

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 9, No. 4

November, 1998



Committee:

*John Reynolds, President; Dudley E. Cass, Secretary/Treasurer;
Al Jefferis, Assistant Secretary; Dudley Cass, Reunion 99 Chairman;
Jack Connery, Newsletter Editor; Ken Noble, Web Master.*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

If you missed the Boston Bash, let me give you six good reasons why you should have been there:

Baked halibut, shrimp, lobster, crab, oysters, scrod. What a place to wine and dine.

On board the USS CONSTITUTION we learned why they call the toilet the head.

Set sail for a harbor cruise. Saw The Old North Church from seaward and visited the place where Baka Hachi was decommissioned.

Took Paul Revere's ride in an air conditioned bus.

Opened the bar in the hospitality room. Spliced the mainbrace and kept it open until the last dog died.

Never, ever miss another reunion.

See you in Branson.

John Reynolds

TAPS

Bill Marx, RDSN (62-63), Owensboro, KY, June 7, 1997

NEW MEMBERS (SINCE JULY)

Joe Buonopane BTFN (65-67) Rockland, MA
Gayne Campbell YN3 (59-61) Montoursville, PA
Paul Williamson, Jr. FT2 (60-62) Hightstown, NJ
Calvin Ratcliffe BT2 (60-63) Franklin, MA
Charles Ryder, EN2 (61-63) Carson, CA
Richard Floyd CS3 (59-63) Enterprise, FL.

LAUGHLIN "MINI" FEB 28-MAR 1

Let's meet Sunday, February 28, and Monday, March 1, at Laughlin, Nevada. The Riverside Hotel (phone 800-227-3849) offers a package deal for the Eddy Arnold show (remember "Make the World Go Away," and he can still do the "Cattle Call").

Room for 2 for Sunday and Monday nights, plus 2 tickets to the Sunday 7:00 pm show is \$93 (VIP rate)

or \$83 (regular rate). The VIP rate gets you better seats for the show. Reservations for the package must be prepaid with a credit card. If you elect the VIP package, ask for seats at the Ruth Cass table.

Room only rates (no show tickets) are: River View \$29, Mountain View \$19. Bring your own snacks and drink for "Happy Hour" at the Cass's room Sun and Mon afternoon. Hope to see you in Laughlin!

Please contact Dudley or Ruth Cass if you are planning to go, if you are interested in golf Monday morning, and/or if you have questions.

WE ARE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB!!

Thanks to Ken Noble (60-62), the Association has entered the 90's and is on the World Wide Web. Take a look at our web page at www.usstopekaclg8.org.

Ken presented the idea to the Board of Advisors at their recent meeting and got an enthusiastic "go ahead" to proceed, and has been appointed WebMaster. There are still things to add to it, things to complete, but some things that you will find there soon include:

- History of the Association
- History of the ship
- History of other ships named Topeka
- News from the newsletter
- Reunion information, including registration forms
- Ship's Store items, prices and order forms
- Directory of members with e-mail addresses
- Methods to send e-mail to members and the Association

Take a look at our page, and if you haven't already, drop an e-mail to Ken thanking him for his efforts. If you don't have a computer and are not on the net, your grandchildren probably are. Get them to show you.

ABOUT BOSTON

Boston was great! Just great! Kudos to Jack and Eva Kehoe. If you were there, you know. If you weren't there, read the letters, look at the pictures. Everybody had a fantastic time, and nobody wanted to leave Sunday.

Wednesday, we went to one of Jack's favorite seafood restaurants. A small group of 15 turned into more than 40. We took over the restaurant and Jack taught us how to eat lobster, oysters and other seafood.

That set the scene. We had beautiful weather for the Boston harbor cruise. We walked the walk of patriots who founded this country more than 200 years ago. We remembered names like Concord and Lexington. We saw The Old North Church where the lantern, signalling Paul Revere, was displayed. We saw the Boston Market where vendors still sell their wares. And, we had lunch at the Harvard Faculty Club.

We had a great cocktail party and an even better banquet, where Captain Bill Ruhe rekindled many memories about our fine ship. We gathered at the Constitution for a picture then went on to see other Men of War from years past.

But most of all, we had the fellowship of old and new friends from years past. Friendships that are just as strong today, if not stronger. We also made new ones. We walked up and down memory lane, remembering and talking about those days when we gathered from all corners of the country to pursue a common goal - - take a fantastic ship to sea and fight it.

SHIP'S STORE REPORT

The following items are available in the ships store. These will make great Xmas gifts so order soon. Please add \$5.00 for shipping, except if ordering just the Boston group picture. If not there already, soon, an order form will be available on the web page.

- Adult shirts
 - Navy and Green, L, XL, 2XL \$22.00
 - White (on sale) 15.00
- Ball caps 8.00
- Key Chains 3.00
- Wine glasses/tumblers 4@ 12.00
- Topeka Jackets, size L, XL, XXL 35.00
- Ship's Plaque (new design, w/name) 30.00
- Cold drink holders 5.00
- Topeka scratch pads (5 pack) 5.00
- License Plate Holders 4.00
- Group picture at the Constitution (includes shipping) 8.00

MEET YOUR SHIPMATE

Nancy Ratcliffe, an administrative assistant for a computer software company, walked into the Sheraton Needham Hotel on August 19 to get things set up in a conference room for a seminar her company was having. She couldn't help but notice the number of people coming up and down the hall, and the noise level increasing just across the hall.

She went out into the hall for a break and noticed all these guys wearing USS Topeka ballcaps. That rang a bell. She remembered that the tattoo's on her husband's arm said "Topeka something." They had been married only 22 years so the USS Topeka didn't mean much to her.

When Calvin, her husband, got home from work that night the first thing she said was, "Honey, what ship were you on?"

"USS Topeka was my first one," he replied. "Why?"

"Well, you'd better get down to the Sheraton in Needham. They're having a reunion."



Calvin Ratcliffe could not get Nancy to move fast enough. He was there less than five minutes when he got connected with Ernie Kershaw, whom he had served with in B Division from 1960-63. The rest of the week was in "automatic."

"It was the greatest thing to see Ernie again, after all these years. And I really enjoyed seeing Wes King and 'Boats.' I had a fantastic time."

Calvin reported aboard in Brooklyn two days after commissioning in 1960 as a Fireman, right out of boot camp and was assigned to B Division. Kershaw was already there. He remained aboard until 1965 when he left as a BT2. It was Vietnam after that, then on another ship before he got out of the Navy in 1968.

Cal has lived in Franklin, Mass., near Boston, for a number of years and has worked for UPS for the past nine. "It was a great reunion, and what a surprise!" say Cal and Nancy. They are already talking about Branson. "I'll get out my cruisebooks and see what other old friends I can find."

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Three business meetings, including the general business meeting and two Board of Advisors meetings are covered below in the order of which they occurred:

Board of Advisors Meeting, August 19, Boston:

- John Keith Reported on the audit of Association financial records for the period 1990-1997. John reported that there was no indication of problems in tracking receipts and expenses. An area needing attention was detailing use of petty cash at reunions. He also made a suggestion that minutes of meetings authorizing expenditures be attached to financial records.
- Don Nellis reported the resignation of Tom Victory from the Board of Advisors because of his wife's health.
- Don Nellis recommended that the Association look into the feasibility of providing either the Friday night mixer or Banquet at no cost to the attendees. This will be studied.
- John Reynolds suggested that we look into establishing three regions within the Association (West, Central and East) with the idea of getting more people involved and facilitating better hosting of reunions.
- Jack Connery proposed that certain memorabilia donated to the Association be donated to the USS Topeka segment of the Combat Air Museum in Topeka, Kansas. Approved.
- Jack Connery reported on revision plans for the Baka Hachi, to be published for the 10th anniversary reunion in 2000.

General Membership Meeting, August 22, Boston.

- Treasurer's report showing total assets of \$17,883.29 was presented and approved. This included \$11,969 for payment for the Boston reunion.
- Membership report showed 880 in the data base, 762 on mailing list, 62 deceased, and 70 not active (bad address or chose not to be on mailing list). 306 have paid dues through 1998, 48 paying beyond 1998. 79 crewmembers at the reunion with a total of 152 members/guests at the banquet.
- Election of Officers: Don Nellis presented the present officers and Board of Advisors for reelection. There were no nominations from the floor. Present officers and board members were elected by acclamation.
- John Reynolds informed the membership that restructuring of the association by regions was being considered by the Board. A plan would be submitted to the next membership business meeting.

- 1999 Reunion Site: Sites presented included Branson, MO., New Orleans, LA, Tulsa, OK. Minneapolis, MN was scheduled to be presented, but the sponsor was not present so it was deleted. Branson was selected on the first vote. The motion was made and approved to hold the reunion during the first two weeks of August, 1999. Dudley Cass was appointed as Reunion Coordinator.
- Proposals for the 2000 reunion (West Coast). San Diego was nominated and will be sponsored by Dudley Cass. Long Beach was nominated and will be sponsored by Parky Parkhurst.
- Jack Connery presented the plan for revision of Baka Hachi and handed out guidelines for submissions. Submissions from all shipmates of "Your best Topeka story" for inclusion in this revision were encouraged.

Board of Advisors Meeting, October 31, San Diego

- The Boston reunion was critiqued. The consensus was that it was a good reunion. The tours and Saturday night banquet were excellent. Lessons learned will be incorporated into the reunion planning guide.
- Branson Reunion Planning. Dudley and Ruth Cass are looking at hotels and report that room rates will be about \$60. Attractive food prices and many good shows should make this a good reunion. Full details will be available in the February newsletter.
- Tom Eagling and Jerry Judge were appointed to membership on the Advisory Board.
- Web Site: The Board reviewed Ken Noble's first draft of a Topeka Web Page, and gave Ken the go ahead to proceed. Location of the new web page is WWW.usstopekaclg8.com.
- Regional organizations. The proposal for, and the reasons therefore, for restructuring the Association into three regions were discussed. The proposal was tabled for further study and will be discussed again at the April Board meeting.
- It was suggested that the Association encourage and assist with special local events, such as luncheons, picnics or other get-togethers in regional areas. A proposal for a San Diego/Long Beach picnic next summer was discussed. Don Nellis and Dudley and Ruth Cass will work on this.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Below is a list of those who attended the Boston reunion. If you weren't there, they are the ones you missed, along with all the good times we had. Fourteen shipmates attended a reunion for the first time. All had a lot of catching up to do, and wished they had been to reunions past. They are indicated by *. It's never too late to come to your first reunion. You will have catching up to do also, but it's fun. And we can almost guarantee that your first will not be your last.

We came from 29 states and the District of Columbia. Twenty four came all the way across country from California. Massachusetts was second with 7, followed by New York, Virginia, Florida and Michigan.

Dale Anderson, Forbes, MN	Norm Malmberg, Fort Jones, CA
Don Anderson, Woodbridge, VA	Donald McFarland, Winchester, VA
Mike Angulo, Spring Valley, CA	Don Nellis, San Diego, CA
Jesse Aragon, Anaheim, CA	Loy Nix, Flowery Branch, GA
Steve Archbold, Dix Hills, NY	Kenneth Noble, Louisville, CO
James Bennett, Bella Vista, AR*	Joe Nolan, Cumming, GA
Roger Beukema, Davisburg, MI	Charles Northrup, Palm Harbor, FL
Jack Bock, Jr., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA	Jim Ownby, El Cajon, CA
Robert Bond, New Braunfels, TX	"Parky" Parkhurst, Granada Hills, CA
James Boyd, Brighton, MI*	Larry Patriquin, Barrington, NH
Phillip Brooks, Cloverdale, CA	Jerry Pennington, Fallbrook, CA
Joe Buonopane, Rockland, MA*	Joe Peragine, San Diego, CA
Thomas Bussell, Mogadore, OH*	Jim Pflieger, Ft. Loudon, PA
Parker Butcher, Shenandoah, IA	Gale Pfund, San Francisco, CA
Bill Carver, Des Moines, IA	Richard Ramsey, Lutz, FL
Dudley Cass, Bonita, CA	Calvin Ratcliffe, Franklin, MA*
Jack Connery, Bixby, OK	John Reynolds, Redondo Beach, CA
Jerry Craig, Cartersville, GA	Russ Richards, Apple Valley, CA
Dale Crandall, Petersburg, NY	Isaac Roberts, Hixson, TN
Jim Curtin, Hinsdale, IL*	Dave Roderer, Washington, DC*
Tom Eagling, Tucson, AZ	Paul Ruby, San Francisco, CA
Mike Faber, Centralia, WA	William Ruhe, McLean, VA
Don Grady, Mechanicsville, VA	Richard Sampson, Plymouth, MA*
George Grupe, Marlboro, NJ	Robert Schramm, Orange, CA
Edward Hewitt, Brigantine, NJ	Austin Schroder, Smith, NV
Tom Hoard, Ithaca, NY	Andre Seaton, Tarzana, CA
Norbert Howe, Lakewood, CA	LeRoy Servin, Apache Junction, AZ
Fred Howes, Scarborough, ME	Alonzo Simmerman, Lodi, CA
Jerry Judge, Chula Vista, CA	Ronald Smart, Turlock, CA
John Keepper, Lake Bluff, IL	Ray Spatz, South Hempstead, NY
John Kehoe, Wellesley, MA	Jimmy Starr, Topeka, KS
John Keith, Portland, OR	Jack Timmons, San Diego, CA
Ernest Kershaw, Melrose, NY	Leonard Van Gemert, Myakka City, FL
Weslie King, Springfield, VA*	Ernesto Villamil, Annapolis, MD
Sid Knowlton, Lynn, MA*	Richard "Dick" Walker, Mendon, MI
Art Krohnert, Philadelphia, PA*	Richard Wallace, Halifax, MA*
Terry LeBar, Haverhill, MA*	Doug Weeks, Canastota, NY
Mike Leahy, Fraser, MI	Egon Werdelman, San Diego, CA
Lewis Loudon, Omaha, NE*	Willie Williamson, San Diego, CA
James Mahoney, Palm Harbor, FL	Dillon Wooten, Goldsboro, NC

IT'S BRANSON FOR REUNION 99

In 1999, we go to Branson, MO August 11-14 for our annual reunion. Put those dates on your calendar now. What is Branson? Where is it?

These and many more are questions on the minds of people on the Left and Right Coasts. There are people out there who will tell you that Branson is the new Mecca for country and western entertainment and will replace Nashville. Others say it has all the flair of Las Vegas, without the gambling.

Branson is a little community nestled in the Ozark Mountains of southwest Missouri, 35 miles south of Springfield. It has flourished over the years into a major world class and tourist entertainment center with many vacation hotels, entertainment shows morning, afternoon and night, and it presents all the trappings of a good time.

Branson isn't just country music! Although it is commonly known as the country music capitol of the world, it is really America's Live Entertainment Capitol, and among its residents are some of the biggest names in contemporary music. Country, pop, gospel, bluegrass, western, rock 'n' roll, classical, jazz, and Broadway style - Branson has it all! If you like '50s-'60s-'70s music, you'll love Branson!

Three dozen theaters feature entertainers such as Andy Williams, Bobby Vinton, Mel Tillis, Roy Clark, the Osmonds, Mickey Gilley, Box Car Willie, The Lennon Brothers (and Sisters) from the Lawrence Welk show, Shoji Tabuchi.

The Springfield airport has air service through Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Kansas City, Memphis, and St. Louis on American, United, US Air, Northwestern, and TWA airlines. Ground transportation, including rental cars, is available.

Reunion costs will be a bargain. The prices are right! Hotel rooms will run about \$60 and food prices are much less than we've paid in the past.

See you in Branson

LETTERS

Dear Ed:

We had another great time at the reunion. Boston was very interesting, especially the historical sites. Being a history buff, I was particularly excited by Concord, Lexington and Old Ironsides. I was really pleased to see four new (never been to a reunion) radarmen attend this year - - guys I worked with in '63 and '64. We really had a lot to talk about. Leanne and I are looking forward to Branson and seeing all of you again.

Jerry and Leanne Pennington (63-64)

Dear Ed:

Glad to hear all had a good time in Boston. I would have loved to come, but it just was not a good time for me at work. Too busy to take off and all that. Maybe I'll make the next one. It would be nice if we could get a group picture.

Ben Billings (63-64)

Ed. Note: We've got pictures this year. See the Ship's Store list.

Dear Ed:

What a great time we had in Boston. We extended our stay and enjoyed whale watching on Martha's Vineyard and the Titanic Artifact Exhibition. Kudos to Jack and Eva Kehoe. They did an excellent job and are probably still recuperating. We are already making plans for next year so we can continue to get to know everyone better.

While we're at it, we'd like to express our thanks to the officers of the association who keep it going and who put in the time and effort to make it function so well. Looking forward to seeing everyone next year.

Mike and Debby Leahy (66-69)

Dear Ed:

I want to thank all of the people who worked on the Boston reunion for making it such a success. Also, thanks to Sid Knowlton for sharing his video and music with all of us. It was quite a show.

After the morning tour of Lexington and Concord, Jim Boyd, Art (Crunch) Krohnert, Lew Loudin and I decided to have lunch at this Olde Tavern, circa 1850. It was quite a lunch, sea stories and all.

Afterward, we decided to take a walk around the market area. Since I was with my old shipmates, it was like being in a "time tunnel." In many ways, it felt like we were on liberty again - - Hong Kong, Kowloon, Subic or one of those many places in Japan - - take your pick. This in itself, made the entire trip for me. Thanks again.

Tom Bussell (63-66)

Ed Note: Tom. That's what we are all about.

Dear Ed:

Sorry I could not be with you in Boston. Being so close, I had really been looking forward to seeing old shipmates. My son got married in Florida on August 22 so was unable to be there.

After leaving Topeka in Boston in 1969 I made another Med trip on a DDG out of Norfolk then got out of the Navy. Later, I came back into the Coast Guard. Stationed on the east coast, I retired in 1988.

Donald "Lurch" Akers (67-69)

Dear Ed:

Have thought of Topeka many times over the years, but would have never dreamed I would be sending e-mail to my boss on Veterans Day, 1998. Think of the guys often and have run into a few, Tom Lascano and Paul Hulette to mention a couple.

Star Trek is coming on soon, and somehow, I can picture the Topeka Wardroom getting quiet to watch it when the series first began. I think Captain Montgomery was a fan and that's why most JO's watched the program.

Bob Baron (66-68)

Dear Ed:

We just couldn't get enough Navy in Boston. On the way home we stopped at Buffalo and went to Marine Park. There are three ships there - - a destroyer, a submarine and the cruiser Little Rock.

From the main deck up, there is little resemblance between Topeka and Little Rock. But below decks, the configuration is about the same. It was spooky how well I knew my way around the ship. When we got to the galley, I could almost see Ray Spatz pulling a tray of cherry cobbler from the oven.

Buffalo is a great town and not far from Niagara Falls. Would be a good site for a future reunion.

Dick and Joanne Walker (66-68)

USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)
Reunion Association Newsletter
c/o Jack Connery
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NAMES/TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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1999 Reunion Coordinator

Dudley Cass. See Above.

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USS Topeka Website

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