

Scuttlebutt

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

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Roberts waiting to enter Panama Canal 1965 – Courtesy Dick Romney

Spring finally seems to be grabbing hold in my little corner of the world. The grass is greening, the temps are rising, robins are singing, Easter is history, the Derby has been run, Memorial Day is nigh and a young (mature) man's fancy turns to thoughts of Annapolis and our 13th biennial reunion. Only 4 months remain until the exciting event. All preparations are complete and information was provided in the last two Scuttlebutt issues and a summary is included here. It appears we will have a pretty good turnout which is good since Tom Zwemke's efforts to install a plaque honoring Roberts and her crews at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC will make the event special. Of course every reunion is special and what makes that true are those who formed a special bond when they served aboard a great ship. Maybe we didn't all serve at the same time but we were all part of the USS Samuel B Roberts heritage.

Speaking of that heritage, I believe it is time to add a 4th Roberts to the fleet. The Navy Secretary names ships and if each of us were to send him a personal letter explaining our reasons for wanting a new USS Samuel B Roberts, who knows. The Secretary of the Navy is Richard V Spencer, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, 1000 Navy Pentagon, Rm 4D652, Washington, DC 20350. Email secnavpa.fct@navy.mil

This issue will also feature the usual columns, articles, photos, remembrances, etc. I hope you enjoy and let us know what you would like to see in future editions.

We Remember

Add names

James E. Clippard (48-50)

Delmer Forth (57-60)

Jack Villane (52-55)

From Our President

The days of our 13th reunion are fast approaching – September 30 to October 3 (October 4 is a last meal, packing, goodbyes, and heading home. No meetings, just wrap up and set sail). You should consider joining your shipmates in Maryland this fall. Some shipmates and guests have already submitted reservations and are looking forward to the fun.

I remember well the Newport reunion – many new members mustering for the first time, regular and irregular attendees – all enjoying the time well spent among shipmates. We all served during different years and that breaks up the membership but our ship, the USS Samuel B. Roberts (DD-823) is the common thread binding us all together as shipmates.

Join us. See the Baltimore harbor, the United States Naval Academy, the hustle and bustle of Annapolis town, a short trip to Washington, DC and the Navy Memorial for a special program honoring our ship.

You came once? Come again! Never been? Try it. You'll like it. Think of the auction, our money-maker with wild bidders on wild stuff you won't find elsewhere. Always a great event with lots of energy and excitement.

Must close – here's a somber thought: Your lumbago, your sciatica, your postponed knee replacement, your encircling arthritis, etc, etc, are all catching up and probably won't get better. Now is the time for all good sailors to "re-unite." The reunion is the way to do that. Join us. Hope to see you there.



Onion Peelings

Ahoy shipmates! Getting close to reunion time and this is a reminder to make sure you get your reservations and paperwork to the hotel and to **Kevin McKeown** as early as is possible. This reunion is shaping up to be another great one. I have been trying to find plank owners and have thus far located 4. They are Ray Fisher, Robert Ray, Earl Cox who is planning on attending the reunion, and John LaFlamme. If you know of any others, let the Association know. I have found a couple of shipmates from the late 1950s and early 60s. Hopefully, they can make the reunion. As you know, this will be a special reunion because of the enshrinement of the 823 into the Navy Memorial. Gives me chills to think about it. I don't believe the DE413 or the FFG58 have had this honor. Don't forget to follow our Facebook page and our great web site. You may want to check out the FFG58 Facebook page also. Lots of good sharing of their "Scuttlebutt" too. Their reunion will be in New Orleans this year, so if you happen to be in the "area", stop in.

Look forward to seeing all my shipmates again. Have a safe, healthy spring and summer. See you in the fall.



You will read a lot this issue about the 823s inclusion at the US Navy Memorial. But what is the Memorial? The mission of the United States Navy Memorial is to *honor, recognize and celebrate the men and women of the sea services, past, present, and future; and to inform the public about their service.*

Bird Droppings

by Don Eagle

A Look Back

Seems like a hundred years ago – well, maybe like yesterday.

Active duty time was up and your name rose to the top of the short-timer's list. In a way, you could hardly wait to get off the ship, go through separation and be on your way to another life, a civilian life. Frank Green said it best: "looking in the rear view mirror, you couldn't wait to get out of there."

And yet, and yet. Something down deep in your soul told you that this wasn't the end of things. Buddies left behind, the familiarity of a daily routine, the excitement of visiting foreign ports, the ship itself.

And now, decades later, you fully appreciate that moment in your life when you stepped aboard, saluted, and began your life aboard the the Sammy B. I, for one, remember that day with clarity, but somehow can't seem to conjure up any recollection of going over the brow for the last time.

In all the columns I've written about life aboard ship, nothing ever comes close to the kind of nostalgia of memories generated some 60 years ago. Whippets of thought skip through your mind like Gazelles bounding the African plain: the smell of diesel while underway, the bracing breeze of Narragansett Bay, the flying fish found on deck, the card games in mount 53, the bustle of coming alongside Pier One, the red-lit passageways, or the exhilaration of being on the bridge during heavy weather. Ashore, we had our fun, and could probably lay out in some detail the bars from Eretria to Copenhagen. I still have a photo of a lot of guys having a great time at the EM Club in Guantanamo. And speaking of Eretria, I still remember the 114 degree temperature in the *air conditioned* bar, the first time we were allowed to wear t-shirts on liberty, and the gigantic lizards clinging to the ceiling and walls of the bar in Massawa.

Absent from those memories of course is the remembrance of things we had a hard time with: inspections, military life, captain's masts, tedium, repetition, rules, and the occasional asshole who was in charge of whatever you were doing. Anyway, here it is, decades later, and the great times seem to be ever present, the bad memories have been relegated to the dustbin of history. I guess that's one of the benefits of aging. You can have a selective memory.

I mentioned Frank Green earlier, and will always have a soft spot in my heart for his keen observance of life, especially Navy life. He had a special knack for reaching deep in his memory bank to deliver humorous and interesting tales about his own experiences as well as passing on interesting tidbits from other shipmates.

So where is all this headed? Well, try Annapolis and the upcoming reunion. A time to remember, reminisce, a time to renew friendships and forge new ones. A time to share stories and relive adventures with old friends. Elsewhere in this Scuttlebutt I'm sure you'll find information about, and forms to fill out to attend what promises to be one of our best. I would encourage you to make this one reunion the one you will want to attend. If you haven't already registered, do it, now!!!

So much for the (unpaid) commercial. As we head into summer, I'm urging all of you to reach down into your own memory banks to recall your time aboard, and to celebrate yourself because you are a real and valuable contributor to this great nation. Always were, always will be. Have a great summer.

Don

On the Scope

Hi all! Spring has finally started happening up here in northeast Pennsylvania. But like so much in this area, it sure takes its time. The weather doesn't really start to feel warm until mid May, so as this article is going to press we are still in transition from winter to spring but we are slowly making progress.

The days to our reunion continue to dwindle and before we know it we will all be heading to the same destination for five days of sea stories, laughter, and reliving our Navy days. That brings me to this little tale. Growing up, I was never much of a seafaring guy and the Navy was probably the farthest thing from my mind. However, once I graduated from high school, I realized like so many of us, that it was time to start thinking about the future.

One big problem all of us faced in the late 1950s and early 60s was that in the not too distant future there was a high possibility we would be drafted. This would likely as not come just as we were starting a career. A decision had to be made on what we wanted to do. I was sure I didn't want to go in the Army, so when I found out about what the Navy called a "Kiddie Cruise", I decided that three plus years in the Navy was better than two years in the Army. With the blessing of my parents, since they had to sign for me, I made the decision to join the Navy.

Like thousands of others, I left to fulfill my obligation. Since I was so young, my biggest worry was that I would be "just a kid" in a man's world. It took a lot on my part to build up the courage to report when the day came. I remember taking the train with my dad and then saying goodbye when my stop came and I got off while dad stayed aboard and continued to work. Never felt more alone in the world than at that moment!

Having brought with me only the minimum items as instructed, I proceeded to find the room to report to. I was greeted by a sailor in dress blues, with hash marks all over. I thought that he was probably a very high ranking officer. He smiled, read my orders and directed me to a room down the hall whose number escapes me. It was in that room that I was sworn in.

When I got to that room and entered it, I was stunned by what I saw. Inside the room were probably a hundred other guys who were all waiting to be sworn in. And every one of them was no older than I was. That's how my Navy career began and happily, it only got better. Hope to see everyone at the reunion.

One last thought! When this "Butt" is printed it will be June and Memorial Day will be past. Since I have become a member of the Roberts Association, I have seen our "Home From The Sea" page continue to grow. It is always sad when I read about a veteran passing but nothing saddens me as much as when I hear of another shipmate passing. Please take a moment to **REMEMBER**.

Ken Giardina

During our upcoming reunion we will be visiting Baltimore, MD which was established by the state as an independent city in 1729. As may be guessed, it has an amazing history. It is the second largest port on the east coast and was once the second largest immigrant processing center. The Second Continental Congress met at the Henry Fite House for a period 1776/77 which made the city the nation's capital. It also boasts of having the country's first postal system (1774) and water company in 1782. If you like history and admire the colonial period, this reunion is for you.

**USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Assoc.
13th Biennial Reunion
Annapolis – Baltimore – DC
September 30 – October 4, 2019**

Venue – Holiday Inn Columbia/East Jessup, MD 20794

**Monday – Sept. 30 – Reunion registration in Hospitality Suite beginning at
noon**

- **Welcome Buffet in the hotel banquet room beginning at 6:00
PM**

**Tuesday – Oct 1 – Tour to US Naval Academy/Annapolis waterfront/historic
Annapolis leaving at 9:00 AM, lunch on members. Returning
approx. 3:30 PM – Evening free**

**Wednesday – Oct 2 – Tour of Baltimore/lunch on members at Baltimore Inner
Harbor, Baltimore. Harbor cruise. Leaving hotel at 9:00
AM and returning at approx. 3:30 PM. Auction and
business meeting in evening.**

**Thursday – Oct 3 – Bus leaves at 8:30 AM for the US Navy Memorial in
Washington, DC where a plaque will be dedicated to USS
Samuel B Roberts (DD-823). Memorial service expected to
occur at this time. Lunch on members. Bus returns at
approx. 2:30 PM**

**Reunion banquet begins at 6:00 PM with cocktail hour
followed by a plated dinner. Entertainment will be provided by
Ms Terry L. White (aka – The Ol Hippie chick).**

Friday – Oct 4 – Reunion concludes, members depart.

**This is going to be a good one. Favorable hotel rates with full breakfast daily. Tours,
fun but not overtaxing, food tasty and plentiful, entertainment. Highlight – plaque
dedication honoring contribution of DD-823 to Navy and country. Best part of reunion
- mixing with others with a shared Sammy B experience.**

2019 USS Samuel B. Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Assoc. Reunion Registration Form

Names of Attendees _____

Monday – September 30, 2019

Welcoming Buffet at the Hotel Price per person: \$52x _____ = \$ _____

Tuesday – October 1, 2019

Tour of US Naval Academy, historic Annapolis, and the Annapolis waterfront. Price per person: \$48x _____ = \$ _____

Wednesday – October 2, 2019

Tour of Baltimore, the Inner Harbor and a cruise on the bay. Price per person: \$50x _____ = \$ _____

Thursday – October 3, 2019

Bus to Roberts “Plaque Ceremony” at Navy Memorial in DC. Price per person: \$30x _____ = \$ _____

Closing banquet in hotel banquet room.

Dinner choice: Prime Rib _____ Chicken Picata _____ Seared Salmon _____

Total dinners at \$45 _____ = \$ _____

Reunion Fee \$ 20.00

Total **\$ _____**

Fill out the above form, include check for total made out to USS Samuel B. Roberts (DD-823) Shipmates Assoc. and mail to Kevin McKeown, 47 Long Beach Drive, Sound Beach, NY 11789-1833.

Echoes

The principal focus of our 2019 Roberts reunion is the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. But what exactly is the Naval Academy, what does it do, what is its history, and why are we going to see it. I will try to answer those questions so that those visiting, during the reunion, can have a better appreciation of what they are experiencing.



The United States Naval Academy is a four-year coeducational federal service academy adjacent to Annapolis, Maryland. Established on 10 October, 1845, under Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, it is the second oldest of the United States five service academies, and educates officers for commissioning primarily into the US Navy and US Marine Corps. The 338 acre campus is located on the former grounds of Fort Severn at the confluence of the Severn River and Chesapeake Bay. The entire campus is a National Historic Landmark and home to many historic sites, buildings, and monuments. It replaced the Philadelphia Naval Asylum, in Philadelphia, which served as the first Naval Academy from 1838 to 1845. The Academy graduates about 1,000 commissioned officers annually and they are some of the highest paid graduates in the country.



When the founders of the United States Naval Academy were looking for a suitable location, it was reported that then Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft decided to move the naval school to “the healthy and secluded” location of Annapolis in order to rescue midshipmen from “the temptations and distractions that necessarily connect with a large and populous city.” The Asylum School was its predecessor and four of the original seven faculty members came from there. Other small naval schools in New York City, Norfolk, VA, and Boston, MA also existed in the early days of the United States.

The United States Navy was born during the American Revolution when the need for a naval force to match the Royal Navy became clear. But during the immediate period following the Revolution, the Continental Navy was demobilized in 1785 by an economy minded Congress. The dormancy of American seapower lasted barely a decade when, in 1794, President George Washington persuaded the Congress to authorize a new naval force to combat the growing menace of piracy on the high seas.

The first vessels of the new US Navy were launched in 1797; among them were the *United States*, the *Constellation*, and the *Constitution*. In 1825, President John Quincy Adams urged Congress to establish a Naval Academy “for the formation of scientific and accomplished officers.” His proposal, however, was not acted upon until 20 years later.

On September 13, 1842, the American Brig Somers set sail from the Brooklyn Navy Yard on one of the most significant cruises in American naval history. It was a school ship for the training of teenage naval apprentice volunteers who would hopefully be inspired to make the Navy a career. However, discipline aboard Somers deteriorated and it was determined by a board of inquiry aboard ship that Midshipman Philip Spencer and two confederates, Boatswains Mate Samuel Cromwell and Seaman Elisha Small, were guilty of a “determined attempt to commit a mutiny.” The three were hanged and the incident cast doubt over the wisdom of sending midshipmen directly aboard ship to learn by doing. News of the Somers mutiny shocked the country.



Through the efforts of the Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, the Naval School was established without Congressional funding, at a 10 acre Army post named Fort Severn in Annapolis, Maryland on October 10, 1845, with a class of 50 midshipmen and seven professors. The curriculum included mathematics and navigation, gunnery and steam, chemistry, English, natural philosophy, and French.

In 1850 the Naval School became the United States Naval Academy. A new curriculum went into effect requiring midshipmen to study at the Academy for four years and to train aboard ships each summer. That format is the basis for a far more advanced and sophisticated curriculum at the Naval Academy today. As the US Navy grew over the years, the Academy expanded. The campus of 10 acres increased to 338. The original student body of 50 midshipmen grew to a brigade size of 4,000. Modern granite buildings replaced the old wooded structures of Fort Severn.

Congress authorized the Naval Academy to begin awarding bachelor of science degrees in 1933. The Academy replaced a fixed curriculum taken by all with a core curriculum plus 18 major fields of study, a wide variety of elective courses and advanced study and research opportunities.

Since then, the development of the Academy has reflected the history of the country. As America has changed culturally and technologically so has the Naval Academy. In just a few decades, the Navy moved from a fleet of sail and steam-powered ships to a high tech fleet with nuclear-powered submarines and surface ships and supersonic aircraft. The Academy has changed too, giving midshipmen state-of-the-art academic and professional training they need to be effective naval officers in their future careers.

The Naval Academy first accepted women as midshipmen in 1976, when Congress authorized the admission of women to all the service academies. Women comprise over 20 percent of all entering plebes (freshmen) and the pursue the same academic and professional training as do their male classmates.

Among the many noted graduates are President Jimmy Carter, Stansfield Turner, Chester Nimitz, Bull Halsey, John McCain Sr., David Robinson and too many more to be listed.

Jim Norton



Plaque Dedication Ceremony

On October 3 of this year, you will meet Rear Admiral, USN Retired, Frank Thorp IV who is the President and CEO of the US Navy Memorial and Brenda Osuch, Chief Operating Officer during our enshrinement of the 823 at the US Navy Memorial at 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC.

Frank will welcome all of us to the Navy Memorial, followed by remarks from SBR Shipmates Assoc. officers prior to the enshrinement ceremony.

It's an event that will make this Reunion the best one yet.

During our forthcoming reunion, we will have the opportunity to view the USS Constellation, the last completely sail-only ship built by the US Navy. She is a sloop-of-war and was built in 1854. A small amount of material from the frigate USS Constellation, one of the US Navy's first four ships, was used in her construction. She served in a variety of capacities for the next century before being decommissioned in February, 1955.

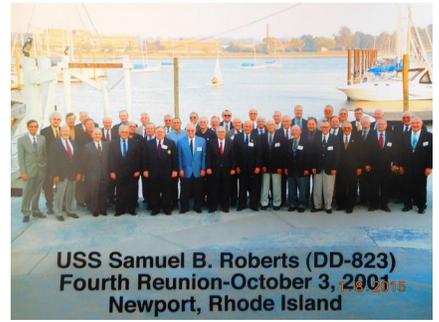


In the last issue of the Scuttlebutt, there was a story by Tom Zwemke about the Zippo lighter he carried with him throughout his time on Roberts. He still has the Zippo and sent a photo of it for inclusion with his story. I don't know how it happened but I substituted a picture of another Zippo for his. I beg old age! I apologize to Tom, to his Zippo, and to Zippos everywhere. Damn fake news!

Dues

If you have not yet done so, please send in your dues!!!

Reunion Memories





26 Long Pond Drive Milton, VT 05468

Shipmates Association

USS Samuel B. Roberts (DD823)

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