

# Scuttlebutt

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

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A gorgeous, hot summer has descended upon the land and outdoor activities are the norm. Burgers cooked on the grill, swimming, boating, and outdoor sports all contribute to making summers pleasurable and memorable. In times gone by, many of us enjoyed these same diversions on some remote island in the middle of an ocean or even on the fantail of Roberts. It just seems the food was tastier, the beer colder, and the activities more exciting. Never mind the sunburn that kept you up for nights on end. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the company was the best anywhere.

This issue will update plans for next years reunion which is shaping up to be a great outing. It will also include the usual columns from our learned contributors, as well as an article from a book written by Jim McGill following Roberts circumnavigation of the globe in 1954/56. There will also be a few excerpts, provided by Bob Hunt, from the ship's log covering the North Sea cruise of 1970. Finally, there will be some license plate holder additions and a couple of surprises. Hope you enjoy!



# Honor Roll



*We Remember*

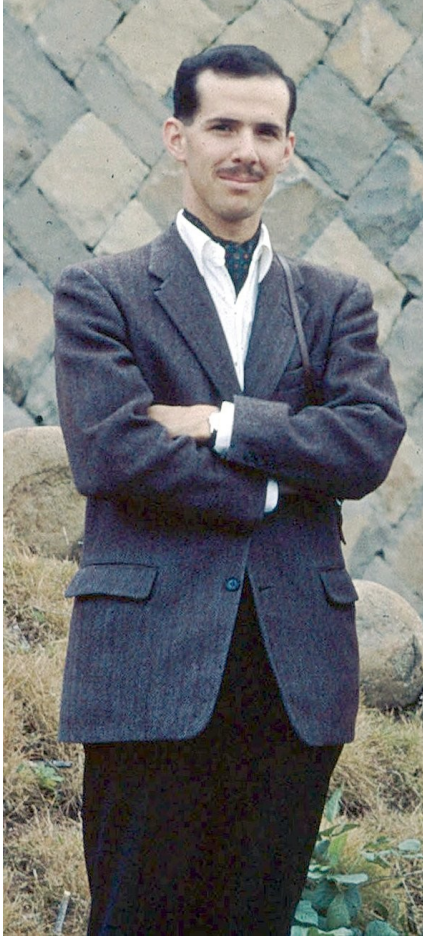
**Add names**

**Dan Nelms (64-67)**

**George W. Prussack (61-64)**

# From Our President

A while back I described the three CO's during my time aboard Roberts. It is now time for the XO's. All very different and all different from the CO's. From August 1962 through December 1965, I served with four Executive Officers. Some of you will remember them.



The first lasted until about a month after I reported aboard. He told Captain Murray the distance to a channel marker while underway was "about an easy nine iron shot." One month! Next came Charlie Beasley. He fleeted up to XO when our golfer left. Son of a "tombstone admiral," Charlie took us through the '62 America's Cup madness and Argentinia NF during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He left the Roberts to become Commanding Officer of an LST. Did he really say; "Underway on fossil fuel," or was that apocryphal? After our return from Argentinia on a cold November morning when I had the quarterdeck, the ever stern Bob Paul comes down the pier "with a bone in his teeth." Did I pass his inspection? I remember the last time I saw LCDR Paul on Roberts, he was in "officer mufti" surrounded in a sea of white hats racing into a Malta bar. It was only when we met at the 2007 Charleston reunion that I realized; "Hey, this guy is fun!" Gone were the stern XO looks. My wife and I struck a great friendship with Bob and his wife Gerry until the both sadly left us.

Last but not least, R.L. Stewart with the booming voice of a preacher. A few memories – defending the wardroom officers from an irate squadron commodore. We had the temerity to wear our Rankowski-issued flight jackets to the O'Club for late night drinks following a Boston Naval Shipyard sea trial. Another time Rod threatened to squash me like a grape – only the deity knows what prompted that. For our enlisted members, not everything was peaches and cream for the officers. Lastly, he was directing actions from the bridge when Roberts and her crew rescued three sailors who fell overboard from Enterprise during night refueling ops in the

**The Intrepid Mr. A** Tonkin Gulf. I can remember Rod using the IMC to alert the sailors in the water to use their lights and whistles to help us locate them. Amazing.

Quite a quartet! Great to serve with them and they all kept us safe during the hazardous life at sea.

*Jim Intrepid*

## Dan Nelms

The image to the right is of Danny Nelms and myself at Tiger Balm Gardens in Hong Kong, January 1966. Danny was a good shipmate and has remained a life-long friend. He often came to our place in Lake George during weekend liberties and even dated my cousin for awhile. He came to our reunion in Charleston and we had a blast. Danny passed in July. We telephoned often. His bigger than life persona and Texas drawl will be missed by me and many others. RIP sailor!



# Bird Droppings

By Don Eagle

## Summer at Sea

Summer is usually a great time for us – barbecues, fishing, boating, vacations, family, get-togethers with friends, and on and on. Sometimes I like to pick up an interesting book and get lost in it. I know that in some past issues I've recommended some summer reading for you, and this time around is no exception. So if you have the time and inclination, here's a couple books that should be interesting and nostalgic.

The first work, **World War II at Sea** is one of the finest books ever written about the Navy's role in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. It's a new book, written by Craig Symonds, that takes you from the German U-boat strategy in the Atlantic to the final decimation of the Japanese Imperial Fleet in the Pacific. It's awesome reading, and gives you the larger picture of not only our Navy, but those other Navies of the world, what caused them to do what they did (the Italian Navy literally ran out of gas and couldn't supply Rommel in Africa, the French Fleet and how Hitler felt it was so important to get their hands on the ships and ports, why Norway was such an immediate target for the Germans, and of course the British, Canadians, Australians, and Russian roles in controlling the sea lanes of the world.) The American strategy was to build more ships faster than the Germans could sink 'em. The Japanese need for control over oil, raw materials, and held the concept that the US would tire quickly of the war and withdraw from the South Pacific.

Yes indeed, it is well worth your while to sit down, pour yourself a nice cold drink (actually, it's going to take you more than one night to get through this one), sit back, and discover so many things you never knew about the Navy's role, hell - **ALL** the world's Navies roles in the greatest ongoing naval battle in history.

Now, for the second recommendation: **CONDITION RED** – Destroyer action in the South Pacific by Frederick Jackson Bell. An interesting read by a Destroyer Commander who gives a lot of attention to detail. There are passages – indeed chapters – where it brings so much back to life about living on a tin can. He explores the duties of his Destroyer, the engagements, the big names like Okinawa, The Solomons, Guadalcanal, and others. But from my standpoint, the author also captures life at sea aboard a tin can. It brought back so many memories. And he did so in minute detail. Of steaming in warm weather, of bringing your mattress topside to sleep under the stars, of the flying fish, the duties of most ratings, of the chow line, highlining, of checking the gauges in the engine room to having a sewing machine at the flag bag for Singalmen's flag repairs, and I could go on and on. You'll just have to read this one to bring it all back. It's not that it tells you anything new, because as destroyermen, you've all been there. What this book does is bring you back. It sharpens your memory. Well, there you have it. My suggestions to you for a great way to spend some time with your Navy roots. Light up a cigar, pour yourself a Johnny Walker Scotch, sit back, and enjoy.

I keep getting inquiries and concerns about how the California wildfires are affecting us. I want to thank you for your concern. We are located near Sacramento and the two major fires (Redding and Clear Lake) are at least 1000 miles away, so we have no problem where we are, and pray that it stays that way. We are also reminded of all those folks who are affected, who have lost houses, pets, and even lives. Please keep them in your prayers. Summers are always a little scary, because there is so much dry fuel around and of course, because we don't get rain from May until November. There's always the threat of wildfires throughout the state. At any rate, have a great rest-of-the-summer, kick back, read one (or both) of the books mentioned above, reminisce, and enjoy life.

*Don*

## Onion Peelings

Ahoy Shipmates;

Here is hoping that everyone is enjoying the summer. Our local veterans committee has been busy going fundraisers for two local schools where we give out scholarships to deserving JROTC students. During the course of the year we host breakfasts, golf scrambles, along with hot dog/hamburger nights as fundraisers. We were able to award four \$1000 scholarships to four students, male and female, at two local high schools. The student JROTC body presents their Honor Guard and colors at our Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations. It is very moving and colorful and is where we have our veterans memorial ceremony and our reading of the names of the veterans lost during the year.

I look forward to receiving my issue of the “”Butt” and like to share my copy with other veterans and “civilians” here at home. When I talk about our reunions and the Sammy B Association, most vets are dumbfounded that we have such a great bunch of shipmates. Most have never experienced a reunion or even contacted their buddies, whether Navy or otherwise. What a loss for them! I am thankful and grateful to the volunteers that keep the Group together and do such a great job of communicating.

Hopefully, we can all look forward to next year and another Sammy B reunion. Weather was lousy last time so I am putting in my early request for sunshine and clear skies. Happy summer, shipmates!



## Echoes

I was in my local grocery this past week to buy some lunch meat. When it was my turn to order, I noticed that the deli clerk, who happened to be an older gentleman, was wearing a Vietnam Veteran hat. After making my initial selection, I asked if he was indeed a Vietnam vet. He answered that he was but he wasn't supposed to be wearing the hat on his head. However, he had forgotten his store logo hat and had no choice but to wear one he had in his car. He then asked if I was also a Vietnam vet and I answered affirmatively. He said army and I said “hell no” Navy. He indicated he was Navy also.

He asked the name of my ship and I replied. His was USS Rogers (DD-876) I looked it up and found it was built by Consolidated Shipbuilding of Orange Texas, the same place the Sammy B was built and at the same time. Scott told me that during the time he was aboard, 1967 to 1971, the ship made 4 WESPAC cruises and operated with the same carrier we operated with, USS Enterprise (CVN-65). The ship and crew won a Presidential Unit Citation for fighting a significant fire on the Enterprise in January 1969. Legend has it that Rogers fired the final shot of the Vietnam War.

It is a good thing it wasn't too busy as we talked for about a half hour. I must admit I enjoyed the conversation immensely. This was the second time I talked to a vet at this deli counter. have had interesting conversations, and been amused. In his column on the preceding page, Mike Cipolla talks about us being fortunate in having a strong association and being able to meet periodically. He is dead on! Scott has no inter-action with anyone from his ship. Sad!

*Jim Norton*

## On The Scope

Greetings to all! After taking up a page and a half in the last issue, I found myself at a loss for words when I received Jim's request for input for this issue of the Scuttlebutt. I was about to give this issue a pass as I was at a roadblock when suddenly a thought came into my head. Trying to keep this column related to the Navy or to my experiences in the Navy is not always an easy thing. Anyway, here goes!

Ever since I can remember, even before I joined the Navy, many images of a sailor's life were ingrained in my sub-conscious. I can still envision a "swabby" with hat worn on the back of his head, wearing jeans, cigarette dangling from his mouth, hanging over the side, painting the hull of a ship. The color was always "Haze Gray." Today for some reason, that thought made me question why all US Navy ships are painted that same gray color. So, I did a little research and this is what I discovered. Maybe you know this. If you do, Bravo Zulu. If you don't, you're never too old to learn.

Oddly, there is a scientific reason for the color. It's not that someone, somewhere just picked it at random. Navy ships are painted in a gray color in order to reduce their visibility as much as possible. Since it is dark at night, black was one possibility. Half the day is dark so a black ship would be nearly invisible half the time. The problem is that during daylight, a black ship would clearly stand out. Thus we are left with three alternatives; the color of the water, the light blue of a clear sky, or the grayish color of an overcast, foggy, misty sky. The Navy believes the skies are overcast/cloudy more often than they are clear. In addition, at sea the horizon is 30 miles out and the contrast between the blue sky and the blue sea is a thin strip of haze gray. Ships beyond the horizon will blend into the horizon. Additionally, using the gray color reduces the contrast of the ship with the horizon and impedes the vertical patterns in the ship's appearance.

That is why "Old Salts" say; "If you cut me all you're gonna get is haze gray and salt water." Hmmm, why the black at the water line? That is fodder for another day!

*Ken Friedman*

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## More Tags and Tag Holders



**Julian Lusco**



**Tony Ramos**

# USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823)

## 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion – Annapolis, MD

### Sept. 30 – Oct. 4, 2019

All is pretty much finalized for our 13<sup>th</sup> biennial reunion to be held in the Annapolis/Baltimore area. There are numerous diversions, naval and civilian, to keep us interested and amused. Our home base will be the Holiday Inn – Columbia/East Jessup which was completely renovated a couple of years ago and should



prove an outstanding headquarters. It is conveniently located with a well regarded restaurant on premises. Room rate will be \$89 per night and that includes full breakfast daily. There will be a meeting room for us to use as our hospitality room.



Our first day's adventure will include a tour of the US Naval Academy. This will be a heartfelt experience for those who have never visited and a joyful rekindling for those that have. There will be plenty of time to explore the City's old waterfront, to enjoy lunch in one of numerous fine restaurants, or to shop.



On our second day of sightseeing, we will visit Baltimore's inner harbor and marvel at the attractions including USS Constellation. After lunch at a harbor restaurant, we will embark on a cruise through the harbor. The tours should be fun and not at all taxing.

This is going to be a great reunion and you should plan to attend. Full details in December's Scuttlebutt.

# The Sammy B...Martha Raye, and Hollywood

For those shipmates who were on the Vietnam deployment of 1965-66, all will remember Miss Martha Raye performing on the hangar deck on December 21, 1965. Her five hour performance, with her two man group, was a refreshing break. After the performance, she, and her troupe were highlined to the Enterprise.



Fast forward to 2002!

For more than twenty years I worked, on occasion on various film, video, and music products. I would often stay at the Hollywood Roosevelt hotel, where the first Academy Awards ceremony was held in 1929.

A lot of performers from the golden age of Hollywood would gather on Saturday nights at the Cinegrill, located in the hotel, to watch performances from the actors and singers of their era.

One Saturday evening a singer/comedian named Mark performed a retrospective on the legendary performer Martha Raye. Turns out he was her seventh husband. He had Martha's mannerisms down pat and acted much like his famous wife. He openly shared with us a lot of her memories of touring with Bob Hope in Vietnam.

After the show, I had the opportunity to talk with him about Miss Raye's performance on the Sammy B. He became a little emotional because his wife was dedicated to performing for the troops and loved touring with Bob Hope.

I thanked him for what Martha did for our crew that day in 1965.



*Tom Swente*

Additional images from the editor of Martha Raye's performance on Roberts, December 1965.



Jim McGill was an officer aboard USS Samuel B Roberts (DD-823) during the ship's Circumnavigation of the World from August 1954 to March 1955. He wrote a book about his experiences and from time to time excerpts will be printed in the Scuttlebutt.

## The Captain

On May 31, 1956, Captain White was relieved of his command in the normal course of events. Our new commanding officer was Cdr. Arden Bauman. He aroused instant dislike among the officers and crew, because he was not basically a nice person. But his major failing was as a ship handler. He knew nothing about maneuvering a destroyer. One day, he decided he would get the ship underway from the destroyer pier and, since I was the OOD at the time, he relieved me of the con to do just that. The ship backed away from the pier and Captain Bauman ordered; **Port engine ahead one third, starboard engine back one third, rudder left full.** I was dumbfounded because he had the engines trying to turn the ship to starboard and the rudder trying to turn it to port.

For about thirty seconds the ship just sat there and quivered. I decided to point out the problem to the Captain in a very diplomatic manner. I said to him, "Sir, your rudder is **left full.**" He looked at me somewhat distantly and replied; "Very well." But, he did not change the rudder to **right full.** We quivered for another minute or so and I decided I should try again. "Sir, your rudder is **still left full.**" This time he didn't even look at me. "Very well," he responded. Still nothing happened. I looked over at the Executive Officer (XO) who was standing on the port wing watching the action, and raised my eyebrows in question. The Exec just shrugged and left me to my own devices. I tried one more time. "Sir, your rudder is **still left full.**" Startled, he seemed to come alive. "**What?**" he responded. "**Left full? Shift your rudder...** With that simple command, the ship swung to starboard and off we went. But it got worse!

Captain Bauman had absolutely no concept of how the rudders and engines worked together. None! Not only that, but he seemed to resist all efforts to help him learn. The XO and I agreed to leave on his desk a copy of Knight's Seamanship, opened to the page that explained how maneuvering a destroyer was done. It did no good! Subsequent to my leaving the ship, he tore up the destroyer pier, ran aground in the Suez Canal, and smashed a buoy in Pakistan. He was one dumb critter, let me tell you. He was relieved of his command within the year.

*Jim McGill*

## Images of the Newport Reunion



Robert Commins & Jim Dunn



Bill Stocks & Tom Gryzbowski



Don Iaherwood

## From Bill Johnson QM3 – 1956/57

February 10, 2018 – Marilyn and I are sitting ere in Maine on a cold, wintery Saturday afternoon just as the Olympics are beginning on TV. I have been looking over the December issue of the Scuttlebutt and realize that 2018 dues are due and that we haven't thanked all you guys (and gals) who put the Newport reunion together. It was just a great affair, from the accommodations, the tours, the get-togethers with old and new friends, the auction, and the banquet. All was first rate!

Marilyn and I were married in 1956 while the Sammy B. was in Newport for awhile. The reunion was a chance for us to get back to Newport after 61 years and try to relive and remember **"the good old days."** We missed Frank Green's smiling face and hope we'll see all of you in 2019 at Annapolis.

*Bill Johnson*

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## From Charles Fanara

I went aboard the Samuel B Roberts in April of 1952, just after her return from a Gitmo shakedown cruise. I was on the ship for 3½ years. First boot camp, then as a mail clerk striker. Joe Bondi had me go to telecom school which is why my full time was 3½ years. When I joined, the recruiter said "If you want to see the world, request destroyers." Well shipmates, he was right. My first cruise was as part of "Exercise Mainbrace," the first Nato naval exercise. 203 warships participated and when I was on the bridge, I counted 80 ships horizon to horizon, east-west, north south. I was 18 and am now 85 and counting.

While I was on board, we saved four men from the sea near Pensacola and three from a crashed helicopter in the dead of night. The coxswain was Red Hohler who with the engine operator and a swimmer went out and found them. The rescued men were pretty shook up so te corpsman gave them brandy. Next day we transferred them back to their carrier while the ship's band played. We received a reward of three large containers of ice cream.

The Roberts is named for a 21 year old coxswain who gave his life to save a number of marines. Having our ship named after this young hero, the Roberts kept saving lives in his name.

*Charles Fanara*

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## Ed Kirko

I had my first beer at the Blue Moon Cafe in Newport!



# Letters to the Sammy B.

I would like to put together a new book to be titled “**Letters to the Sammy B.**” Envisioned is a compilation of letters written by the men who served aboard the ship at any time. Letters may be a reflection of time aboard, memories of ports visited, an exciting event, good friends made, officers and crew, impact of service on your life, or anything else you want to tell your ship. Start each submittal with “**Dear Sammy B.**”

Each shipmate may submit more than one letter. If enough letters are received to assemble a book, it will be distributed to the membership. Writing the letters should be enjoyable. Completed letters may be sent to Jim Norton at 26 Long Pond Drive, Milton, VT 05468, or emailed to [jijo1944@comcast.net](mailto:jijo1944@comcast.net), or messaged. If you have questions, call me at (802) 893-8045.

*Jim Norton*

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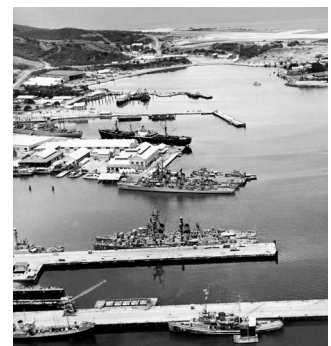
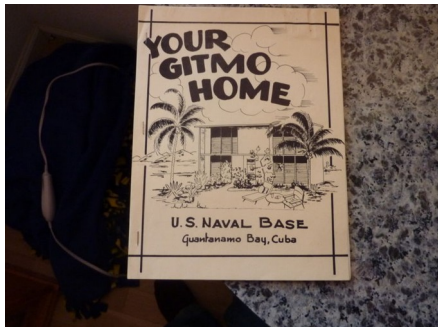
Tom Zwemke  
[tzwemke@gmail.com](mailto:tzwemke@gmail.com)

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## Ship's Store

Our Ship's Store is being run by Carol Green. She carries a number of USS Samuel B Roberts items including hats, tees, sweat shirts, hoodies, etc. at very attractive pricing. Contact Carol to order, to get a listing of items carried, or pricing at [cgreen4392@comcast.net](mailto:cgreen4392@comcast.net) or call at (856) 935-4392. Give Carol a call. She will be glad to hear from you and get you your desired Sammy B gear. You can also download an order form on our ship's website at [samuelbroberts.org](http://samuelbroberts.org)

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