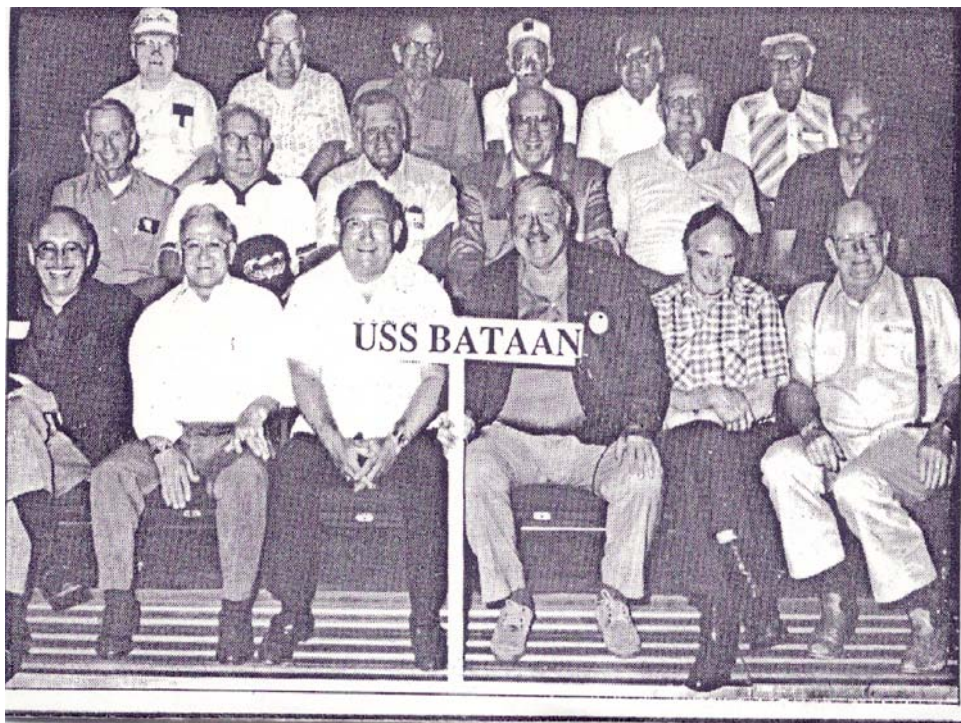


## HOW AND WHY WE STARTED

The year before our first reunion an add appeared announcing a reunion of the crew of the USS Bataan in Houston. I was excited since we had never had one. When I arrived there were not too many of us and we soon discovered that the reunion was actually that of the USS San Jacinto. They had advertised using the names of the other CVL's as well to swell the number of attendees so that they could get lower prices for things. I can't remember the names of all the Bataan people but they included Larry Ayers, Joe Midollo, me, a pilot named Jimmy Smythe and air crewman named Al King from VT 50, a guy from Minnesota who worked on the arresting gear machinery, Kenny Brown and a few other snipes.



Everything was geared for the San Jacinto people and we were not too happy. We got together and decided to start our own society and plan our own reunions. The snipes called Jerry Murphy in Philadelphia and he and his wife flew down to join us. Jerry was in the business of supplying food stuffs to hotels and we then decided to have our first real USS Bataan reunion in Philadelphia the following year. The rest is history.

We placed ads in many magazines such as The American Legion, VFW, FRA, Retired Officers, etc. This resulted in a nice turn out and the beginning of the present USS Bataan Association. As you know, a number of us have joined the staff of the Supreme Commander and more will follow but we hope the people who have manned LHD 5 will keep the Association going.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS GIVEN TO ME BY **DR. MEL ROTNER** (3rd on the left). THE NAMES THAT I HAVE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**RICHARD COLE, JOE MIDOLLO, TOM RATHBONE, MEL ROTNER, EDGAR HELM SR., LARRIE AYERS, JIMMY SMYTH (VT-50 PILOT), BILL WUNCH, ROY BELL, JERRY MURPHY, NICK PARADIS, GEORGE GRAY (VF-47), VC WELCH, DARRELL MOORE, BRADY ROSENTRIT, C.J. RUNNER, JACK MASSELL, JACK MARKO.**

**I AM NOT SURE IF THESE WERE THE ONLY ONES THAT WERE PRESENT, BUT VERY CLOSE. IF ANYONE CAN HELP IN IDENTIFYING THEM, PLEASE MAKE NOTE AND LET ME KNOW. NOTE— ALL THOSE THAT WERE AT SAN JACINTO ARE NOT IN THE ABOVE PICTURE. IF ANYONE HAS A CLEAR PICTURE, WE COULD USE A COPY.**