

# USS TOPEKA CLG-8

## Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 20, No. 1

March 2009

### Officers:

John Reynolds, Chairman, Board of Directors; John Reynolds, President;  
Dudley Cass, Secretary-Treasurer; Gary Baker 2009 Reunion Chairman;  
Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor; Ken Noble, Web Master



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is a lengthy "From the President". At a meeting in San Diego it was suggested that we spice up the newsletters with some interesting stories. I offer this as a start to others jumping in and writing some stories about your experiences. Don't be bashful. We would all love to hear from you.

*It was a great time to be alive!* We had just completed a great mission. The USS James C Owens DD776 had been assigned to escort the USS Missouri into Tokyo Harbor for the signing of the Japanese Surrender. We were all awe struck! as we watched the big White seaplane with the big green cross on the side land in front of us. We had been at General Quarters for most of the morning and we were to remain in that condition, with orders not to shoot at the white seaplane with the green cross on its side. We were to remain at GQ until the enemy had left the harbor. All small boat coxswains were assigned to be on duty to pick up all VIP's and take them to the "Big Mo" for the signing. I was happy for that assignment as I was Coxswain of the Captains Gig aboard the "mighty JC" and it gave me an opportunity to get a close look at History in the making. One of my passengers that morning was Admiral McCain (Senator McCain's grandfather). It was the first time I had heard of him so that didn't mean much to me at the time. We then returned to our ships and waited for the call to return to the "Mo" to return people back to the beach. In the meantime we all shared binoculars, and watched the little weasels in their tuxedo's bow and grovel before their conquerors. Then our skipper got on the PA and said "Attention all hands! The Imperial Forces of Japan have surrendered to the United States of America." A great cheer went up from all of the ships that were at anchor in the harbor, especially from all the USNR people, as that meant their mission was over, and they could all go back to their

families. Those of us that were USN people were happy that the war was over, and wondered what our next assignment would be. The scuttlebutt was hot and heavy that we were all coming back to the good old US of A.

As we left Tokyo Harbor we headed for good old Buckner Bay in Okinawa. We had been there before and looked forward to a little R&R, where the beer was only 10 cents a bottle and the giant lobsters were \$3.00 during happy hour. So on Oct.8th 1945 we steamed into Buckner Bay. We could all taste the lobster and beer as we tied up to the tanker, topped off and took on the assigned buoy that was close to the entrance as you could get, and as far from the fleet landing as possible. I remember groaning as this made the boat coxswain's unhappy because of the long hauls from ship to shore. However, the war was over, and it was time to "raise hell". Lucky me! I had the duty that night and spent the night shuttling liberty parties back and forth. Not to worry!... tomorrow will be my day in the sun. Well the next day we awoke to the scuttlebutt that all liberty was canceled as there was a storm heading our way. We had been through many storms before, so let's get it over with and get back to the important things in life, Beer and lobster tails. Little did we know what was in store for us? As the storm increased we found ourselves in a real pickle. We unhooked from the buoy and tried to get to sea, but it was too late. We spent the night steaming forward, dropping the hook, dragging anchor, pulling in the anchor, steaming forward, dropping the hook etc. This went on all night. The rain hit us and it felt like pebbles raining down. All hands were ordered topside and we all thanked God that our skipper had the foresight to top off, because we were sitting heavy in the water. There were many others that were not so fortunate. All during the night we could hear the sounds of ships crashing into each other. We were so busy

trying to stay afloat and away from other ships we did not have time to even realize what was happening. The next morning, however, we looked on the beach and saw piles of ships aground. The carnage was unbelievable.

*“On 4 October 1945, a typhoon was spotted developing in the Caroline Islands and tracked as it moved on a predictable course to the northwest. Although expected to pass into the East China Sea north of Formosa on 8 October, the storm unexpectedly veered north toward Okinawa. That evening the storm slowed down and, just as it approached Okinawa, began to greatly increase in intensity. The sudden shift of the storm caught many ships and small craft in the constricted waters of Buckner Bay (Nakagusuku Wan) and they were unable to escape to sea. On 9 October, when the storm passed over the island, winds of 80 knots (92 miles per hour) and 30-35 foot waves battered the ships and craft in the bay and tore into the Quonset-huts and buildings ashore. A total of 12 ships and craft were sunk, 222 grounded, and 32 severely damaged. Personnel casualties were 36 killed, 47 missing, and 100 seriously injured. Almost all the food, medical supplies and other stores were destroyed, over 80% of all housing and buildings knocked down, and all the military installations on the island were temporarily out of action. Over 60 planes were damaged as well, though most were repairable. Although new supplies had been brought to the island by this time, and emergency mess halls and sleeping quarters built for all hands, the scale of the damage was still very large. If the war had not ended on 2 September, this damage, especially the grounding and damage to 107 amphibious craft (including the wrecking of four tank landing ships, two medium landing ships, a gunboat, and two infantry landing craft) would likely have seriously impacted the planned invasion of Japan (Operation Olympic).”*

For a complete listing of all the ships sunk and destroyed click on <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq102-6.htm>.

You will be amazed!

JR

## **NEW MEMBERS (since November 2008)**

Mark Wills SN (69) Bybee, TN  
Ronald Fisher EM3 (62-64) Cumming, GA  
Walter Frazier MM# (59-63) Lilesville, NC  
Kelly Smith GM3 (60-61) Athens, TX  
Manuel Gallardo SN3 (65-67) San Antonio, TX  
Joe Fitzgerald FTM2 (62-65) Quitman, TX  
Joseph Hooker PN3 (62-64) Studio City, CA  
Robert Jakeway (D) MM3 (59-61) Sandpoint, ID  
Lawrence Merkner MM2 (59-62) New Carlisle, IN  
Michael McLaughlin CPL (63-65) West Linn, OR  
Roger Whitworth CS3 (63-67) Green Cove Spring, FL  
Roy White BT3 (63-66) Alexandria, LA  
Daniel Garigan ETN3 (65-66) Portland, OR  
Francis Kindl SF3 (67-69) Cedar Rapids, IA

## **TAPS**

Charles Armstrong DCCM  
“J” “W” Perkins CDR  
Joseph Peragine CWO3  
Michael Phillips HMSN  
Charles Ryder EN2  
Joseph Friend CPL  
Robert Jakeway MM3



## **ANNUAL DUES**

Annual dues, for the calendar year, are \$20 or \$80 for five years. Although dues are requested, they are not mandatory. The dues, however, are used to cover expenses such as the preparation and mailing of letters, newsletter and directories, “upfront” reunion expenses, and the cost of maintaining the TOPEKA website on the internet. Dues should be sent to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Drive, Bonita, CA 91902-2019

### **Errors in 2009 Topeka Directory.**

The 2009 Topeka Directory, which has been mailed to those who have dues paid through 2009 and beyond, has errors in it. How did this happen?

In an effort to improve the presentation of data in Topeka Directory, reduce the labor in assembling the directory, and reduce the mailing costs, the directory building process was changed. Unfortunately, some data was lost in the transformation, and the errors were not detected before the directories were printed. The types of errors included: all data missing for some members, deceased members not marked as deceased, inactive members not marked as inactive, and some old mailing addresses not corrected.

Please email, write, or phone me, if you need more information about those missing, or with incorrect data in the directory, or if you see other discrepancies in the directory. Errata sheets, listing those who are missing, those not marked as deceased, and those not marked as inactive, are available on request to me.

We will have a corrected directory on or before the Chicago Reunion, after we insure that the discrepancies in data and procedures are corrected.

Dudley Cass, Sect/Treas

## **CHICAGO REUNION TOURS**

### **CATIGNY PARK**

Thursday Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, 09 morning tour:

#### **The Formal Gardens**

Nearly 40-acres large, the Formal Gardens in Cantigny Park were designed by one of the country's foremost landscape architects, Franz Lipp. With 20 plant-specific individual gardens to stroll through, the gardens offer a tranquil setting, far removed from the bustle of world.

#### **Robert R. McCormick Museum**

The Robert R. McCormick Museum served as the country estate Col. Robert R. McCormick, until his death in 1955. The museum educates visitors on the McCormick family's daily life and provides the

opportunity to visit 27-rooms of this 1896 mansion showcasing family furnishings and collections of Chinese and European art.

### **First Division Museum at Cantigny**

This world-class museum promotes public learning about America's military heritage and affairs, as well as honors and remembers the Big Red One – the famed 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. The historic tanks located on the grounds outside the building have become icons for generations of Chicago area residents.

### **Spirit of Chicago Dinner Cruise**

Thursday Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, '09 evening tour:

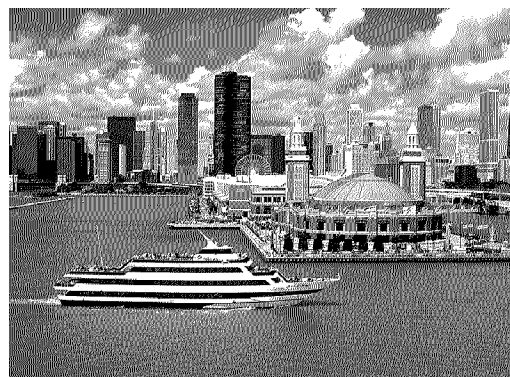
A member of the crew will escort you to your table for a three-hour evening of cruising fun. Order drinks then get ready for the time of your life.

Coffee, tea, iced tea and water are complimentary. You may also purchase mixed drinks, fine liqueurs, specialty waters, champagne and exceptional wines.

Enjoy the city's famous waterfront from a totally different point of view through Spirit's huge panoramic windows, or from any of the ship's outdoor viewing decks.

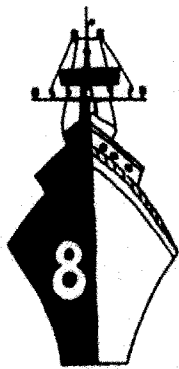
When your waiter invites you to our Grande Buffet, feel free to select as much or as little as you like from an amazing array of salads, entrees and side dishes. Finish off your meal with your choice of luscious desserts.

During your meal, be entertained by lively performances from our talented staff and crew. After delighting you with renditions of many popular songs, the cruise kicks into high gear when the spirit DJ spins your favorite Top-40 hits and you show off your latest moves on the dance floor.



**USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION**  
**C/O KATHY SPATZ**  
**503 OLIVE BLVD.**  
**SOUTH HEMPSTEAD, NY 11550-8012**

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 Ken Noble, Ray Spatz, Dan Moore

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**Ships Store**  
 Linda Roberts, 7315 Valley Lane, Hixson, TN 37343-2207;  
 423-842-5147; Email [ijlrob@aol.com](mailto:ijlrob@aol.com)

**SHIPS STORE**

Most of the merchandise will be available in Chicago. All orders should be sent to Linda Roberts at 7315 Valley Lane, Hixson, TN 37343-2207. Linda's phone number is 423-842-5147. Include \$5.00 shipping with each order and make checks or money order payable to the Reunion Association and send to Linda with your order.

**Ladies Shirts**

White	\$19.00
Cardigan Baby Blue	\$20.00
Scoop Neck Blue	\$16.00
V-Neck L. Pink & Pistachio	\$16.00

**Polo 2003**

Navy/White XL, XXL	\$20.00
White/Navy XL, XXL	20.00
Navy w/pocket XXL	20.00

**Polo 2005**

Navy M, L	\$19.00
Med Blue L	19.00
Red w/pocket M	21.00

**Men's Shirts**

Dessert Moon	34.00
Niki Blue	31.00

**Jackets**

Red Jackets	\$36.00
Ping-Canvas	\$48.00

**Assorted items available**

Ball Caps	\$12.00
Cold Drink Holders	4.00
Coffee mugs w/Topeka emblem	5.00
Topeka Note pads (5 pack)	4.00
License Plate Holder	3.00

**USS TOPEKA (CLG8) REUNION ASSOCIATION INC.**  
**2009 CHICAGO REUNION HIGHLIGHTS**  
**Reunion coordinators: Gary and Pat Baker**

The great city of Chicago is welcoming us to see its many magnificent attractions. Chicago is famous for its fabulous architecture, its museums, parks, the zoo, Navy Pier and of course Soldier Field just to mention a few.

**Reunion dates:** Wed September 16th through Saturday September 19, 2009. Most people will plan to depart on Sunday the 20th.

**Hotel:** Our hotel is the beautiful newly remodeled (2008) Four Points by Sheraton. It is located at 10249 W. Irving Park Road at Mannheim Road, Schiller Park, Il. 60176 Room rates for kings, doubles and king wheel chair accessible is \$110 per night there is an 11.5 sales tax and occupancy tax added. These rates (which are a very good rate negotiated by Ruth Cass) are good Tuesday September 15th through Saturday September 19th. There is a free self parking lot for the registered guests. The hotel runs a shuttle from O'Hare airport. For those of you coming in to Midway airport, Midway is about 18 miles SW of the hotel. Cab fare runs about \$50 to \$75 one way or you can use Airport express 800-654-7871 which runs between Midway and O'Hare and then take the hotel shuttle. Check in time is 3:00 PM check out time is 12:00 PM. We have a very nice 675 sq. ft. hospitality room for our use Wednesday through Saturday evening. You will make your own reservations. The rooms will be released on August 25, 2009. To make your reservations call 847-671-6000 or 800-325-3535. Please make sure to tell them you are with the USS Topeka to insure room rates.

**Reunion Schedule:** We recommend that you plan to arrive on Tuesday because we have a full schedule of events Wednesday through Saturday.

**Tours: Wednesday Sept 16th; Tour A - Great Lakes NTC Tour 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM.** Our motor coach will pick us up at the hotel entrance at 10 AM. We will enjoy a tour of Great Lakes, an important advanced Navy training center. Many of you went through your basic training at this facility. We will see historic buildings designed by Jarvis Hunt, a noted architect who used the motif of the bow of a sailing ship in his buildings. We will be met by a representative from Great lakes on arrival and enjoy our tour and then have lunch (which is included) in the Port O'Call restaurant with its magnificent view of the lake. A photo ID is required (driver's license OK) for all passengers and a list of all participants is required by Great Lakes by September 7, 2009. Cost on this tour is \$49 per person.

**Thursday Sept 17, Tour "B" Cantigny Park 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

We will be picked up at the front entrance of the hotel at 10:00 AM for an escorted tour of Cantigny, the country estate of Colonel Robert R McCormick, former editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. We can tour the 35 room mansion filled with European antiques, paintings, rare books and Asian art. The house is set in manicured gardens with a rose collection, numerous formal designs and the Idea Garden. Visit the First Division Museum which portrays the history of the 1st Division, the Big Red One, of the US Army. Lunch is on your own at the Cantigny Cafe. Cost of this tour is \$35 per person.

**Thursday Sept 17; Tour "C" Spirit of Chicago Dinner Cruise 5:30 PM - 11:00 PM**

We will be picked up at the hotel for a drive to Navy Pier where the Spirit of Chicago is docked. We will view the incredible Chicago skyline from the large picture windows of our ship as we enjoy a fabulous dinner cruise on Lake Michigan. From the ship we will view Chicago's

magnificent skyline, voted one of the top ten most spectacular views by the Society of American Travel Writers. We will have a bountiful delicious meal of creative salads, entrees and desserts prepared fresh daily on board while enjoying engaging entertainment and lively music. The beautiful vessel which was built specifically for viewing the Chicago skyline has three enclosed decks plus an open-air deck to explore. Dress for the dinner is dressy casual - no shorts and T-shirts. Final count for this tour is due by August 10, 2009. Cost of the dinner cruise and transportation to and from Navy Pier is \$105 per person.

**Friday Sept 18; Tour "D" City of Big Shoulders Tour 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Enjoy an interesting, fully-narrated driving tour of the City of Big Shoulders. Our certified tour guide will point out historic and significant sights. We will see some of the tallest buildings in the world and be whisked up in the fastest elevators to the observation floor of the John Hancock Building for breath-taking views of the city. We will discover why Chicago is called the windy city and why its river flows backwards. We will see its fabulous outdoor art, the Magnificent Mile and the landmark Water Tower which survived the great fire. We will hear stories of Chicago's colorful past and be surprised by the exciting, diverse beautiful city of today. We will visit Navy Pier, one of Chicago's top attractions. It was once used for shipping and naval training and even a university but now has been converted to a shopping, eating and entertainment complex. Lunch is on your own at Navy Pier with about a dozen different options to choose from including Capi's Italian, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., Joe's BeBop Cafe and Dock Street Cafe to name a few. Cost on this tour is \$46 per person.

**Friday evening, September 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be a cocktail mixer** starting at 6:00 PM with dinner buffet at 7:00 PM. Dinner will be held in the Buckingham room and it will be a "Taste of Chicago" with Chicago style hotdogs, Italian beef with peppers, Maxwell Street Polish Sausage, homemade chips, coleslaw assorted cookies and brownies.

**Saturday Sept.19; Reunion business meeting** at 9:00 AM with group pictures directly following. The rest of the day is on your own to do whatever you wish, visit one of the museums, go to the zoo, go shopping on the magnificent mile or just visit with old friends. There will be a cocktail hour starting at 6:00 PM and dinner at 7:00 again in the Buckingham room. Dinner choices will be Prime Cut New York served with mushrooms and Au Jus, Baked Salmon Filet served with dill sauce, Chicken Marsala with mushrooms, chives and a marsala wine sauce or Pasta Primavera for our vegetarian entree. Children's plate will be either chicken fingers or mini burgers. Dinner will include a fresh fruit cup, Caesar salad, green beans almondine, double baked potato and cheesecake with strawberries for dessert. We will have nice selection of wines with dinner including a Chardonnay, White Zin, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

**Hospitality Room:** We will have the hospitality room open daily starting at 7:00 AM with coffee, donuts, bagels, juice, toast and fresh fruit. We will be open until midnight except during the Friday night and Saturday night doings. Alcoholic, non-alcoholic beverages, coffee, water and snacks will be provided. This will be from Wednesday through Saturday, also where we need to go for registration, the ship's store, photos, cruise books etc.

This is our 20th anniversary and should be a fun, exciting time for everyone.

If you have any questions contact Gary or Pat Baker at 1240 Lonesome Pine Lane, Billings, Mt. 59105. Phone 406-252-4546. E-mail address [pbaker@bresnan.net](mailto:pbaker@bresnan.net)

We hope to see you all in Chicago

**USS TOPEKA (CLG-8) Reunion Association, Inc. Registration      Rev. 2/25/09**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion, Chicago, IL, SEPTEMBER 16-20, 2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number in party \_\_\_\_\_

Staying at the Four Points Hotel Chicago O'Hare? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What nights? Check: Tue \_\_\_ Wed \_\_\_ Thu \_\_\_ Fri \_\_\_ Sat \_\_\_ Sun \_\_\_ More? y/n  
 Emergency Contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Any Handicap and/or Special Dietary Requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) for nametag(s) (if you haven't previously received permanent nametag):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special!!**

This is our 20<sup>th</sup> Reunion. To commemorate this special event, the Reunion Association is taking care of the fixed costs, and Hospitality Room costs, from funds left over from previous reunions, and \$1000 contributed in the will of Richard Ramsey, who died last year. All you pay for is the Friday Buffet and the Saturday Banquet, and the tours you take. Enjoy!!

**Reunion Fee:** The Reunion Fee includes the costs of the Friday night Buffet Dinner, and the Saturday night Banquet. Reunion Fee (per person) for adults attending all four days: \$70. For those not attending all four days: \$5 for Wed; \$5 for Thu; \$27 for Fri; \$43 for Sat. Adult Guests/Teens/Children at Friday Buffet Dinner: \$27/27/13; at Saturday Banquet Dinner: \$43/33/16.

<b>Days Attending</b>	<b>Number Attending</b>	<b>Price (Per Person)</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b><u>Members, All four days</u></b>	_____	\$70	\$ _____
<b><u>Members, Not all four days</u></b>			
Wednesday	_____	\$5	\$ _____
Thursday	_____	\$5	\$ _____
Friday	_____	\$27	\$ _____
Saturday	_____	\$43	\$ _____
<b><u>Adult Guests/Teens/Children.</u></b>			
<b>Friday Buffet:</b> Adult Guests	_____	\$27	\$ _____
Teens	_____	\$27	\$ _____
Children	_____	\$13	\$ _____
<b>Sat Banquet</b> Adult Guests	_____	\$43	\$ _____
Teens	_____	\$33	\$ _____
Children	_____	\$16	\$ _____
		<b>Reunion Fee Total</b>	\$ _____

**Banquet Entrée Choices** (give number)

Prime Cut New York \_\_\_\_\_ Baked Salmon Filet \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Marsala \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pasta Primavera (Vegetarian) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child's Plate: Chicken Fingers \_\_\_\_\_ or Mini Burgers \_\_\_\_\_

**(CONTINUED ON REVERSE SIDE)**

**TOPEKA 2009 Chicago Reunion Registration (continued)**

**Tours:**

<b>Tour</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>“A” Great Lakes NTC Tour Wed 10AM- 2:30PM</b>	_____	\$49	\$_____
<b>“B” Cantigny Estate Tour Thu 10AM-3PM</b>	_____	\$35	\$_____
<b>“C” Spirit of Chicago Dinner Cruise Thurs 5:30-11PM</b>	_____	\$105	\$_____
<b>“D” “City of Big Shoulders” Tour Fri 10AM- 4 PM</b>	_____	\$46	\$_____
<b>Tours Cost Total</b>			<b>\$_____</b>

**Reunion Fees and Tours Costs: Total \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Deadline for Payment of above costs is August 15, 2009.**

**Make Checks payable to USS TOPEKA (CLG-8) Reunion Assn. and mail to:**

**Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, CA 91902-2019**