

USS TOPEKA CLG-8 Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 8, No. 1

February, 1997



Committee:

*John Reynolds, President; Dudley E. Cass, Secretary/Treasurer;
Al Jefferis, Assistant Secretary; Tom Victory, Bud Zimmerman,
Reunion '97 Chairmen; Jack Connery, Newsletter Editor*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's always a sad time when we lose a shipmate. My sincere condolences go out to the families of those shipmates we lost this period. Herb Hedge is a shipmate whom we will all miss. I will especially miss him because of the many hours I spent with him in the dental chair. On our last trip back from Vietnam, I went through some major dental work and he was very good at what he did. I was confident in his ability to solve my problems. He was Dr. Hedge to me then, and he later became Herb as we bonded as shipmates during past reunions. He still inquired about how things worked out with my dental work after I left Topeka. I was able to tell him about the compliments other dentists gave me about the good job he had done during those times.

Herb remembered us in his will by leaving \$500 for his Topeka shipmates. His parting wish to us that we apply the money to having that first drink on him when we gather in Seattle to "splice the mainbrace." Thanks Herb, we will miss you.

* * *

The committee has been working out all the kinks for our reunion in Seattle. I am looking forward to a great time. I hope you are all planning to be there. I promise that the Andrews Sisters will not sing this year.

John Reynolds

1997 DUES

1997 Dues are \$20.00 and are due now. This increase was voted by the membership at the annual meeting in Topeka to help defray the expense of 1997 calendars, which have been mailed to all 1996 dues-paying members. Those already paying their 1997 dues need not send an additional \$5.

Donations received in addition to the \$20 will be sent to the Sailors Home in Pascagoula, MS., at the end of the year.

Please send dues to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Drive, Bonita, CA 91902.

TAPS

Elmer (Joe) Greeno, FTCS (60-63), July, 1996,
GardenGrove, CA.

Don Ward, LT (65-66), March, 1996, Bremerton, WA.

Herb Hedge, LCDR (DC) (64-66), November 28, 1996,
Ottumwa, IA.

William H. Groverman, RADM, COMCRUDESFLOT 3
(63-64) December 25, Burlingame, CA.

IT'S LAUGHLIN TIME AGAIN

March 4-8 are the dates set for what has come to be the "Laughlin, NV Bash." "Pick your own hotel, stay in your RV or at the Riverside, where a package deal includes two nights and tickets to the Don Ho show for \$77," says organizers Dudley and Ruth Cass. Rooms without the show range between \$19 and \$25 a day. If you want the Riverside package, call 800-227-3849 with a credit card. If you want the Don Ho show, ask for seating at the Cass table (Row 3, Table D).

Happy hour will be in the Cass room at the Riverside at 4 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday. Bring your own drinks and snacks. Those interested in golf contact Jim Ownby at 619-447-9496. If you have questions, contact Dudley or Ruth at 619-267-3123.

A BRICK FOR TOPEKA

The Iowa Gold Star Museum for military memorabilia has been established at the Camp Dodge National Guard Training Center near Des Moines, Iowa.

There is a brick wall inside with names of many men and service units who served in the military during all wars. Shipmate Bill Carver (60-63), Des Moines, IA has suggested that we buy a brick, inscribed with our name, for that wall. The cost is \$150, payable in three annual installments of \$50. "I will pay the first \$50," says Bill, "if donations could be collected for the balance."

The Board of Directors has agreed to do this and solicit donations for the \$100 balance. The inscription, to be placed on the brick, will read as follows:

USS TOPEKA
CL-67 1944-49
CLG-8 1960-69

Anyone interested in contributing, send donations marked for the Iowa brick to Dudley Cass.

LETTERS

Dear Ed:

This check (in the amount of \$500) is from Herb Hedge and is to be used to buy a round or two of drinks at the next USS Topeka Reunion to say "thanks for your tolerance during my antics in the '60's, and for your renewed friendship and forgiveness in the '90's".

From the Will of
Herb Hedge (64-66)
died November 28, 1996
Joyce Williams, Executor (Herb's sister)
1206 Hutchinson Ave.
Ottumwa, Iowa, 52501

Dear Ed:

I have a 1946 Blue Jacket Manual, in good shape. I'll give it to the first one who wants it and will pay postage.

Homer Whittaker
Mar Det (60-62)

Dear Ed:

It was really exciting to see my old ship in print and to know there is a group of old shipmates to converse with. It surely brings back lots of memories, having served aboard three years.

I am still attached to the Navy in a civilian status (30 years). I am the General Foreman in charge of maintenance for the USS Constitution in Boston.

I went to sea again this past year on the Coast Guard Barque "Eagle" in training to sail Old Ironsides on her 200th birthday in July of 1997.

Thanks for the newsletter and hope to be in touch often. It's good to be home.

Dick Wallace (60-63)

Ed Note: Dick, why don't you write an account and take pictures of sailing in Ironsides, and I'll publish an article in the newsletter. Let's talk about it.

Dear Ed:

Thanks so much for persuading Mom to go to the reunion in Topeka and invite us daughters. All four of us were looking forward to meeting some of the guys that Dad had known. Mom and Bev went to the Seranata

Farms dinner, and had a great time meeting a lot of the shipmates. I, unfortunately, could only make it to the Ladies Tea and visit the bell. I was hoping to hear some stories about Dad and life at sea.

Would like to hear from anybody who knew Dad. Please write to my mom, Mrs. Vickie Barr, (wife of Larry, RM3 62-65) at 114 SE 13th, Newton, Kansas, 67114.

Thanks for your help.

Mary Barr

Dear Ed:

I guess it is unusual when the editor writes to himself. But I talk to myself too, so I guess that makes it all right.

I just wanted to say something about Herb Hedge. I remember standing by the registration desk at the hotel in Topeka when I looked to my right and there was Herb Hedge. On the spur of the moment, Herb decided to come to the reunion. He knew that it would be his last shot. That's what he thought about Topeka.

I remember a conversation we had in 1965 off the coast of North Vietnam. Herb was down in the dumps. "You guys come to the wardroom table talking about the number of rounds you fired, the number of aircraft you controlled, and the pilot you picked up out of the water. All I can talk about is the drilling and filling I did."

Somehow, I don't think I was able to convince Herb how important that was, that if he didn't do those things, old "Toothache Joe" would have his mind on something else when he fired the guns.

Herb had some problems, and we tried to help. In later years, about 1992 after I had seen Herb for the first time in all those years at the Long Beach Reunion, I had occasion to have dinner with the editor of a very prominent dental magazine.

As we talked over coffee, I was reminded of Herb and the things he was doing, and said, "I bet we have a friend in common. I'll tell you where he's from and you tell me his name. Ottumwa, Iowa."

"That would be Herb Hedge," he replied. And he went on to tell me how much of an impact Herb had on the profession of dentistry by working with and helping dentists who had problems with alcoholism. Herb had turned his adversity into a positive.

When I learned of Herb's death, I called my editor friend, whom I hadn't seen since that dinner. "I thought something must be wrong," he said. "I missed seeing him at the last conference. Thought he must be sick. He will be missed by the dental profession."

We will miss you Herb. And so will others.

Jack Connery (62-64)

SHIP'S STORE REPORT

Newest item available in the Ship's Store is a ship's plaque, available in three versions during the life of the ship. There is the original crest, with the conostoga wagon, which was used on the cover of the Commissioning program, the dark/light version of the Baka Hachi days, and the Honor, Freedom and Valor design, showing the ship and missile.

The plaques are laser etched in an oak base. Costs of the plaques are \$22.00. For an additional \$5.00, a brass plate will be added at the bottom showing your name, rank/rate, and period of time you were aboard. (Your option—maximum of 2 lines. About two weeks will be required for delivery.

Other items available in the Ship's Store include

- Adult shirts, pink, green, white \$22.00
- Ball caps 8.00
- Key Chains 3.00
- Baka Hachi Book 7.00
- Wine glasses/tumblers 4@ 12.00
- Topeka Jackets, Navy 35.00
- 1977 Calendars 6.00

Like everything else, our costs have gone up. Please include \$5.00 for shipping any order. Send requests to Jill Connery, 16334 South Lewis, Bixby, OK 74008.

WHERE DID THE NAME COME FROM?

PEA COAT

Sailors who have to endure pea-soup weather often don their pea coats but the coat's name isn't derived from the weather.

The heavy topcoat worn in cold, miserable weather by seafaring men was once tailored from pilot cloth - - a heavy, coarse, stout kind of twilled blue cloth with the nap on one side. The cloth was sometimes called P-cloth for the initial letter of "pilot" and the garment made from it was called a p-jacket - - later, a pea coat. The term has been used since 1723 to denote coats made from that cloth.

Courtesy, Navy Public Affairs Library

ASSOCIATION DIRECTORIES

How many of you can find your latest Topeka Directory? The latest one published by Dudley Cass in December and sent to all dues paying members?

We get indications that the directory gets lost. Dues checks mistakenly come to the editor because "can't find Dudley's address." We know it is a rather small book, but

why not treat it as a telephone directory/address book, and keep it with your other directories, ie telephone book, address book, etc. It would be a big help to Dudley and the newsletter editor. Please remember that dues payments got to Dudley.

ELECTRONIC-MAIL

It was suggested at the annual meeting that we publish electronic mail addresses as part of the directory. There are so few at this time we will publish them in this newsletter. Here's what we have so far:

Jack Bock: jbock@interworld.net
Jack Connery: JJConn@aol.com
Bob Kershner: Kershner@Worldnet.att.net
Bill Montgomery: WMMontg@AOL.com
Harvey Nelson: nelsonah@ntdi.net
Mike Sitnic: dizzywave-southphilly@worldnet.att.net
Sam Sheehan: cejasam@aol.com
Jack Timmons: JETimmons@aol.com
Dick Walker: leidyk@ne-link.net
Greg Wappelhorst: GWAPEL@AOL.com
John Woolston: John.Woolston@kandy.com

TWO SHIPMATES RETIRE - - AGAIN

Two Topeka shipmates recently retired, for the second time. They don't claim to have had as many careers as John Hojaboom, but they don't claim to be as old as he is either.

Bob Kershner (63-66) has retired as executive vice president of the Sandhill Association of Realtors, Southern Pines, NC. His first retirement, from the Navy, was in 1986 after 26 years of service. Bob was hired in 1987 as the first paid member of the Association, and during his tenure, saw the organization grow from 95 to 350 members. He was instrumental in establishing a computerized multiple listing service.

Bob and Suzanne are looking forward to travel, gardening, reading, fishing and boating.

Also retiring is Jack Connery (64-66). For 15 years, he has been technical/creative writer, advertising manager, for T.D. Williamson, Inc., a manufacturer of pipeline maintenance equipment in Tulsa, OK. Jack retired from the Navy in 1977 after 21 years of service.

Unlike Bob, Jack is starting his third career. He has established J&JConn Resources, Inc., which will provide contract technical writing services in the Tulsa area. He hopes that effort will support his desire to write some short story fiction. In addition, he and Jill want to make up for lost time with daughters and grandchildren in California, Maine and Texas. Jack will continue to publish the Association newsletter and Jill will handle your Ship's Store requests.

Dear Ed:

Until last Spring, I had no idea what had happened to the USS Topeka, or its crew. Then, I saw the notice in our VFW magazine about the Topeka reunion.

I quickly became a member and ordered a copy of BAKA HACHI. This book brought back many memories, especially the 1964 WestPac cruise.

I got a big kick from the story of Jim Ownby parking in CDR Simpson's parking place, then receiving the "demonstration of communications in action."

I can believe this story because CDR Simpson spent a lot of time in CIC during AAWEX's. I was the radio net operator reporting bogeys course, speed, grid location, etc. I quickly learned to repeat exactly what the CDR wanted, or suffer the consequences.

Jerry Pennington, RD3, a good artist, painted a 'screaming eagle' on the back of the Commander's chair. CDR Simpson was subsequently nicknamed the "Screaming Eagle" by OI Division personnel.

Don (Marshall) Dillon RD2 (62-64)

Dear Ed:

For the longest time, I thought the highest point in Kansas was the overpass of exit 6 on that incredibly long highway, I-70. Other people had told me that the highest point of traveling in Kansas was reaching any state line.

So why would we want to travel in Kansas? We came from Louisville CO to Topeka for the 1996 reunion. My wife of 32 years was not looking forward to this. She knew no one that would be attending and was anticipating a bunch of old salts drinking beer and swapping sea stories. Boring!. Well, she was partly right, there were a bunch of old salts drinking beer and telling stories. Some beers were downed, old acquaintances were renewed and new ones made. But it seems it was the women that made more new acquaintances than their old sailors did. Although ill one day, Sandy was able to meet and enjoy the company of our better halves.

I say this to Topeka wives who may have cold feet about attending a reunion: Plan on the next one in Seattle. Help your sailor man pack the bags and come with him. Sandy is already planning for that trip in August, and it was she that asked if we could attend. Her idea - - I had no need to prod her. She thoroughly enjoyed Topeka.

To all the guys who showed up from the OI division. It was great to see you again

As Sandy and I left for home and passed exit six once again, and shortly after that crossed the border back into Colorado, we observed that there was a new high point in Kansas. It was left behind in Topeka.

Kenneth Noble (60-62)

GETTING READY FOR SEATTLE!!

Tom Victory and Bud Zimmerman et al are "all ahead Bendix" in preparations for Reunion 97 in Seattle August 13-16. Tom and Bud are guaranteeing us a good time in the Puget Sound area.

One of the highlights will be a visit to Tillicum Village for a salmon dinner cruise. A boat tour of Elliot bay precedes this trip to Blake Island Marine State Park, where we will visit "Puget Sound of the Past" - - Indian ceremonial longhouses, potlatches, war canoes and Indian art. This unique village is styled after the native "Longhouse" and remains one of the Northwest's most natural settings.

The traditional feast begins with steamed clams and nectar. Following is an all-you-can-eat buffet line which features alder-smoked salmon and Indian bread. As the meal ends, the lights dim and a narrator tells stories of the Indian land, and customs. Native American performers portray their ancient folklore through a series of costumed dances.

The island is the birthplace of Chief Sealth, whose name, slightly changed, was chosen to mark a little pioneering town founded in the 1800's known as Seattle. Estimated cost, based on 30 participants is \$60.

Also on the schedule is a tour of the a Trident submarine and the Submarine Base Bangor at Silverdale. This will be an all day tour and will include lunch. A maximum of 35 can go on this tour and, for security reasons, names have to be turned in by July 15. Costs for transportation will be about \$20 each, not including lunch, based on a number of 35.

If you want to play golf in Seattle, please let Tom Victory know now at Box 3241, Port Orchard, WA 98366-0241.

Get ready to be "Sleepless in Seattle." Registration forms will be included in the May newsletter. However, for planning purposes, please complete the form below and returning it to Dudley Cass, if you think you will be there. This is for planning purposes and is not binding.

If you are on the Internet, take a look at the information available on Seattle and the surrounding area.

Reunion 97 Questionnaire

August 13-16, Seattle Washington,

Name _____

I am planning on coming to Seattle and with me will be:

_____ and

Clip out and mail to Dudley Cass 3028 Bonita Woods Drive, Bonita, CA, 91902.

REMEMBER WHEN?

When I served aboard the Topeka from 1963-77 as a Dental Technician, I took a lot of dental x-rays on hundreds of shipmates for three LCDR dentists: Pistocco and Hedge (deceased), and Beck. I always tried to do my best not to make mistakes in this procedure as it could be extremely difficult and uncomfortable for the patient because of the technology and equipment used during that time. My nightmare began one afternoon while we were home ported in Long Beach. Our Exec, CDR "J" "W" Perkins, called me and asked if I would stay after 1600 on a particular day and x-ray his wife's teeth. I felt honored by his request. We made an after hours

appointment and CDR and Mrs. Perkins came in. After numerous uncomfortable attempts I finally completed her x-rays. The Perkins' thanked me and left the ship. Was I glad that was over! I knew everything now was going to go perfect - - wrong! Since it was after hours, I did not follow S.O.P. which called for locking the x-ray dark room door while film was being developed. As I stepped across the passageway, a Hospital Corpsman entered the dark room and turned on the light, which ruined all of her film. You can't believe how I felt the next day when I called CDR Perkins and said "Guess what?".

Steve Warren (63-67)

USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)
REUNION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
c/o JACK CONNERY
16334 SOUTH LEWIS
BIXBY, OK 74008



Memories of Topeka. . . .



We remembered times past



We gathered for a picture



Dress of the 1800's



Listening to Bluegrass on the Oregon Trail



A visit to a Hero's Museum



Our Ship's Bell



Table for the Missing Sailor



**Relaxing in the Hospitality Suite
Topeka Home of Senator Bob Dole**



Our Sea Cadet Color Guard