

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 27, No. 3

November 2016

Officers:

Dan Moore, Chairman, Board of Directors; Dan Moore, President;

Gary Baker, Secretary-Treasurer;

Al Gustafson 2017 Reunion Chairman;

Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor; Gary Baker, Web Master;

Pat Baker, Ships Store



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all. As I write this morning I can't help but think about our friends and shipmates on the East coast. I know this letter will come out well after Hurricane Matthew moves on. Not going to say much about Sedona other than if you missed it, **it was spectacular**. It was your loss. Ruth Judge and her "groupies", (Barb, Gilby and Claudia), put together a great event. I'm already looking forward to Buffalo next September. Al and Catherine Gustafson are hosting us and have some great attractions planned for us. There will be more to come later, but in the meantime, save your pennies and mark your calendar for September 17th. We are increasing our effort to attract new members and increase the attendance at our reunions. We need **YOUR** help. Look up a former shipmate and invite them to Buffalo. Gary and Kathy are going to expand circulation of this newsletter to many who haven't paid dues and attempt to get them back on board. Future reunions will be determined by future attendance.

Again, a special thank you to Gary Baker as Secretary/treasurer, for all the hard work he puts in keeping our records straight. Also Kathy Spatz for publishing our newsletter.

A thought for you to keep in mind: "In wine there is Wisdom, in beer there is Freedom, and in water, there is Bacteria".

Dan

NEW MEMBERS (SINCE July 2016)

Lyle Walden HM2 64-65

Richard Tucker CPL 66-67

Marvin Soderquist LCPL 66-68

(Posthumous Registration)

Allen R. Lyman PFC 66-68

(Posthumous Registration)

TAPS

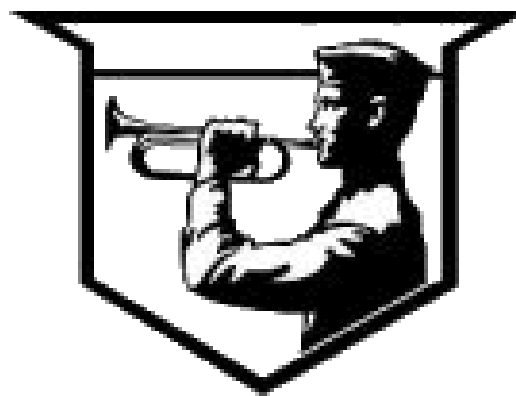
Jesse Aragon BM1 59-62

Lannie Conn LCDR 62-63

Clyde R. Baumgardner LTJG 60-61

John S. Woodard YN3 59-62

Egon H. Werdelman CDR 60-61



USS TOPEKA 27TH ANNUAL REUNION

Who Came to Sedona?

Pat and Gary Baker
David and Kathryn Berg
Phil and Susan Brooks
Jerry Craig
Jay and Tana Davis
Charlie and Jill Deering
Catherine and Al Gustafson
James and Peggy Henslee
Harvey and Susan Hershkowitz
Arnold and Marion Hoel
Ruth Judge and her Posse (Barbara, Claudia and Gilby)
Cal and Joan Ladd
Sharon and Dan Moore
Robby and Bell Robbins
Kathy and Ray Spatz
Chris and Mike Thompson
Jean Timmons and Sandi Calabough
Mike and Susan Wandschneider
John and Bridgett Woolston



REUNION RECAP

Ruth Judge was our host for the Sedona reunion, capably assisted by her 'Posse' Barb Jensen, Gilby Steel, and Claudia Hedrick. They all went above and beyond to be sure we had a great time! We were at the tail end of the monsoon season and had warm weather, but with a few showers



Our hospitality room opened up on the golf course, and was only a few steps from a fire pit with a huge semi-circular sofa around it. The room also had a kitchen and wet bar.

We had Red Rocks Magic Trolley give us a tour of Sedona and the beautiful surrounding area on Monday. Some highlights were a visit to Chapel of the Holy Cross, built into the red rocks, with a great view overlooking Sedona.

Just before lunch we stopped at the Sedona firehouse which had a 9/11 Memorial with a beam salvaged from the World Trade Center. Ray Spatz presented the firemen on duty with a few mementos from the NYFD.

Tuesday took us to Fort Verde State Park, where a park ranger, and a volunteer in period uniform, showed us through the fort with a running commentary of life in an 1880's isolated military post.

In the afternoon we visited the very interesting cliff dwellings at Montezuma's Castle National monument.

Ruth Judge was our tour guide on Wednesday as we visited the historic mountain-side town of Jerome with its Mining Museum, and nearby Clarksdale.

Ruth lived in both Clarksdale and Jerome, so she had a wealth of knowledge of the area that she shared with us. We ate lunch at a little cafe in Jerome called the Mile High Grill which was indeed at an elevation of 5280 feet!

USS TOPEKA 28TH ANNUAL REUNION

Reunion Dates:

**Monday, September 18, 2017 through
Thursday, September 21, 2017**



Al (Gus) and Cathy Gustafson are our hosts for the 2017 reunion. They are long-time residents of Buffalo, so have an intimate knowledge of the Buffalo area and it's attractions. Gus may be contacted at Gus127@verizon.net or 716-648-5960 for any questions or information.

Our hotel is the beautiful newly-renovated Buffalo Millennium Hotel.

Hotel amenities include free parking, free wireless internet, complimentary shuttle to and from Buffalo Niagara International Airport, and within a 2-mile radius of the hotel. Walden Galleria Mall is a two-minute walk from the hotel and has 200 shops including many eateries. There are also several restaurants very close to the hotel.

Room rates are \$117.00 per night for a Deluxe Room, \$127 for a Deluxe Courtyard Room, and \$199 for a Suite. All rooms are subject to a 13.75% tax. Parking at the hotel is complimentary. The group rate will apply for two days before and after the reunion.

Reservations must be made no later than August 4, 2017. After that date the room block will be released and there is no guarantee you will be able to book a room. **Please** make your

reservations as soon as you can. We have to let the hotel know 60 days before our arrival date if we can't make our room night commitment. Otherwise we'll be liable for penalties. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel reservation line at 1-800-323-3331. Be sure to ask for the USS Topeka Reunion group rate. The Courtyard and Suite rooms are based on availability, so make reservations for these rooms extremely early.

For early arrivals the hospitality room will be opened Sunday afternoon, September 17, at no extra charge.

Agent Orange Update

As of June 2016, Senate Bill (S681), with 47 sponsors, and the House Bill (HR 969), with 336 sponsors, still needs additional support before they can be approved.

As of August, 2016 HR969 was being held in committee by representative Jeff Miller (R FL), because he had stated he doesn't believe the science supports any blue water navy exposure.

S681) is also being held in committee by Senator Johnny Isakson (R GA) because he doesn't believe the legislation can be paid for.

In September, 2016, Congress returned from their recess. We need to once again attempt to convince the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees that this legislation needs to be completed by the end of this 114th congressional session.

Take action! Write or e-mail your Congressmen to support our Vietnam Blue Water Navy Bills, HR969 and S681. This link will give you their contact information:
<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials/>.

If you are ill due to your time in Vietnam, file a claim so it's on record if the Blue Water Navy Bills are passed.

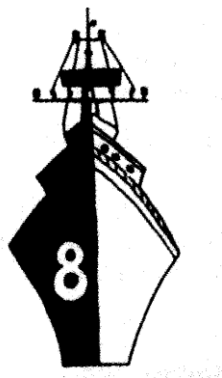
Keep informed! Here's a link that will give you the current status of both HR969 and S681:
<https://www.congress.gov>. Click on 'Legislation' and enter the bill number in the search field.

Urge all your friends and military acquaintances to help support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015

USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION

C/O Gary Baker
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TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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SHIP'S STORE

All clothing items have been discontinued. The store will continue to stock ball caps, lapel pins, jacket patches, and license plate frames.

The ship's store is managed by Pat Baker. Her contact information is on the ship's store page of the website and the address page of the newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Our dues-paying membership has risen a bit, as of October, we have 212 members whose dues are paid through 2016 and beyond.

Past dues are forgiven, so any dues received now are applied to 2017. Dues are \$20 annually or \$80 for five years.



