

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 29, No. 1

March 2019



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

Greetings from the Mid-West. Hope everyone had a great holiday season. Here in Indiana we are looking forward to Spring. Unusual weather in many parts of the country.

Would like to welcome our new members that have signed up in the past several months. I place our reunion information in both the American Legion and VFW magazines. I have had a number of calls as our Association has been discovered for the first time. Several shipmates have serious health issues and are unable to attend the reunions. I direct them to our website and surprised how many don't have a computer. For those that don't, your local library probably has some available.

Looking forward to having a good turnout in Rapid City. Some great tours are on the schedule. (Information enclosed). Aside from the reunion schedule, there are numerous other sites reasonably near Rapid City to explore before or after the reunion. So, please get your registration in to the Bakers.

Sharon & I look forward to seeing our friends in South Dakota as well as making new friends. Something to think about.... Why isn't there a mouse flavored cat food?

Until September, have a great Spring & Summer.

Dan

NEW MEMBERS (SINCE NOVEMBER 2018)

Russel Baker YN2 60-61
Raphael Rayford SH3 60-63
(Posthumous Registration)

TAPS

Arthur G. (Joe) Nolan SMC 64-66
Clyde B. Evans BT3 60-61
Ervin M. Kolodzik BTC 60-67
Bernard Daniel Kish CS3 64-68
Victor J. Sheppard SN 66-68
Roy L. Denio RM2 60-63
John L. Milbrodt SFP3 65-67
Raphael G. Rayford Jr. SH3 62-65
Roger E. Lauer PH3 61-65
Thomas K. Parsons SK2 65-68
G. Roger Willis RD3 65-68
Michael J. Leahy MM3 66-69



USS TOPEKA 31st 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

gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org or call them at 406-252-4546 for any questions or information.

Our hotel is newly refurbished Best Western Ramkota Hotel.

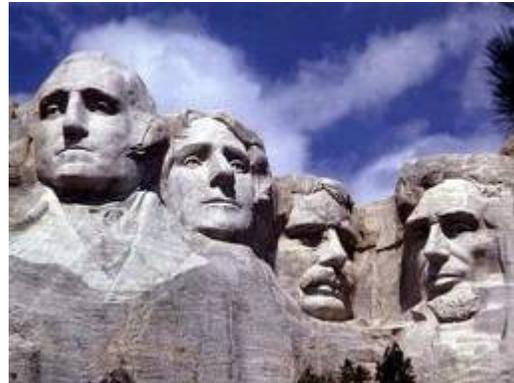
The hotel is located just off Interstate 90 and next door to Rushmore Mall. There are several eateries in the mall, and other restaurants within a short walk. The hotel offers a courtesy shuttle from Rapid City Regional Airport. The hotel is two stories, but has no elevators. We requested that our room 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.

PROPOSED 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!

Black Hills National Cemetery is located three miles east of Sturgis, S.D., in the shadows of the Black Hills. This region is the homeland of the Lakota Sioux Indians who traversed the Great Plains before the advent of Europeans in the mid 18th century. French explorers first arrived in the early 1740s, and Spain acquired sovereignty over the region in 1762. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase gave the United States title to the region. Yet, until 1856 when Fort Randall was established, fur trappers and traders were the sole European settlers. Soon after, the towns of Vermillion and Yankton became permanent establishments, and by 1861 the Dakota Territory had been formed.

The greatest rush of European immigration came in 1874 when gold was discovered in the Black Hills. A wave of prospectors flooded the area, radically transforming the region and causing disturbances as well as creating opportunities. Legally, the Black Hills had been closed to white settlement under the Treaty of Fort Laramie. The military, however, was in no position to halt the advancing settlers. In fact, it was the military that encouraged settlements when the 7th Cavalry, under Gen. George Custer, reported the discovery of gold.

America's first transcontinental railroad was completed in May 1869 through the combined efforts of government and private corporations. Subsidiary rail lines such as the Dakota Southern Railroad, established in 1872, proved to be more important for bringing newcomers into the region. Between 1870 and 1890, the white population in the Dakota Territory increased six fold.

The influx of settlers onto the Great Sioux Reservation culminated in a war of cultures at the Battle of Little Bighorn in June 1876. As a result of Custer's defeat, American Indians were forced to accept a reduction in their reservation land. This cleared the way for further development by settlers, which further angered the American Indians. As a result, the Fort Meade military reservation was established in the region shortly afterwards. The last serious cultural conflict began in the fall of 1890 with the death of Sitting Bull and ended with the massacre of hundreds of American Indians at

Wounded Knee. Thus, barriers to settlement of the region eased.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, new railroads were laid across the Dakotas and aided in the further development of numerous communities. In 1890, Pierre was chosen as the permanent capital of South Dakota. Twelve years later, in 1902, the Battle Mountain Sanitarium was established in nearby Hot Springs to aid in the care of veterans within the region. Cemeteries at both the Fort Meade Military Reservation and the former sanitarium eventually became a part of the National Cemetery System in 1973.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

The number of dues-paying members continues to decline. Dues are the only income we have to fund the day-to-day operation of the association. We will probably break even in 2019, but the outlook after that isn't good.

Your dues status is on the address page of the newsletter. Dues are \$20.00 per year or \$80.00 for five years. Past dues are forgiven and any dues received now are applied to 2019.

AGENT ORANGE UPDATE

The Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act 2017, although being passed unanimously by the House of Representatives, died in the Senate without any action. The bills have been revived in the 2019 session of congress.

In a 9-2 decision, a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit said that "blue water" veterans — those who were stationed on ships off the shore of Vietnam — are entitled to the same benefits for diseases associated with Agent Orange as those who served on land or Vietnam's inland waterways. At this time, there's no word on whether the VA is going to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court.

USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION
C/O Gary Baker
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TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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SHIP'S STORE

The store continues to stock ball caps, lapel pins, bumper stickers, jacket patches, coffee cups, and license plate frames.

Due to increased shipping costs the ball cap prices have been increased by \$1.00. For the time being all other prices will remain the same.

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.