



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

From Our President

Greetings Shipmates

I wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. I hope you are well and look forward to seeing you soon.

It is time to make your plans for This years' reunion in Branson Missouri (September 16 through 20). I have never visited here and am really looking forward to all it has to offer. The Tanners and Bakers have some great tours planned and there is a lot to see and do in Branson. Our hotel is centrally located, close to many restaurants, and highly rated by Trip Advisor (number 1 of 124 hotels in Branson).

I encourage all who are able to try and attend this year's Topeka Reunion. We had a small turnout but a great time last year in Spokane. Don't miss this opportunity to see old friends and shipmates. We are trying to keep this going as long as possible, but you never know if this will be our last. As a special treat I promise no bad jokes at dinner this year! If you have any questions feel free to give me a call or E-Mail.

Answer to Last Newsletter Riddle- What goes in the blank below?

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

New Riddle- I am gentle enough to sooth the skin, light enough to reflect the sky, yet hard enough to crack rocks, what am I?

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

In closing I would like to encourage prayers and support for our fellow sailors and all military in harm's way in the Middle East.

Our Navy is doing an excellent job at sea defending commercial shipping and our own warships. The Mediterranean was a lot safer place to be when the Topeka was deployed there.

See you in Branson.

Fair Winds and Following Seas

Gus

New Members (Since November 2023)

None

Taps

Marvin A. Davis LTJG 61-62

Reunion Dates:

September 16th – September 20th, 2024

We will be staying at The Lodge of the Ozarks, Branson's best hotel on 'The Strip'. It is 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!



Amenities

Free Breakfast
Internet Access
Free Parking
Swimming Pool
Fitness Center
Accessible
Business Center
Meeting Facilities
Smoke free
Smoking Areas
24 hour
Elevator
Ice Machine
Conference Center
Television

Tour A

Tuesday September 17th, 2024 - Morning

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.

Lunch on your own and shopping at Grand Village Mall.

Tour B

Tuesday September 17th, 2024 - Afternoon

The 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 pilothouse, and dine in the atrium-style dining theater before taking a seat for the show.

Tour C

Wednesday, September 18th, 2024

College of the Ozarks and Vietnam 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 Missouri 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 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 D

Thursday, September 19th, 2024

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

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.

Fantastic Caverns

America's only ride-through cave. Discover the timeless beauty of Fantastic Caverns, one of

earth's rarest treasures. There are only four of its kind in the entire world, and the only one in North America. Here, you'll discover one of the world's most beautiful natural wonders; giant columns stretching from floor to ceiling, delicate soda straws glistening with minerals, tiny cave pearls hidden in crystal-clear water. And best of all, you'll see it close-up from the comfort of a jeep-drawn tram!



2024 YTD Financial Report

A summary of our finance’s year to date. The association’s 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.

<u>Account</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>2024 YTD.</u>
Operating Fund	\$15,416.35	\$15,610.85
Reunion Fund	\$4,535.48	\$4,525.48
Ship’s Store	\$2,916.61	\$2,886.61
Total	\$22,868.44	\$23,032.64

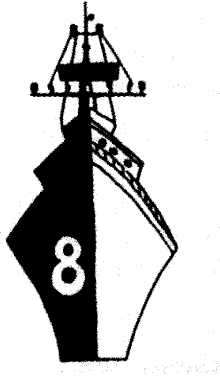
Membership and Dues

At the Board of Directors meeting on September 21, 2023, the board elected to cease collecting dues after 2028. Members that have already paid dues through 2028 are considered Life Members. When other members pay dues through 2028, they also will become Life Members.

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, Chairman
Arnold Hoel, Vice Chairman
Jerry Craig, Harold Jackson, Dan Moore, Ray Spatz, Jay Davis
and Dan Moore

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Ships Store:

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Ship's Store

The store has USS Topeka ball caps, lapel pins, jacket patches, coffee cups, as well as 6th and 7th 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. 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 Thru 2023' (or higher) you'll be dropped from the mailing list and won't receive the annual directory or any further newsletters.