

USS TOPEKA CLG-8

Reunion Association Newsletter

Volume 4-2

May 1993



Committee:

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Dudley E. Cass, Secretary/Treasurer; Isaac Roberts, Reunion '93 Chairman
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Remember the TOPEKA Ambassadors organization that was created when Captain Ruhe was CO? This was a group of volunteers who took on projects overseas to create Good Will. I came aboard at the tail end of that era, so only know what I heard: that they were a very effective group.

I suggest that we recreate the TOPEKA Ambassadors in concept. Ambassadors unto ourselves. Anyone can belong - - anyone can come and go. What I see an Ambassador doing is taking his phone directory with him when he travels. When he gets to his destination (or when enroute), he makes the time to call a shipmate in the vicinity. Just to say "hello," or get together for a beer.

It is a little difficult to find people by area in the directory, but it can be done. I made a whirlwind trip to Orlando and Tampa, FL, a few days back, and took five names with me. Missed connections with most of them, but left messages for some. Did get to spend an afternoon with Dick and Dorothy Ramsey in Lutz, FL. That made the whole trip worthwhile. Sorry I missed the others.

The only other thing an Ambassador would have to do is report back. Let this newsletter know about such visits. I believe this will make us a better Reunion Association.

After thinking about this, then making that Orlando trip, I came home to find Jerry Craig's letter. Great minds travel in the same direction - - well almost. Close enough that I am appointing Jerry Head Ambassador.

Boy, are we growing. Look at those 25 new names. Bravo Zulu to Dudley Cass and his new electronic telephone book. This will revolutionize the way we find people. We now have 353 in the data base with 303 active.

Don Nellis and the Board of Advisors are proposing a set of bylaws for the Association that will be presented to the Membership at the annual meeting in Nashville. Hopefully, we can mail it out ahead of time, with the next newsletter, so all will have time to look it over.

Speaking of Nashville, see you there.

Jack

MOVING?

Or have moved. Put us on your list to send a change of address card to. Occasionally, newsletters are returned with the notation, "forwarding time expired." Sometimes, the Post Office will apply a yellow sticker, giving the new address. Then we have to re-mail newsletter. Sometimes, however, they don't. In that case, unless someone knows where you are, you are lost to us.

REUNION 93

Each year, the reunion seems to get better. Seeing old and new-old faces certainly contributes to that, but the site and the activities planned also make a large contribution. This year is no exception.

Ike and Linda Roberts have put together a real fine program for Reunion '93. Although some of the times and details are still tentative, it looks like a lot of fun.

The Music City Hilton has promised to take good care of us. For example, this is the first reunion where we've had our own registration forms. This is a class outfit.

Considering the rapid growth of the Association, there will be a lot of new faces there this year. New sea stories.

Whether you are a country music fan or not, a visit to the Grand Ole Opry will get your feet tapping. Then there's that GOO-GOO candy for which Nashville is famous.

The tours planned, especially the Music City Tour, really look interesting, and we could all use a line dancing lesson.

We're looking now for a Banquet Speaker.

But most of all, this will be a time for shipmates to be shipmates again, even in memory only.

Come to Nashville and relive with us those days of BAKA HACHI.

REUNION COSTS

We are trying something new this year with the reunion costs. It seems like it would be more equitable if costs were levied based on how much of the reunion one attended. Considering that we provide a Hospitality Suite the full three days, it doesn't seem fair for an individual who can't get there until Saturday to pay the same fee as the ones who arrived Thursday.

So, we are breaking down the fees into two categories: Thursday through Saturday, and Saturday only.

If this system works, and doesn't turn into an accounting nightmare, we'll suggest that we do it again next year.

WANT YOUR REUNION FEES PAID?

Send Dudley the name and address of a shipmate not already in our data base, and your name will go in the hopper (once for each name). A drawing will be held at the reunion and the winner receives the cash equivalent to the Reunion Fee for two, and Hotel lodging for two for three nights.

You can also participate using Dudley's electronic phone book. You send him a name and location (see article this news letter), he sends you a list of possibles and you check them out and find a shipmate.

We did this last year for the first time, and Tom Hoard (64-67) won \$325.

IN MEMORIAM

CWO4 Gordon Day (1959-66), early March, 1993, Grants Pass, Ore.

Clay Rueber, Montello, WI.

WELCOME ABOARD (SINCE MARCH 1, 1993)

Terry Lebar, RD2, (63-66), Brownsville, TX
Dave MacPherson, LT, 63-65, Brookfield, WI
Doyne Wills, LCDR, 64-65, Panama City, FL
Hal Black, 1966-68, Annandale, VA
Donald Clark, LT, 66-68, Long Beach, CA.
Clifford Bourne, BT3, 67-69, Scarborough, ME
Robert Plake, HT1, 59-61, Indianapolis, IN
Harold Petty, SN, 62-64, Carthage, TN
John Jessup, Sr., FTM2, 66-69, Piqua, OH
LeRoy Servin, BM3, 62-64, Casa Grande, AZ
John Fuhrman, 65-68, Wautoma, WI
Jack Clements, Virginia Beach, VA
Homer Whittaker LCPL, 60-62, Burkburnett, TX
Jack Timmons, LTJG, 64-65, San Diego, CA
David Anderson, LTJG, 64-66, Woodland Hills, CA
Donald Stewart, LTJG, 64-66, Redlands, CA
Thomas Kyrko, YN3, 59-60, San Diego, CA
Parker Butcher, 63-66, Shenandoah, IA
Sam Sheehan, LTJG, 63-65, Ponca City, OK
Ronald J. Krolicki, LTJG, 59-61, Livonia, MI
Joseph Blisseck, IC3, 64-68, North Bend, OR
Ken Hummell, LTJG, 62-65, Hooper, UT
Bodin Schexnayder, LT, 66-67, Cary, NC
Richard Fladmark, PN1, 62-63, Fredericksburg, VA
Dick Sharp, EN3, 67-68, Monument, CO.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Sue Kershner, wife of Bob (63-66), who finally, after 32 years of off- and on-schooling, and raising four boys, received her BA degree in Business/Economics at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, NC. Also, their youngest son graduated from high school this year.

LETTERS

Dear Ed:

Thanks for the TOPEKA Reunion newsletter. An old shipmate sent me a copy of the January, 1992 issue. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed to know that there was such a group.

It's good to see so many old friends' names in the newsletters. I'm anxious to get my copy of BAKA Hachi. It ought to keep me spellbound for awhile.

Don Ward (65-67)

Ed Note: Don, good to hear from you. I hope that by now you have seen most of the past newsletters and have enjoyed BAKA Hachi. Hope to see you in Nashville.

Dear Ed.

I appreciate very much the special invitation to attend the USS TOPEKA reunion in Nashville.

My wife (Polly) and I will drive up the 15th and I will be delighted to have the invocation at the banquet program Saturday evening.

Since we live so close to Nashville, we have been there several times and have taken many tours and have enjoyed the interesting sights of the city.

Again, thanks for the invitation, and we will be looking forward to seeing you in Nashville.

Hal Sessions, Jr., Chaplain (61-63)

Dear Ed:

Hey Guys: I am really glad you found me. What a surprise. Parts of that experience seem so long ago and other parts like yesterday. It was a "helluva" memorable time and I definitely want to get up to speed with everyone with whom I had the privilege to serve.

Thanks a bunch for bringing back some delightful, old memories that just reading your newsletter was able to evoke. Particularly liked Captain Montgomery's anecdote about the change from WEST-PAC to the Med.

Hope to see you in Nashville.

Bo Schexnayder (66-67)

Dear Ed:

Thanks for sending the information, I think it's great that you guys have formed a Reunion Association, and here are my dues.

Bill Montgomery's "Remember When?..." on his unexpected learning of deployment of TOPEKA to the Med was funny, since I was the FLOT Three Scheduling Officer at the time and had known but was sworn to secrecy by CRUDES-PAC. We knew our Admiral at the time and Bill were not real close, so I guess he kept the secret too. High Level Stuff: CRUDES-PAC was concerned about morale and perhaps our Washington DC folks also wanted the matter kept quiet for military and personnel reasons. Who can remember the reasons used so long ago?

Jack Timmons (64-65)

Dear Ed:

Thanks to you guys for finding me. Darn right I remember TOPEKA even though I hadn't thought much about her lately.

The newsletters show a lot of care and feeding and I enjoyed looking at the reunion pictures. Bos'n Heeney still looks the same but who are those other

old guys? I have to admit my draft is a little deeper now.

You mentioned the infamous Dependent's Day cruise (Bock, Moran, Grupe). Joy Briggs was a guest of mine on that cruise and married me anyway.

I finished up my 30 at Marquette University NROTC here in Milwaukee, and stayed on to pick up a law degree. Just hung up my shingle in New Berlin, Wisc.

Naturally, am delighted to join the Association. I appreciate all the work that's gone into the association and am very grateful that you found me.

Dave MacPherson (64-66)

Dear Ed:

Since last reunion, I have located two of my old division mates. They each remember a couple of names and hometowns so maybe we can go from that. Also, both said they would be in Nashville.

If anyone needs help in locating shipmates, I travel regularly from Denver, CO area east to PA, NJ, and points in between. If someone will furnish me a name and hometown, I'll be glad to go through local phone books to try to locate them or a relative. That's how I found my two buddies.

Until then, Judy and I are really looking forward to seeing everyone again this year in Music City.

Jerry Craig (66-69)

Ed Note: Thanks Jerry. That's why you are appointed Head TOPEKA Ambassador.

Dear Ed:

I was delighted to hear from a TOPEKA Maru shipmate after so many years. I certainly can't imagine what phone directory you found my name, being way up here in the boonies.

Even today, I still tell my sixth graders sea stories about Captain Rah Rah Rhue, and the forced march up Mount Fugi with "J" "W" Perkins leading the way.

I will always cherish the time I spent on that old vessel. Next to Commander Perkins, my favorite friend and mentor was LT John Bone. Have you been able to contact him?

Ken Hummell (62-65)

Ed Note: Ken, John Bone is in the directory, but we don't hear from him very often. Perhaps you can "get him in automatic."

FIND YOUR BUDDY?

Dudley Cass has recently installed a national white-pages phone directory in his personal com-

puter. Given a last name, first name and initial, there is a good chance that an address and phone number can be found (except for those with unlisted phones). It is difficult to find men using only last name and initials, because there will be many identical entries.

It also helps if you give some idea of what part of the country he might be in, and better yet, the state and city. Send Dudley as much information as you can about someone you would like to locate, and he'll be glad to help. He'll provide you the list of names he comes up with, and you can check them out. Find a TOPEKAMan and you'll get credit for the reunion drawing.

Several of the new names/addresses in the "Welcome Aboard" list resulted from a search in Dudley's phone directory, using names from TOPEKA cruise books.

REMEMBER WHEN . . . ?

We were test firing the weapons (small stuff) off the fantail one day, and I had just finished firing a machine gun when the ship's doctor came up and wanted to fire. Our Gunny instructed me to be his "A" gunner (feed the ammo to the weapon). I had already taken out my ear wax and tossed it overboard and forgot to replace it.

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



The next morning I went to sick call and told Doc my ears were ringing like crazy. He said his were also and for us to wait awhile and see what happened.

Sometime later I was standing post at the entrance to the missile house when the phone rang. The person on the other end (he turned out to be the Sgt.-of-the-Guard) sounded like Donald Duck to me. I thought someone was cutting up and hung up. A couple of minutes later the door burst open and in comes the Sgt.-of-the-Guard and a bunch of Marines with weapons at the ready. Needless to say I got a royal chewing out and I don't think anyone ever realized it was my hearing at fault.

As it turned out, I have about 50 percent loss of hearing in one ear but never applied for disability because it has been more of a blessing than a problem so far, if you know what I mean.

Dennis H. Wright, MARDET (68-69)

Ed Note: Woe unto anyone, especially a sailor, when he happened to be in a passageway as the "React Squad" of Marines made their way to the missile house when something like this happened.

