

USS TELFAIR APA-210 -- 2021 REUNION REPORT

Again, what another great reunion! After missing 2020 due to COVID, a great group totally over 120 shipmates, spouses and guests came to Annapolis to rekindle old friendships and to create a few new ones. As part of the larger amphibious ships reunion group, we were able to include a total of 12 Telfair shipmates (plus 10 spouses and guests for a total of 22). This was less than the 18 shipmates who attended in 2019, but still a very good Telfair showing in light of the fact that no less than 11 amphib ships were represented this year. While an overall good turnout, it was obvious that lingering COVID concerns kept numbers down a bit. Hopefully, those concerns will be gone by next year.

The Annapolis area was nice, weather was iffy, but hotel facilities were great. Once again, everyone attending from Telfair unanimously agreed it was a great reunion, and we all look forward to next year in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

As usual, some ships were represented by many shipmates and guests, while others were represented only by a few. Regardless, all were "gator" ships, including the USS Bexar (APA-237), USS Cambria (APA-36), USS Capricornus (AKA-57), USS Casa Grande (LSD-13), USS Chilton (APA-38), USS Monrovia (APA-31), USS Muliphen (AKA-61), USS Pickaway (APA-222), USS Rankin (AKA-103), USS Telfair (APA-210), and USS Yancey (AKA-93).

Here's a list of those Telfair shipmates that were there:

John Birkel	Dick Disotell	Henry Garcia
Frank Hilberer*	Brian Miller	Jose Rivera
Jim Rosenow	John Tustin	Lee Vincent
Joe a Alberto	Bill Graham	John Farley

(*brought our Telfair reunion banner and life saver ring -- thanks, Frank)

As before, the group reunion was managed and coordinated by Ray Casey of Military Reunion Planners, and he did another excellent job. Ray and his assistant Christine were there every day making sure everything ran smoothly. It's easy to feel spoiled when one can attend a reunion where we can simply enjoy it without having to do all the work as in years past! And like last time, we also had a terrific hospitality room with enough libation and snacks to satisfy everyone.

The tours and other events were great, except where limited by bad weather. On Monday evening (Sep 20) there was a welcome buffet for the group that was well attended. A hot breakfast buffet for reunion attendees staying at the hotel also was available every morning that was included in the room rate.

On Tuesday (Sep 21) we toured the U.S. Naval Academy located in Annapolis. What a wonderful and inspiring place it is. We had excellent tour guides who led us throughout the campus grounds, seeing everything from Captain's Row (beautiful homes for commanding officers) to the tomb of John Paul Jones. A very special treat was to witness the noon meal formation of all Midshipmen who marched into Tecumseh Court and stood at perfect attention, while battalion attendance was taken. Once this is completed, the Academy band played "Anchors Aweigh," followed by the "The Halls of Montezuma" as the Midshipmen marched into Bancroft Hall (their huge dormitory) for their noon meal. Ray Casey also arranged a pizza lunch for those attending the tour.

Wednesday (Sep 22) we were bused to Baltimore where we were able to tour the S.S. John W. Brown, one of only two remaining, fully operational Liberty ships that participated in World War II. The John W. Brown was built in Baltimore in 1942 and spent its war years in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Not quite as big as the Telfair at 440 feet long, it still was big and similar enough to bring back many memories of amphib ships like the Telfair. We were able to tour any part of the ship we wanted from berthing decks to engineering to the bridge and deck gun locations. It is "crewed" by a group of volunteer guides who are all certified for the positions and responsibilities each had. In addition to various local activities, the John W. Brown still steams out from Baltimore several times a year for display purposes. Later in the day we were given a bus tour of the City of Baltimore, plus a tour boat ride around Baltimore's harbor. Wednesday was pretty overcast, and we did experience some drizzle and light rain, but not enough to spoil the day's activities.

We weren't so lucky on Thursday (Sep 24) as a storm and heavy rains hit Annapolis. We were scheduled for an afternoon boat tour of Annapolis harbor that had to be cancelled due to the weather. Cost of that boat tour will be reimbursed by Ray Casey. We did attempt to do a bus tour of Annapolis earlier that morning, but heavy rains made it less than what was hoped for. Couldn't help the weather, but at least we were keep busy for a few hours even if only inside a bus riding around town in the rain!

The reunion closed that Thursday night with our sit-down dinner banquet held in the hotel's ballroom. Following the meal we were entertained by a great stand-up magician who entertained all with his "sights of hand" and comedic conversation. He was definitely a hit with many who were left scratching their heads saying "how did he do that?"

Crew's Meeting...

Prior to the banquet, group and individual photographs were taken to be included in the reunion memory book for those who ordered one. There also was a very short group meeting during which it was formally announced that the 2022 reunion will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado next September. Details, including dates, hotel, etc., will be posted on the Telfair website and shared with Telfair roster members with email addresses in the coming weeks.

Following the group meeting, Telfair attendees briefly met separately. As before, everyone said it was a great reunion and that we should continue with the group approach. Everyone was encouraged to review the crew roster on the Telfair website (<https://usstelfair.org/crew-roster> -- password "apa210") and contact anyone that they might know to encourage them to come to the reunion next year. Given our advancing years and health issues, we know that "next year" might be the last year for some to attend. So let's not waste that opportunity.

Group pictures of reunion attendees, tour locations and banquet will be posted to our website at <https://usstelfair.org/reunion-information> when they become available. This report is being sent only by email and not mailed, but a copy also will be posted on that web page, as well.

Thanks again to all that attended. Let's hope all of them and more make it to Colorado Springs next year!

Jim Rosenow