



**Officers:**

**Dan Moore, Chairman, Board of Directors; Dan Moore, President;**  
**Gary Baker, Secretary-Treasurer;**  
**Gary and Pat Baker 2019 Reunion Chairman;**  
**Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor; Gary Baker, Web Master;**  
**Pat Baker, Ships Store**

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Well, as I sit to write this article for the current newsletter, I can't help wonder where the past few months have gone. (and the years).

We are now only a little over three months 'til our reunion in Rapid City. Pat Baker has some good stuff lined up for us.

If at all possible, PLEASE join us there. Some really great "Topeka Folks" will be there. The comradery is second to none.

Gary is covering the Blue Water Bill in this letter. What great news!!!!!!!!!!!!

For those of you that did the interview in Philadelphia, your story should be available for you. If not, feel free to give me a call.

Retired Navy Chief:

An absolutely True Story!\*

A retired Navy Chief, who had a wife and 12 children, needed to move because his rental agreement was terminated by the owner, who wanted to reoccupy the home. When he said he had 12 children, no one would rent a home to him because they felt that the children would destroy the place.

So he sent his wife for a walk to the cemetery with 11 of their kids. He took the remaining one with him to see rental homes with the real estate agent. He loved one of the homes and the price was right. The agent asked: "How many children do you have?" He answered: "Twelve." The agent asked, "Where are the others?" The Chief, with his best sad look, answered, "They're in the cemetery with their mother"

**MORAL:** It's not necessary to lie; one has only to choose the right words.

A reminder to all is that we have a web-site and Face Book page. They are:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/825655290949203/>  
<http://www.usstopekaclg8.org>

Every year I have our reunion information posted in both the American Legion and VFW Magazines. I always get a number of calls from shipmates that don't have a computer. If you don't have a relative, friend or neighbor who has one, try your local library. Checking out our website occasionally is generally worthwhile.

Hope to see a large turnout in Rapid City

(NOT Grand Rapids)

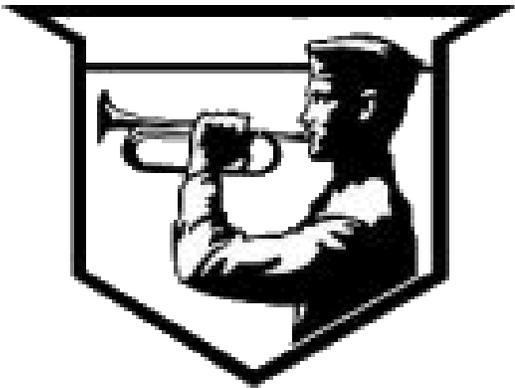
Dan

## New Members (Since March 2019)

Robert Schoenstein MT2 60-63  
(Posthumous Registration)  
Lovendo Ballestrus TNSN 65-67  
Donald Sutton PN3 64-66

## Taps

William Carver SN 60-63  
William D. Carver BM3 60-63  
Robert G. Schoenstein MT2 60-63  
Erin L. Endicott RD3 61-63  
Paul Ruby LTJG 62-65



## USS TOPEKA 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

Rapid City, South Dakota

### Reunion Dates:

Monday, September 16, 2019 through Friday,  
September 20, 2019

Pat and Gary Baker are our hosts for the Rapid City reunion. They have hosted in the past, and will do their best to make this a memorable reunion. E-mail them at [pbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:pbaker@usstopekaclg8.org) or call them at 406-252-4546 for any questions or information.

Our hotel is newly refurbished Best Western Ramkota Hotel.

The hotel is located just off Interstate 90 and next door to Rushmore Mall. There are several eateries

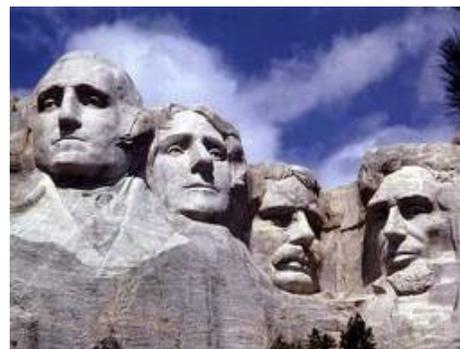
in the mall, and other restaurants within a short walk. The hotel offers a courtesy shuttle from Rapid City Regional Airport. The hotel is two stories, but has no elevators. We requested that our room block be on the ground floor. To make certain you get a ground floor room, specify that when making reservations. Breakfast is not included in the room rate, but prices in the hotel restaurant, Minerva's, are very reasonable, and we will be given a 10% discount on breakfast.

Reservations must be made no later than August 16, 2019. After that date the room block will be released and there is no guarantee you will be able to book a room. Group rates are \$113.17 (tax included) for single King or double Queen rooms. King Suite rooms are also available for \$145.87 (tax included). They are not part of our room block, so make your reservation very early for them. Also the King Suites are quite a ways from the lobby, restaurant, and hospitality room, and may be on the second floor. The group rate is effective for 3 days before and after the reunion. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 605-343-8550. Be sure to ask for the USS Topeka CLG-8 group rate.

For early arrivals the hospitality room will be opened Monday afternoon, September 16, at no extra charge.

## Tours

Tuesday we'll drive to Crazy Horse Memorial and then on to Mount Rushmore National Monument where we'll have dinner, and then stay for the evening lighting of the faces ceremony.



On Wednesday we will visit the South Dakota Air and Space Museum and tour Ellsworth Air Force Base. Then on to Wall Drug for lunch and

shopping. Our return trip will take us through Badlands National Park with a stop at Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

Thursday is a drive to Black Hills National Cemetery and 1878 Fort Meade. Then we'll drive through Spearfish Canyon and on to the towns of Lead and Deadwood. At Deadwood we'll have a couple of hours to have lunch, explore the historical sites, and/or gamble.

We could do so much more, but these are all "must sees". Be sure to bring your camera!

### **History of the real Deadwood, South Dakota**

The discovery of gold in the southern Black Hills in 1874 set off one of the great gold rushes in America. In 1876, miners moved into the northern Black Hills. That's where they came across a gulch full of dead trees and a creek full of gold and Deadwood was born.

Practically overnight, the tiny gold camp boomed into a town that played by its own rules that attracted outlaws, gamblers and gunslingers along with the gold seekers. Wild Bill Hickok was one of those men who came looking for fortune. But just a few short weeks after arriving, he was gunned down while holding a poker hand of aces and eights – forever after known as the Dead Man's Hand.

[Calamity Jane](#) also made a name for herself in these parts and is buried next to Hickok in Mount Moriah Cemetery.

Deadwood has survived three major fires and numerous economic hardships, pushing it to the verge of becoming another Old West ghost town. But in 1989 limited-wage gambling was legalized and Deadwood was reborn.

Today, the town is booming once again. You'll find modern-day casinos, resort hotels, full-service spas, big name concerts, and some of the best parties in the entire United States. Come walk in the footsteps of our legends and make history in Deadwood. We've been entertaining guests since 1876.



### **Who is Coming to Rapid City?**

Pat and Gary Baker  
Sharon and James Bennett  
Susan and Phil Brooks  
Jerry Craig and Special Guest  
Norris and Linda Westbrook  
Marilyn and Ken Cushman  
Kathy and Al Gustafson  
Estel Hays  
Karen and Wesley Heifner  
Susan and Harvey Hershkowitz  
Joan and Cal Ladd  
Leanne and Jerry Pennington  
Kathy and Ray Spatz  
Wanda and Thomas Swink  
Pat and Gerald Tanner  
Ellen and Weldon Zimmerman

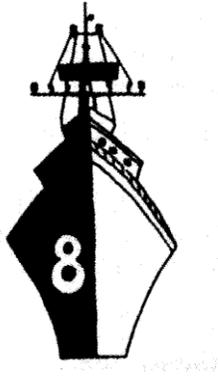
### **Agent Orange Update**

On May 14<sup>th</sup> the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 was passed unanimously by the US House of Representatives. Once signed into law, H.R. 299 will restore VA benefits to thousands of Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans who had their disability eligibility taken away in 2002 after regulatory changes. It will also require the VA to contact those veterans who had filed claims that were later denied. Those veterans could be eligible for retroactive benefits.

The bill now heads to the Senate. Contact your senators and urge them to pass the Senate version of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, Senate Bill S203!

USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION  
C/O Gary Baker  
20 Heather Drive  
Billings, MT 59105

TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUEST



### NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Chairman, Board of Directors**

Dan Moore, 56619 Wedgwood Ct N, Elkhart, IN 46516;  
574-295-5156; [Dan56619@aol.com](mailto:Dan56619@aol.com)

Board Members: Dudley Cass, Arnold Hoel, Jerry Craig, Harold Jackson, Dan Moore, Ray Spatz, Jay Davis

**President**

Dan Moore, 56619 Wedgwood Ct N, Elkhart, IN 46516;  
574-295-5156; [Dan56619@aol.com](mailto:Dan56619@aol.com)

**Secretary-Treasurer**

Gary Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105;  
406-252-4546; [gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org)

**2019 Reunion Coordinator**

Pat & Gary Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105;  
406-252-4546; [gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org)

**Newsletter Editor**

Kathy Spatz, 503 Olive Blvd., So. Hempstead, NY 11550;  
516-697-8274; [kathleenspatz@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenspatz@gmail.com)

**Webmaster**

Gary Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105;  
406-252-4546; [gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org)

**Ships Store**

Pat Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105  
406-252-4546; [pbaker@usstopekaclg8.org](mailto:pbaker@usstopekaclg8.org)

### SHIP'S STORE

The store has USS Topeka ball caps, lapel pins, jacket patches, coffee cups, and license plate frames as well as 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and Vietnam bumper stickers. Order forms and illustrations of items are on the Ship's Store page of the website.

The store is managed by Pat Baker. Her contact information is on the ship's store page of the website and the Names and Telephone Numbers section of this newsletter.

### Membership and Dues

Dues fund the day-to-day operation of the association. This includes the costs of publishing and distributing the newsletter and members directory, maintaining the website, and office expenses.