

USS Great Sitkin Reunion - 2020 - Norfolk, Virginia

The official dates for the reunion are September 9th thru 13th, 2020. Our host hotel is the same Holiday Inn we used in 2003.

Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center
5655 Greenwich Rd
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Room rates are \$124 a night. It includes a complimentary breakfast buffet each morning. Rates are good 3 days prior and 3 days after the official reunion dates. Restaurant is onsite, and the food is superb! Prices are reasonable too. The hotel website is: www.HIVABeachNorfolk.com. Check it out.

And now, the venues: Before I start, I'd like to offer two statements. The first is from the Mariner's Museum in Newport News. This is their mission statement:

"We connect people to the world's waters, because through the waters, through our shared maritime heritage, we are connected to one another."

The second statement is from a Facebook post made by our Shipmate, Ray Bryant, BM3, '69 - '73:

"In a couple of days Karen & I will be attending my ship's reunion. It is difficult to believe it will be 50 years this Christmas Eve I reported aboard the USS Great Sitkin (AE-17). December 24, 1969, I went aboard a scared, confused, immature 17-year-old high school dropout, heading for the wrong side of the criminal justice system. Four years later, I walked off the ship a mature, self-confident man of 21 with a future. Any success I can claim in life I owe to those four years in the Navy and my marriage to Karen J. Bryant. The Sitkin was my safe space for four years. To be able to reconnect with my shipmates is "priceless!"

This will be quite the seafarer's reunion. All of our trips will center on our love for the sea and our like experiences shared by Ray.

On Thursday, we will be heading to the Mariners' Museum. That will be an all-day event. We will have lunch there, and our memorial service will be there as well. It is a world-class museum with many interesting things to see and do. We will have guided tours through much of the museum. Their website is: www.marinersmuseum.org.

Friday morning will begin with a visit to the Farrier Firefighting Facility. This is where the Navy teaches Damage Control and Firefighting to our 21st century Sailors. We will have a guided tour of the school and while it won't be as interactive as the gun ranges we've seen the past two years, we will be able to see up close how training is done in the 21st century. Seeing how this has been the primary Navy fire school on the east coast for over 75 years, I am sure many, if not all of us, have been there for training at some point. Prepare to be amazed! Their Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/Farrierfireschool/>. You will be able to buy command T-shirts and patches there.

From Farrier, we will go on a 45-minute guided bus tour of the Navy base. After that, we will head to the Nauticus. Yes, it is another museum of the sea with three floors of exhibits, the US Navy Museum and the USS Wisconsin (BB-64). Lunch is on your own. Part of the day will be a two-hour boat tour of the Hampton Roads water front. Their website is <https://nauticus.org/>. These are two action-packed days. There is so much more to see and do, you may be interested in coming early to the reunion or staying later. We will be providing the cost and registration details for the reunion in the Spring 2020 newsletter.

Other details, all preliminary. The Saturday evening banquet will be buffet style. A new twist this year. We will be having a "Silent Auction." To facilitate this, we will be looking for donations of quality items to provide the members to bid on. Proceeds will go toward offsetting some of the reunion expenses.

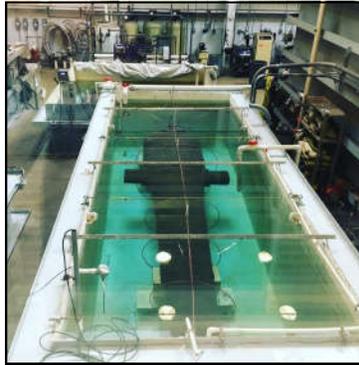
In closing, Mary and I value your thoughts regarding the Norfolk reunion. Please Email us at dcckaiser@kaiserstorage.com. Have a happy and save holiday season. See you in 2020!

George & Mary Kaiser, Reunion Hosts

2020 Reunion in Norfolk, Virginia



Explorer's Theatre



One of the guns from the USS Monitor being preserved



Actual Propeller of the SS United States



FARRIER
FIRE FIGHTING
SCHOOL



USS Forrestal (CV-59) Memorial

Nauticus, U.S. Navy Museum and the USS Wisconsin (BB-64)

