

**December, 2008**

My fellow Roberts shipmates

I am writing this on November 21, 2008 and tomorrow, November 22, marks the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a dark day in America's history. It was on that date in 1963 that our president, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated. Most people of a certain age can remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the awful news.

The USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823) was my home at that time and we were tied up alongside a pier in Karachi, Pakistan. I was an authorized late sleeper as I had been fortunate enough to have had the mid-watch earlier. A guy named Wheeler came down at about 7 AM and shook my rack more vigorously than I thought necessary. As I ever so reluctantly roused I heard him say, "They killed the president." I didn't believe him for a second and told him in rather strong terms that this was not a subject to be joking about and to get the hell away from me.

There was no way it could be true but then they started broadcasting updates over the IMC system. Reality began to set in as did belief. Soon everyone on board was scurrying to get underway but the mood was far from the usual air of anticipation. The world had started a new chapter and none of us could envision what the future would bring.

Paul Gillin