



Scuttlebutt



A quarterly publication of the USS Samuel
B. Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Association

Volume 19, Number 4

December, 2020



1965

Michael Testa Photo

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Time waits for no man and this year rapidly draws to conclusion. Despite the virus, the infirmities of aging, social upheaval and political unrest, I hope 2020 has been a great year for every shipmate and their families.

In this issue, with the trees in the north country having shed their leaves and year end holidays at hand, we look back and remember Christmas holidays aboard our beloved Roberts. Mom, dad, spouses, and siblings may have been missing but we celebrated and enjoyed the season with a surrogate family, our shipmates.

Our regular contributors will continue to amaze us with salient insights and witty bon mots. They will hopefully continue to grease my palm for heaping praise upon them. There is a plea from a shipmate's son, a shipmate's remembrance and other stuff. Finally, a reunion update is included here-in. Hope you enjoy!!!

Honor Roll

Add

Karl G. Heinze (54-56)

Joe Kuhn (64-66)

Lester “Butch” Manzi (67-69)

Carol Smith (51-54)

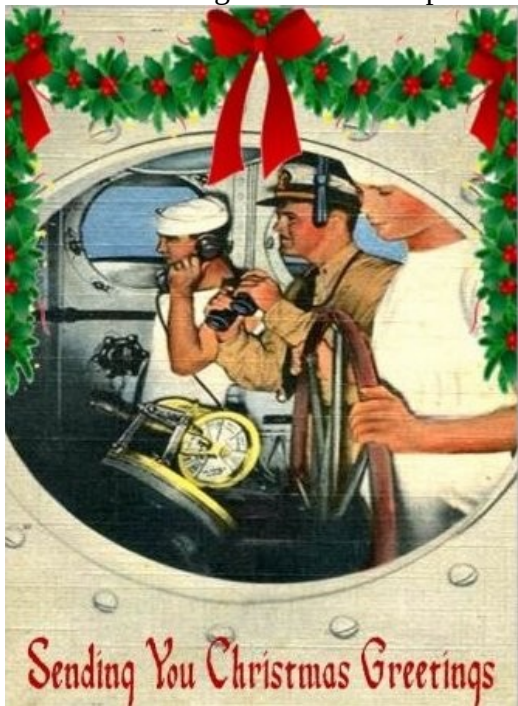
Sigmund Staszewski (51-55)

From the Presidents Desk

Greetings fellow shipmates! Can you believe this is the final issue of the “Butt” for the year 2020? Where has the time gone? If you are wondering if there is something different about this December issue, there is. Usually in the December issue, when a reunion is scheduled for the coming year, a complete schedule of the reunion is included. This year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, minor details remain to be resolved. Therefore, we will hold off printing the details until the spring 2021 issue. Don’t worry, there will still be plenty of time to plan.

Back to Navy stuff! If you recall (for any of us at this stage of the game, that’s not so easy), several issues back I wrote a missive about why U.S. Navy ships were painted gray. At the end of that little tale I hinted at a later follow-up regarding black paint at the waterline. Nothing like being prompt. At least I remembered!!

Just as there is significance to ships being painted gray, so is there significance to black paint below the gray at the waterline. Although unable to find a reason for the black, I did learn the color is called “boot-top”) and is an anti-fouling paint. **(Anti-fouling definition – Of a coating, process, or the like preventing the accumulation of barnacles, algae, etc., on underwater surfaces: The makers now use an anti-fouling chemical on all underwater hulls).** The line is not arbitrarily painted. Black paint is applied to a line that is 12 inches above the ship’s maximum-load waterline. How many of you knew that? This is my understanding from research I have conducted. If anyone can amend or correct my statements, fire away. My feelings will not be hurt. I feel if information is not correct it is misinformation and that is not good.



The past several months have been hard on all of us. This virus has forced us to change our way of living and in many cases has brought about stress and sadness. By the time you receive this, the holidays will be upon us. It is my deepest wish that you and your families will be able to enjoy the season. I wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year.

Ken Friedman

A Christmas Story

It was nearing Christmas, 1965. Roberts and crew were in waters off the coast of Vietnam. Mail was hit and miss at best. We all anxiously awaited holiday packages from home. Finally “Mail call” and I received a big package. Put it on one of the plotting tables in CIC and tore into it. Every delicacy a heart could desire was in that box. Cookies of every kind, brownies, chocolates, pastries, even a cake beckoned. But there was a problem! Delays and temps had caused mold to form and the colors of everything were brighter than the sprinkles on the sugar cookies. Hours of work by my mother and girlfriend had to be tossed over the side. Don’t believe I have gotten over the disappointment to this day. **Jim Norton**



Bird Droppings

Don Eagle

When we first came up with the idea of a newsletter for DD823 veterans, we looked at many different names before arriving at the word “Scuttlebutt.” In retrospect, it was just a natural that we would name it thus. For, according to my book on nautical terms, a scuttlebutt is a cask on deck used for the crews drinking water, and kept over the scuttle for drainage. Lately a scuttlebutt has become a drinking fountain. Because much unauthenticated gossip was exchanged around the drinking fountain, the rumor mill aboard ship came to be known as “scuttlebutt.”

And so, my dear fellow shipmates, we all became participants in conjecture, rumor, and spreading the word on projected events, itineraries, personnel, and just about anything else you can think of. I personally can remember hearing the scuttlebutt on upcoming cruises, destinations, schedules, officer appointments, and just general news. I think you all know what I mean when you think about the way we got word of just about anything. From my time aboard, I remember getting the scuttlebutt on upcoming liberty ports, upcoming exercises, or hell, just about anything upcoming. We of course heard all kinds of information (or misinformation) prior to official notice via the Plan of the Day, Captain’s announcements, or something in print. There was nothing quite like scuttlebutt. For hopes were made, plans were made, and a sort of camaraderie was formed between shipmates, who all “shared” what they thought was going to happen.

And so today, you hold in your hand a communication link that still brings us all together. Information shared, memories retrieved, plans for the future, Only this time, it’s true. It’s not conjecture, it’s not a bunch of wishful thinking.

Happy Holidays

And now for a bit of reminiscing. This issue brings you to memories of Christmas past, of snowflakes on your pea coat as you return to our ship in drydock in Charleston, of a special Christmas menu that the cooks (now known as culinary specialists) offered: Turkey, ham, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, olives, pickles, quartered lettuce, raisin sauce, buttered asparagus, peas, glazed sweet potatoes, fruit cake, pumpkin pie and ice cream. Of course, it was all served on a metal compartmented tray. And standing in a corner of the mess deck was an honest-to-God real Charlie Brown Christmas Tree.

Going home on leave shortly after Christmas, I can remember flying out of Logan in Boston on a four-engine prop job, stopping at Midway in Chicago, changing planes, and continuing on to San Francisco. Of course you were able to smoke on the flight, and being a white-knuckle flier, I sorta maybe have had a few of those little bottles of Scotch between destinations.

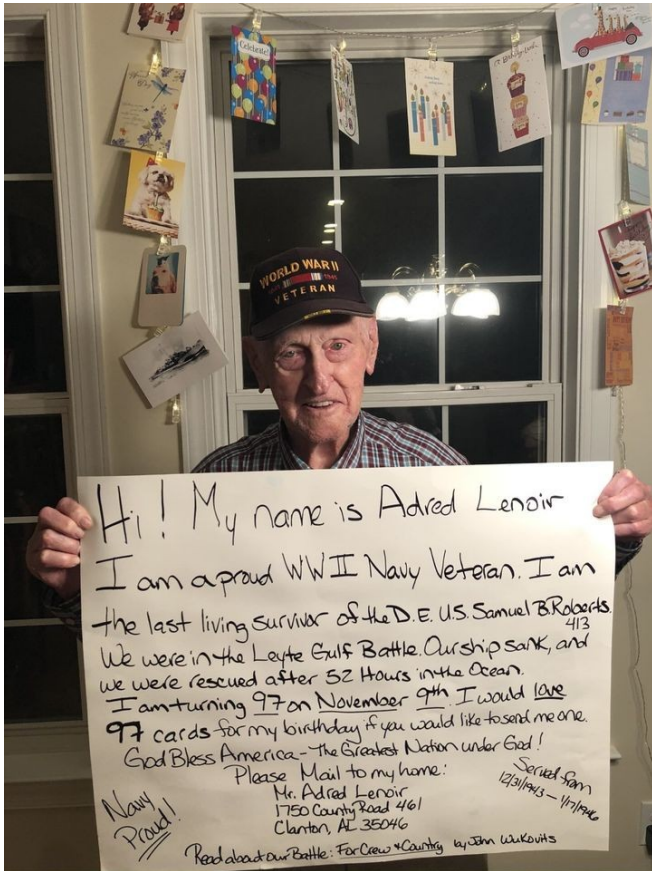
And speaking of cigarettes, I noticed in one of my letters home that I offered to bring home a few cartons, because we were able to get them for (would you believe) eighty cents a carton. Of course selection was limited to Camels, Lucky Strikes and Pall Malls.

Well, time marches on, and we are all left with some really amazing and wonderful memories of time aboard Roberts. At this point I’m hoping that things normalize a bit and that we can meet as a group in our reunion as scheduled. I personally, am looking forward to it – and to seeing y’all once again in person.

Here’s wishing you and your family a truly bright and Merry Christmas, a healthy New Year, and hopes that we may be able to spin a yarn or two around the scuttlebutt soon.

Don

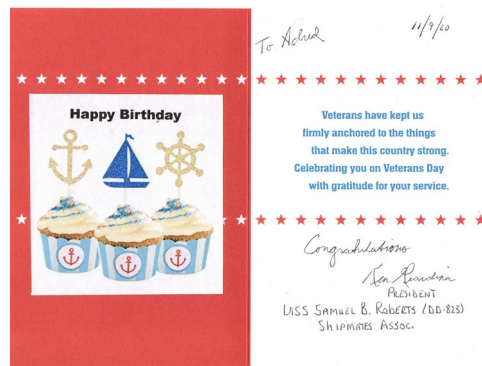
Last Man Standing



Recently we accepted a new member into the Roberts Facebook Group. The new member's name is Erica Hoffman and she was the Executive Officer on the FFG-58 during the ship's decommissioning. She posted the image shown to the left and indicated she would be sending Mr. Lenoir a card, a challenge coin and some additional Samuel B Roberts memorabilia.

In October, 1944, Adred and his shipmates aboard Roberts were part of Taffy 3, a flotilla of destroyers, destroyer escorts and lightly armed escort carriers. On the morning of October 25 they engaged the main Japanese fleet made up of battleships, cruisers, destroyers and numerous support ships. The badly outgunned Americans held their own, sunk several of the larger ships and repulsed the attack. Steaming aggressively through a gauntlet of incoming shells, Roberts scored a torpedo hit and numerous gunfire hits on a battleship. She earned the sobriquet **"The destroyer escort that fought like a battleship."** After being sunk, crew members spent many hours in the water. Here they died from exposure, thirst, shark attack and from simply giving up.

Your association officers thought it would be a fitting gesture to also honor Mr. Lenoir and in so doing pay tribute to all who fought so gallantly on the original Sammy B that day. Ken Giardina sent a card (see below), some reunion coins and a DE-413 muster book. Others also sent cards and books.

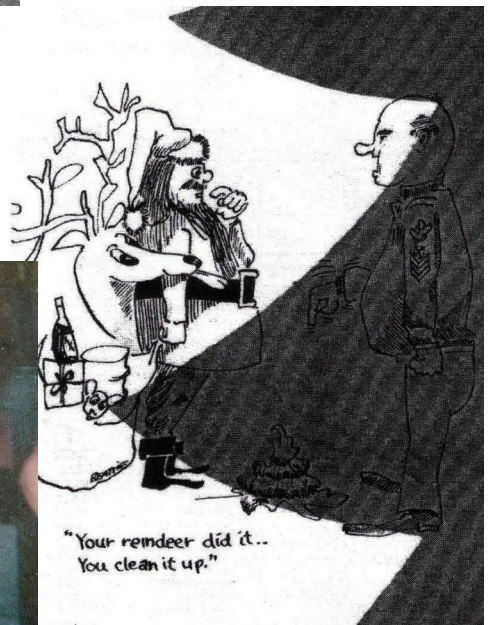
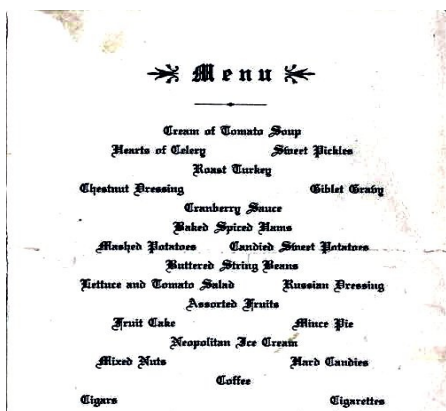


Others sent cards, books and DD-823 memorabilia. Anyone wanting to send a message or greetings at Christmas should do so. We do have a kinship.

Mike Huffman is also a member of our Facebook group. His father, E Glen Huffman, was the second to last survivor and we honor him also. If you are not a Roberts Facebook member, you should be.



Some memories of Christmas past:



Onion Peelings

Mike Cipolla

Happy fall/winter shipmates. With all the quarantines, social distancing, and trying to stay safe, it has been a year of frustration. I want to welcome our new members to the association. Included are Captain Erica Hoffmann, Wallace Conely and Tammy Lee, daughter of shipmate Jack Lee Nickerson. Glad to have you aboard. Sad to report, earlier this year Ray Fisher, plank owner, passed away. The last survivor of the DE-413, Adred Lenoir, just celebrated his birthday, 97 years young. I had the privilege of meeting Glenn Huffman, a 413 survivor, a few years ago. He was a true hero, gentleman and second to last of the survivors. If you have Facebook and are on the Sammy B, DD-823 page, hook up with the FFG-58 Facebook page and also the Sammy B shipmates Facebook page. Lots of great stuff. Don't forget the excellent website edited by Tom Zwemke. Lots of talented people in our association.

I do want to say thanks to Jim Norton for all his hard work in putting together the Scuttlebutt. Collating, publishing and distributing the "BUTT" is truly a major feat. .

Halloween, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be here and gone during this issue of the Butt and I want to wish everyone the best during these times. Please stay safe (wear your mask), practice social distancing and be prepared for 2021.

Mike

Don't Call Me Sir

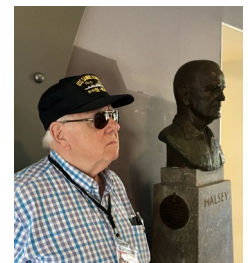
Jim Antenucci

Ready for a sea story? Y'all may remember a few issues back I recounted the stories of a few of our shipmates who as young sailors were approached by a senior PO or chief to change their work and division. Talent was spotted and the sailor was asked if he was interested in being a yeoman, radioman, ICman, etc, The rest is history. This sea story is different. It happens before our shipmate is transferred to Roberts.

A chief approaches the foc'sle amid the sound of hammers chipping away at the deck on a brisk, cool Narragansett day. "Anyone interested in becoming an 'engineer'?" Our intrepid sailor, a seaman deuce, up and salutes the khaki with an enthusiastic "yes, sir." "Don't salute me. I'm not an officer and don't call me 'sir.' I'm a chief." In this situation both are looking at the proposal from a point of self interest. Remember how cold it was in Newport? "Ah, the warm engine rooms." "yes, sir." "Don't call me sir. Follow me." On to the starboard side and a hatch in the main deck. "Go down that ladder and keep going all the way."

At the ladders end, there sits the leading petty officer of the space, coffee cup in hand. Our soon-to-be-engineer moves in his direction, dodging open deck plates where sailors are in the bilges. "What do you want?" "The chief sent me down to be an engineer, sir." "Don't call me sir! Report to that BT3 and do what he says." You know the rest of the story. Chipping paint and cleaning bilges. "But at least it's warm and now I'm a snipe."

Y'all know this shipmate. Here's a picture. He went on to an illustrious career as an "engineer," the lead petty officer in the after fireroom of the USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823), Kevin McKeown, our great association treasurer



The following was sent from Roberts by Charles Fox to his parents.

Dec. 21, 1965

Dear Mom and Dad,

Santa Claus may not be coming to the Roberts this Christmas, but Martha Raye is. She and her troop were flown to the Enterprise yesterday, and today she will be high lined to the ship until she has put on an hour long show and spent an afternoon, with each of us. I never realized what an important gesture it is to send show people to military outposts, but I know now. Just the anticipation of her arrival has made the crew so happy it is hard to believe. It's funny how much real Christmas spirit can be squeezed into such an otherwise austere situation.

It looks like we will be starting for Newport the last week of February, possibly hitting ports like Singapore, Bangkok, Naples and Barcelona. (We didn't make Singapore or Bangkok.)

We are north now, in and out of visual range of Hainan for about a week doing ASW operations. Every other day a Russian trawler comes up to us, weaving in and out of formation, sniffing at one ship, then another. We aggravate her anyway we can. Yesterday we waited until she was down wind, then blew tubes all over her. Right in her wake, wherever she goes, is a little Navy tug. Two can play the same game.

I've been collecting different officer's paperwork theories. Since it is a problem of ours, I'll pass them along for what they're worth. Mike Testa, ASW officer, always has neat desk, and never seems burdened by paperwork. He says, "Anything not absolutely vital to national security, I throw away." Bill Fey, who is of a clerical bent, files it all. He has a neat desk but after a few months it starts to take up a lot of drawer space. The XO routes all of his to someone else, with little attached messages – "Please expedite." Or "Investigate and inform me of results." I put all of it right in front of me in the middle of my desk and worry about it, because what's on top is bad enough, but what's beneath, being hidden, is foul food for my imagination.

Martha Raye is gone now. She was magnificent. She arrived with only a soldier found in some camp who could play mediocre rock and roll guitar, and an army officer. The rest of her troop had headed back to the states. She was worth more than a weeks liberty to the crew.

Happy New Year, if this reaches you by then. Your last letter was postmarked two weeks ago, so I fear mail service is going down hill.

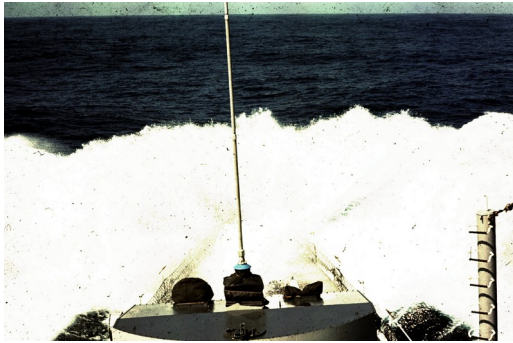
Love
Charlie



Of Ships and Shoes

Jim Antenucci

Long, long ago – the end March – Pandemic is gathering its power. “The wind blows where it pleases. You hear it but you don’t know where it comes from or where it goes.” There is the poor Pope alone in a deserted St. Peter’s Square. Pandemic Times. Will be hearing his blessing Urbi et Orbi – to the city, to the world. Citing Mark’s gospel recount of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, the Pope reminded us of losing faith, of fear for our lives. I was reminded of our lives at sea, our storms, especially the one in December 1963 returning from the Med. I remembered seeing Rembrandt’s only seascape at the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum in Boston – long before it was stolen on St. Patrick’s Day 1990. Poor Miss Gardner – and never to be seen again – only that empty space on the museum wall. I don’t remember praying or trying to wake Jesus with a “Don’t you care if we drown?” In the painting the brightest light focuses on some sailors, forward, reefing sails, securing lines or hanging on for dear life. Yet six disciples in the stern huddle around the sleeping Jesus, barely visible in low light, to wake him. One on the rudder and one blowing lunch. My storm days on SBR were hanging on for dear life. I relied on God, Buships, and days earlier, Dramamine! On watch in CIC with RD2 Burke who could always be relied upon for a calming word: “What’s the matter Mr. Antenucci? Not talking while the flavor lasts?”



Back to the Pope. He exhorted faith in Pandemic times. Little did we know how long faith and hope would be required in these troubled times. And he did so more gently than an irritated Jesus, awakened by the weak faith of his followers, to calm the sea and wind.

All this got me to thinking about Jesus and the sea on a more recent Sunday in the lectionary. You all know the other famous story. It even made its way to officer fitreps – a “water walker.” It’s the Sea of Galilee again – another evening squall. Matthew is the writer now. The boat has gone on ahead on the sea known for quick changing weather and sudden squalls. The sea is quite small, 13 miles by 8 miles. This time the ship was in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves for the wind was contrary. The disciples were straining at their oars. Pop! “And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water.” Remember our friend Leonard Cohen. Jesus deals with an impetuous Peter who starts out of the boat but loses faith when he sees the wind. Then we hear another exhortation to faith. Yes, I believe the pandemic will end. By the time this goes to press? Probably not. “Fear not” and “Do not be afraid.” It was fun to see the different rendition in John’s gospel. No Peter, just a fast walking Jesus overtaking the boat and shouting, “Don’t be afraid, it is I” All I could think of was that John’s mother – a good Jewish mother - may have told him, “If you want a better place at the table leave Peter out. He gets enough coverage.”

I sit here writing under a wall tile that my mother gave me during my seagoing days. “A sailor’s prayer – Dear Lord, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small.” Didn’t we observe the majesty of the sea in our days? The awesome sea. All my life I had been near the sea, yet here I am now, elderly and vulnerable, in Georgia as far from the sea as I have ever lived. But I still love the mystery, the majesty of the sea. The standing in, the standing out of port. The gentle sea, the terrible sea testing Buships, the sailors and officers that “go down to the sea in ships.”

Jim A



Joe Kuhn



I remember SN Joe Kuhn. He was in First Div. while I was the navigator during the Rankowski days. In March 1965, SBR headed for an overhaul at Boston Naval Shipyard. Not much chance Kuhn and I would get to know each other better. No chance at all! But Captain Rankowski always had some plan swirling around in his brain. You had to know him.



Here's the plan Mr. Antenucci. "You are to go to the Philadelphia NSY along with our oil king, BT3 John Matarazzo, to cannibalize spare parts from the inactive mothball fleet." "Aye, aye sir. What did he say? How do I get there? I don't have a car, let alone a driver's license (typical New Yorker)." BT 3 not cleared to drive Navy vehicle. Enter SN Kuhn. Ready, willing and able, cleared for a host of Navy equipment.

Interesting trip – Boston to Philly and back – with no tangible results but I did learn a few things. Navy vehicles were equipped with speed governors. With the steady Kuhn at the helm, the Jersey Turnpike had little or no patience with a 50 MPH Navy vehicle. One guy zoomed by well over the speed limit. A little later we passed his wreck on the side of the Turnpike.

That's how I got to know and appreciate SN Kuhn. He was not a sharp sailor in his uniform but sailors come in all shapes, sizes, talents and degrees of spiffyness. A good reliable sailor. Ready for sea as we used to say. We just learned of his passing. We also learned that besides the Roberts Vietnam deployment, he made four more tours to Vietnam or its coastal waters. Rest on your oars, sailor, **Jim A**

Fun Quiz

Hopefully this little quiz will provide a pleasant diversion for all you Sammy B swabbies. Jim Antenucci has provided 3 photos. Under each will be a question or questions about them. Answer the questions to Jim Antenucci at jimanten@gmail.com or Jim Norton at jjjo1944@comcast.net. Correct responses will be recognized in the next issue of this newsletter. Have fun!



1



2



3

- 1 – Name of ship? Name of City? Year?
- 2 – Name of horn player?
- 3 – Where? Year?

Carol Smith – Did you know Carol Smith. We received the following from his son, Greg Marlar.

Ahoy sailors of the USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823),

My father Carol L Smith, served aboard Roberts from 1951 to 1954. During his time on board he had several close friends. I regret not talking to my dad more about his Navy experience and would like to know more.

My biological father passed away in 1960 right after I was born. Carol married mom, a woman with 3 small boys. Although he never adopted us, he was the only father I ever knew and he raised us as his own. He was a man who made sure his children enjoyed their childhoods and had opportunities he ever dreamed of. I am not ashamed to say that **NO** man I have ever met was my father's equal. I admired his strong faith in God, his joy for life and love for others. Carol Smith (Dad) passed away October 2019. His funeral was widely attended and he received a very respectful burial. I am now reaching out to any and all shipmates that may have known him. I would really like to talk to you. Contact me at 1482 South 975 Rd. Council Grove, KS 66846 or gtmarlar@mail.com. Respectfully Greg Marlar

Photos of Carol Smith will appear in the next Scuttlebutt. Sorry but I ran out of space in this one.

Dues – 2021 membership renewal date is January 1. The dues collected ensure this Scuttlebutt gets to you. Send your check in the amount of \$15 to USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Assn. Mail to Kevin Mckeown, 47 Long Beach Drive, Sound Beach, NY 11789.



Ship's Store – Get your Sammy B themed merchandise for Christmas from Carol Green who runs our ship's store. She carries a variety of items like hats, tees, sweatshirts, hoodies, etc. Reach Carol at egreen4392@comcast.net. Order form also available on website samuelbroberts.org. Order early!

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Website/Facebook Page – Check out our web page at samuelbroberts.org. It is a source for all things DD-823. Also, you can become interactive on our Facebook page, USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Association. Join now and join the discussion.



Sammy B. Scuttlebutt

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Shipmates Association

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