

# USS TOPEKA CLG-8

## Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 8, No. 4

November, 1997

### Committee:

*John Reynolds, President; Dudley E. Cass, Secretary/Treasurer;  
Al Jefferis, Assistant Secretary; Tom Victory, Bud Zimmerman,  
Reunion '97 Chairmen; Jack Connery, Newsletter Editor*



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the October meeting of the Advisory Board, the Herb Hedge Memorial Fund was established to assist shipmates who would like to attend reunions, but are in need of financial assistance. The assistance may include all or part of the reunion fee and/or hotel accommodations.

Any member may forward a written request for assistance to any officer of the association, any member of the Advisory board, or any member of the Reunion Committee. All requests will be forwarded to the President who will decide the merit of the request and the amount and type of assistance to be provided.

The association endeavors to bring all Topeka shipmates together at every reunion. Although we struggle to keep prices as low as possible, we have, in times past, known of shipmates who have missed reunions due to lack of funds.

It's not too early to start making plans for the '98 bash to be held August 19-23 at the Sheraton Hotel in Needham, Mass., just outside of Boston. See ya there.

John Reynolds

### SEATTLE REUNION

It was great. All 82 members in attendance and the 73 wives, children and guests had a great time. Our thanks to the Seattle Reunion Committee, composed of Tom and Vi Victory, Bud and Ellen Zimmerman, Bob and Debbie Odman. They did an outstanding job.

We went back in history to the Tillicum Village, where we had the unique experience of eating at the birthplace of Chief Sealth, who was honored later by naming Seattle after him. We saw how Native Americans lived in the Northwest long before the

white man settled, then we were brought back to reality with a tour of the Trident ballistic missile submarine Ohio at Bangor, one of the most powerful weapons systems in existence.

We saw the space needle and the beautiful Seattle skyline. We enjoyed the coffee, and could see Mt. Rainier in the distance.

We had a hospitality suite big enough to accommodate us (well, at least most) for a change. We exchanged many memories there with old friends as well as making new ones.

On Saturday morning, we took care of Association business at the annual meeting, then gathered for a group picture.

We had a fine cocktail party. Our banquet was luxurious. We had an outstanding Color Guard from the submarine base. We remembered those no longer with us. It was a very posh banquet until we were taken back a century or two by a raid from the Sea-Fair Pirates. What fun it was, listening to them sing the bawdy song "Bang Away My Lulu" to Ruth Cass.

Our good-byes late that night continued into Sunday morning, as we began to spread to the four winds. Seemed like each "goodbye" was followed with "See ya in Boston."

### TAPS

Don Stewart, LTJG (64-66), Concord, Calif., October 26, Cancer.

Bill Herring, CSC (61-64), Calvary, Georgia, August, 1997, Cancer.

Thomas Uber, SN (60-62), Struthers, Ohio, January 1, 1997.

## NEW MEMBERS (SINCE AUGUST, 1997)

Rollis "Lee" Kowalski, SN (63-65), Federal Way, WA  
James Dewey, LCPL (63-65), Seattle, WA  
Jim VanSant, Oakdale, CA  
George Breckenridge, FN (65-66), Kent, WA  
William Haluch, GMG3 (61-65), Caseyville, IL

## LETTERS

*Ed Note: The following letter was attached to the publication "Sail Constitution," which commemorated the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of the USS Constitution and its return to sea in the summer of 1997. This book was displayed at the Seattle reunion.*

Dear Ed:

I send this to share with all of my shipmates this historic event.

After working on the Constitution for 24 years, I was very proud and honored to be a crew member and actually sail the oldest wooden sailing ship afloat. But the honors did not stop there. The Master Chief of the Navy presented me a certificate making me an honorary Chief Petty Officer, and the Secretary of the Navy shook my hand and presented me with his medallion.

It was quite a day for an old sailor, and it brought tears to my eyes.

We received a bigger welcome on our return to Boston than any military unit since WWII. It was awesome. I am so very proud to be an American and have served my country. I hope this event made all Americans remember and appreciate their heritage.

Dick Wallace, SMSN (60-63)

*Ed note 2. We all appreciated your letter and enjoyed "Sail Constitution.." Now that we are coming to Boston for Reunion 98, perhaps you can get together with Coordinator Jack Kehoe, and arrange a group tour of the Constitution for us.*

Dear Ed:

Just a short note to say that once again I won't be able to make the reunion in Seattle. The last two years were false alarms requiring biopsies with ultimately negative results.

The latest prostate biopsy came back positive. Subsequent cat scans and a bone scan indicate the cancer is contained within the gland itself. Have scheduled surgery to have the damn thing removed August 11.

I know this sounds like a record, but perhaps next year. My best to all.

Doyne Wills, LCDR (64-66)

*Ed Note:*

*Just before going to print, I talked with Doyne. Since his letter in August, the doctors have done all sorts of unmentionable things to him, short of removing the prostate gland. All sorts of scans, shots, pictures, probes and prodding. Still under treatment, he talks about the next 10 years, which as Doyne always was, is very positive. Says to tell Dudley that he will, for sure, be in Boston.*

Dear Ed:

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of the \$339 donation in honor of one of your Topeka Shipmates and a resident of the Home, ETC Victor N. Hammond, USN (Ret.). This contribution will be used for the benefit of shipmates living at the home.

Thank you and the members of the USS Topeka Reunion Association for the kind and thoughtful support of our home.

F.M. Fox, Director  
United States Naval Home

## REUNION 98

Start making plans now to be in Boston August 19-22 for Reunion 98. The Sheraton Needham, which has hosted many ship reunions, will be the reunion site and Jack Kehoe (61-63) is the Reunion Coordinator.

Boston was chosen on the first vote and the majority was overwhelming to the point that votes were not counted. Closest competition was Atlanta, presented by Jerry Craig.

Detailed information on Boston and the reunion will be provided in the next newsletter.

One of the first requirements in planning a reunion is to get a good estimate of the number coming. If your present plans include Boston, please take a few minutes to provide the following information. There is no obligation on your part - your input will help us make adequate arrangements to handle the crowd. Please complete and send to Dudley Cass.

### Reunion 98 Tentative Plans

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number attending \_\_\_\_\_  
Please indicate the days you plan to attend:  
Wednesday \_\_; Thursday, \_\_ Friday \_\_; Saturday \_\_.  
I Will be staying at the reunion hotel? Yes \_\_. No \_\_.

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual business meeting was held Saturday, August 16, 1997, at the Doubletree Hotel, Seattle, Washington, in connection with Reunion 97. Highlights of this meeting follow:

### • Treasurer's Report Summary

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Balance 8-7-96</b>   | <b>\$4,284</b> |
| 1997 Expenses           |                |
| Calendar                | \$2,921        |
| Newsletters             | 2,341          |
| Directories             | 290            |
| Misc. Postage           | 229            |
| Computer/Office         |                |
| Supplies                | 139            |
| Miscellaneous           | 106            |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$6,026</b> |
| <b>Income/Dues 1997</b> | <b>\$5,725</b> |
| <b>Balance 8-8-97</b>   | <b>\$3,983</b> |

### • Membership Report

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Total in data base    | 852 |
| Active                | 761 |
| Dues paid (37%)       | 283 |
| New members this year | 24  |
| Members at Reunion    | 82  |
| Banquet Attendance    | 155 |

### • Old Business

Annual dues set at \$15.00 for 1998.

Contributions collected this year (\$339) have been forwarded to the Navy Home.

Contributions of \$80.00 collected for Topeka Brick in wall at Iowa Gold Star Museum. Bill Carver (60-63) put up first \$50, and the Association will provide remaining \$100 through contributions.

### • New Business

**Election of Officers:** Slate presented included John Reynolds, President; Dudley Cass, Secretary-Treasurer; Al Jefferis, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer. There were no nominations from the floor. Approved by majority vote.

**Advisory Board:** Tracy Tipton approved as a new member of the Advisory Board. Other members are Don Nellis, Chairman; Don Anderson, Jack Connery, Jim Ownby, Irad Parkhurst, Jerome Pennington, and Tom Victory.

**Reunion 98:** Cities proposed were Atlanta, New York, Boston, Orlando, and Myrtle Beach. Boston selected on the first vote. Month of August selected. Jack Kehoe was selected as Reunion Coordinator.

**Reunion 99 Sites (Central U.S.):** Branson, Mo., Dudley Cass; Tulsa, Ok., Jack Connery; Minneapolis, Mn, Calvin Ladd; New Orleans, James Bond.

**Cruiser Museums:** Tom Eagling reported that two former cruisers have been converted into museums and are open to the public. He stated that each had an area set aside for photos and histories of other cruisers. Recommended the Association consider donating \$100 to each, and to provide them with photos and ship's history.

## DUES DUE

Dues for 1998 are now due and payable. At the annual meeting, the membership approved dues of \$15 for 1998.

As you can see from the Treasurer's report, our expenses for 1997 were more than income from dues. All members are encouraged to pay their dues promptly.

As in the past, this is the only time collection of dues will be mentioned in this newsletter. However, we will continue to indicate on your newsletter address label whether or not your dues are paid.

Please send check for dues payable to the Reunion Association to Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, Cal., 91902.

## LOST PICTURE/LOST PERSON

On Sunday, August 17, as the Seattle Reunion was closing down, a woman gave Tom Victory \$20 for a group photo.

In the haste of closing down the hospitality suite, Tom did not write her name down, and could not remember it later.

Please identify yourself to Tom at Box 241, Port Orchard, WA., 98366, and Tom will send the picture.

## MOVING? MOVED? WAS YOUR NEWSLETTER FORWARDED?

Then drop a card to Dudley Cass and let him know your new address.

## BAKA HACHI REVISITED

In an October 15 meeting, the Board of Advisors approved revision of *The Baka Hachi 1960-1969*, to be re-published and available for distribution at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reunion Association in 2000.

Jack Connery, who wrote and edited the original publication, has suggested that it be revised. "*Baka Hachi* is the official history of CLG-8, combined with your memories and stories, making it a living document," says Jack. "At the time of it's writing, we had about 150 members, of which perhaps 75 submitted pictures and memories of Topeka. Now, we have over 800 in the data base, covering the 10 years of Topeka's life. What a history we can make with all those stories!"

*Baka Hachi* is on file with the Naval Historical Society. It's time now, with our extensive membership, that we update it and make it the real history of our ship.

All of you have memories. All of you have stories. He would even be interested in stories from the wives. Dust off the cobwebs, write those stories down, including names of other shipmates, time frame, and let's get them recorded before they are lost. Don't worry about grammar or spelling, Jack will take care of that. Send them to Jack (address on newsletter). Be a part of this history, something that no ship has ever done.

## SHIP'S STORE REPORT

The following items are available in the ships store.

- Adult shirts
  - Green, sizes 2XL, XL, L \$22.00
  - Navy Blue, sizes 2XL, XL, L 22.00
  - White (on sale) 2XL, XL, M 15.00
- Ball caps 8.00
- Key Chains 3.00
- Baka Hachi Book 7.00
- Wine glasses/tumblers 4@ 12.00
- Topeka Jackets, Navy, size 2XL 35.00
- Ship's Plaque 22.00
- (Personalized) 27.00

Remember, Christmas is coming, and these items make great gifts. Let us ship you something for a loved one or friend. Allow extra time for plaques. Like everything else, our costs have gone up. Please include \$5.00 for shipping any order. Send requests to Jill Connery

## REMEMBER WHEN . . . ?

I have been reluctant to send this story because it's still embarrassing, even after all these years. However, my shipmates have encouraged me to do so.

As a youngster, I'd had always prized myself a being a good ring warrior. However, as a street fighter I'd never had much luck at holding my own. I guess I never had the killer instinct except while in the boxing ring.

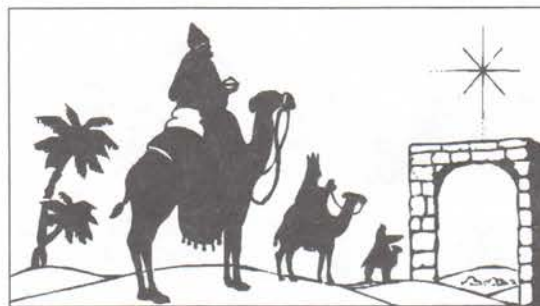
On my first cruise to WESTPAC, under the command of Captain Ruhe, I encountered a confrontation in Manila with a sailor from another ship. After kicking up our heels ashore and being on "Cinderella" liberty there were about 500 of us waiting to be shuttled back to our respective ships. This sailor looked at my Topeka patch and made a derogatory remark about my ship. I looked around for Topeka support, but there was no sign of a shipmate! After making an insulting remark about his ship, I turned to walk away and caught a full bottle of San Miguel across the bridge of my nose, breaking it, knocking out one tooth and breaking two others--one at the gum line and one with a nerve exposed.

The second class corpsmen aboard ship extracted the one and removed the nerve from the other and saved that tooth. Upon arriving Yokosuka, Dr. Hedge sent me to the ship DIXIE for new teeth. I returned to TOPEKA with a partial plate which I was most pleased with.

Captain Ruhe, taking his daily exercises running around the fo'c'sle turrets approached me, and of course it was an immediate "attention on deck". He had been appraised of the incident and was concerned about my treatment and well being, and asked if I had received good treatment while aboard DIXIE. He wanted to inspect the workmanship of my new false teeth. I took him literally and laid my teeth in the palm of his hand. With a surprise on his face he said: "Well Bond it looks as though they did good work?" at which I replied: "Yes Captain, I am indeed very pleased"!

James E. Bond, YN3 (1964-1967)

## SEASON'S GREETINGS



With the holiday season just around the corner, the officers and members of the Board of Advisors take this opportunity to wish all of you a joyous and blessed season, and a prosperous 1998. Let's remember our shipmates at sea and their families.

## MEET YOUR SHIPMATE

Lee Kowalski parked his car and was walking into work at the Doubletree Hotel in south Seattle the morning of August 16 and noticed the sign on the marquee: "Welcome, USS Topeka Reunion Association."

"I'll be damned," he muttered. "I've always wondered if my ship would ever show up here."



Dick came to work for the Doubletree in 1971, and has performed all services in connection with customers: bussing tables, bartending, room service, waiter - - in fact has become a "jack of all trades." He has even baked the famous "Doubletree cookies." He does not claim a title,

but it ought to be Manager, Customer Services.

"The last few years, we've had a lot of ship reunions, and I often wondered about Topeka. I did not know there was an association." The first thing he did after meeting John

Reynolds, who had helped him get special liberty many years ago in Guam, Dick found the ship's store and bought the items necessary to identify him as a Topekaman.

When the word got out, hotel employees absconded with display cruisebooks, found a 30-year-old picture of Lee with some other sailors, and used it in posters all over the hotel, offering a contest, "can you identify Lee?". The hotel bought him a banquet ticket and he ate with us (when we could get him away from tending store).

Lee came aboard as a seaman in 1963, originally from Guam, but claiming Seattle as home. He was assigned to the Deck Force, and as the rotation goes, was soon assigned to mess cooking. "I really liked food service, and wanted to be a cook," says Lee. "But they wouldn't let me, so I figured out ways of extending and extending as a messcook. Some Chiefs in the CPO mess helped me. I worked hard, studied, and left the Navy as a CSSN."

After leaving Topeka and the Navy in 1965, Kowalski traveled with a Carnival for a couple of years, then joined the Seattle Doubletree in 1971. Since then, he's been waiting for a Topeka Reunion to come to Seattle.



**The Gang, Reunion 97. At press time , we had not yet received the official group photograph so we had to use this snapshot. How many can you recognize? Next issue we will publish the official picture.**

## NAMES/TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The following are names, addresses and phone numbers of various people in the association. Place it on your fridge, or paste in your phone book (just in case you can't find your directory when you need it):

### Chairman, Board of Advisors

Don Nellis, 12735 Abra Dr., San Diego, Cal., 92128; Telephone 619-487-4595.

### President

John Reynolds, 916 Esplanade, # 177, Redondo Beach, Cal., 90266; Telephone 310-540-7817.

### Secretary-Treasurer

Dudley Cass, 3028 Bonita Woods Dr., Bonita, Cal., 91902; 619-267-3123.

### Newsletter Editor

Jack Connery, 16334 South Lewis, Bixby, Ok., 74008; 918-366-4581; Fax 918-366-6368; E-mail JJConn@AOL.com.

### Ship's Store

Jill Connery, 16334 South Lewis, Bixby, Ok., 74008; 918-366-4581; Fax 918-366-6368; E-mail JJConn@AOL.com.

## WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

### FATHOM

Fathom was originally a land measuring term derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "faetm" meaning to embrace. In those days, most measurements were based on average size of parts of the body, such as the hand (horses are still measured this way) or the foot (that's why 12 inches are so named). A fathom is the average distance from fingertip to fingertip of the outstretched arms of a man --- about six feet. Since a man stretches out his arms to embrace his sweetheart, Britain's Parliament declared that distance be called a "fathom" and it be a unit of measure. A fathom remains six feet. The word was also used to describe taking the measure or "to fathom" something. Today, of course, when one is trying to figure something out, they are trying to "fathom" it.

**USS TOPEKA (CLG-8)**  
**REUNION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**  
**c/o JACK CONNERY**  
**16334 SOUTH LEWIS**  
**BIXBY, OK 74008**





# Reunion 97 Se





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