

SCUTTLEBUTT



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

Shipmates Association

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December 2017



Our long awaited Going Home Reunion in Newport, RI has come and gone but what a momentous event it was. About 100 shipmates and guests got together over 4 days and celebrated like it was 50 or 60 years ago. Everyone had a fantastic time, and many are already looking forward to our next venue, Annapolis, MD. In this issue are the reflections of some attendees as well as lots and lots of photos. Hope you enjoy!

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**Please add the following shipmates
to the Honor Roll:**

Capt. Wm. R. Glaser (65-66)

Ronald J Nichols (54-56)

Al Pizzi (48-52)

Harvey G. Wahl (47-51)

From the President's Desk

Christmas is coming. By the time you read this, Thanksgiving and daylight savings will be behind us. We have much to be thankful for – national security, food and a successful reunion.

Newport was good to us – beautiful weather and a great reunion. In our seagoing days, I think Newport was mostly good to us also.

A few words of thanks from your association president: your officers – Mike Cipolla for keeping things on an even keel, for being an auctioneer extraordinaire, and for his work in stocking the hospitality room. Kevin McKeown for keeping a close eye on our finances and all-around reunion care. Jim Norton our hotel liaison-hotels and dining. Ken Giardina for the reunion coin and manning the registration desk, and Jim Cruce for ably performing the chaplain duties. A president couldn't ask for a better team.

We had a wonderful turnout – members and first-time attendees. Mike, our basso profundo, drummed auction fever to new highs and our total to a record \$1356. Lots of excited bidding.

The NAVSTA tour and visit to our old piers, courtesy of the PAO Officer, Lisa Rama, and a great presentation by BMC Medina was a wonderful treat. The Mayor of Newport, Harry Winthrop, dropped in at our welcome buffet, offered a few words and fielded our questions.

There were two wonderful and heartfelt readings at our banquet. Kyle Senk read his father's shipmate, Ralph Senk's, letter to his grandsons about his Navy experience. Ken Giardina left us speechless with a memorial to Roberts and to the "officers and sailors" who stood the watch.

I must end. Even your president must abide by the dictates of his editor, Jim Norton.

Two last items. Thanks to all who helped during the four days especially Jim Dunn who worked all around the hospitality room even though no one asked, he just did it and he was always there for a shipmate in need of a helping hand. I only heard one complaint about the reunion: no dancing! We'll work on it for Annapolis 2019.



Fearless Leader

Bird Droppings

By Don Eagle

The Soul of a Sailor

Well, the Newport Reunion is now history. It was a time to not only see old friends, but to make new ones. Our biennial get-together is a very special time, one filled with tours, events, the auction, dinners, memorials, and of course, the Hospitality Lounge. But it is also a very special time when each of us reflects on our own time in the Navy, our experiences, our hopes, dreams, plans, and memories. I like to think of it as reflecting on the soul of a sailor.

How many years has it been since you walked the decks of the Roberts? How many years has it been since you left the Navy? I'll bet that things have changed a lot for you in the intervening years, right? So, after all these years, why do you have memories of things that happened so long ago? Why do you still seem drawn to the sea, to ships, and can still use the language and skills related to your Navy days?

I don't know where you came from, whether it was from the plains of Wyoming, the coast of California, Minnesota, Texas, or any of the states on the Atlantic seaboard. There was one thing that had a commonality: you wanted to be in the Navy. You wanted to see the world. You had curiosity and respect for the sea. You had a respect for our country that today one calls patriotism. That love of the sea is not only the tie that binds, but the glue that holds our shipmate's association together. For it was in the Navy that we met friends, shared experiences, learned just what it meant to be a sailor. It was the shared experience of good times from oh so long ago.

Today many of those old friends are gone. Yet. Yet. Yet the soul of the sailor still yearns for the love of the sea. In every day speech you continue to use the language you used so long ago. When visiting a port, you automatically look out to sea, searching for ships on the horizon. You innately feel the roll of the ship no matter what kind of craft you board. You feel at one with God's creation. You see, it's really deep-seated.

For many of us, our Navy days were eye-openers. Not mentioning any names, but I know of several guys who came aboard with a sort of hell-on-wheels personality, and left with a totally different attitude. The Navy changed you for the better, and your love for the sea grew stronger even when the short-timers list indicated it was time to move on. The years may have rolled by, but the soul of a sailor – your soul – never stopped it's affinity with the seas.

Through the years I have written this column and have often quoted poets. Not something that is particularly up the street of the average sailor. But somehow these guys have tapped into the sailor's soul with incisive wit, uncanny understanding, and a flair for painting a picture with words. Perhaps my very favorite has been "Sea Fever" by John Masefield:

"I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely seas and the sky. And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by. And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking, and a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking."

It kind of reminds you of being on the bridge during heavy weather, watching the waves crash over the bow, or throwing off the lines to the pier and heading out to sea. There's nothing quite like it. Anyway, I used the last few lines of this poem in my tribute to Frank Green two years ago:

"And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over."

I think that the bottom line is really about your own internal romance with the sea. If you go on a cruise, I'd be willing to bet that you relive your passion of looking out to sea, thanking God for the creation of an awesome sunset, to experience the "roll" of the hull or watching the flag snap in the breeze, to sense the fresh, bracing wind or marvel at the phosphorous wake. Take a time-out moment and reflect on how the salt water that runs through your veins is your direct connection with all that is, has been, and ever will be.

Then you will realize that you have the soul of a sailor.

Don

Onion Peelings

I have been sitting here and rehashing our recent reunion in Newport, RI. It was a special time for me and even though the town has changed dramatically, it was a very nostalgic trip. I tried to envision Thames Street, the YMCA, and of course the bars and tattoo parlors. It was difficult to do and as the saying goes; "You can't go home again." The reunion was great and as usual many thanks go to Kevin, Jim, Jim, Jim, and Ken. Also, thank you Leon and Florence McCoy for making a special effort to be at the reunion. Great to see you both. We were blessed with good weather and the tours, hotel, and banquets were super. Special thanks to Newport Mayor Harry Winthrop who graciously gave up part of his evening to join us at the welcoming festivities.

At the business meeting all current officers were reelected to their positions for another two-year term. In 2019, we are returning to Annapolis, MD where I believe our first reunion was held. It should be another great time. Personally, I love the DC area: Museums, museums, museums. Maybe we can sit in on a session of Congress.

Holidays are coming so enjoy your friends and family and stay warm and healthy. One more thing! I don't want to forget the ladies that helped us throughout the reunion. You are indeed special!

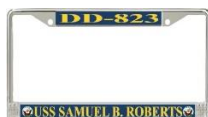
Chris Cipullo

On the Scope

Hi all! By now everyone should be home safe and sound following our reunion. I hope everyone had a great time and for all who were unable to attend for whatever reason, I sincerely urge you to start making plans for the next one, to be held in Annapolis, MD. If it turns out anything like Newport, it will be a memory to live on. Each reunion seems to get better and better for me but this one was extra special. I have been to every reunion since the Virginia Beach reunion in 2003, with the exception of the one in DC which I was unable to attend due to my wife's illness. I have always had a great time. I can remember my very first one and how disappointed I was that the only other attendees that I served with were our CO, Ray Ward and our XO, Al Hennessy. Not exactly buddies of mine. However, by the time the reunion ended, I discovered new shipmates whom I look forward to seeing at each subsequent reunion. This year's reunion was a little different. For the first time I had the happy fortune of sharing the reunion with two shipmates who were on board with me and with whom I had actually been friends. We were able to rehash so many things during our time together and it really made our memories come alive once again. It made Newport just a little more special. I would like to express personal thanks to everyone who worked so hard in putting the event together. I do not know if everyone is aware of the time and planning that is required. Without the efforts of key guys (and gals), these reunions would not be so successful. In closing, the holidays are upon us and I would like to wish everyone the BEST!!

Ken Giardina

Association member Tony Ramos sports a DD-823 license on his car in Texas. He knows others either have a Roberts related tag or tag holder. He thinks it might be fun to do a feature in the Scuttlebutt. I agree! Anyone with a Roberts related license or plate holder is asked to take a photo and send it to Jim Norton for inclusion in the next newsletter. Should be fun!



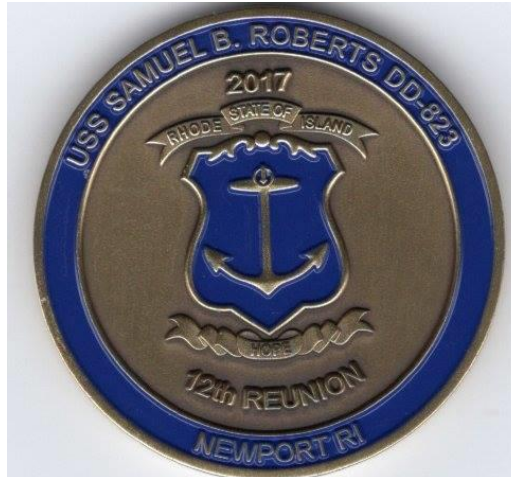
2017 Reunion Photos

Newport, RI

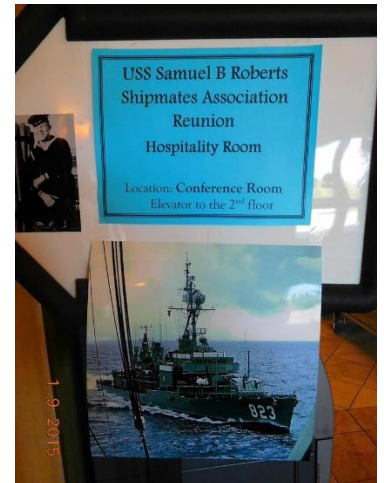
The photos of the reunion that are included in this newsletter were provided by several individuals. I will not credit individual photographers for fear of omitting a name, but we owe each a debt for capturing the images.



Reunion Coin – Front



Reunion Coin – Back



Registration Desk



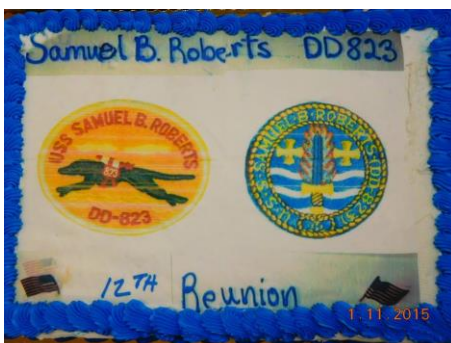
The Shipmates



The Ladies



Newport Mayor Harry Winthrop & Mike



Reunion Cake



Memorial Wreath



Vanderbilt Mansion

2017 Reunion Photos

Newport, RI



Navy War College Museum



Battleship Cove



Memorial Service – Cipolla & Ramos



Kevin McKeown



B\$ Session



The Edwards



Auction Time



On Pier Two

Still There

The 12th Reunion is over

Many decades have come and gone with memories of the Sammy B. either at pier one or two, locked in our memory vaults forever.

But the memories of the bus ride into Newport for us single guys to go on liberty for 48 or 72 hours to drink dime glasses of beer on Thames Street, sleep at the YMCA, or change into our “civvies” at the locker room across from the “Y” are great ones as well.



YMCA – Still There



Locker Club- Still There



Movie Theater – Still There



White Horse Tavern – Still Serving

The “Y” building is still there as is the locker club building. The movie theater where we watched James Bond in Goldfinger is still there and so is a bar and restaurant, The White Horse Tavern, where we would occasionally hoist a cool one. It is still there and still serving those beers.

The bars on Blood Alley, Thames Street, are gone. Oh well, four out of five is still not bad after the more than half a century since we were stationed in Newport, RI.

For the record...the 12th Reunion was a huge success. Thanks go to Jim Antenucci, Jim Norton, Kevin McKeown, Ken Giardina, and Mike Cipolla for making it happen.

2018 Association dues are due on January 1. They remain a paltry \$10 annually. Please send your check in that amount to Kevin McKeown, 47 Long Beach Dr., Sound Beach, NY 11789. Kindly mark your check with the notation “2018 dues” and include your address, home phone number, mobile phone number, email address, highest rate or rank while aboard, dates of service, spouse or partner name. The dues go to costs associated with this newsletter and our web page. They are a great value. Thank you for your prompt attention.



ECHOES



Our “Going Home” reunion is now in the books and judging from the comments I have received, it was a great success. Personally, I think it was the best of the many reunions I have attended. Frank Green used to provide his impressions after each reunion. I will use this forum to do the same.

For us, the reunion got off to an iffy start. We checked in and were given a key to room 216. Slid the card in the lock and the knob turned, no problem. However, there was a chain securing the room from the inside and a female voice asking what we wanted. We explained 216 was our room and the voice was adamant that it was her room. Turns out the voice belonged to Pat Antenucci, to whom they had given 216 earlier. I went to the desk and was told by the clerk that he misread the room number and that our room should be 218. He issued new keys. I asked if the Antenucci’s keys would still work since they had issued new keys for their room. He assured me there would be no problem. He was wrong! In a similar vein, Jim Wilson’s and Arlene Dooley’s lock mechanism had a defect and they needed new keys every time they entered the room, at least until a technician was available. Fortunately, these problems were minor and quickly resolved.

Possibly the most unusual incident of the entire reunion occurred while we were visiting Pier Two on the Navy base. Chief Medina was regaling us with his stories when out of the corner of my right eye, I saw a police car pull up and an officer got out, adjusted his gun, and stood near his car. A very short time later, another car pulled up at the other end of the pier, parked his car in a blocking position, got out, went to his trunk, got out a loud speaker (I was waiting for him to pull out a riot gun and if he had, I was looking for a place to hide), and stood by his car watching us. After a couple of minutes, both officers started walking towards us. At about this time, our PAO, Lisa Rama noticed the officers and started to walk towards one of them. She told me later that no one had informed them of our visit and several people had called to inform them of a large crowd milling about on the pier. They came to investigate and tell us to get off. Fortunately, Chief Medina had served on the Roberts, FFG-58, and had an affinity for the Roberts name and those who served aboard any iteration. The docks were his and he approved our visit. The police didn’t know that and were very wary of a bunch of 70 and 80- year-old anarchists.

Two things will stick in my mind as being quite special. The first was the memorial service on USS Massachusetts. The entire ceremony was very well done, from the ringing of the ship’s bell and reading each shipmate’s name to the tossing of the wreath and watching it float away. One couldn’t help but to be moved. The second were the recognition awards given to Jim Antenucci, Mike Cipolla, and Kevin & Mary McKeown for their service to the Association. They were all affected by the recognition.

Of course, the reunion is about meeting and socializing with others who served on the 823. I was especially glad to see my old sonar buddy, Jerry Whitehurst and wife Carol. My ASW boss Mike Testa and his boss John White were there as were a number of shipmates who served when I did such as Kevin McKeown, Tom Zwemke, and Larry Edwards. Many of those I fondly remembered from previous reunions such as the Gauden’s, Dunn’s, and Sarno’s came and some new attendees such as Jim Wilson and Arlene Dooley were pleasant surprises. I am looking forward to 2019 and Annapolis!

Jim Norton

2017 Reunion Photos

Newport, RI



Whitehurst & Norton



Norton & Whitehurst



McKeown & Wilson



John Durant



Rama, Ramos & Cruce



Dan Sarno



Giardina, Rosevear



Pat Antenucci



BMC Medina

2017 Reunion Photos

Newport, RI



Steve & Betty Senderovitz



Bill Peters



Gaulden & Semenchuk



McKeown & Tittertons



White & Sarno



Phil Semenchuk



Sells & Daulton



Terry Haskins



Sailor Wannabee



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Sammy B. Scuttlebutt
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