

Scuttlebutt

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

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My guess is that it has been a rough three months for all. I hope each of you and your loved ones are weathering the virus outbreak in good spirits and are healthy and well. I personally am going “bats.” It is probable I have always been headed in that direction but the accelerator is now fully depressed. After years of complaining, I actually want to go to the market and go for a haircut. Sitting in a restaurant, enjoying lunch, will never again be taken for granted. Our world has changed and we can but hope it will return to some semblance of what was.

Even the plans for our Boston 2021 Reunion tours are not finalized. Well, they are but our bus and tour operator was ordered to shut down by the State of Massachusetts before they could get the written contracts to us. We have a lot of time and I expect things to normalize soon. Complete details on the tour packages will be provided in the December issue of this missive.

Most of you are aware that we are not the youngest of groups. Over the past few years, our membership has been declining at an alarming rate. Therefore it is with great pleasure that I announce two new members, Thomas Heisner and James Carlisle. Both were ship-fitters during the mid 1960s and were located by Jim Dunn. **Welcome Aboard!**

All the thrilling content from our talented staff writers will be featured on the following pages. There will also be information relative to the hotel for the Boston reunion, some member correspondence and a few unexpected surprises. So put on your masks, make sure your spouse stays at least six feet away, wash your hands a half dozen times and enjoy.

Honor Roll

Add

Ray Fisher (plank owner)

Merrill G. Smock (56-58)



From the Presidents Desk

To all my shipmates, putting normalcy aside, I wish to extend to all during this very difficult time my most sincere and deepest prayer for the safety and wellness of all. We are in the midst of perhaps the most difficult time of our lives and I urge everyone to please be vigilant of your surroundings and to follow the guidelines being issued your by local health officials. If we all pitch in and do our part, we will get through this

and be back on the high seas once again.

While my intention in this edition’s column was to refrain from my usual ins and outs, sadly there is one other item that I feel compelled to mention. It was brought to my attention by our treasurer, Keven McKeown and references a certain email that he received whose contents should be made public. It was sent to him with the appearance of coming from me. Contents are as follows:

“From Ken Giardina, President president.post10@gmail.com Subject: Re: Favor needed PLS. I am in a conference meeting right now as I would be working till late midnight and need you to get me some gift cards. Could you pick up a few Steam Gift Cards for me. When I’m done with the meeting I will reimburse you.”



The email was an attempt to fish Kevin into doing something that would scam money from him and used me as the bait. This was not the first time this scheme has been tried. I know personally that it was tried on me when Jim Antenucci was president. Everyone, please be advised that this Association will **NEVER**, under any circumstance attempt to solicit money from any member. If a drive or program is ever to be held, it will be on behalf of the Association, with payment going to the Association. In addition, in the event of such a program, details will be provided to the membership well in advance of program start. If you receive an email of this nature do not respond to it. Please forward it to me.

Till the next issue of the “Butt,” hopefully under better circumstances, please everyone be careful, stay well and be safe.

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In the last issue off this newsletter the names of CDR Richard Henry White and CDR Robert Earle Hawthorne were transposed in the listing of DD-823 Commanding Officers. Capt. White commanded Jan. 54 to April 56 and Capt. Hawthorne from April 56 to May 57.

On May 1, the Navy announced contracts for up to 10 new FFGs. The Roberts name may return.

Bird Droppings

By Don Eagle

The old calendar on the wall tells me that this year marks the 75th birthday of DD-823. Wow! Her keel was laid in June, 1945, and she was launched in November of the same year – meaning it took only 5 months to build her. She was launched in November 1945, and was decommissioned exactly 25 years later in November, 1970. This year marks the 50th anniversary of her demise.

The **ROBERTS** had a complement of 345. Considering that the average age of the crew was around 20, that means that those plankowners would now be around 95. Guys who were assigned to the ship at the tail end of her career would now be in their 70's. And considering that the average time served aboard was around two years, that would indicate to me that – let's see now, 25 years of being commissioned divided by two (years) and multiplied by 345 personnel, means that during the life of the ship, some 4,140 sailors served aboard the Roberts. Realizing that not ALL of the crew members were approximately 20, what with senior officers, chiefs, and career regular navy guys, the average age would need to be adjusted somewhat. And, considering that I remember we had 282 people aboard when I was on the Roberts, that might knock down the number of people to somewhere around 3525, and up the average age to somewhere in the mid-twenties.

When we met in Jacksonville (2009), I recounted a bit of history of the Samuel B. Roberts. In all, three ships bore the name: The DE413, DD823 and FFG58. Two of those ships are at rest at the bottom of the sea. One, the (DE-413) in the Pacific and ours (DD-823) in the Atlantic. The third (FFG-58) was retired in 2015, and resides at the Philadelphia Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility. Assuming that each had a complement of around 200, that their lives were approximately 6 months (DE-413) and 30 years (FFG-58), my guess is that you could add another 3,215 sailors who have served aboard one of the three SBR's. That gives a grand total of approximately 6,740 men who, over a 71 year period, trod the decks of a ROBERTS.

In reviewing Jim Norton's excellent two-volume set of books on the 823, I was captivated by the personal stories of so many shipmates. I had to laugh when I checked out the pay scale of the enlisted men – I was making the princely sum of \$144.00 a month. That figure, along with the list of clothing prices for Chiefs, were pretty incredible: Chambray shirts \$1.35, black shoes \$5.45, socks 25 cents per pair, dungaree pants \$1.60, dress blue jumper \$9.20, peacoat \$24.00 and underwear 45 cents per pair. To take a stroll down memory lane, check out not only Mr. Norton's books, but read up on Wikipedia as well.

Well, its been 50 years since the good old 823 was retired, and obviously a lot has changed. Prices have gone up, the cold war is over, but the Navy continues to be an important part of our defense system.

The COVID 19 virus has essentially changed us all in the few short months we've encountered it. It not only impacted the way we live, but has been pretty interesting to watch our heritage, our US Navy, come to grips with not only the virus, but the new challenges to our defense by other nations. The carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, the SECNAV, gunboats in the Hormuz strait, the new Chinese aircraft carrier and territorial claims in the South China Sea are all keeping our Navy at the forefront of what is happening, all while fighting off a pandemic such as we've never encountered before.

So with that, I'll sign off, wishing you all good health, now and in the future, as well as throwing a 75th year salute to the grand old lay we all called home so many years ago, and a special "job well done" to all who ever sailed aboard her. Whether you're in your 70's or 90's, our country owes you a debt of gratitude for that time of your life you devoted to keep your country safe, secure, and free.

May you have fair winds and following seas.

Don



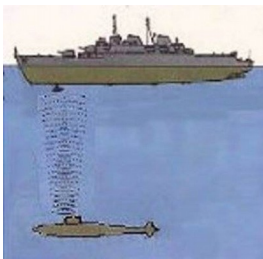
Onion Peelings

Mike Cipolla

Well I hope everyone has battened down the hatches and is staying healthy and safe. These are certainly times to try men’s souls. We will survive this and come out stronger for it. I was saddened to report we lost another shipmate and plank owner. Ray Fisher passed during the quarantine and even though we lived very close to each other, I could only pass mine and the Association condolences via email and phone. Ray was extremely proud of the Roberts and his Navy buddies. Not sure how many plank owners are left. Jim Norton or Kevin may know.

One of the good things about being quarantined is that I get to go over all my Navy memorabilia and pictures. Great to look at old pictures of prior reunions. My reunion stuff goes back to 2001 in Newport. I look at the pictures and am amazed that no one has really changed in 20 years. We just keep getting better looking.

I need to congratulate our new officers and wish them well. The Association is in good hands and will continue to move forward. Losing shipmates is never easy and there may come a time when we have to merge with the FFG58. On a side note, the “scuttlebutt” is that a new Roberts may be coming down the line. Wow! Terrific! The FFG58 is in the Navy Yard in Philly and if you are in the area, it’s a great place to see her. One final thing: The FFG58 has a Facebook page similar to ours. It is both interesting and informative. Take a look at it because it is a namesake, as is the DE413. Stay safe, secure and healthy.



Echoes

Jim Norton



As the CoVid 19 Virus drags on and I saw it’s effect on two Navy ships, USS Roosevelt and USS Kidd, I got to wondering how the US Navy was impacted by the Spanish Flu of 1918. Turns out, significantly. Navy doctors of the period preached to all personnel, from the rawest recruits to the most senior flag officers, the need for hand washing and, where possible, a form of social distancing. Despite its best efforts, Navy medicine had mixed success containing the epidemic.

In 1918, Naval medical facilities admitted 121,225 Navy and Marine Corps patients with influenza. Of these patients, 4158 die and the sick spent more than one million sick days in hospital. Navy medical personnel were familiar with smart practices and decried sailor’s habits of “promiscuous spitting” to keep hygiene and sanitation standards high and reduce the risk of contagion.

Jim

Mail Call



Dear Shipmates

It was the summer of 1955 when I put in my papers to go from active reserve to active duty. The reserve center offered a number of choices and sent me to the Naval yard at Philadelphia. It was here I found my color vision to be a little off which prevented me from trying to become a pilot. At the ripe old age of 18, I knew my life was over.

New orders came assigning me to the USS Samuel B Roberts DD823 in Newport, RI. As I walked up the gangplank a CPO named Dan Woodson approached and asked if I would like to strike for Quartermaster. I accepted and a new friendship was born. I was assigned to QM3 Ken Anderson for training. I quickly learned Morse code and could send and receive at the 12 words per minute. There were only two other guys that could send faster by flashing light so I found myself standing top watch as a seaman apprentice.

One day while sitting on the flag bag, drinking a cup of coffee and standing watch, a petty officer from the galley came up to me and informed me I had been assigned as a mess cook. I was wiping down tables and trays when Chief Woodson came in and reamed me a new one for leaving my post. I apologized and told him the first class cook had told me I was next on the mess cooking list. I learned a few new Navy words as Chief explained what would happen if he pulled any of his personnel without clearing it with him.

We had trips to Pensacola to provide plane guard and to the Charleston ship yards for repairs. Finally I had my first foreign country liberty when Captain White requested permission from the Commodore for a visit to Havana for setting a new shore bombardment record.

We were scheduled for a Med cruise in November but it was moved up to September. It was the start of a grand odyssey that will be forever remembered by me and all my shipmates. I still recall places visited and people met. In later life my job took me to Europe and the Far East. It was then I realized what a great adventure Roberts had provided.

I keep trying to make a reunion but the years keep passing and Arizona is a little distance to travel.

Ken Buss

QM3/SM3

1955/1957

Dear Shipmates

I hope all is well with everyone. I attended my first reunion last year and look forward to Boston. I am stuck in my house on a raw, windy day. What better time to write about one of my experiences on the Roberts. It is a sea story that happened over a half century ago. Anyone involved is either dead or can't remember.

Following in my Grandfather's, Father's and Mother's sea service footsteps, I enlisted in the Naval Reserves in Sept. of '64. Program at the time called for two years reserve time followed by two years active duty.

Advancement to seaman, among other things, involved two ACDUTRA's, allowing to report to active duty as a seaman. Due to Vietnam, I was called to active duty six months early and assigned to Roberts as a on-striker seaman. I reported aboard as part of the replacement crew when Roberts got back from the Vietnam cruise in '66. As a non-rate, I was assigned to the deck force, 1st div. After a couple of months in the deck force, while doing "decky" things, TM2 Trickel tapped me on the shoulder and asked me if I wanted to be a Torpedoman. I can't remember how many seconds it took me to reply in the affirmative but it wasn't many.

I was assigned to Fox Div. which also consisted of Sonarmen and ASROC gunners. As they require additional training, by the time they report to their commands, many are already rated. Fox Div. did not have many non-rates. Each division on the Roberts was required to provide a non-rate mess cook for a three month period. Fox Div. because of the number of non-rates, provided a mess cook for one month periods.

When it was my turn to mess cook, Roberts was assigned to sonar training in Key West. As it was late summer, early fall it was rather warm – actually stifling hot. I was a "sweater" and felt the heat. My job as mess cook was to keep the steam line supplied and serve the food. Remember, the galley was on the main deck and the steam line and mess deck were a deck below. That means I had to balance a hot greasy tray of mystery meat from the galley oven, stepping over the coaming to the main deck, doing a 180 to the hatch to the steam line, ducking the hatch while stepping over the coaming going down the ladder and turning again to the steam line. I had to do all of that while balancing that damn tray. Like I said, I perspire. Balancing a hot tray of grease on the bounding main was hard work and my clothes showed it. Every time I would duck the hatch while stepping over the coaming, my head would be over the food, and I would perspire into whatever food I was carrying. It wasn't always just at the hatch. A pitching, rolling ship like ours provided many places where my head would be over the food in my transit to the steam line. It was my daily routine, especially at dinner and supper: Duck, perspire, serve, repeat!

I had a concern about this but noticed no one getting sick and figured the grease killed off any foreign substance that fell into it. Then again, maybe it was God's way of putting more salt into the food to help prevent heat exhaustion, especially in the tropics, thus supporting Roberts readiness.

When my mess cooking time was up, I went back to Fox Div. secure in the knowledge that no one had died while I mess cooked. We rotated mess cooking among the non-rates and my turn was again approaching. But lady luck (and lots of studying) intervened and I made 3rd class, thus escaping another turn in the mess.

Phil Piccola

**TM3
1966/1968**

Dear Shipmates

I just learned of the passing of our shipmate Bill Rost. I remember Bill Rost well and to me this is sad and shocking news.

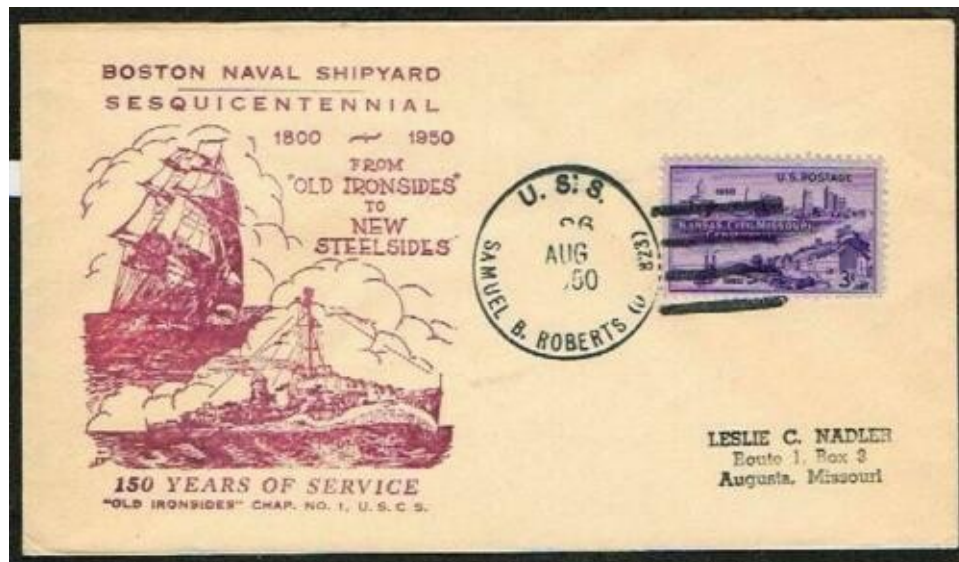
I remember him from reunions, Branson and Dulles/DC. I remember him as one of my earliest welcomers to the Sammy B. I knew he was a sharp cookie and he had a title I had never heard – The Oil King! I wondered what that meant. He took me on a late night tour, at the behest and courtesy of Lt. John Terry, Chief Engineer. Tanks – oil, water and more, chains and reports. I learned that BT3 Rost didn't order the oil but came up with the numbers that made their way daily to the Captain (who did order the oil).

At Branson, I realized that he and Sandy were good friends with John and Ellie Rosevear. When one of our morning entertainments ended, they were on their way to lunch. For old times sake, Bill invited me along. Since Pat had not accompanied me to Branson, I was happy to join them. Without my ubiquitous camera, I ponied up for a table photo. Alas, neither Bill nor John were ready to come to our side of the table: results, smiling Jim with Ellie and Sandy.

We all met again at Dulles in 2015. Times had changed and Pat was still “lyin low” courtesy of a wandering storm heading north along the coast. But things were different. Sandy was in the early throes of her condition. Bill was distracted by this and they had to leave early. One thing I learned at that reunion was ow proud Bill was of a son who had risen through the Army enlisted ranks to become a Command Master Sergeant and was about to retire. I felt Sandy was in good hands. A few short emails later, Bill and I left off our comms but I thought, oh well, perhaps Newport would bring us together again. It was not to be.

Back to the start of our Navy times, the friendly Oil King, BT3 Bill Rost and I parted company shortly after SBR’s return from a cruise to the friendly climes of the Caribbean following the heavy weather and cold winds of Argentinia. All a mere six months. With his enlistment up but before he left Roberts, Bill insured that he had trained another talented sailor and boilerman, BT3 John Matarazzo, as the OIL King.

As I left the 2015 Dulles Reunion, I thought that surely Sandy would predecease Bill. But it was not to be. A sad farewell to a shipmate.



Dear Shipmates

II was recently made aware of the death of Bill Rost. Bill and I were best fiends despite the taboo of guys from the boiler room associating with those from sonar. Actually, after the Navy, Bill and I went back to school together at Central Michigan University. Bill excelled in his studies and went on to earn a master’s degree. He and Sandy were with Ellie and I when we got married. I am very sad to lose a friend like Bill. Stay safe everyone.

John Rosevear

Of Ships and Shoes

Jim Antenucci

It is a privilege to be given free rein to write what I think and then have it printed for shipmates to read. Or breeze over. Or dismiss. Our Shipmates Association has many talented writers. You may join them. I have read them. They have things to say about our lives at sea. It could be anything. Just steer a course clear of Scylla and Charybdis – personal venom, politics, religion, unseemly stories. You may find yourselves in print, bumping off these pages the pontificating or know-it-all. Try it. You may like it. I do. So her I go for this quarter.

“When I have fears that I may cease to be before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain.”

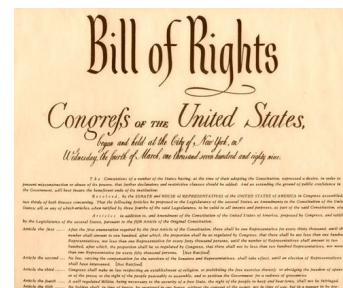
Good lines “In a time of cholera” or now in a time of Covid 19.

Here I write on day 45 of our national lapse wondering where we will be when you actually receive your Scuttlebutt on day 75. So while I write, elderly and vulnerable in Georgia, I my succumb to West Nile Virus carried by newborn mosquitoes lurking and waiting in my garden! It took a dear friend and neighbor two years ago. So! Who knows? Why worry like poor Keats? Or in the words of the immortal Alfred E. Neuman, “What? Me Worry?” We may be carried off by some Fifth Column already in our veterans’ bodies. Or tornadoes. You get the picture.

In this odd time of our national life, I have been thinking about the Bill of Rights. A few years back in these pages I looked at my oath as I joined the Navy – to support and defend the Constitution. Hmmm, did I do that? Yes, Jim, you did, and so did all of you. What a Constitution! Many years ago I read in some august journal that an egghead in Cambridge suggested we had a poor Constitution and it needed to be changed. I always thought we had a marvelous document that was born, in terrible labor pains, in those years after the Revolutionary War. “Should we do it now or wait until we have a perfect document?” “Do we need safeguards not enumerated in the initial proposal?” “Why do we need amendments? The protections against a tyrannical central government are already there.” On and on. The Federalist papers were written and printed in a free press to persuade the hesitant. It was decided. The constitution first. Let’s get a government and then work on the peoples’ concerns.



I recently heard a governor when questioned on national tv if he thought about the Bill of Rights when he instituted some of the pandemic restrictions in his state. His answer is what brought all this to mind. “The Bill of Rights. That’s above my pay grade. I wasn’t thinking of the Bill of Rights.” Hmmm. This is not a history. I am not a historian. What it caused me to do is to go to some old books around my house to refresh my memory. What were the founders thinking? We are accustomed to hearing about the Second Amendment all the time, due process, freedoms of the press and religion, but the one which caught my attention now is “the right of the people peacefully to assemble, and petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Haven’t we seen much of that from Day 30 thru Day 45? One case even waits at the Supreme Court for decision. What is everyone upset about? It really doesn’t matter. The matter is that the people have peacefully assembled to petition the government – in these



instances the states – for redress of grievances: lockdown, quarantine, ineptitude, what may be sold, what may not, what’s open, what’s not, who says? What is clear is that peaceable assemblies may not be shut down. They will and must be heard. The assemblies are protected by our Constitution. What a great system.

My teeming brain is running into my screaming editor. The editor wins. Space decides. You have seen my thoughts. Yours may be better. Remember, space decides when you write.



Our Webmaster Speaks

Tom Zwemke



I took the image on the left on Sunday February 24 at the US Navy Memorial reflecting on our enshrinement we held on October 3 of last year. On Monday February 25-26 I attended a week long PBS Summit on supporting Public Media. There was no mention of Corona virus at the summit or on Capitol Hill in my meetings. A week later our world began to change.

Looking back over seventy six plus years I feel very lucky to have had the life I have lived. What gives me strength as I’m sure gives most of you strength is our time and experiences on board the Sammy B. Through hurricanes, typhoons and all the events in between, those were the best years along with all our reunions and friendships. Lucky me! So shipmates, hang tight and we’ll see each other in Boston next year.

Hope you are all doing well.



U. S. Navy Flu Pandemic 1918



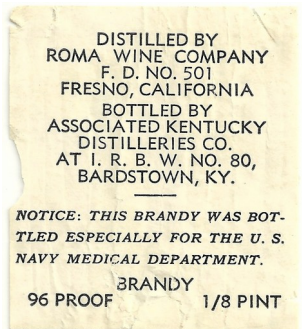
Crew Submissions



Submitted by John Sells



Submitted by Jim Antenucci



Submitted by Larry Edwards

ARMED FORCES LIBERTY PASS	SERVICE USN	DATE ISSUED 29 JUL 66
LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL EDWARDS, Larry P.		CARD NO. -----
SERVICE NO. 779 24 27	GRADE—RATE PO3(E-4)	
ORGANIZATION—INSTALLATION—BASE USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (DD823)		
TIME LIMITS NONE		
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF ISSUING OFFICER <i>[Signature]</i> C. P. FOREDA, LCDR, USN, XO		
DD(N)-345 1 April 1950		16-63060-1 GPO

Submitted by Larry Edwards



Stay Safe



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Shipmates Association

USS Samuel B. Roberts (DD823)

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