch.

Dave Clink (1968-69)

Dear Ed:

We would like to thank the folks who helped put on a super reunion in San Diego. The help included planning the reunion, helping with reunion events, getting the food and beverages to the hospitality room, serving the food and beverages, putting together the banquet program, and participating in the banquet; taking "watches" as hospitality room host, and numerous other details in making the reunion a success. Our thanks to Jerry and Ruth Judge, Egon and Helen Werdelman, Alonzo and Georgette Simmerman, Phil Brooks, Ray Spatz, Jerry Pennington, John Reynolds, Jack and Jill Connery, Jack Timmons, Jim Van Sant, Parky Parkhurst, Cal Ladd, Sandy Tipton, Mary Whisennand, and Don Nellis. And a special thanks to Trish Connery, Larry Tang, and Laura Cass (Jack's daughter and finance, and Dudley's granddaughter), who participated in the Banquet Program. If I left out anyone - see us in Atlanta and we'll buy you a drink!

Dudley and Ruth Cass (61-64)

Dear Ed:

The reunion was terrific. Thanks to Ruth and Dudley - It really was fun, and San Diego and the hotel were a great place to get together.

Thanks Jack and Jill for keeping up the memories and ships store.

If anyone is ever up (out or down) our way, please call and we'll get together.

Loretta and Paul Ruby (62-65)

Dear Ed:

I suffered a slight stroke while at the reunion in San Diego. It was at the start of the banquet on Saturday night.

I spent some time in the hospital but am feeling great now.

Returned home on 29 August. Thanks for the calls, cards, letters and Email.

Tom Victory (60-64)

Dear Ed:

Hello! my name is Patty Johnson, from Johnson City, TN. My brother John W. Boyd Jr. was in the Navy from 1964 thru 1968, and served on the USS Topeka.

I remember when I was 7 years old, my mother, father, brother, sister and I visited Johnny, on the USS Topeka in August, 1967. It was wonderful to stand on Topeka!

He had many good stories to tell of the time he spent on Topeka, and of his fellow shipmates. He never met a stranger. I am sure that his experiences in the Navy and aboard Topeka helped him prepare for the last two years of his life - - a battle with cancer.

My brother passed away in January, 1993, a cancer victim. I miss him dearly. Six months prior to his death, we lost our mother; then his wife Kathy died five months after him. I do not remember what his rank was. I would greatly appreciate any help you could give me.

When I found the Topeka website, it brought a lot of joy to my heart, knowing that this was the ship that Johnny served on, and that maybe this is a good way to have him remembered.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone who might remember Johnny. I would like to correspond with any of his shipmates.

I think your website is wonderful. My heart goes out to all of you who have served your country, and you all have my deepest admiration. Thank you in advance.

Patty Johnson

105 Central Point Lane

Johnson City TN 37604

Email: JOHNSONPBJ@webtv.net

ANNUAL MEETING NEWS

Highlights of the annual meeting, held in San Diego at the 2000 reunion, include the following:

- Present Association officers and board members will remain the same through 2001.
- Atlanta selected as the 2001 reunion site. Reunion will be in October and Jerry Craig will be reunion coordinator.
- Denver selected as the 2002 reunion site. Ken Noble will be reunion coordinator.
- Selection of a West Coast site for the 2003 reunion and will be made in Atlanta.

BAKA HACHI DELAYED - - AGAIN

Unfortunately, publication of the revised edition of *Baka Hachi* has been delayed again. A couple of months back, Jack Connery got into a fight with his computer, and he won that battle, but lost the war. His computer crashed and burned, along with an almost completed revision of the book.

Scheduled for publication prior to Christmas, Jack saw that there was no way to re-create the book by that time, and appealed to the Board of Advisors. None of the information was totally lost. It was just the completed manuscript that was lost. The Board has generously given him until the Atlanta reunion to produce copies of the book.

With every bit of bad news, there is also good news: There is still time to get your favorite Topeka story included in the book. Jack knows that there are still a lot of untold stories out there.

Got yours down and send it to Jack.

SHIP'S STORE REPORT

The following items are available. Please add \$5.00 for shipping. If you are on the internet, there is an order form on the Topeka web site.

We have polo shirts of upgraded quality, 100% cotton, and also a great quality jacket. We think you will like them. We also have a few medium sizes in shirts and jackets since the ladies have been ordering them.

The license plate covers let people know you were on Topeka and will help in finding "lost" shipmates.

Old Style Shirts:

Adult shirts, green, S, XXL	\$22.00
Adult shirts, red, XL, 2XL	22.00

New Style Polo Shirts

White, or, Gray w/Navy Trim, Beige w/Black Trim; Sizes, M, L, XL, 2XL	28.00
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New Style Nylon Jackets

Hunter Green or Royal Blue, both w/Navy trim Sizes M, L, XL, 2XL	46.00
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Ball caps	10.00
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Key Chains	3.00
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Ship's Plaque (new design, w/name)	30.00
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Cold drink holders	5.00
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Topeka note pads (5 pack)	5.00
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License Plate Holders	4.00
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TAX FREE STATUS

At a recent board meeting in San Diego, a motion was approved to take the necessary action to get formal California tax-exempt status for the Association. This will most likely be done under IRS Code section 501c(19) as a tax exempt veteran's organization.

Since this will require filing fees, consultation with a CPA, and perhaps require legal assistance, the Board authorized the secretary/treasurer to expend up to \$2,000 to obtain this status.



OUR SAILORS ARE TOUGH!

Ed Note: The following was written by a Lieutenant Landry, who flies an SH-60B (we saw this helicopter at North Island in San Diego) off the USS HAWES which provided support to the USS COLE after the bombing. It has made its way around the internet in e-mails, and is published here for those not on the net.

Our sailors today are just as tough as we were, and we can be proud of them.

"It wasn't until a few days ago though, that we started doing something that I feel may be the first thing I've seen in my short Naval career that has truly made a difference. Right now we're supporting the USS COLE and her crew in Aden. When the attack occurred we were a day away. Just by luck we happened to be on our way out of the Gulf and headed towards the Suez and could get here in a relatively short amount of time.

I know what you all have seen on CNN, because we have seen it too. I just want you all to know that what you see doesn't even scratch the surface. I'm not going to get into it for obvious reasons. But I will tell you that right now there are 250+ sailors just a few miles away living in hell on Earth. I'm sitting in a nice air-conditioned stateroom, and they're sleeping out on the decks at night. You can't even imagine the conditions they're living in, and yet they are still fighting 24 hours a day to save their ship and free the bodies of those still trapped and send them home. As bad as it is, they're doing an incredible job.

The very fact that these people are still functioning is beyond my comprehension. Whatever you imagine as the worst, multiply it by ten and you might get there. Today, I was tasked to photo rig the ship and surrounding area. It looked so much worse than I had imagined.

unbelievable really, with debris and disarray everywhere, the ship listing, the hole in her side. I wish I had the power to relay to you all what I have seen, but words just won't do it.

I do want to tell you the first thing that jumped out at me - the Stars and Stripes flying. I can't tell you how that made me feel . . . even in this God forsaken hell hole our flag was more beautiful than words can describe. Then I started to notice the mass of activity going on below, scores of people working non-stop in 90 plus degree weather to save this ship. They're doing it with almost no electrical power and they're sleeping (when they can sleep) outside on the decks because they can't stand the smell or the heat or the darkness inside. They only want to eat what we bring them because they're all scared of eating something brought by the local vendors. Even with all that, the USS COLE and her crew is sending a message guys, and it's that even acts of cowardice and hate can do nothing to the spirit and pride of the United States. I have never been so proud of what I do, or of the men and women that I serve with as I was today.

There are sixteen confirmed dead sailors who put it on the line for all of us, and some of them are still trapped here. Please take a minute to pray for their families and say a word of thanks for their sacrifice - one made so that we can live the lives that we do."

USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)
Reunion Association Newsletter
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Inside Reunion 2000 San Diego California, August 16-20



Irye Couch (60-65) tells again the story of how he was the first sailor to report to the CLG-8 in Brooklyn.



Gale and Margery Pfund (62-64) renewed acquaintances with many old friends.



Parker and Connie Butcher enjoy dinner on an evening harbor cruise.



John Courtney (59-62) tells how he beat cancer so he could attend his second reunion. Becky looks on.



This Town Trolley is how we toured Naval installations in San Diego.



Some wanted to ship over for assignment to a ship like this.



Charles Beardsley (62-65) shows off the Topeka Commissioning Pennant he took into protective custody.



John Keith (59-50) takes bets on tomorrow's golf match while Mary thinks about shopping.

Inside Reunion 2000 San Diego California, August 16-20



Mike Hight and Andre Seaton (both 60-62) talk about the early days of CIC watches.



Steve and Sandra Archbold (60-63) enjoy drinks prior to the Saturday night banquet.



Joe and Marcella Heeney (63-66) and Tom Stumpf (64-66) remember the fun had at "Foc'sul Frolics."



Cal Ladd (63-66) explains to shipmates how life was in the engine rooms.



Dick and Ellen Wallace (60-63) relax on the dinner cruise.



Ed Moran, Jack Bock and George Grupe, all 62-65, still blame each other for missing movement.



Jerry and Leanne Pennington (63-64) share a good Topeka story with Shipmates.



Ken and Irene Kuchin (64-66) relive Topeka memories.