USS R E Lee (601) News

Summer 2024

Reunion News

Absolute Latest News

Presidents Message

I want to welcome each of you that plan on attending the next reunion in Manitowoc, Wisconsin on September 24-29th. This location was not expected when it was chosen at our last reunion in New London/Groton, but after my trip there and seeing the sights and understanding the history of this area, I really think each of you that are able to attend will be very glad you came. I was surprised to find a very nice community right on Lake Michigan.

More than 7,000 men and women worked around the clock, 365 days a year to build some of the best submarines in the Navy. During WW II, the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company built 28 submarines for the US Navy. Of the 28 submarines built here, 25 were built in time to see action during the war and together they sank 132 Japanese ships. The USS Cobia was not built in Manitowoc, but for nearly 50 years, she's been a fitting memorial to the men and women who built Manitowoc's Freshwater Submarines and the brave men who served on those boats.

I hope this little bit of history will excite you to come to this reunion. We have planned another great reunion and like all past reunions, the main reason we meet is to keep in touch with our fellow shipmates and to keep the history of the Robert E Lee (SSBN/SSN601) alive for our children and grandchildren. If you are still not sure you will attend, please reconsider and sign up now to come and be a part of this wonderful reunion.

Joe White
President, Robert E. Lee Association

POD

Tuesday September 24th:

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Early Registration) Hospitality Room.

Wednesday September 25th:

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Registration Continues. Evening Free.

Thursday: September 26th

9:00 a.m. Maritime Museum. Tours morning and afternoon. (final information will be posted at reunion) Everyone will need to drive to Museum from Hotel. We will tour the Maritime Museum with opportunity to take groups on the USS Cobia.
Lunch at the Museum will be provided by the Association.

Evening Free.

Friday: September 27th:

On you own, tour of local attractions. We will provide information of sights and recommendations to visit.

Evening Banquet and Opening Ceremonies. Business Casual

5:00 p.m. (Individual and Group Pictures) Photo book will be available to purchase from photographer as soon as available.
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Cash Bar) Be seated by 6:15 p.m.

6:15 p.m. Color Guard will enter for Opening Ceremonies.
6:30 p.m. Opening Remarks by President/Prayer/Dinner Served (Buffet).
7:30 p.m. Eternal Patrol (Bryan or Dale) reading of names/time of silence to honor those we lost since last reunion.
7:45 p.m. Introduction of Keynote Speaker: John Lindstedt.
8:45 p.m. (Entertainment) Elvis is in the building.
9:30 p.m. President closing remarks.

Saturday: September 28th:

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Morning Business Meeting (Hospitality Room)
Agenda: Elect New Officers. Review financial condition of Association (Dale Thompson). Pick next Reunion Site. Update on Association Web Site (Fred Williams). Other Business.

Saturday Afternoon September 28th:

(Free time to visit area on your own)

Saturday Evening September 28th:

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Cash Bar
6:00 p.m. (finger foods/entertainment) Time to spend with old friends and new friends and say our goodbyes.
8:00 p.m Raffle and 50/50 drawing.
8:00 p.m. As soon as Raffle is over President makes final remarks.

Keynote Speaker

John Lindstedt is a nuclear submarine officer having “Qualified in Submarines” on 19 Feb 1974 on USS Kamehameha SSBN 642 Blue attached to Submarine Squadron 16 in Rota, Spain. While attached, Kamehameha engaged in the First Yom Kippur War of October 1973, when she was ordered to patrol the Straits of Gibraltar for a month, and then proceed into the Mediterranean Sea for Deterrent Patrol 20. John also had two years of sea service in the Merchant Marine as a marine engineer sailing to Northern Europe and South America. He is an Honorary Plank Owner of the USS Hyman G. Rickover SSN 795 and a member of the Commissioning Committee of the USS Wisconsin SSBN 827.

After his naval service, John returned to his home state of Wisconsin, and joined Advance Plating Technologies, a surface finishing engineering firm. The company provides surface finishes in gold, silver nickel, tin, and lead in addition to engineering services to a large array of US companies. He is especially proud of the components that his company provides to the US military…. SSTG catch bearings in the current Virginia class SSNs, EMALS Launch System currently operational on the USS Gerald R. Ford, CVN 78, and the carry ammunition to all service branches.

John also has an avid interest in the history of the US Submarine Force. This has resulted in his development of a series of lectures that present the accomplishments of the Force, and the key role that it provides to our national defense. He provides these lectures free of charge to universities, maritime museums, veteran groups, high schools, grade schools and senior citizen groups. It was because of his teaching that he was invited to spend an evening with Eleonore Rickover, the Admiral’s second wife, at

her home in Arlington, Virginia. It was a special evening that he captured in an article, “The Hidden Rickover” (copies available).

John is married to his lovely bride, Cindy of 55 years. Yes, 55 years!!! They have three children, Jennifer, Matthew (US Air Force veteran; O-3) and James (US Navy veteran; E-6).

Registration Form R E Lee Reunion 2024

Badge Names **Amount**

_____ 19___ - 19___ _____ 100.00 *

Crew Member Name/Nick name Years on Board Rank/Rate

_____ 100.00 *

Guest Name

Association Dues # Years Paying Cost/YR

(Must be current member to attend)

____ 10.00 _____

Mail To: (Check payable to)

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

TOTAL: _____

*** 120.00 after: 7/24/2024**

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
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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 resturant 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:

40 rooms at Rate:

$129.99 single/double occupancy
(5% state tax + 8% room tax) = $146.89
Block rates apply: September 23 - October 1, 2024

Note:

Room rate includes free breakfast for the reunion dates (24-29)

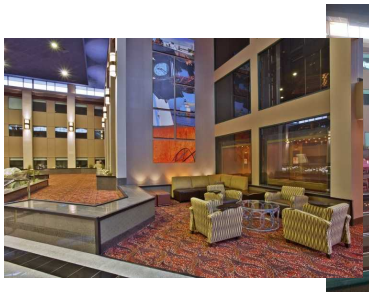
Hotel Amenities:

Coffee stations throughout the Hotel
Starbucks in the lobby
Movie theater that runs movies all day
Indoor swimming pool
Workout room

Reservation information:

Calls should be made direct to Hotel at 920-682-6000; **DO NOT** call the 800 number.
ID self as for R.E. Lee Association Reunion.

If arriving or departing outside above dates, members must make a separate reservation for those times.



Things of Interest

USS Cobia and Museum

History

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.

In 1970, Cobia was brought to Manitowoc to serve as an international memorial to submariners. 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. As a National Historic Landmark, Cobia has been restored to its original 1945 configuration. Visitors of all ages can enjoy a guided tour through the boat and see where the crew slept, ate, and prayed to make it out alive.

Restoration

USS Cobia is a major exhibit at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, requiring thousands of man-hours of maintenance and restoration. Cobia was dry docked in 1996 and went through an intensive interior restoration over the next few years. Staff and volunteers focused on returning the submarine to her 1945 look. In 1998, the Museum was awarded a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP). This grant helped underwrite interior restoration that included installation of WWII era flooring, bunks, metal trim, and crew lockers.

After many years of meticulous research, cleaning and repair, some of the submarine's systems have come on-line. Two specific volunteer-led projects was the installation of a DC power drive on board the submarine and the rebuilding of main engines #1 and #2. Other recent successes include the restoration of Cobia's SJ-1 radar, thought to be the oldest operational radar in the world, and the return of the WWII radio shack to operational status.

MUSEUM HOURS

Sept - May (Labor Day - Memorial Day)

Thursday - Monday , Closed Tue-Wed) 10AM - 4PM

Summer Hours

Open 7 Days A Week Memorial Day - Labor Day 9AM - 5PM

The museum is closed New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
There are special holiday hours for the weeks of Christmas and New Years.

ADMISSION

Adults:	$20
Youth (Ages 4-12):	$13
Ages 3 & Under:	FREE
Seniors (Ages 65+):	$17
Veterans:	$17
Active Military	Free

Rates include access to the submarine, USS Cobia! Receive a $5 discount for Museum-only admission!

Museums For All Program: $8 (for guests with a valid EBT, BadgerCare, FoodShare/Quest, Medicaid, and/or WIC card.)

SUBMARINE TOURS

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum is proud to be home to USS Cobia, a World War II submarine. USS Cobia is moored in the Manitowoc River next to the museum. Guests may tour the submarine during normal museum hours.

Guided tours are the primary way to experience the submarine. In the summer months, guided tours are available every day on a timed basis. Guided tours are normally 45 minutes long. Tour capacity is limited, so we strongly encourage purchasing your tickets ahead of time, as tours do sell out. You can purchase tickets online or by calling the museum.

During the winter season, self-guided audio tours are available on weekdays and on Sundays. On Saturdays, guided tours are available on a timed basis. Guests using the audio tour may download the mobile app on Android or borrow a tablet from the front desk. The audio tour may also be accessed online at any time here. Masks are recommended on audio tours.

We recommend allowing for two to three hours to fully explore the Museum and tour USS Cobia. The last entry to the submarine is one hour before the museum closes.

Accessibility note: USS Cobia is maintained largely in its historical arrangement. This means it is not accessible to people with limited mobility. To complete the tour, guests must cross a sloping walkway, descend two sets of stairs (26 total steps), pass through 7 watertight hatches measuring 38 x 20 inches (0.9 m x 0.5 m), and climb 22 steps. A video recording of a submarine tour is available at any time. Speak with front desk staff for video tour options.

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS

Caregivers
Free admission is offered to caregivers accompanying an individual with disabilities.

Active Duty Military
Military personnel on active duty are free.

Blue (Gold) Star Program
From Memorial to Labor Day, active military and up to 5 family members enter the museum for free.

http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org/submarines/uss-cobia/

More Things To Do

I'll cover some things to do with a little more detail this time. Evidently Manitowoc and Two Rivers Wisconsin consider themselves a "twin cities" kind of thing, so some of the things mentioned may not be located in Manitowoc proper.

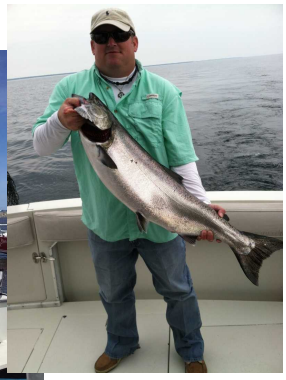
Golf

There are at least five area golf courses, from par three through a forty five hole classic course, if you can still walk that far. For the young at heart there are two miniature golf courses. The "modern" crowd can pick from five "disc" courses.

Museums and Art

Of course there is the Maritime museum with the USS Cobia, but there is more than that to choose from. Naturally the most common are those related to the farming life, but there is a museum devoted to the printing trade as well as a fine arts museum. There is even a historic "fishing village" and coast guard museum.

Fishing



There are both stream and lake fishing to choose from. For those not into charter fishing there are several area lake Michigan fishing piers and boat ramps. The tourist guide (mentioned below) lists five fishing charter services to pick from.

Scenic Drives

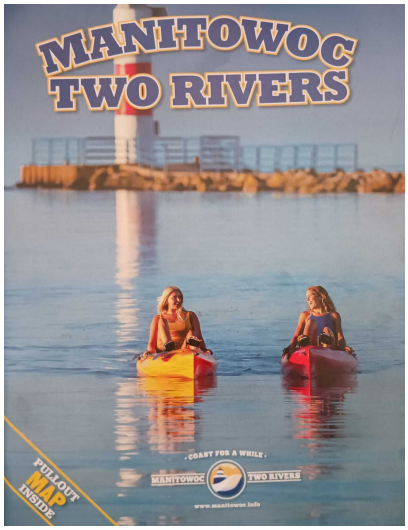
Wisconsin is by location in a very pretty and interesting part of the country. After all it is located next to the state known as, "the land of 10,000 lakes." We, by design, will be in the area hopefully at the peak of fall color so any direction you choose to drive should be a spectacular experience. Just don't drive too far east!

RV, Campgrounds and Parks

There are a good selection of day use parks, some with tennis courts, hiking and biking trails and of course a lakeside beach to pick from. One even includes a "free" cave tour. There are many campgrounds and a number of RV/ campgrounds to pick from as the area is far from the urban sprawl. Most are on or quite near lake Michigan. One bills itself as a, "Marina and RV park". The majority of RV parks seem to be located in Twin Rivers, a short distance away.

Lighthouses

The area is home to three historic Great Lakes lighthouses. These are a smaller version of the ones we normally saw many times at the beginning or end of our deterrent patrols. The earliest were constructed in 1839 and 1886. One has been relocated to the historic fishing village.



Best Information

I still suggest y'all request a copy of the area visitor's guide by clicking on the image on the right of this text. Thumbing through the visitor's guide, I think you will be surprised at the wide range of interesting and entertaining things there are to do in the area.

VA Health Care

At the 2022 Patrick Henry reunion, I was visiting with an old shipmate who mentioned he was in the VA health Care system. I told him in the early 2000's I had attempted to get in the VA system, but I was rejected because I was, "too rich". He said I should check into joining again as the financial requirements had been relaxed. He said he too had been rejected, but he reapplied, was accepted and even qualified for "no co-pay" coverage.

When I got back from Georgia, I checked in with my "VA Representative" in Henderson county, and he said I really should apply and provided me with the paperwork required to enroll. I filled out the paperwork and submitted it. The instructions said I should receive a reply in a couple of weeks. This was in January. In July I had heard nothing. Went back and visited with my county guy and he did some phone calling and said he would get me an answer. Long story short, it reminded me of the old Navy days. For no apparent reason, one day I received a little packet from the VA, I think it was September. Enclosed in the envelope was a little handbook, and as I thumbed though it, I found on one of the pages, my name and that I was officially a member of the "Group G"? Further reading explained I was in a "co-pay required" Group.

What I hope you gain from this little story is:

1. You really ought to check if you now qualify for VA health coverage.
2. Remember your old Navy days and "endeavor to persevere" as the old Indian chief in "Josey Wales" said.
3. At our age we can never have too much health care.

But my tale is not over. My late east Texas good neighbor, an ex-Army Vietnam vet, was in the system. He used to drive all the way to the VA campus in Killeen, TX. I never really asked why, but when I started trying to pick a point of service, I called the two Tyler, TX (30 miles) clinics and they never answered their phone, nor called me back. I physically went to Plano, TX (10 miles), and it reminded me of the tax office in New London, CT. "Surly" would be a compliment! You really don't ever want to go there. I had been warned not to pick the Dallas VA hospital, so I contacted the Bonham, TX (60 miles) VA and got a very friendly "come see us" kind of answer. So another take away: Remember your old Navy days! And hopefully you won't be paying for Biden's gas much longer.

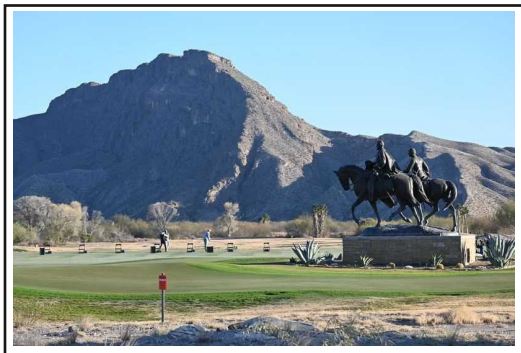
After almost a year in the system, I got a notice the VA was going to drop me, because I was "too rich." I won't bore you with all the details on that one but, just remember your Boy Scout motto, "Be Prepared". It ended well as it proved to be a paper work snafu, as I file my taxes with an extension every year and they thought what I sent didn't match what I filed, since they, in August or so of 2023, used 2022 and not my 2021 tax return, which I used when I applied over a year prior. You got it: Remember your Navy days.

Why did I go through all this fiasco? Well, Medicare prescription system has this

damn thing called a “doughnut hole” which I fall into about halfway through the year. I’m then required to pay full price for prescriptions until, I believe, I’ve spent out of pocket over $4,000+? before the insurance kicks back in. Good news! The VA doesn’t have a “doughnut hole.” BTW, they make you keep your Medicare coverage. Go figure? But, just remember, it’s the Government. Also, at our age you can never have too much health care.

https://www.va.gov/ VA Affairs

https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction Apply On-Line



Robert E. Lee statue that was relocated from a Dallas park to a Lajitas Golf Course. This was Texas Reporter’s most popular photo last month.

*** ATTENTION ! ***

Those wishing to propose the next reunion location must meet the previously ignored standards for proposing the next reunion site.

If you wish to propose a reunion location:

Be prepared to give a 5 min. presentation of why we would want to go to that location.

Must be willing to help with planning the reunion.

Provided names of local contacts for hotels, catering, transportation and etc.