

USS R E Lee (601) News

Summer 2023

See You There?

September 25th - 29th, 2024

We are doing a quick head count of those that plan to attend the next reunion in Manitowoc. Please select one of the 3 options and return your vote to our President [Joe White](#) at JWhite.AG68@shelterinsurance.com.

Option 1: **Yes**

Option 2: **Maybe**

Option 3: **No**

We Are Going Where?

I guess most of you are wondering, WHAT? Well, there is a basic reason for the location pick. In WW II, Manitowoc was the location of an inland shipyard that built fleet boats for the war. There is still a small shipyard that builds Bill Gates and Elon Musk quality yachts. Other than that, the place supposedly has more per capita cows than humans. Remember this is "Cheese Head" country. It is definitely in a pretty part of the county located midway on the western shore of lake Michigan and more or less centrally located in the nation.

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum was founded in 1970 as the Manitowoc Submarine Memorial Association, and has since grown to be one of the largest nautical museums in the country; it has been granted affiliation status with the Smithsonian. There is over 60,000 sq ft of interactive and standing exhibits exploring maritime history with a particular emphasis on the Great Lakes. Perhaps the Museum's crown jewel is the World War II, USS Cobia, a "fleet boat" diesel submarine similar to those built in Manitowoc during the war. There are daily tours of the vessel, which is moored in Manitowoc's harbor, allowing visitors a look at Manitowoc's role in the war building 28 submarines for the U.S. Navy. In 1986, Cobia was incorporated as a part of the Manitowoc Maritime Museum, declared a National Historic Landmark, and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. One interesting thing is the Cobia managed to escape all the later "conversions" most of the war boats underwent and is pretty much in an "as built" configuration.

USS Cobia (SS 245) was launched November 28, 1943, in Groton, CT. In June 1944, it began the first of six war patrols in which she sank thirteen Japanese vessels. By July 1944, Cobia had established itself in the annals of World War II sub history by attacking an enemy convoy bound for Japanese-held Iwo Jima. Cobia sank two vessels, including a troop transport carrying a Japanese tank battalion of twenty-eight tanks. U.S. Marines considered this sinking critical to their success in capturing Iwo six months later.

Some links:

[Manitowoc Visitor's Guide](#)

[Maritime Museum](#)

[I know you will want to place an order.](#)

Reunion Hotel

Holiday Inn

One of the biggest hotels in Manitowac is the Holiday Inn. Some key features we need for a reunion, in addition to the room count, are things like a large banquet room, meeting room space, hospitality room, on site restaurant and bar and other amenities. Many hotels in the area just do not have the things we need. The Holiday Inn has them all covered. We have had quite a few past reunions at Holiday Inns and those host hotels have all meet our needs.



Hotel Information is awaiting contract signing, so **TENATIVE:**

Rate: \$129.00 per night

Rate good 2 days before and 2 days after reunion

Free Breakfast for days of the reunion

Reservation information will be provided when reservations are opened in early 2024.



Association News

New Vice President


Last reunion the crew elected Brian Ersek as our new Vice President. Brian brings some younger blood and insight into the Association and he has hit the ground running. He has been eager to help and always ready to lend his input and assistance. The rest of the Association officers are, shall we say, getting a little "long in the tooth", so Brian brings a fresh, new enthusiasm and outlook to the organization.

Reunion Planning

This coming reunion is once again proving to be a challenge to plan. The location is the major issue. Although in a beautiful part of the county, it is quite remote as far as transportation infrastructure is concerned. The biggest major airport is Milwaukee with Green Bay being a smaller, but closer choice. Either airport will require some amount of ground transportation to reach the final destination. As best I can figure, those flying in will need to rent a car to make the final mileage. I'll check, but I believe Manitowoc only has a "Puddle Jumper" airstrip near by.

We were lucky there is at least one good sized hotel for the reunion or we might have had to rent some tents and camping gear. There is a well reviewed Maritime Museum with a WW II smoke boat, which will make for an interesting afternoon or so. Joe says anybody interested in cows are in for a treat, as the area is heavily into dairy farming. "Cheese Heads" remember?

All this has reminded your officers they have strayed from the established reunion selection procedure. Until recently a more "formal" selection was required. No shouting from the back of the room. Someone proposing a reunion location must do some personal backgrounding of the desired location. At the business meeting they must do a formal presentation for their choice. They must then be ready to step up and help with reunion planning details should their site be selected by the crew.



SSBN/SSN 601 Association Dues Form

Name: _____

Email: _____

Years: ____ **X \$10.00 =** _____

Make check payable to: Robert E. Lee Association

Please mail to:

USS Robert E Lee Association
C/O Dale Thompson
1011 S. Blue Bonnet Dr
Deming, NM 88030-4415

Website News

www.ssb601.org

Content Added

We just keep adding content. Chief Francis Almer emailed some pictures and other digitalized media related to his time on the Lee. Bob Smith sent a link to the text of the banquet speech Rear Admiral Williams gave at the 2003 reunion in New Orleans. Bob felt it was inspiring and well presented. I agree and have established a link on the website. Bob also reminded me of a site on the web that is basically a "snapshot" archive of the World Wide Web. This will allow me, as time permits, to go back and recover more of what was on our older former Lee websites even though they are now gone.

If you are interested here's a link to the [web archive site](https://web.archive.org/): <https://web.archive.org/>

I have recently added a R E Lee the boat link page to the website to accommodate the expanding Lee SSBN/SSN related information I have been recovering from our older websites:

[R E Lee SSBN/SSN \(601\) https://ssbn601.org/index.php?content=template/boatlinks.html](https://ssbn601.org/index.php?content=template/boatlinks.html)

We are always looking for more Lee related content for the site. If you have anything that you would like to share please contact me either by [personal email](mailto:fwilliams22@gmail.com): fwilliams22@gmail.com or as the [webmaster](mailto:webmaster@ssbn601.org): webmaster@ssbn601.org so we can find your content a home on the website.

Your Navy Service

On a related note revisited. I was unable to convert much of the personal service history many of y'all had worked so hard to document, and for that I am sorry I could not do more. All of the sea duty, shore duty and personal pictures were unsalvageable or beyond the scope of our new website's design capability (Remember "FREE" :-).

To this end, I recommend those that wish to leave a record of the Naval service check into the Navy [Memorial website](https://www.navy-memorial.org/). This site is operated by a non-profit recognized by the Navy, and is therefore about as permanent as our country's future. There is a section for recording your service:

<https://www.navy-memorial.org/navy-log>

So look into doing your personal history one more time. Your grandchildren will be truly amazed.