



Greetings from the Sterett Association

2019 Reunion Special

The 2019 USS Sterett Reunion is just weeks away

Still plenty of time to get registered

BUT

Guaranteed room rate of \$92 is only guaranteed up to 29 August

If you're on the fence about attending, get a room reservation before the discount expires. You can cancel if you decide not to attend.

The Details:

When: 19-22 September 2019

Thursday & Friday are arrival days – no scheduled events

How Much: Member/Shipmate: \$75 Guest: \$75

Where: Jacksonville, FL



Marriott Jacksonville Hotel
4670 Salisbury Road Jacksonville, Florida 32256
904-296-2222





General Hotel Information: <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/jaxfl-jacksonville-marriott/>

The room rate for the reunion will be **\$92** (+tax & fees).

The room rate also includes a discounted breakfast buffet price of \$12 per person, tax and gratuity not included.

Room rate will be honored three days before and after the reunion.

All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card.

An online reservation link can be found here:

https://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkIdData=USS+Sterett+Association%5EJAXFL%60USAUSAA%6092.00%60USD%60false%602%609%2F16%2F19%609%2F25%2F19%608%2F26%2F19&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes&fbclid=IwAR1Z91xwzmGhhXNp-dMSLO4B1yKeM55NTZKyraMuraTbgruVqLtWhxf6dfk

Or call: **904-296-2222** or **800-962-9786**.

Be sure to specify USS Sterett Association

**** Reservations must be received on or before August 29, 2019 to guarantee the discounted rate.**

Banquet Menu

The following will be offered for our Saturday evening reunion banquet.

Entrée choices must be indicated on the reunion registration forms

Beef:

Sliced London Broil with mushroom Anju sauce

Chicken:

Breast of Chicken Francaisa with Citrus Butter Sauce

Fish:

Baked Cod with garlic and lemon caper sauce



Vegetarian:
Chef's Choice

Above served with vegetable of the day.

Chef's choice Starch

Mixed greens, tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, shredded carrots with assorted dressings.

Saturday Tour

The planned tour to the Budweiser brewery was cancelled. Budweiser no longer has this tour available.

A search for an alternate location which would fit our Saturday afternoon time constraints was unsuccessful.

Therefore, Saturday afternoon will be free time.

We encourage our guests to take advantage of this time to explore the many attractions offered by Jacksonville.

Area Attractions

As the **largest city in the continental U.S.**, Jacksonville is the perfect place to explore and discover something new, from its extensive park system (the largest in the nation with two national parks, seven state parks, and more than 400 city parks), to its beautiful relaxing beaches (22 miles of them), and its historic neighborhoods that are filled with character and charm.

When in town be sure to check out these "Only in Jax" spots:

"Only in Jax" Attractions:

- Adventure Kayak Florida <https://www.adventurekayakflorida.com/>
- Catty Shack Ranch and Wildlife Refuge: <http://cattyslack.org/>
- Beaches Museum & History Park: <http://www.beachmuseum.org>
- Fort Caroline National Memorial <https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/foca.htm>
- Kayak Amelia Eco-Tours <https://ameliaadventures.com/>
- Kingsley Plantation https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp_visiting.htm
- Museum of Science and History MOSH: www.themosh.org
- Nature & Sunset cruises onboard the St. Johns River Taxi www.jaxrivertaxi.com



- Sweet Pete's Candy Factory Tour in Downtown: www.sweetpetescandy.com
- The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens: www.cummERMuseum.org
- The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens: www.jacksonvillezoo.org
- The Jax Ale Trail Passport: www.JaxAleTrail.com
- Top to Bottom Walking Tour of Downtown: <http://adlibtours.com/Tours.html>

Locally Owned Boutiques:

- Eco Relics in Riverside (Reclaimed wood furniture, salvaged materials) <http://ecorelics.com>
- Midnight Sun in Five Points Riverside (Eclectic gifts) <http://www.themidnightsun.net>
- Natural Life at the St. Johns Town Center (Boho clothing) www.naturallife.com
- Rethreaded www.rethreaded.com
- Rosie True in the San Marco Square (Women's boutiques) www.rosietrue.com
- Rusted Market in San Marco (Antiques, cool gifts) www.facebook.com/rustedmarket
- Violet in Five Points in Riverside (Women's boutiques) www.facebook.com/violet.riverside

Do not leave Jax without having one of these local experiences:

- Checking out The Land of the Tiger at the **Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens**.
- Catching a show at the Bryan-Gooding Planetarium at **MOSH**.
- Drinking one of the **Top 26 Cocktails** in Jacksonville.
- Discovering our African-American heritage at **Kingsley Plantation**.
- Fishing, swimming, biking, and surfing at **Hanna Park**.
- Exploring the Gardens at **the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens**. They are nearly 100 years old!
- **Golfing** at one of our area's 70 courses.
- Paddle boarding or surfing in **Jacksonville Beach**.
- Running, biking or walking the **RiverWalk** from Downtown to Riverside.
- Sipping a beer at one of our local tap rooms and getting your **Jax Ale Trail** Passport stamped.
- Snapping a selfie at **Friendship Fountain** overlooking the Downtown Jacksonville Skyline.
- Spotting **the murals in Downtown** Jacksonville.
- Taking a kayaking tour of the **Timucuan Preserve** and its marshes.



- Riding on the **Jacksonville River Taxi** in Downtown.
- Visiting **Atlantic Beach**, it's only 15 miles from Downtown and it's as quaint a beach town as they get!
- Walking through the Currents of Times exhibit at **MOSH**.
- Watching a movie at **Sun Ray Cinema** in Five Points in Riverside.



For golf enthusiasts:

The following golfing events have been arranged:

Thursday Sep 19 at NAS Jacksonville Golf Course (AM tee times to be assigned 7 days before the event)

Friday Sep 20 at the Hidden Hills Country Club (AM tee times at 0938, 0946 & 0954)

If interest, please contact Chuck Bond at acts.9.15.saul@gmail.com or call/text at (360)720-4401.

Reunion Registration

Go to <https://www.sterett.net/reunion-register/> for reunion registration information and follow the link provided to register.

You will find both on line and mail in forms.

Entering a quantity of 2 or more will expand the on line form for guest entries.

The registration process requires banquet entrée selection



On line payment of fees will be through PayPal.

You do not need a PayPal account to make the payment. Credit cards can be used using the PayPal interface.

Reunion Check In

As soon as possible after arriving at the hotel, stop by the hospitality room to check in. Upon check in, you will be given name tags for you and your guests, a pin for your ball cap or lapel.

Behind your name tag you'll find a card indicating which dinner entrée you prefer at Saturday dinner. Be sure to bring the card with you to dinner and place it on the table for the wait staff to know what to serve.

Kick back, have a beer or a soft drink and look around for that shipmate you've been anxious to catch up with. The hospitality room serves as a place to hang out when you're not doing other things.

Ship's Store Sales

Duffy Groener, our ship's store custodian, will have Sterett "stuff" available for sale in the hospitality room. These items include ball caps, lighters, windbreakers, polo shirts, challenge coins, coffee mugs, window stickers and sew on patches.

Off Limits

The Sterett reunion is a time to reunite with shipmates and friends. It is a time to reflect on the people who helped to make us who we are today. It is a time to remember the good times we shared in days past. It is a time to laugh at the crazy things we did when we were young and reckless.

It is not a time for airing our political differences, arguing about the state of the world today or taking up personal causes.

Please keep it civil and light hearted.

Dress Code

Casual attire throughout the weekend – wear what's comfortable

Saturday banquet – Dressy casual:

Slacks

Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt

Optional tie

Business Meeting

We will conduct our business meeting on Saturday morning.

This meeting is **restricted to members in good standing** (dues current).

Go here to join or pay dues: <https://www.sterett.net/membership/>



The meeting will be conducted generally following Robert's Rules of Order.

The following items are covered at the business meeting:

Election of new officers:

The Sterett Association needs you to step up.

If our organization is to survive, we must have the active support of our younger shipmates.

Sterett was in service for 27 years. If you enjoy the reunions and other aspects of the Sterett Association, then get active.

We need shipmates who served across the years of Sterett's service life to step up and take a position.

Sterett Association officers are elected for a two year period.

The following positions will be elected:

President

Vice President (we are reverting back to 1 VP)

Secretary/Treasurer

3 Officer At Large positions

(Ships Storekeeper is a voluntary position)

2021 Reunion

The location for the 2021 Sterett reunion will be decided at the business meeting.

The location is determined by a vote of the members in attendance. The Sterett board does not make the final decision but may veto a nominated location if deemed not in the best interest of the Association members.

A few things to consider:

Sterett shipmates live from one end of the Country to the other.

The reunion location has been moved around the country to accommodate shipmates that live in various places.



We've been to the Rockies (Littleton, CO), the mid Atlantic (Baltimore, MD), the southwest coast (San Diego, CA), the Gulf Coast (Biloxi, MS), the northeast (Portland/Bath, ME), the northwest (Silverdale/Tacoma, WA), sort of in the middle (Branson, MO) and now the southeast coast (Jacksonville FL).

Perhaps it's time to pay those who reside west of the Mississippi another visit.

We would all like the next reunion to be in our own back yard but please give some thought to other shipmates who weren't able to make the trip to Jacksonville.

For a successful reunion, we must have a Sterett shipmate in the selected area who is willing to take on the duties of Reunion Coordinator.

Want it in your town?

Be prepared to convince the members that it's the best location for 2021.

(Joe Gaughan can provide tips!)

Jacksonville will be another great reunion location. Don't miss the opportunity to mingle with your Sterett shipmates at the 2019 reunion.

Remember:

- **Rooms must be booked by 29 August 2019 to guarantee the discounted rate. Following this date, discounted rooms will be on a space and rate available basis.**

Who's Going:

Registered Shipmates Attending: (list does not include spouses or other guests)

| Rank/Rate | First Name | Last Name | Hull |
|-----------|------------|-------------|--------|
| YN3 | Burton | Dietz | DLG 31 |
| SM1 | Daniel | Fitzpatrick | CG 31 |
| OS2 | Trey | Johnson | CG 31 |
| STG2 | Bob | Patterson | CG 31 |
| Dr. | Le | Phung | CG 31 |
| LTjg | John | King | DLG 31 |
| SH3 | Mike | Britton | DLG 31 |
| BM3 | Randy | Norton | DLG 31 |
| LT | Clay | Flowers | CG 31 |
| HM2 | Chuck | Bond | CG 31 |
| STG2 | Allen | Guyse | DLG 31 |
| RD2 | Duffy | Groener | DLG 31 |

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



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|-------|---------|-------------|--------|
| Lt | Van | Hada | CG 31 |
| STG1 | Bill | Hightdudis | CG 31 |
| EW1 | Jeff | Kirk | CG 31 |
| DS2 | Thomas | Begley | CG 31 |
| EN2 | Kenneth | Wilhelm | CG 31 |
| DS2 | Jeffrey | Brown | DLG 31 |
| SM3 | Dan | O'Riley | DLG 31 |
| BT2 | Frank | Ames | CG 31 |
| YN3 | Gary | Nichols | DLG 31 |
| HT2 | Ron | Burch | CG 31 |
| MM2 | Dwayne | Koeller | CG 31 |
| LT | David | Schweizer | CG 31 |
| STG1 | Glenn | MacArthur | DLG 31 |
| | Dale | Byhre | DLG 31 |
| SK3 | Michael | Vogel | DLG 31 |
| SK3 | Steve | Donner | CG 31 |
| SM2 | John | Onorato | CG 31 |
| EW1 | Vince | Danner | CG 31 |
| STG2 | Neal | Doucet | CG 31 |
| LTjg | Bruce | Riley | CG 31 |
| SKCS | Brian | Werring | CG 31 |
| OSCS | Steve | Hayes | CG 31 |
| OSSN | Danial | McGowan | DLG 31 |
| OSC | Wayne | Wright | CG 31 |
| LCDR | Bill | Barker | CG 31 |
| BMSN | Russell | Henniger | CG 31 |
| | Liennhu | Doan | CG 31 |
| STGSN | Eduardo | Garcia | CG 31 |
| JO3 | Tom | Updike | CG 31 |
| YN1 | Brian | Bon | CG 31 |
| RD1 | Rick | Allard | DLG 31 |
| STG3 | Kirk | Wagoner | CG 31 |
| RD3 | Kenneth | Nantz | DLG 31 |
| IC2 | Jimbo | Era | CG 31 |
| EN2 | John | Wheeler | CG 31 |
| HT2 | Michael | Stevenson | CG 31 |
| ISCS | Donald | Zimbelman | CG 31 |
| BM1 | Lane | Baumgartner | CG 31 |
| BT2 | Ken | Bridges | CG 31 |
| FC3 | Phillip | Crowe | CG 31 |

USS STERETT ASSOCIATION



| | | | |
|--------|---------|-------------|--------|
| LTjg | Ken | Hager | DLG 31 |
| TM2 | Brian | Cox | CG 31 |
| OS2 | Nick | Robles | DLG 31 |
| OS2 | Evan | Mickel | CG 31 |
| LT | Donald | Kelley | CG 31 |
| MM2 | Jim | Bolton | CG 31 |
| EW2 | Kenny | Marshall | CG 31 |
| STG2 | Thomas | Ossmann | CG 31 |
| GMM1 | Don | Hageman | CG 31 |
| OS2 | Dale | Hilliard | DLG 31 |
| SM3 | James | Jennings | CG 31 |
| HT1 | Robert | Unverdorben | CG 31 |
| EN3 | Pat | Stallworth | CG 31 |
| GMM2 | Javier | Cantu | CG 31 |
| STGC | Joe | Gaughan | CG 31 |
| GMM2 | Bill | Morris | CG 31 |
| STG3 | Ronald | Choate | CG 31 |
| IC2 | Elonzo | Carter | CG 31 |
| STG1 | Mark | Fullmer | CG 31 |
| DS3 | Mark | Raasio | CG 31 |
| | Lienni | VU | CG 31 |
| LTjg | Mark | Beaulieu | CG 31 |
| STG2 | Vernon | Ridley | CG 31 |
| OS2 | Barry | Vitez | CG 31 |
| FC3 | Ed | Garcia | CG 31 |
| FCSN | James | Hizer | CG 31 |
| YN3 | Larry | Motz | DLG 31 |
| STG2 | Ashley | Drake | CG 31 |
| LT | Tom | O'Connor | DLG 31 |
| Family | Debbie | Sterett | |
| OS2 | Brien | Mantooth | CG 31 |
| BM2 | Ronald | Erickson | DLG 31 |
| | Liennhu | Laihuyen | CG 31 |
| STG3 | Mike | Cummings | CG 31 |
| EW2 | Rich | Yeskis | CG 31 |
| Capt. | Richard | Genet Sr. | CG 31 |
| MM2 | Mac | McAllister | DLG 31 |



Special Event

50 years ago, this month, on 30 August, Sterett took part in a pilot rescue that was **the longest successful rescue penetration of a Navy helo over North Vietnam.**

The operation is described in the following report by J.E. WIANT, LTJG, pilot of Big Mother 74, the SH3 helicopter on Sterett's helo deck.

At 17:30 on 30 August 1968, I received "SAR ALERT" over the 1MC aboard the **USS STERETT**. The crewmen raced from below deck to the helo, arriving at the same time as the pilots. At 17:33, we were manned, and I executed an ASE off take off without incident. ASE came on the line after about 1 ½ minutes in the air. Crewman Burleson donned his swim gear, as they did not know the location of the SAR. I proceeded to my orbit point and awaited my rescap (*Rescue Combat Air Patrol – aircraft overhead the zone to ward off enemy*). We were given a position of the pilot in relation to the **USS STERETT** locating him about 220⁰/62 miles inland from our present position. A "straight line" route was impossible due to AAA sites and other fortifications. The crewman arranged their equipment, cleared the M-60s, as they learned the SAR was inland.

We examined the charts and decided on a route well to the south over the Vinh Hills and west to the mountains where we turned north along a ridgeline to the SAR location. We sighted our A-4 escorts (3 miles offshore) and I started my penetration at 5,500' on a heading of 270°. Prior to crossing the beach, I called for IFF and lights off. The crewman handed us our armor and I authorized them to clear their weapons. As I crossed over the beach, I called "feet dry" and turned UHF communications over to my co-pilot.

Following the rescap vectors and interpreting our Flak charts, we proceeded to the ground without opposition or incident. The communications were very cluttered until we came under the direct control of the on-scene commander. He switched us to guard and everyone else to SAR primary. At this time, Big Mother 74, the on-scene commander, and the downed pilot were the only ones on guard and communications were excellent.

I turned east on my first approach and the on-scene commander (VA-94) flew by my starboard side in a dive and marked the spot by voice call and a steep pull-out. We marked it as 18° 45' and 105° 20'. I had the survivor localized now and called for a smoke marker as I began my decent through 3500' and approach. At this point, we received very heavy 37mm, 85mm and 100mm AAA fire and I worked to the north. Rescap suppressed the



fire sufficiently enough for me to make a high speed 270° approach into what wind there was. He was about 2000' in a bamboo grove at the foot of a ridge. The survivor had a day smoke going which was immediately seen.

From 2 miles out, the survivor did an excellent job of calling us over him. We started receiving small arms fire at this time and I had to increase my hover altitude due to the dead leaves coming up. Copilot had a hard time holding number two engine on the line, the friction control was weak. We used the forest penetrator and my crewman put it at about 10-15 feet from the survivor. Crewman SMELLIE directed the pilot over the survivor. He made his way to the penetrator and attempted to deploy the seats and experienced problems, so he detached it and hooked himself on by his D-ring. The high-speed hoist performed as advertised and when SMELLIE called "survivor clear – break hover" at 18:25, I exited the area. The survivor trailed behind the helo for 15-20 seconds, while the crewmen winched him inside. The survivor stated that he was too tired to work the zippers on the forest penetrator, so he took it off and attached the hook to his torso harness "D" ring. Crewmen placed a flak jacket on the survivor and seated him. WIANT, asked the crewmen to provide the survivor a bottle of brandy, from the first aid box. Survivor drank one and later a second, with 3 cups of water. He was in shock and extremely exhausted. His knee was injured, no noticeable bleeding.

We were in the hover about three minutes and received small arms rounds through the after-fuel cell, cabin deck, part of fuselage skin, and number two main rotor blades. The self-sealing cell worked satisfactorily, and we headed south along the route we came in on. The crewmen stuffed a rag in the hole, watching the gages, with no noticeable unbalance between the tanks. At this point, it was suggested I use a route into Thailand, and declined because I was not informed of the Air Force SAR elements airborne ready to escort us to NAKHON PHANOM. I also considered our available SAR A/C and decided that if I went to Thailand our SAR assets would be greatly impaired. My crewman expended M-60 ammunition throughout. They each had their weapons jam at least once.

We started out at 6300' and received 37mm, 55mm, 85mm, and 100mm fire throughout the entire route. A-4 rescaper did an outstanding suppression job and got several secondaries. My co-pilot fired two clips from his M-16 at several people on the deck as I broke hover, but I had to make him stop because the empty cases were bouncing off the windscreen into my face. [SMELLIE Comment] - On the way out, we drew more flak. I think it was 57mm as we were about 5,500 feet and it was bursting between 7 and 8,000 feet. Three salvos of at least eight rounds each were fired at us. The first salvo went aft and up at almost 6 o'clock. They walked it up and the third salvo was closer to us and going up at almost 3 o'clock. At this time, I saw two A-4's start in on a run and the flak was suppressed. About 5 minutes later, we drew some more flak, but it was bursting at least 1,000 feet below us. An A-4 made a run on the site, dropped one bomb and suppressed the site.

[BURLESON Comment] – I knew for sure they saved our skins. We did not draw any more fire on the way out.

Through evasive maneuvers, excellent rescaper and on-scene commanders from VA-94, we made it "feet wet" with only a few more scratches and dents from flak bursts. During the entire exit, we received ground fire.



We landed back aboard the **USS STERETT** at 19:13 without incident and the survivor, LCDR Harvey EIKEL, USN, from VA-93 received medical attention. Eikel suffered multiple abrasions, superficial powder burns on left hand, 1 ½ inch laceration on scalp, and contusion of right knee.

[SMELLIE Comment] - **The support and cooperation received from the DLG's is outstanding.**

On post flight we found that we took 3 hits. One in the aft fuel cell just forward of the aft station. It went through the cell and out the cabin overhead. We took one round through one rotor blade. That was the extent of the damage. The success of this mission can be best attributed to the state of readiness the SAR posture is continually in. The fast reactions of the on-scene commander, the rescap, **and the coordination by the USS STERETT**. The high degree of coverage and professionalism exhibited by my crewman and co-pilot were without exception.

The longest successful rescue penetration of a Navy helo over North Vietnam. "One of the most professional SAR pick-ups I have ever seen." CDR A. Lou Alexandria. XO, VF-51

The players:

USS Sterett Air Controller: **RD1 Richard Allard**

Rescued pilot: LCDR. Harvey Eikel

Helo:

Pilot – LTJG Jeffrie E. Wiant

Co-pilot - LTJG Paskell D. January Jr.

1st crew – ADJ-2 George A. Smellie

2nd crew – AMH-3 Donald G. Burleson

At this point you're no doubt wondering what this has to do with a reunion special event.

Shipmate Mike Smith (SN/DK3) wanted to memorialize the importance that SAR Missions played aboard Sterett, both in it's DLG and CG configurations. As such, he commissioned a painting by noted Marine Artist, Dale Byhre, which would capture this mission in a dramatic fashion. The resulting painting is a magnificent depiction of Sterett in action.

Mike said the following after seeing the finished painting:

"Mr. Byhre's wonderful approach to the integration of a customer's vision onto a final canvas was nothing short of superlative. He handled our commissioned work professionally and ensured that we ended up with the painting that we had envisioned at the outset of accepting the task. The result is a masterful piece of artwork that we will cherish for years to come". "As we say in the Navy, Dale...Bravo Zulu! Well done!"

The painting will be unveiled at the reunion on Saturday evening following dinner.



On hand will be the artist, **Mr. Dale Byhre**, **OSCM (Ret.) Richard Allard** who, as an RD1 was the air controller who coordinated the rescue operation from **Sterett** and **LTjg Paskell D January**, the Co-pilot of Big Mother 74.

There's no doubt those at the reunion will be impressed with this terrific piece of art which presents USS Sterett at one of her finest hours.

For those interested, prints will be available.

Hope to see you in Jacksonville.