



July, 2018

HELENA QUARTERLY

USS HELENA ... *The Name, The Ships and The Men ... a Proud Tradition of Service to America*

SAN DIEGO 2019!



Crowne Plaza Hotel
Sept 9, 2019 Sept. 12, 2019





From the Bridge

James McNamee

President

james1602@q.com

The reunion in Kansas City was a success for those that attended. The hotel hosted a very good happy hour in the evening from 5:30 to 7:30 every day in the hotel atrium area. That did effect our hospitality room attendance but it did save on our USS Helena cocktail expense.

The tour to the National Frontier Museum and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum included a mule driven wagon ride with a very interesting driver that told stories about the history of the area as we traveled through that part of the city. After the wagon ride we enjoyed a chuck wagon lunch and some entertainment.

The next day we enjoyed the tour to the Steam Boat Arabia a supply boat that was sunk in the Missouri River in the mid 1800 and was found in 90 plus feet of mud. It was dug up and the cargo was cleaned and put on display in the Steam Boat Arabia Museum. To see the amount of cargo that has been restored is absolutely amazing. I recommend that if you are in area of the Steam Boat Arabia Museum it is a must see.

At our Thursday banquet dinner Timothy Wiese a member of the SS725 told about his experience when the 725 stopped where the CL50 was sunk and all hands on deck to pay tribute to the CL50 and those that didn't make it. We also had Chester (Ski) Biernacki a member of the CL150 attending the reunion thanks to the help of Doug Comella, his father was also on the CL50

On Friday evening after settling our account with the members of hotel sales office I was checking the Helena bank account and found hotel accounting had over

charged us to the point that they had cleaned out our bank account. There was nothing I could do because of the weekend there was no one to complain to. So upon arriving home the first thing Monday morning I was on the phone to the hotel manager. It took three months of discussion and we were reimbursed the amount of the over charge and some extra for all the problems they caused us.

As we have in the past reunions the members attending the reunion vote to where to hold the next reunion in 2019 and it was decided on San Diego. Darrel Thessen and I along with our wives have visited San Diego and have found the hotel to host our 2019 reunion.

The date we have selected is Sept 9, 2019 Sept. 12, 2019. The hotel is the Crowne Plaza 2270 Hotel Circle North San Diego Ca, 92108. Room rates are single and double rate \$119.00, Triple rate \$129.00, quad rate \$139.00 all plus taxes. All rates will be available for three days before and three days after. Due to the tropical setting surrounding the hotel I thought a Hawaiian style reunion would be something different so bring and wear your Hawaiian shirts and dresses and shorts as you feel comfortable with. We will be having as our Thursday dinner a Hawaiian Luau with the hotel tropical setting surrounding us. Additional information re : tours and food will follow in future news letters.

There are a large number of Helena Organization members live in California and the south west so here is a chance for them to attend. Since I have been President for the most part we have had the same members attend the reunions no matter what part of the country we have hosted the reunions, so maybe we will see some new faces this time. I realize that we are not getting any younger and have some health problems including myself. I use a cane and a walker when needed but I still manage to get out and enjoy myself.

See you in San Diego *Jim*

Two Bells



HARRY DABB
DOD: FEB 2017
CA-75 B DIV, F1, 45-46

JOSEPH DESCH
DOD: JAN 2017
CL-50 3RD DIV, COX, 39-43

JAMES FULTON
DOD: FEB 2017
CA-75 5&2 DIV, Bm3, 48-52

JOSEPH C. GARRETT
DOD: 1-9-2018
CA-75 OR Div, Rm3, 53-55

JAMES V. GREALISH*
DOD: DEC 2013
RADM (APD-8 USS WATERS/CL-50 RESCUE)

RUGGLES HARRINGTON
DOD: APR 27 2018
CA-75, 7th DIV, BMG3, 50-52

JAMES McCELLAND
DOD: 2015
CL-50 F DIV, FC1, 39-42

LEANDER PAPE
DOD: FEB 2017
CA-75 A DIV, EN3, 51-53

MAURICE E. PARKINSON
DOD: MAR 2016
CA-75 F DIV, SN, 48-52

ROBERT REICHS
DOD: 1996
CA-75

WARD SHANAHAN*
DOD: 2017
CVA 9 (HELENA, MT, NAVY LEAGUE)

WILLIAM L. SLACK
DOD: OCT 1973
CA-75, 1 DIV

BENJAMIN TABLER
DOD: JULY 2016
CA-75 F DIV

ELDON M. WALKER
DOD: OCT 2016
CL-50 V DIV, 39-43

HERBERT S. WALTERS
DOD: 12/13/2017
CA-75, 1944

WALTER WENDT
DOD: Unknown
CL-50 M DIV, MM1, 39-43

** Helena Organization Honorary Member*

We apologize for the lack of complete data and/or timeliness of the above announcements. We must rely on information when and in whatever form it is provided. Often it is purely word of mouth offered in passing. Should you become aware of a member's passing, please notify the Organization. Your's may be the only notification we receive. Thank You



HELENA QUARTERLY

The Helena Quarterly is a quarterly publication of the USS Helena Organization, Inc. and is published purely for the education of and communication with it's membership and other interested parties. Not for Sale.

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If you now have email access, or have recently changed your email address and haven't advised the Organization, please do so as soon as possible. Thank you!

Please email your new, or changed email address to:
vrhorton@charter.net

We Need Your HELP!

2017 Reunion Hotel



EMBASSY SUITES®



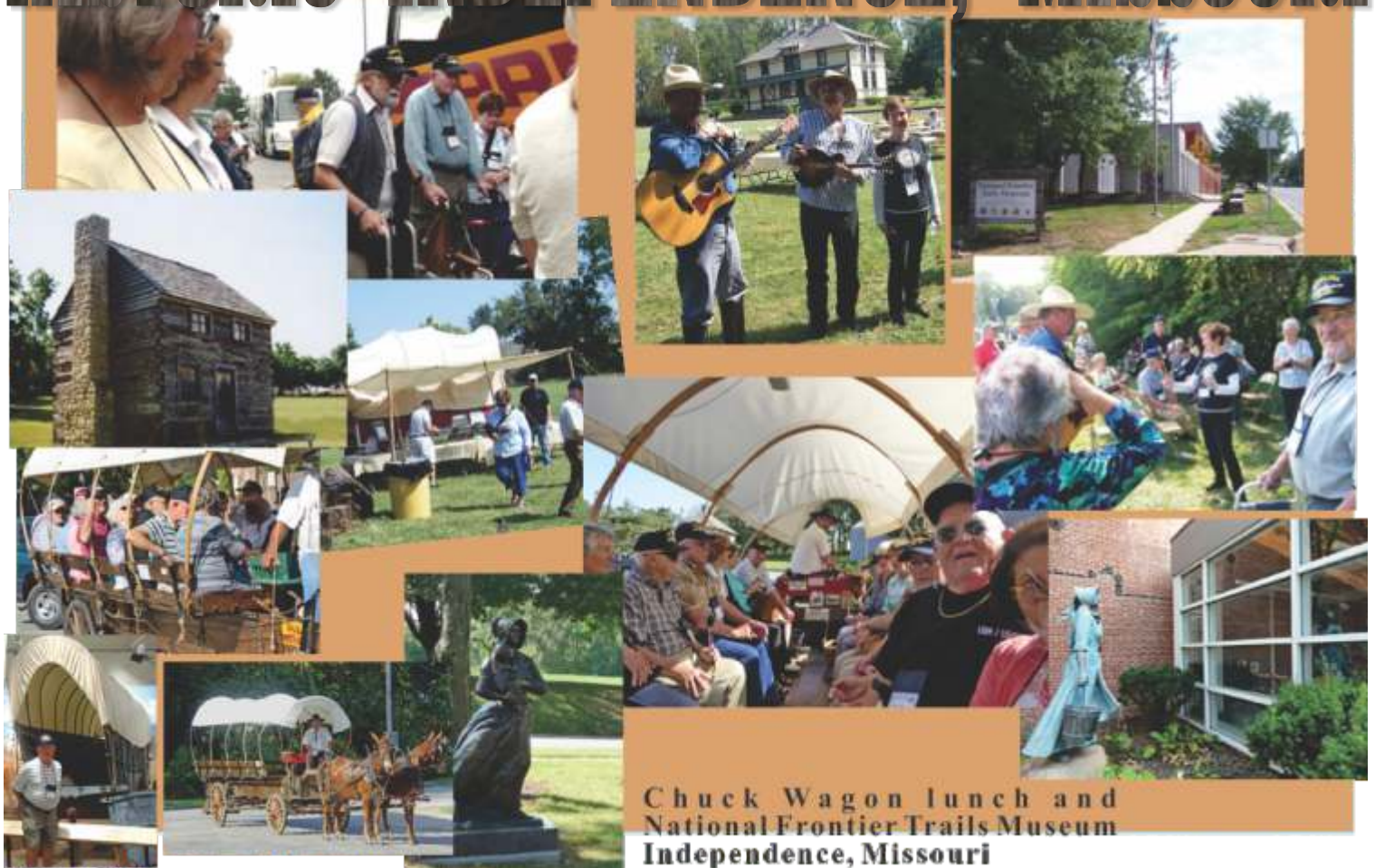
The all-suite Embassy Suites Kansas City - International Airport hotel offered choice of thoughtful amenities. Set less than five minutes from Kansas City International Airport via a complimentary shuttle. This Kansas City hotel is located off of Interstate 29 and Tiffany Springs Parkway, and offered spacious two-room suites with a separate living areas and a range of items, including two flat-screen TVs, WiFi and a microwave.

Delegates woke up to a free cooked-to-order breakfast and enjoyed snacks and drinks at the complimentary Evening Reception in the hotel lobby. For their free nights, the Hotel offered delicious, contemporary American cuisine at Fountain Bar & Grille.

Tuesday, September 19 Tour



HISTORIC INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI



Chuck Wagon lunch and
National Frontier Trails Museum
Independence, Missouri

Gatherings



The Attendees



Barnette, Harold and Carolyn. CL-50
Barnette, Charolette. Daughter-In-Law. CL-50
Bender, Jason. SSN-725
Barker, Gary and Sandy. CA-75
Bezouska, Ron and Angie. CA-75
Biernacki, Chester "Ski". CL-50
Biernacki, Eunice. Guest of "Ski". CL-50
Boatman, Jack K. and Dixie. CA-75
Boitano, Bob. Son-in-law of Jim McNamee. CA-75
Boitano, Denise. Daughter of Jim MnNanee. CA-75
Brelje, Vic and Betty. CA-75
Burns, Ronald and Michiko. CA-75
Garrett Joseph and Ruth. CA-75
Garett, Margaret, daughter of Joseph. CA-75
McWhorter, Lynn, daughter of Joseph. CA-75
Clements, Karen, daughter of Joseph. CA-75
Daron, Patrick, son of Harold Daron. CA-75
Comella, Doug and Cecilia. CL-50
Flick, Dennis and Rosemary. CA-75
Harrington, Ruggles and Nancy. CA-75
Henry William Hank and Mary Jean. CA-75
Udell Gale and Ann. CA-75
Wiese, Timothy and Becky. SSN 725

Willyard, Luther Glen. CA-75
Gilbert, Jim Carl. CA-75
Mays, Claude E. Jr. CA-75
McNamee, James and Cecelia. CA-75
Miles, Joseph. CA-75
Mistic Carl L. and Mary Ann. CA-75
Polaski, Stephen and Beverly. CA-75
Potter, Philip and Sharon. CA-75
Pullin, Earl. CA-75
Thiels, Lynda Pullin. Daughter of Earl. CA-75
Richart, Dale. CA-75
Sagert, Reynold and Patricia. CA-75
Seymour, Richard Dick. CA-75
Schmalz, Sandra A. CA-75
Stein, Robert and Carol. CA-75
Thiessen, Darrell and Janice. CA-75
Thurber Allen, SSN-725.
Turner Randal K. and Nadine. CA-75
Zimmerman Gary and Diane. CA-75
Woltring, Jerry and Delinda. CA-75
Lapa, Hank J. and friend KC Pham. CA-75
Lapa, Hana and friend Henry
Hughes, Peggy. Tour Guide.

USS Helena Discovered: A Story of Valor and Perseverance

- The USS Helena was discovered late last month by the expedition crew of Paul Allen's R/V Petrel
- Sunk by three Japanese torpedoes in July 1943, the Helena was located in the Solomon Sea
- Over 730 of the 900 crew aboard Helena survived thanks to help from nearby ships, two coast watchers and local natives

Few ships can claim a history like that of USS Helena (CL 50). Her distinguished and storied World War II service began at Pearl Harbor and ended in a heroic and determined rescue seemingly too dramatic to be true. Late in March 2018, the Helena was discovered by Paul Allen's expedition crew aboard Research Vessel (R/V) Petrel.

Sunk on July 6, 1943 by three Japanese torpedoes during the Battle of Kula Gulf, the St. Louis-class cruiser was found 860 meters below the surface, resting on the floor of the New Georgia Sound off the coast of the Solomon Islands.

Helena's history closes with the almost incredible story of what happened to her crew in the hours and days that followed. As various rescue efforts got underway over the course of 10 days, amazing stories of Sailor toughness unfolded in which 732 of the 900 crew survived the sinking and were ultimately rescued. When her bow rose into the air after the sinking, many of them clustered around it, only to be fired on. Two American destroyers, the USS Nicholas (DD 449) and USS Radford (DD 446) were dispatched to rescue the surviving crew.

As the sun rose, the enemy remained within striking distance, and the two American vessels suspended rescue operations to pursue the Japanese. The survivors were amassed into two groups.

The first group of about 275 survivors was aided by volunteers and small boats left on scene by the two destroyers. Helena's commanding officer, Capt. Cecil, who survived the sinking, organized a small flotilla of three motor whaleboats each towing a life raft, carrying 88 men each, to a small island about 7 miles. This group was rescued the next morning by USS Owin (DD 433) and USS Woodworth (DD 460).

[Read more at https://www.paulallen.com/uss-helena/#dU59HPL10A4QEBHr.99](https://www.paulallen.com/uss-helena/#dU59HPL10A4QEBHr.99)



The second group, numbering nearly 200, clung to the slowly sinking bow of Helena. When things were looking bleak, a Navy Liberator dropped lifejackets and four rubber lifeboats. The wounded were placed aboard the lifeboats, while the able-bodied surrounded the boats and did their best to propel themselves toward a nearby island. Wind and current, however, carried them away from the island, and ever further into enemy waters. American search planes who eventually arrived could not locate the drifting flotilla, and some of the wounded began to perish under the harsh circumstances. Another night passed, and in the morning the island of Vella Lavella was within reach. Survivors landed safely on the island. Two coast watchers and local natives cared for the survivors as best they could, and radioed news of them to Guadalcanal. The remaining 165 Sailors took to the jungle to evade Japanese patrols. Finally, Nicholas and Radford, augmented by USS Jenkins (DD 447) and USS O'Bannon (DD 450) set off July 15, 1943 to sail further up the slot than had been attempted before. On the night of July 16, the rescue team brought out the 165 Helena men, along with 16 Chinese who had been in hiding on the island.

Helena started with a crew of 900 men. All but 168 had survived the sinking and eventual rescue.



Membership

Please help us keep our membership roster up to date by notifying Membership Chair, Ron Burns of any changes in your current contact information, i.e., mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, or a shipmate's passing.

Ron Burns, Membership
314 8th St. , Park Hills, MO 63601
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HELENA SHIP'S STORE



CA-75 Challenge Coin - \$10.00 ea.



Spiral Bound
Copies of CA-75 Cruise Books -
1951, '53, '53", or '54 - \$25.00 ea.
1956, or '57 - \$30.00 ea.
1958 - \$45.00
1959/60 - \$60.00
1960/61 - \$50.00



CA-75, or CL-50 Caps - \$20.00



Helena License Plate Frame
\$20.00 ea/2 for \$30.00



4" CA-75
Patch - \$15.00



CL-50,
or CA-75 CD
\$10.00



Nugent
Album CD
\$10.00



3" Helena Org.
Decal - \$5.00

All Prices Include Shipping
Make your check payable to: USS Helena Organization
and mail to: Helena Ship's Store
49 S Shining Mountain Dr., Cape Fair, MO 65624