

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 34, No. 3

November 2023



Officers:

Al Gustafson, Chairman Board of Directors and President;

Arnold Hoel, Vice Chairman and Vice President

Gary Baker, Secretary-Treasurer;

Staff:

Kathy Spatz, Newsletter Editor and Photographer;

Gary Baker, Web Master:

Pat Baker, Ships Store

Another great Topeka reunion has come to an end, and I hope that all who attended had a safe trip home.

Although we had a small turnout this year Cathy and I had a great time. As usual Pat Baker hosted another great reunion. Thanks Pat! The tours and hotel were great. Our guest speaker was one of our best ever. Thanks, Dan Moore for bringing your son! It was great to hear about his distinguished Naval career and to meet him in person.

I was also pleased to get to know several shipmates I had never met before and hear of their service on the Topeka. Seeing an old shipmate who I first met in Boilerman Class A School in 1967 was also a special treat for me.

Next years' reunion will be in Branson Missouri, hosted by Gerald and Pat Tanner. There is lots to do in Branson and they have great plans in the works. I would like to strongly encourage everyone to make a special effort to attend this reunion. Try and contact old shipmates and encourage them to attend as well. All are welcome and we are hoping to make this year special and accessible to all. You never know this could be one of our last reunions, hope to see you there. Feel free to give me a call if you have questions about the organization or reunion Save the date (September 16, through 20).

Here is the answer to the last newsletters riddle:

Riddle-Name 3 consecutive days without using the words Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday.

Answer- Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow!

New Riddle- What goes in the blank below?

Bob is Kens son; therefore, Ken is the _____ of Bobs father.

As always, a special thanks to Pat and Gary Baker as well as Kathy Spatz for all the work they do for the organization.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season. Looking forward to seeing you all in Branson.

Fair Winds and Following Seas

Gus

New Members (Since March 2023)

None

Taps

David Clink MM2 68-69

James Curtin LTJG 60-62

Edward Bennet BT2 59-62

Dennis Corkrey SN 60-63

Reunion Dates:

September 16th – September 20th, 2024

2023 Branson Reunion

We will be staying at The Lodge of the Ozarks, Welcome to Lodge of the Ozarks, Branson's best hotel on The Strip. We are conveniently located on HWY 76, Branson's entertainment corridor. That means your favorite Branson, Missouri shows, restaurants, and attractions are a short walk from Lodge of the Ozarks!

Tour A

Tuesday September 17th, 2024

Tanger Mall in the morning.

Afternoon tour will be a cruise on Table Rock Lake aboard the Showboat Branson Belle.

The Showboat Branson Belle, America's Most Entertaining Lake Adventure, presents an exciting musical variety show. All cruises offer a unique experience aboard the 700-passenger paddle-wheeler as it cruises Table Rock Lake.

Guests can explore the ship's three upper decks, visit the Captain in the pilot-house, and dine in the atrium-style dining theater before taking a seat for the show.

Tour B

Wednesday, September 18th, 2024

College of the Ozarks and the Veterans Memorial Museum.

College of the Ozarks warmly welcomes all visitors to enjoy our beautiful campus! The College of the Ozarks has a variety of unique experiences to offer to anyone planning a day of things to do in Branson, MO or to those who are just visiting the Ozarks region.

Some of the sights to visit at the college:

The "Lest We Forget" 9/11 Memorial features a World Trade Center column which stands as a memorial to the 2,996 lives lost on September 11, 2001 in New York City, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania. Known as "St. Michael's 37" (in honor of 37 Port Authority officers killed), the column and flanges resemble the body and wings of an angel.

Patriots Park sits near the entrance of campus and contains The Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial which honors the 1,410 servicemen and women from Missouri who gave their lives during the Vietnam War. Built and designed by students, this memorial serves as Missouri's official Vietnam memorial.

The black granite walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are divided – reflecting the division of America. The statue in the middle represents the servicemen and women who stood in the gap and gave what their nation asked of them. The red, flower-filled 'V' stands for valor and represents the blood that was shed during the war.

Additionally, the Missouri Gold Star Families Memorial, which honors Gold Star Families (those who have lost immediate family members killed in their service to the country), preserves the memory of the fallen and stands as a stark reminder that freedom is not free.



The Veterans Memorial Museum is composed of ten great halls covering the wars and conflicts fought during the 20th Century. Circulation and viewing starts in the World War I Hall, progressing through World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and more.

The names of the men and women killed in action in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and recent conflicts of the 20th Century are displayed on the walls of the halls.

Tour C

Thursday, September 19th, 2024

Bass Pro Wonder of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium

National Archery Hall of Fame

Free experience that seeks to preserve the sport's history and tradition in the United States; showcasing more than 1,500 artifacts, including a handmade bow created by Native American Apache leader Geronimo.

National Rifle Association Sporting Arms Museum

Free exhibit dedicated to chronicling the development and evolution of hunting arms in America from colonial times to present day; home to the premiere collection of sporting arms in the world featuring legendary items like Teddy Roosevelt's hunting rifle.

Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium - Now Open!

World-class, enchanting fish and wildlife attraction features 35,000 live fish, reptiles, mammals and birds, and one-and-a-half million gallons of water.



2023 YTD Financial Report

A brief summary of our finance's year to date. The association finances are looking good. There is quite a bit more money in the Operating account than is needed to fund the day-to-day expenses of the association. With the consent of our president, Al Gustafson, and the board of directors, as we wind down our association over the next few years, the excess will be used to offset the fixed costs of our annual reunions.

Account	12/31/2022	2023 YTD
Operating Fund	\$16,283.88	\$14,323.52
Reunion Fund	\$5,588.65	\$3,835.48
Ship's Store	\$2,266.37	\$2,656.11
Total	\$24,138.90	\$20,815.11

Membership and Dues

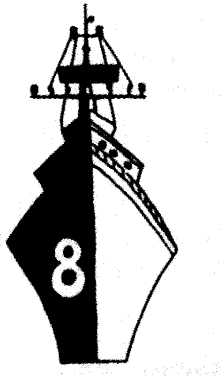
At the Board of Directors meeting on September 21, 2023, the board elected to cease collecting dues after 2028. At that time members who are current on their dues (paid through 2028) will become Lifetime Members and will continue to receive the annual directory and the newsletter.



Spokane, WA reunion hosts Pat and Gary Baker.

USS TOPEKA REUNION ASSOCIATION

C/O Gary Baker
20 Heather Drive
Billings, MT 59105



TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Chairman, Board of Directors: Al Gustafson
Vice Chairman, Board of Directors: Arnold Hoel
Directors: Jerry Craig, Harold Jackson, Dan Moore, Ray Spatz,
Jay Davis

President:

Al Gustafson, 3668 Bonnie Lane, Hamburg, NY 14075; 716-648-5960; gus127@verizon.net

Vice President:

Arnold Hoel, 418 W 229th St., Carson, CA 90745; 310-834-5359; Arnold.hoel@yahoo.com

Secretary-Treasurer:

Gary Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105;
406-252-4546; gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org

2024 Reunion Coordinator:

Pat Tanner, 1124 E Camorene St., Springfield, MO 65803;
417-597-9331; jtandpatsue@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor and Photographer:

Kathy Spatz, 503 Olive Blvd., So. Hempstead, NY 11550;
516-697-8274; kathleenspatz@gmail.com

Webmaster:

Gary Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105;
406-252-4546; gbaker@usstopekaclg8.org

Ships Store:

Pat Baker, 20 Heather Drive, Billings, MT 59105
406-252-4546; 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 6th and 7th Fleet and Vietnam bumper stickers. A generic Navy ball cap "We Own the Seas" has been added to the inventory. 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. Dues are \$20.00 per year or \$80.00 for five years. Your dues status is indicated on the address page of the newsletter. If it doesn't say '**Dues Exempt**' or '**Dues Paid Thu 2022**' (or higher) you'll be dropped from the mailing list and won't receive the annual directory or any further newsletters.