

# USS TOPEKA CLG-8

## Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 10, No. 2

May, 1999



### 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

#### It is time to relieve the watch:

It was over ten years ago when the group in San Diego met to talk about a USS Topeka Reunion. Many reunions have come and gone since then and we still have, basically, the same group of Southern California people running the show. At the last board meeting, this subject was talked about at great length. Mainly, the conversation centered around how to get some of the other members across the country involved in sharing some of the leadership duties in the association.

This will be Dudley Cass's last year as secretary/treasurer. At the membership meeting in Branson, Dudley will be replaced. He has had this job since day one and is now asking to be relieved. If there is anyone out there who would like to fill these big shoes please let us hear from you. You can send that information to Don Nellis, Dudley Cass or myself. Anyone interested in any of the other leadership jobs please let the Don know ASAP. Don is chairman of the nominating committee and needs that information soon so he can get prepare a slate of nominees ready for the Branson membership meeting.

Ruth and Dudley have done a great job lining things up in Branson. This year's reunion will be a great one. Please don't miss it. Come have a good time and get involved in the running of our fine association.

John Reynolds

### BINNACLE LIST

James Bond (YN3 64-67), recuperating from a serious auto-pedestrian accident, at James Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, Fla. 813-631-6181.

### NEW MEMBERS

Andy Cutbirth, YN3 (61-64), Springfield, MO  
Pete Reifsnnyder, LTJG (61-62), Wilton, CT  
Gerald Fullerton, SN (59-63), Fountain Valley, CA  
Benjamin Begin, GMG2 (61-65), St. Francis, ME  
John Cox MM3, (63-65), Richland, WA  
Michael Providence, YN3 (63-66), Fairport, NY  
Russell Stamper, FT1 (59-61), Apopka, FL  
Lamar Johnson, FTM2 (64-68), Beaverton, OR  
Raymond Saunders, MM3 (60-63), San Diego, CA  
Tom Fitzsimmons, SN (67-69), New York, NY  
John Courtney, MM3 (59-62), Charlotte, NC  
Ronald Cooler (68-69), Crestview, FL  
Emory Smith, FTG2 (62-65), Manteca, CA

### INTERESTED IN FIVE-YEAR DUES?

Members have inquired about paying dues less frequently. At the most recent meeting of the Advisory Board, the option of paying \$60 for five years of dues was approved, effective immediately. This is a savings of \$15 over the 5 year period for the member. Members choosing this option would receive the updated Member Directory at the first of each calendar year. Your newsletter mailing label will continue to tell you your dues-paid status.

## REUNION SCHEDULE

### Wednesday, Aug 11.

- Complimentary Continental Breakfast 7-9 a.m.
- Van service available daily from 7 a.m. to midnight. Vans will be dispatched from hospitality room by the "watch". For return transportation to the hotel, call the hospitality room. A van will be dispatched to pick you up.
- 3 Van runs to Springfield airport on Wednesday: Vans will leave airport for Branson at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m.
- Open day for visiting, shopping, whatever.
- Hospitality room opens at 9 a.m. on Wednesday. Snacks, beverages (alcoholic, non-alcoholic, coffee, etc.) available.  
Check-in for new arrivals.  
Ships store will be set up.  
Lunch time snacks.
- Group setup for Mickey Gilley show (at 8 p.m.). Leave hotel for Mickey Gilley restaurant at 5:15 p.m., then walk to theater after eating. Return to hotel approx. 10 p.m.
- Individuals desiring other shows, make own reservations, buy own tickets (from ticket outlet at hotel); van will be available to transport individuals to shows, will pick them up after show when they phone for pickup.

### Thursday, Aug 12.

- Local van service available as on Wednesday.
- Hospitality room as described above.
- Golf (to be arranged).
- Group setup for Bobby Vinton show at 3 p.m. Group will walk up hill to theater (1/2 block from hotel) Van can transport those who can't walk up the hill. Leave hotel 2:00 p.m. for show.

### Thursday, Aug 12 (Contd.)

- Group setup for Shoji Tabuchi show at 8 p.m. Vans will leave hotel at 5 p.m. to go to Paradise Grill for dinner, then walk (across parking lot) to theater after dinner. Return to hotel approx 10:30 p.m.
- Individuals desiring other shows, manage as above.

### Friday, Aug 13.

- Van service and hospitality room as above.
- Golf (to be arranged).
- Group setup for Roy Clark lunch show at 1 p.m. Leave hotel at 11 a.m. for Loew's theater restaurant - eat at 12 noon. Show starts at 1 p.m.
- Cocktail party at 5 p.m. No-host bar. Buffet dinner (salads, chicken, roast beef, beef in sauce, lasagna, vegetables, cherry cobbler, beverages).

### Saturday, Aug 14.

- Van service and hospitality room as above.
- Meeting of Advisory Board 7:30 a.m.
- Group pictures at 9 a.m. at hotel. (Men, women, men & women). Photographer will take orders, 8x10 color prints (\$8 each) will be delivered at banquet Saturday p.m.
- Business meeting following group pictures.
- Banquet. No-host bar 6 p.m. Meal at 7 p.m. Color guard will present colors. Prime Rib, Scallops in wine-sauce in pastry shell. Vegetables. Dessert. beverages. 4 wines to be served.

### Sunday, Aug 15

- Vans to Springfield Airport. Times 7 a.m., 11 a.m. (departure from hotel).

\* \* \* \* \*

## IN BRANSON ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 10?

Several shipmates have said they will be in Branson by Tuesday evening, and would be interested in seeing the 7 p.m. Andy Williams Show. If you would like to join the group, make a note on your reunion registration form to let us know. And please contact Ruth or Dudley Cass at the reunion hotel by Tuesday afternoon. We will try to setup a block of seats at the theater, and restaurant arrangements for a early dinner before the show.

## MICHIGAN, OHIO INDIANA SHIPMATES

Want a ride to Branson? How about on a chartered 45-foot touring coach, with other shipmates and their wives? Sounds like a pre and post reunion party.

Shipmate Dick Walker will charter a bus from the Coldwater, MI area, on the Michigan-Ohio-Indiana border, if there is enough interest. The bus would depart Coldwater Tuesday night and return early Monday morning. Cost would be about \$95.00. If this sounds like a way to go, contact Dick at 28964 Jacksonburg Rd., Mendon, MI 49072 by June 15. Telephone 616-496-7730. You can also email him at <leidyk@net-link.net>

## LETTERS

Dear Former Crew Members of USS Topeka:

Just to let you know that the former Light Cruiser Oklahoma City slipped quietly beneath the Pacific Ocean near the Marianas Islands after four days of bombardment during Navy training exercises in March.

One thing I would like remind all Topeka crewmen is that Topeka and Oklahoma City spent a lot of time together from their beginnings in 1944 and through the end of World War II. They were some of the last Cleveland Class cruisers to be built.

They went through shakedown training together, traversed the Panama Canal together, and sailed to the war in the Western Pacific together. While there, they operated together and even sailed within 55 miles of Tokyo while doing shore bombardments on the Japanese homeland in the area of Nojima Cape. This working relationship continued later during the Vietnam War.

In view of the close working relationships between the two ships, I would suggest that we consider having a joint reunion sometime. The old guys from WWII have mentioned Topeka at times; however, I know there exists a definite separation of the old from the new in your organization. Maybe it's time to reconcile. Who knows?

John Baker

President, USS Oklahoma City Reunion Association

## FROM THE EDITOR

The reunion at Branson, our 10<sup>th</sup>, will be a very important one to the future of our association. You saw in "From the President" that Dudley will not run again for Secretary/Treasurer. We will have to replace him and those are surely big shoes to fill.

I also hear through the grapevine that others may bow out. I know that Don Nellis has not been well, and I think he may want a rest. There may be others.

Come to the reunion prepared to have a good time. Come also to help in the process of selecting the next generation of officers.

## TO ALL VETERANS

We have been informed that the following was published in Navy Times and the Colorado Elks News (Courtesy Roger Lauer, PH3 (61-65).

A bill was recently passed by Congress entitling veterans to a dividend on the SGLI insurance they had while in service. Both current and former military personnel are entitled to this dividend regardless of whether or not they still carry the insurance. If you are eligible, you will not receive a dividend unless you ask for it. The Veterans Administration will review each individual case and determine eligibility. A general schedule of dividends earned is as follows:

2 years of service:	\$261.00
3 years of service:	\$391.00
4 years if service:	\$528.00

To apply for the dividend, write to the Veterans Center, P.O. Box 8079, Philadelphia, PA, 19101. Include your name, address, GI insurance number (if known), branch of service, date of birth, and dates of military service. Include a copy of your DD 214 if possible

## SHIP'S STORE REPORT

The following items are available in the ships store. Please add \$5.00 for shipping. Save shipping charges by purchasing in Branson. If you are on the internet, there is an order form on the Topeka web site.

The Topeka note pads are great for honeydo lists, telephone notes, and shopping lists. Be the only one in town to have them.

The license plate covers are a great way to let people know you were on Topeka.

It is time for mowing again. You'll need one of those insulated holders to keep the beer cold.

- Adult shirts Navy and Green, L,XL,2XL \$25.00  
White (on sale) 15.00
- Ball caps 10.00
- 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 note pads (5 pack) 5.00
- License Plate Holders 4.00

### MOVING? MOVED? WAS YOUR NEWSLETTER FORWARDED?

Then drop a card to Dudley Cass and let him know your new address.

## NAMES/TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Chairman, Board of Advisors

Don Nellis, 12735 Abra Dr., San Diego, Cal., 92128,  
Telephone 619-487-4595.

### President

John Reynolds, 916 Esplanade, # 107, Redondo  
Beach, Cal., 90266, Telephone 310-540-7817.

### Secretary-Treasurer

Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, CA,  
91902, 619-267-3123, Email: BonitaRCDC@aol.com

### 1999 Reunion Coordinator

Dudley Cass. See Above.

### Newsletter Editor

Jack Connery, 9814 E. 83<sup>rd</sup> Pl., Tulsa, Ok., 74133,  
918-459-8918; Fax 918-459-9758; E-mail JJConn@AOL.com

### Ship's Store

Jill Connery, 9814 E. 83<sup>rd</sup> Pl., Tulsa, Ok., 74133,  
918-459-8918; Fax 918-459-9758; E-mail JJConn@AOL.com

### Web Master

Ken Noble, 613 Fairfield Ln., Louisville, Co., 80027,  
303-665-7468, E-mail: kennoble@bwn.net

### USS Topeka Website

<http://www.usstopekacig8.org>

## WHICH SERVICE IS BEST

A soldier, a marine, and an airman, got into a fight about which service is best. The fight was so heated, that they killed each other. Soon they found themselves in Heaven. They see St. Peter walk by and ask him: "Which Branch of Service is the best?"

St. Peter replied, "I can't answer that. But, I will ask God what he thinks the next time I see him."

Some time later the three see St. Peter again and ask him if he was able to find the answer.

Suddenly, a dove landed on St. Peter's shoulder. The dove was carrying a note in it's beak. St. Peter opened the note and read it out loud to the three fellows:

Gentlemen: All the Branches of the Service are 'Honorable and Noble'. Each one of you has served your country well. Be proud of that.

Signed,  
GOD, USN (Ret.)

**USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)**  
**Reunion Association Newsletter**  
**c/o Jack Connery**  
**9814 E. 83<sup>rd</sup> Pl.**  
**Tulsa, Ok74133**



## Branson Reunion Highlights.

### **Branson Grand Ramada Hotel.**

At 245 Wildwood Drive, Branson, MO 65616. Just down the hill from the Bobby Vinton Theater. Phone: (417) 336-6646 or (800) 850-6646. \$60 (plus 11% tax) per night. Rooms have King-size bed, or two double beds. Rate good 3 days before and after the reunion. Non-smoking floors 1-6, smoking floors 7 and 8, Chef K restaurant/bar/banquet rooms on ninth floor. Ticket outlet off main lobby. Swimming pool. Laundry. Complimentary Continental breakfast 7-9 a.m. each morning. **Make your own reservations. Deadline for reservations at our room rate is July 28, 1999. Be sure to tell them you are with TOPEKA Reunion.**

### **Show Arrangements.**

- Block reservations have been made for 4 shows: **Wednesday 8 p.m. Mickey Gilley**, 55 seats; **Thursday 3 p.m. Bobby Vinton**, 65 seats; **Thursday 8 p.m. Shoji Tabuchi**, 75 seats; and **Friday 1 p.m. Roy Clark Lunch show**, 55 seats. The number of seats may be increased or decreased if necessary. Tickets for these shows must be prepaid with the reunion registration. Group rate tickets require that all attending arrive at the theater in one group. Individual tickets will not be provided.
- **Mickey Gilley Show.** Wednesday, 8 p.m. Group rate (20 or more) \$16. Depart hotel by van at 5:15 p.m. to Gilley's Texas Cafe for dinner. Walk across parking lot after dinner to theater. Two hour show filled with Southern charm, honky-tonk piano, occasional jokes, and medleys of #1 country hits such as "Room Full of Roses" and "Stand by Me". Steel-guitarist Joey Riley is featured. Mickey and Joey will sign autographs for you.
- **Bobby Vinton Show.** Thursday, 3 p.m. Group rate \$21. Theater 1/2 block up hill from hotel. Van will take those who can't walk up the hill. Leave hotel, as group, for theater at 2 p.m. The show is touted as Branson's premier variety show, features the Glenn Miller Orchestra, showcases music of the '60s and '70s, and Vinton hits such as "Roses are Red", "Blue on Blue", and "Mr. Lonely".
- **Shoji Tabuchi Show.** Thursday, 8 p.m. Group rate \$27. Depart hotel by van at 5 p.m. to Paradise Grill restaurant for a buffet dinner. After dinner, walk across the parking lot to the theater. Shoji's show features some of the finest "fiddle music" ever heard, and is noted for its terrific music and awe-inspiring costumes, lighting, and special effects. The show includes country, bluegrass, western swing, Cajun, classical and jazz music. Shoji's wife and daughter are included in the show. It's the show that many consider to be Branson's best, by an amazingly talented family with spirits to match.
- **Roy Clark Lunch Show.** Friday, 1 p.m. Group rate \$33 (includes lunch). Depart hotel by van 11 a.m. to Loew's Theater Restaurant. Eat at noon. Show starts at 1 p.m. Roy Clark's elfin grin, high good humor, lightning virtuosity on guitar and fiddle, and generous, effusive spirit have made him a huge star the world over. He is probably best known for his 25 years hosting the TV show "Hee Haw." His talent has earned him rewards such as "Entertainer of the Year," "Country Music Star of the Year," "Instrumentalist of the Year," and "Picker of the Year." From pure country music to classic guitar music, no one can pick it better than Roy!
- Some members indicated they wanted to see the Box Car Willie and Ferlin Husky shows. So did we. Box Car Willie died recently. Ferlin Husky has stopped his performances for health reasons. Sorry.

Tickets, reservations, etc., for other shows will be the responsibility of the individual desiring those shows. For many of the Branson shows, reservations may be made in advance by phone (417) 332-1649, or tickets may be purchased, after arrival, at the ticket outlet at the Reunion hotel.

### Van Services.

Two 27-passenger vans will be available from 7 a.m. - Midnight Wednesday through Saturday. They will be used to transport reunion attendees from the hotel to any Branson area location for shows, amusement parks, restaurants, golf courses etc. They will be dispatched from the hospitality room. Ready to return to the hotel? - just call the hospitality room dispatcher, and he will dispatch the next available van to pick you up. These vans will also be used for airport runs on Wednesday, and Sunday morning.

### Airport Transportation.

- There is no scheduled ground transportation from the Springfield airport to Branson.
- Car rentals (Hertz, Avis, Budget, National, others) are available at the airport.
- Taxis are available at \$75 (for one way trip) to take 1-4 people to Branson.
- Individual van transportation may be arranged (by advance prepaid reservation) with C&D Tours, Inc. The cost is \$45 round-trip per person. The reservation form is included in the reunion registration package.
- The TOPEKA Reunion vans described above will make 3 trips on Wednesday to pick up Reunion arrivals. The times (departure time from the airport) are 11 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m. The vans will take departures from the hotel Sunday morning at 7 a.m. and at 11 a.m. Please schedule your arrivals on Wednesday, and departure on Sunday to take advantage of these van services. MAKE SURE YOU PROVIDE YOUR AIRLINE/FLIGHT NUMBER, AND ARRIVAL/DÉPARTURE TIMES ON THE REUNION REGISTRATION FORM, IF YOU DESIRE TO USE OUR VANS.

### **OTHER BRANSON ATTRACTIONS.**

**Other Shows.** Information on all the other shows will be available in the Hospitality Room. There are too many shows to try to name them all in this newsletter. If you have access to Internet, try the web site [www.BransonWorld.com](http://www.BransonWorld.com). If you would like complete information by mail, call Action Publications in Springfield, Mo at (417) 886-8669 and ask for a copy of their Branson Getaway Guide. Lot's of information on everything in Branson.

**What's in Branson for the Kids?** Water parks and theme parks, go-carts and mini-golf, boating and wave running, museums and art galleries, helicopter rides and train rides, fishing and swimming, and cave tours. There are plenty of things to do besides shows in Branson! But even the shows are great for them, too. There are no shows "not suitable for children" in Branson, and it's highly likely the younger ones will be laughing and clapping right along with you at the shows you/they pick. Shows offer discounted tickets, and many let them in for no charge at all.

**Shopping, Anyone?** Rumors that some of the ladies might be interested in shopping. There are several outlet malls. One of them, the Tanger Mall, is a block away from the hotel (and downhill!). Antique shops are in the downtown Branson area. Souvenir and craft shops are aplenty. The Ozarks are known for their quilts. There's a Quilts & Quilts store; and hand-crafted quilts at Brier Rose. There's even an Ernest Tubbs Record Shop for those hard to find records.

**Bass Pro Shop.** People come from all over the country to see the this 300,000 square feet complex containing everything for outdoors "sports". Fishing, hunting, camping, boating, RVing, all around the indoor "outdoors" exhibits which include waterfalls, ponds with live fish and ducks, a saltwater aquarium, and exhibits with antique rods, reels, lures, and even boats. About 30 miles away in Springfield, Mo.

**Golfing.** Bring your clubs to Branson. There are 11 golf courses in the Branson area. John Reynolds is going to choose one for the tee times on Thursday and Friday morning, but you may be interested in checking out the others while you're here. For more information on the courses, check the web site named above, or call Action Publications (417) 886-8669 for a copy of their Branson Getaway.

**Branson RV Facilities.** Our February newsletter contained complete info. Refer to it for locations, costs, phone numbers.

Reunion Registration

USS TOPEKA CLG-8 REUNION Branson, Missouri, August 11-15, 1999

Please fill in this Registration form and mail with check by July 5, 1999.

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

Staying at the Grand Ramada Hotel ? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Flying into Springfield? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes; Flight info: Arrival date/time \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date/time \_\_\_\_\_

Person to Contact in case of emergency - \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any Handicap requirements, or special Dietary requirements - \_\_\_\_\_

For those who have not previously received permanent nametags, name(s) (first,last) you would like on the nametag(s). \_\_\_\_\_

REUNION FEE: For Adults, the Reunion Fee will be \$85 per person for the four days, which includes the cost of the Hospitality Room, The Friday night Cocktail party/buffet, and the Saturday night banquet. For those not attending all four days: No charge for Wednesday, \$15 for Thursday, \$30 for Friday, \$40 for Saturday. For children attending the banquet: \$10 12 years and younger; \$18 for teenagers - there is no charge for children not attending the banquet.

<u>Days Attending</u>	<u>Number Attending</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Cost</u>
All Four Days	_____	\$85	_____
Not all Four Days			
Wednesday	_____	\$0	_____
Thursday	_____	\$15	_____
Friday	_____	\$30	_____
Saturday	_____	\$40	_____
Children at Banquet	_____	\$10	_____
Teenagers at Banquet	_____	\$18	_____
	Reunion Fee Total		_____

BANQUET ENTREE CHOICES (give number)

Prime Rib \_\_\_\_\_ Scallops \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_

For children (12 and younger)

Hamburger/fries \_\_\_\_\_ Cheeseburger/fries \_\_\_\_\_

GOLF/TOURS

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Golf (tee time AM (TBD) Thursday)	_____	TBD	_____
Golf (tee time AM (TBD) Friday)	_____	TBD	_____
Show "A" - Mickey Gilley Wed. pm	_____	\$16*	_____
Show "B" - Bobby Vinton Thu. afternoon	_____	\$21*	_____
Show "C" - Shoji Tabuchi Thu. pm	_____	\$27*	_____
Show "D" - Roy Clark lunch/show Fri.	_____	\$33*	_____

\*Note: Prices shown are group rates. Prices are higher if we don't have 20 or more, and the difference will be collected in Branson.

Shows Cost Total \_\_\_\_\_

REUNION FEE AND TOURS COST TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt of Payment Deadline for Reunion Fee/Shows Cost is July 10, 1999. Make checks payable to TOPEKA Reunion Assn., and mail to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, CA 91902.

**PRIVATE VAN TRANSPORTATION FROM/TO SPRINGFIELD AIRPORT.**

To reserve your own van transportation from/to the Springfield Airport, Fill out and Mail the form below, with payment, to the address shown on the form.

Springfield/Branson  
Airport Shuttle Service

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight Information

Flight # \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$45.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Total

We accept visa, master card, discover or personal checks.

Please fill out the information above and send payment to:

C & D/ Creative Tours & Reservations  
P.O. Box 1004  
Branson, MO 65615  
Attention: Cindy Humphries