

USS ROCHESTER (CA-124)



Association



Vol. V, No. 1

News Letter

February 2018

From Secondary Conn...

Garry Phillips

I am really looking forward to the upcoming reunion in Kansas City! Don't know about you, but I get very excited and reminiscent about seeing my old ROCHESTER friends -from another era, a different time.

Our editor has begun a series of articles about the CO's of the ROCHESTER and I can't wait until he gets to Captain Hathaway. As a PO3, I was scared to death of him. He was an awesome figure on the bridge, at inspection, or at mast. It is hard to imagine a Captain Hathaway today when every newspaper and talking head refers to every person in uniform as "Our Heroes." Bullshit. Captain Hathaway was truly a hero.

I am reading again *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors* by James D, Hornfischer. In this excellent account of the "Battle off Samar" during the invasion of Leyte, Philippines, 4 U.S. destroyers took on 3 Japanese battleships (including the Yamato), 6 cruisers and 11 destroyers or escorts. Captain Hathaway was the CO of one of those U.S. destroyers, the U.S.S. Heerman (DD-532). Heermann was the only American destroyer to survive the battle. He was a true hero. His story is breathtaking.

Although I am reluctant to resign myself to ancient history, I am reminded that I retired from the Navy before the current CNO was a midshipman. Some things have no doubt changed.

Respectfully, Garry

Chaplain's Corner

ALERT WATCH

Having to set a "watch" goes back into history. They were created to: in order to guard, to watch in order to look for and a watch in the night. In the new testament there were four watches of three hours each. The "Great Wall of China" had a weakness due to their watches being bought and let the enemy through.

Having an alert watch on the Rochester was essential. To help provide the alert part, a steam fired coffee pot in the shop provided a much appreciated help. Those winters in Korea were cold! How refreshing to come inside, warm up and have that stimulating coffee.

Over 40 references in scripture refer to a watch. For example Shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, David praying and asking "set a watch before my mouth" and Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in 1st Corinthians 16:13 "Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong". May we be alert as we watch events taking place in our culture. There is a time and place when we can speak up, share our influence and make a difference.

Prayerfully submitted, Frank West, Chaplain



AVAST AND AHOY!!

The Kansas City Reunion is just off the starboard bow – it's nearing time to set the sea detail. Reserve your berth at the hotel and sign up for the festivities. See PAGE 5 for more information and PAGE 7 for the registration form.

Pete Russell

Association Newsletter

This newsletter is published quarterly by the USS ROCHESTER Association. The Association's Officers encourage questions and comments. You may contact the Editor by writing Rod Neal, 14300 Chenal Parkway #7018, Little Rock, AR 72211. If you would like to submit an item of information or a story to the newsletter, mail it to the address above or email it to rdn.crn@comcast.net

Association Officers

Garry L. Phillips, President	Pete Russell, Executive VP
Rod Neal, 1 st VP	<i>Vacant</i> , 2 nd VP
Joseph S. Hill, Secy/Treasurer	Frank West, Chaplain
William W. Berkley, MAA	Betsy Phillips, Storekeeper
Frank Dayak, Director	Merlin A. Scheller, Director
Charles L. Chipley, Jr., Director	Russell Newman, Director

Association website: www.USSRochester.org

Rochester Museum and Science Center: www.rmssc.org

SHIP'S STORE

The Ship's Store has a new item – a white long sleeve mock turtle neck with the USS ROCHESTER ship and name embroidered on the left chest. It's a wonderful addition to the inventory and a great buy for the reunion in Kansas City. Sizes run a little larger than average, so you might want to consider one size smaller. Contact me soon as supplies are limited.

If you would like to see our entire line of USS ROCHESTER (CA-124) items, or if you desire a larger size than is listed here (PAGE 6), please go online at www.USSRochester.org; phone 731-336-4090, or email me Eliz_Phillips@yahoo.com.
Betsy Phillips

Maintaining Membership

Membership Dues for 2018 were due on January 1, 2018. Your current status is noted near your mailing address block. If there is a **2018** by **your** name, you dues are current. If 2017 is printed you have not paid your 2018 dues. Joe Hill can be reached at 4011 Ditty Road, Cookeville, TN 38506 7663; by phone: 931-432-4848; or email: nitecrawl@twlakes.net.

Donations Received

The Association wishes to thank the following for their generous donations:

John T. Blevins donated \$25

Jane McAuliffe donated \$25

Mildred L. Shipley donated \$50

TAPS

The following shipmates were reported to have passed away. If anyone has different information, please let us know.

<u>Name</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>Div</u>	<u>On Board</u>
Hebert, Roger L.	MA	2016	Flag	57-58
Moses, Prince	CA	2017	3rd	54-61
Powers, William	CA	2017	CS	48-53
Roberts, Gilbert	MI	2016	S-4	55-58
Smith, Eugene	CT	2018	1 st	46-47
Williams, Dennis	WI	2016	M	59-61

All will be greatly missed, but fondly remembered by their ROCHESTER shipmates and families.

HONORARY MEMBERS

No new Honorary Members

STORIES OF THE ROCHESTER WANTED

We are looking for stories about events that took place involving members of the crew. We need a time and an outline of what occurred and the names of the shipmates involved. Don't worry if your memory is a little wobbly. If the story is good enough everyone will want to believe it. Send your story to the Editor of the Newsletter (see top left of page two). We have received four stories which we will start using in the May Newsletter and following issues. Right now we can use some stories having to do with watch standing and roving patrols.

NAUTICAL TERMS EXPLAINED

“THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND”. Sheet lines were tied to the lower corners of a sail to control its effect on the ship's motion. When two or three came loose the sail was considered not under control. When a person had consumed too much alcohol, “three sheets to the wind” implied they were drunk and thus not under control.

STORIES OF THE SEA

Carpenter “Chips” Helms, as the senior Warrant Officer, invited the ship’s Chaplain to the WO Mess for lunch. Lunch with the Warrant Officers was always a pleasant affair and deemed an honor. The Chaplain was asked to bless the food which he did. Before starting to eat, Chips said that following dessert, the Chief Bos’n would end lunch by reciting the Lord’s Prayer. This came as a surprise to everyone, especially Boats. Sparks leaned over to the Gunner and said, “Bet you \$10 he doesn’t know it”. From Guns, “You’re on”. Dessert was completed and Chips asked Boats to say the Lord’s Prayer. Boats began, “Now I lay me down to sleep...”. After lunch Sparks pulled out his wallet and gave Guns \$10, saying, “ Surprised me too, I really didn’t think he knew it.

SCUTTLEBUTT

The draft continuing after WWII provided the Navy with a constant supply of young officers and recruits for its fleet. A general willingness to learn and work was evident in these young men, but a high level of turnover meant that a depth of experience was often in short supply. Warrant Officers filled in the experience gap. They were the technical memory as well as the go-to-guys on how to handle the occasional personnel matter. They were also key in shaping the awareness, understanding and actions of young Division Officers. There were typically nine WO’s on the ROCHESTER. They were specialists in the critical operating aspects of the ship. They had informal monikers such as “Chips” for the Ship’s Carpenter, “Sparks” for the Chief Electrician, and “Boats” for the Chief Bos’n. These titles signaled the WO’s special roles in the ship’s crew.

The WO’s on the ROCHESTER shared many similar experiences and characteristics. They were young sailors when WWII broke out and many were survivors of the first several months of the war when outcomes did not always favor our side. They were all competent, smart, and natural leaders who inspired confidence. Most came out of WWII as very young chiefs and in some cases WO1’s. They were almost always affable, well liked, interesting, and fun to be around. Their many roles included expert, teacher, mentor, and leader.

Their staterooms on the ROCHESTER were in the forward part of “Officers’ Country” with a small, homey wardroom for their mess. They were

comfortable with the crew at all levels from enlisted to officers. However, the demands on them were many and could be intense, and their wardroom was something of a sanctuary to retire to and recharge.

DESIGN HISTORY OF THE USS ROCHESTER

This is the fourth in a series. Commissioned in 1946 the ROCHESTER’s armament reflected a shift surface action to anti-air, although still retaining its primary and secondary guns, probably with shore bombardment in mind. It entered service with nine 8”/55 guns in three turrets and twelve 5”/38’s in twin mounts. It also had forty-eight 40 mm guns and forty 20 mm. Unlike most cruisers in the navies of other countries, US cruisers built after the 1920’s did not carry torpedoes. This was a smart move, because cruisers were primary targets and having torpedoes exposed topside was an explosion waiting to happen. Most heavy cruisers built by other countries before WWII were comparable to the ROCHESTER in terms of 8” and secondary guns.

British and French cruisers were similarly armed with nine to six 8” guns. Usually the secondary guns were of a smaller caliber and fewer in number. **German cruisers** had eight 8” guns in four turrets and twelve 4.1” guns in six mounts.

Japanese cruisers usually had ten eight-inch guns in five turrets, and eight 4.7” guns in twin mounts. Initially AA protection was light, usually with a mix of around ten to twenty 40, 37, and 20 mm guns. The Japanese relied on 25 mm guns. The Japanese 4.7” and 25 mm guns were marginally useful in air defense mainly due to limited elevation for the 4.7” guns and slow rates of fire for the 25 mm.

As WWII progressed most navies added to their AA capability although considerably less than the ROCHESTER when it came into service. In 1953 the 40 mm and 20 mm guns were removed and replaced with twenty 3”/50’s. The new AA guns fired a round which had a VT fuse. When fired it began sending a signal that bounced off the target and returned to a sensor. As long as the distance was closing nothing happened. The instant that the distance was increasing the round was exploded. This was extremely effective against WWII era designs, but less so for planes firing missiles.

STORIES OF THE ROCHESTER

The Scuttlebutt column In the November issue described the typical preparations involved in planning a Divisional WestPac Party. This begins the first of a two part description of an actual event. The particular Division will go nameless to protect the guilty. The Planning Committee arranged for the exclusive use of a suitable site, usually a tavern-bar with tables, chairs and booths surrounding a dance floor, with juke box and a place for a small band. The decorating theme was nautical. Food and beverages were served by a friendly staff. It had that "Everybody knows your name" feel about it. At 1630 members of the planning committee and Division Officer arrived to check out the arrangements. It was apparent that the facility had been battened down for a storm. The mirrors behind the bar had been packed away. Anything that could be broken, thrown or used as a weapon had been removed. The friendly staff remained friendly, but also displayed some wariness, reminiscent of Christians in the Coliseum eyeing the lions. The three members of the carefully selected Shore Patrol arrived. Their duties were to maintain order while attempting to remain reasonably sober over the course of the party.

At 1700 the remaining members of the Division began trickling in. Dress was prescribed by local regulations. Officers wore civilian attire, usually with coat and tie. Chiefs had the option of uniforms or mufti. Enlisted were supposed to be in uniform, but usually half resorted to civilian attire, casual, but neat. Enforcement of the uniform requirement was lax, unless you got in trouble, then it worked against you. Sailors who had been to Hong Kong and had acquired tailor made uniforms, knew that they looked the part, and preferred uniforms. As the night progressed they would roll back their cuffs to reveal striking embroidery of dragoons, tigers, along with nautical symbols like anchors all tied together with Asiatic motifs. Travolta would have taken note of their moves on the dance floor.

Dinner commenced at 1830 and more or less continued throughout the evening. Orders were taken at the tables and served by the wait staff. Arrangements had been made for reserved places for guests: the Department Head, the relevant Assistant, Warrant Officer, and the CO and XO. They could arrive and leave at any time. Three or four sailors were designated greeters and when a guest arrived they were welcomed and escorted to their place, usually close to the Division Officer. The Party

started out as a fairly gentle affair. Emily Post would have been proud. Of course as the evening wore on things began to change. (To be continued in the May issue).

BIOGRAPHIES OF ROCHESTER COMMANDING OFFICERS, CAPT RICHARD SHEPPARD

CAPT Richard Daniels Sheppard was the last sea-going CO of the USS ROCHESTER. He was born 27 Oct. 1910 at Bremerton, WA. He was appointed to the Naval Academy in 1928 and graduated in 1931. Like most of the ROCHESTER CO's, he participated in more than his share of major events in the Pacific. He was the Gunnery Control Officer on the USS Ralph TALBOT (DD-390) at the naval battle of Savo Island, north of Guadalcanal. The Talbot was hit by friendly fire as well as from the Japanese and was holed as well as set on fire. The destroyer was dead in the water and as water entered the destroyer it began developing a serious list. LT Sheppard organized a party to put out the fires. He then went over the side, swam through a hole with a line which he used to pull a mattress against the hole. He then worked his way to a manifold which he set to begin pumping water from the listing side of the Talbot. These actions resulted in award of his first Silver Star.

After repairs stateside the Talbot returned to the South Pacific where the destroyer with LT Sheppard as it's XO participated in the Solomon Islands campaign during which he earned his second Silver Star. In August 1943 LCDR Sheppard became the Talbot's CO. As the CO he participated in several engagements in the Marshall Islands as well as Vella LaVella. His actions earned him a first Legion of Merit Award. He was transferred to the HQ Command of the 10th Fleet in March 1944 where he was awarded a second Legion of Merit for his efforts in developing Anti-Submarine tactics and actions used against German Subs.

Following WWII he was involved in several staff assignments and commands. He assumed command of the ROCHESTER early in 1961. Shortly after becoming the ROCHESTER's CO the ship was sent to Bremerton to be decommissioned. LCDR Karl T. Swanson, the previous Engineering



Officer had worked out a plan for such an event which maximized the use of the ship's crew. The current Engineering Officer, LCDR Charlie Brown, MPA, LCDR John Snyder, and CAPT Sheppard recognized its merits and followed it. The result was that the ROCHESTER was cited for completing its decommissioning work ahead of schedule and under budget. CAPT Sheppard retired following the ROCHESTER's decommissioning at Bremerton, thus beginning his life and ending his Navy career at the same place. He lived in San Diego and Vallejo, CA. His wife died in 1976 and CAPT Sheppard died in 1993. Both are buried at the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery at Point Loma, San Diego.

THOUGHTS ON STANDING WATCHES, THEN AND NOW

The recent spate of collisions at sea have caused several Association members to respond with their thoughts about the matter. Sixty or so years ago watches were stood relying pretty much entirely on the watch stander's personal awareness. "Standing" was the relevant term. Watches were stood in an environment that was often uncomfortably hot or cold. Sailors typically stood eight hours of watches a day plus work four to eight hours each day. Twelve to 16 hour work days were the norm. There were occasional slip-ups, but they were rare. And usually responsibilities were designed to be backed up in a manner that caught any mistakes. In addition the CO was a constant presence, particularly when circumstances became critical. If anyone has a view or experience that they would like to share, we would like to hear from you.

AHOY!, IT'S TIME TO SIGN UP FOR THE KANSAS CITY REUNION AND MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS

The Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel is now accepting reservations for the 40-room block we have arranged for our reunion at the special rate of **\$112 per night, plus tax**, which is applicable 3 days prior and 3 days following the official dates of 27 September to 1 October 2018. **Call the hotel directly at 816-891-8900**; tell them you are with the USS Rochester Reunion Group (the booking code is **ROCH**), and make sure they quote you the special rate. Make your reservations now. You can cancel up to 48 hours prior to arrival without penalty. If you have any trouble reserving a room at our special rate, or are told the hotel is sold out, or have any other problems making your reservation, call Pete Russell immediately at 703-569-7733 in Virginia.

The room rate includes full breakfast buffet for two (2) per room per day, complimentary parking, and 24/7 airport shuttle service. All guest rooms feature refrigerators, coffee makers, HD flat-screen TV, and free WiFi. The hotel has an on-site *Asado Urban Grill and Restaurant*, a fitness center and an indoor/outdoor pool.

In this issue you will find the **Reunion Registration Form** to be filled out and mailed in by all planning to join us in Kansas City. Please note that we have an **August 16th deadline for receipt** of the completed forms with payment to our Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Hill in Cookeville, TN.

Your attention is invited to the reunion news and schedule published in the August and November 2017 issues of the Rochester Association newsletters, and on the Association's website at communityassociation.net/ca124/. In our next newsletter, we will cover some of the history of Kansas City, MO, and some interesting points about the sites we will be visiting during our stay.

In the meantime, stay healthy and spry and continue to carry the spirit of the old Rochie Maru.
KANSAS CITY, HERE WE COME!

Shipmates and Family Members Please use this form and mail it with a check for 2018 Dues. Dues are \$25 annually for the period Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Make check payable to USS ROCHESTER Association and mail to Joe Hill., Sr Treasurer USS ROCHESTER Association, 4011 Ditty Road, Cookeville, TN 38506-7663. Joe may be contacted by phone 931-432-4848 or Email nitecrawl@twlakes.net.

USS ROCHESTER Association Membership/Associate Membership Application

Name: Last _____ First _____ Middle _____ Spouse _____
 Address: St. _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone: _____ Email _____
 On Board: Rate/Rank _____ Division/s _____ Years On Board _____
 Associate Member's Name _____ Relation to Shipmate _____
 Address: St. _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone: _____ Email _____
 New Member? _____ Renewal Membership? _____

USS ROCHESTER Association Ship's Store Order Form

Feb 2018

All items designed for adults. All with Logos: (e) = embroidered, (ss) = silk screen, (p) = patch

	Med	Lrg	XL	XXL	XXXL	Unit Price	Qty	Total Price
Golf Shirt w pocket, Blue (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$30	___	___
White (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$30	___	___
Windbreaker, Blue (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$34	___	___
Tee-Shirt, Grey (ss)	___	___	___	___	___	\$12	___	___
Sweatshirt, Grey (ss)	___	___	___	___	___	\$20	___	___
Sweatshirt, Blue (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$32	___	___
Sweatshirt, Grey (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$32	___	___
Hooded Sweatshirt, Blue (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$32	___	___
Mock Tee-Neck Long Sleeve Shirt, White (e)	___	___	___	___	___	\$30	___	___
Ball Cap, Blue (p)	___	___	___	___	___	\$12	___	___

Make check for total to _____ Item Subtotal _____
 ROCHESTER Association _____ Number of Items _____
 and mail to Betsy Phillips, **Total** _____
 8795 Hwy 54, Paris, TN 38242

Your Address _____ Telephone _____



**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT WITH YOUR PAYMENT BEFORE AUGUST 16, 2018
U.S.S. Rochester (CA-124) Reunion, Kansas City, MO, 27 September - 1 October 2018**

----- REGISTRATION -----

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____ Rate/Rank: _____

Division: _____ Years Aboard: _____ to _____ PLANK OWNER: Yes ___ No ___

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email: _____ Cel _____

Spouse/Guest(s) Attending: Yes ___ No ___ Last Name(s): _____ First Name(s): _____

Emergency Contact: Name and CITY _____ Telephone: _____

Please describe and dietary and/or mobility requirements: _____

I/we would like to help with: Registration ___ Hospitality Suite ___ Bus Captain ___ Ship Store ___ Other _____

DATE	EVENTS, TOURS	COST EA	QTY	TOTAL
	Registration (Members and Guests)	\$25.00		
SUBTOTAL FOR REGISTRATION				
THURSDAY, 27 Sept	Welcome Reception – CHECK BOX if Attending	No Cost		-----
FRIDAY, 28 Sept	A – World War I Museum Tour	\$44.00		
SATURDAY, 29 Sept	B – Kansas City Highlights Tour	\$45.00		
	C – Pizza-and-a-Movie Night in Hospitality Suite	\$5.00		
SUNDAY, 30 Sept	D – Harry Truman Presidential Library Tour	\$39.00		
	REUNION BANQUET- Please Make Dinner Selection, below			
	1 – Grilled Top Sirloin Steak, Sauteed Mushrooms	\$45.00		
	2 – Filet of Salmon, Leek Confit, Smoked Tomato Jus	\$45.00		
	3 – Chicken Marsala, Rice Pilaf	\$42.00		
MONDAY, 1 Oct	Farewell Gathering After Complementary Breakfast – Please CHECK BOX if you plan to Attend.	No Cost		_____
	Non-refundable Late Registration Fee (if received after August 16, 2018)	\$15.00		
Sub-Total for Events, Tours, Banquet, and Late Registration (if applicable)				
GRAND TOTAL				

Please send this Registration Form AND Full Payment for all items selected to:

Joe Hill, Sr. **NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018**

Make Checks Payable To:

U.S.S. ROCHESTER ASSOCIATION

Send Form and Payment To:

Joseph Hill, Sr., 4011 Ditty Road, Cookeville, TN 38506-7663

NOTE: Costs are non-refundable after Thursday, August 16, 2018 except, 1) in case a tour is cancelled or 2) in case of personal emergency preventing attendance or requiring early withdrawal from the reunion. In those cases, the full amount will be refunded to you by the Association after the reunion. Need assistance? CALL Joe (931) 432-4848 or Pete Russell (703) 569-7733

USS ROCHESTER (CA-124)
Association Newsletter
14300 Chenal Parkway #7018
Little Rock, AR 72211



USS ROCHESTER CA124

