

REUNION 2026

Dear Shipmate:

This will serve as the final announcement and scheduling for the Norfolk Reunion, September 23-27. Attached in this package are the:

- Registration form for all activities.
- Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel info.
- Schedule of events and tour descriptions.
- Paid roster of members.

This reunion will be the first event using a reputable reunion company (Armed Forces Reunions, INC), a company which conducts many military and group tours throughout the U.S. They will handle all the tours, and the accounting of funds collected for the various activities, including welcome packets and hospitality oversight. We will evaluate their level of service after the reunion to determine if we use them in the future.

The Hotel we are using is very centralized to our activities, and is located on the Norfolk waterfront, across from the Naval Ship Repair Facility, at Portsmouth. A ferry landing is outside the hotel, which sails to Portsmouth and the Norfolk Harbor. Along the scenic, waterfront walkway is shopping, a variety of restaurants, and a band shell, with live entertainment. The Nauticus Naval Museum and USS WISCONSIN are also a short walk along the waterfront.

Overall, we have a great time planned for this event and we hope you can attend. Aside from the reunion events, there are many activities within the Norfolk area for vacation planning. Historic Williamsburg is a short drive from the hotel, as well as Virginia Beach, Historic Jamestown, Yorktown and Portsmouth. These destinations were not planned for the reunion, due to physical requirements, such as walking and loading and reloading of buses. The hotel has offered the reunion room pricing for three days on either side of the reunion dates. For additional information, and trip planning, you may wish to visit the Norfolk visitors link at www.visitnorfolk.com.

We will have two special guests in attendance:

- Friday night, September 25, Mayberry's own special deputy will visit us in the hospitality suite around 7:30 pm. A Barney Fife impersonator, David Browning will entertain us and assist the Shore Patrol with any rowdy shipmates. Mr. Browning traveled with Don Knotts and opened for him for many concerts and events.
- Guest speaker for the Saturday Banquet is still under consideration. I am attempting to have Rear Admiral Samuel J. Cox, Director of the Naval History and Heritage Command to discuss the recent discoveries of sunken Naval vessels. Potential backup is Captain Channing Zucker, USN (Ret.), former Secretary of the U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association and former Director of the Historic Naval Ships Association.

Reunion registration packets will be available from noon on Wednesday, 23, September outside the Hospitality Suite, located off the main lobby. The opening reception will begin at 5:00 pm with opening remarks and then a food service offering of "steamship round", turkey and mashed potatoes,

plus our normal offering of snacks and alcohol. We will have our silent auction of donated items, followed by great stories.

Our Business Meeting will be conducted on Saturday, 26 September. During the meeting will discuss the potential for future reunions, which may include New Orleans or Buffalo. Additional items for discussion will be the Scholarship Program, Honor Flights, and the election of officers. At present we are without a secretary, with the passing of Robert "Boomer" Grindle and a Chaplain, with the resignation of Dave Franclemont. We will be voting for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The positions of Advisor, Webmaster, Recruiting and Scholarship are appointed positions. If you wish to participate in any of the above positions, please contact the President for further information and counsel.

It is requested that you refer to the enclosed membership roster. If your membership expired at the end of 2025, you would need to bring your dues up to date, to support the association and continue receiving the magazine and other benefits of our Association. Dues are \$25 per year or \$45 for two years in a single payment. Dues are payable to: **USS PROVIDENCE Association** and may be forwarded to:

USS PROVIDENCE Association
c/o David Abdouch
127 Amberwood Dr.
Walnut, CA. 91789-2463

A few shipmates have asked about "Associate" membership for members of their family. Dues would be \$25 per year and \$45 for two years in a single payment. Associates would have all the benefits of normal membership, for the exception of voting rights.

Looking forward to a great reunion.

Jim Chryst, President