

USS GYATT ASSOCIATION

October 2002

Greetings Shipmates-

As always we had a good time being together this year as we did in years past - some of us arrived early and some arrived late but we were all there for the same thing to see each other and we want to thank Keith and Dottie Kellum for bringing us together in the year 2002. We had about eight new faces and we missed a large number of the old faces -some that we will never see again. The weather ordered, by Keith and Dottie, was just outstanding -with sunny skies and great temperatures. In addition to great shows a number of us were able to get our Christmas shopping out of the way.

All together we had XX shipmates attend and a few stragglers that showed up for a visit. Based on all that has happened in the past year a large number of shipmates drove.

Our official start date was Wednesday and as usual some arrived early and some stayed a few extra days. Wednesday was greeting day and an extensive amount of hot hors d' oeuvres were available and everyone stayed and visited.

Thursday was tour day and we took in all of Branson and had a tour of Table Rock Dam, which was built in the late 1950s of over 1.2 million cubic yards of concrete and 3.3 million cubic yards of embankment. We ate downtown and on the return some stopped at the Veteran's Memorial Museum while others frequented the two major discount malls - one less than a block from our hospitality room. We also had a disappointment in the afternoon when Gloria Mathews, who returned to "Old Branson" which was part of earlier tour, with her spouse Wayne (1953-54) tripped and broke her arm and sustained a cut above the eye that required some stitches. Gloria and Wayne returned to their home in Atlanta, where her arm was placed in a cast. All is well and she is recuperating.

That evening we had our memorial service in a quiet wooded area amongst tall pines and assisted by a local honor guard. Our chaplain, Tom Fuller, who was ably assisted by C. J Turk, Fred Dietrich, Gordon Sander and Roland Castillo, read all 190 plus names of our departed shipmates. After the service we boarded the Showboat Branson Belle for a cruise on Table Rock Lake, dinner and entertainment. The entertainment consisted of singers, dancers and a ventriloquist who was ably assisted by one of our own ladies.

Friday was a day that allowed everyone to take care of gifts for kids, grandkids and house sitters with the night allowing some to see the Haygood Family show and others to see Andy Williams and Glen Campbell.

Saturday and we started the morning with a group hot breakfast, this was to make sure that we had sufficient energy for our annual meeting that started immediately after we finished eating. The minutes of the meeting will be covered separately. After the meeting we drew for our annual state gifts with everyone drawing a number and picking up the gift with the corresponding number sitting on the table. The door prizes were awarded at our banquet - but we will get to that a little later.

USS GYATT ASSOCIATION

The afternoon found everyone standing between the conference room and our rooms for photographs, prior to boarding the bus for the Shoji Tabuchi show, which featured an outstanding violinist accompanied by musicians, singers and dancers. The music ranged from country to classic with a large variety in between numbers.

Our evening featured; an excellent meal, dancing -with music provided by a quartet of senior musicians who played our kind of music and the door prize drawings. The drawings for the door prizes, which provide monies to help support our mailings to our shipmates, were made after dinner. As usual Bill Betz provided some absolutely outstanding stained glass work for prizes and as usual the winners were over whelmed. The first drawing; a small stained glass piece with a destroyer etched in the oval center panel was won by Delores and Doug Martin; the second drawing, a 3-day, 2-night stay at the Westin Hotel in Miami was won by Phil & Fred Barata; the third drawing, the free hotel stay was won by Lois and Jim Schardin, who were also celebrating their 45th wedding anniversary; the fourth drawing, the Harry David Goody Basket was won by Carlene and Danny Hutchison; the fifth drawing, the 50-50, was won by Flo and Lou Laffoon; the sixth and final drawing, a Bill Betz extra large stained glass piece, was won by Marian and Al Seybrecht and no one wanted it more than Marian. Many made their goodbyes when the music came to an end and others were able to do it the next morning. Butch Elliott, who along with his wife Carolee, departed early Sunday morning got as far as Ozark, thirty miles up the road before their van decided it needed a new transmission - so Butch spent an extra week in Southern Missouri while Carolee hitched a ride with a shipmate so that she could be there for their family.

We all had a good time and missed the shipmates that didn't make it this trip and we are thankful that we were spared losses by terrorists that we experienced with the Cole Bombing in 2000 and 9-11 in 2001. Take care and God Bless-

Thanks to Fred Barata for this recap as I was unable to make the reunion.

Your secretary -Martin