

USS TELFAIR APA-210 -- 2022 REUNION REPORT

Another Telfair/Joint Amphibious Ship reunion is now part of history. While Colorado Springs was a great event, our attendee numbers are dropping. Whether it's our advancing ages or residual Covid effects, we had but eight Telfair crewmates (plus five spouses) in attendance this year. Annapolis last year saw 12 shipmates, but still down from the 18 shipmates that attended the reunion in Buffalo. Regardless of the number, the lucky few who did attend had a wonderful time.

The Colorado Springs area turned out to be great, as was the weather. Hotel facilities, including our hospital room, also were great, even if a bit dated to some.

As before, ships were represented by several shipmates and guests or only by a few. All were "gator" ships, including the USS Bexar (APA-237), USS Cambria (APA-36), USS Capricornus (AKA-57), USS Chilton (APA-38), USS Monrovia (APA-64), USS Pickaway (APA-222), USS Rankin (AKA-103), USS Telfair (APA-210), USS Tortuga (LSD-46), and USS Yancey (AKA-93). The Telfair came in third as to the number of shipmates attending.

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

Henry Garcia	Kerry Helton
Frank Hilberer*	Brian Miller
Dave Robbins	Jim Rosenow
Myron (Mike) Schultz	John Tustin

(*brought our Telfair reunion banner -- thanks again, Frank)

Also, we don't want to forget those supporting wives who also were there:

Linda Helton	Bonnie Hilberer	
Susie Rosenow	Flossie Schultz	Carolyn Hughes

As before, the group reunion was managed and coordinated by Ray Casey of Military Reunion Planners.

The tours and other events were pretty good and well attended. On Sunday evening (Oct 9) there was a welcome buffet for the group. A hot breakfast buffet for reunion attendees staying at the hotel also was available every morning that was included in the room rate. There was a slight change regarding the hospitality room. The hotel would only allow us to bring beer and wine into that room, but made up for it by giving each person two free drinks at the hotel bar during their happy hour every evening.

On Monday (Oct 10) we were bused to the U.S. Air Force Academy. This was very different from the U.S. Naval Academy that we toured last year in Annapolis. The Air Force Academy covers a huge amount of land, and its campus was not condensed like Annapolis. We could only tour the visitor's center and watch a film on cadet life. Our big disappointment was that we couldn't see or tour the academy's beautiful chapel as it was under renovation and was entirely hidden by a big box! Back on the bus we were taken for a ride through the majestic Garden of the Gods (you have to see it to believe it), with lunch on our own at the local Trading Lodge.

Tuesday (Oct 11) the heartiest of the lot took the COG Rail Excursion to the top of Pike's Peak. While the weather and temperature at ground level was pleasant, many found out that the temperature drops around 30 degrees by the time you reach of the top -- this on top of the rarified air! More that a few were still shivering on their way back to the hotel. A few of us lesser souls decided to forego the mountain and instead take in a little walking and shopping in historic Old Colorado.

Wednesday (Oct 12) had two great tour options. About half the group when to see the National Museum of WWII Aviation, while the other half opted for going to Dragon Man's Eclectic Emporium. The aviation museum was full of WWII aircraft, and everyone who took it's two-hour tour said it was great. Dragon Man was something else. It wasn't until we got there did we realize what a spectacular place it is. Externally it looks like an open field gun range where people can come to shot everything from a pistol to a machine gun. However, inside you discover one of the greatest collections of military hardware, uniforms and paraphernalia covering all major war periods that you will ever see. Even the ladies were astounded and couldn't stop bragging about it. This is a definite "must see" should you ever visit Colorado Springs.

The reunion closed that Wednesday evening with a sit-down dinner at the hotel. The reunion's overall planner, Skip Sanders from the USS Rankin, did not attend this year due to health issues. As a result, the banquet ceremony was simplified. Beginning with the national anthem sung a cappella and the Pledge of Alliance, we did a "missing man table" ceremony, followed by a period of silence remembering those who we lost the past year. This was ended by recognizing the three widows who still came to the reunion, notwithstanding the recent loss of their husbands.

Prior to the banquet, group and individual photographs were taken to be included in a photo memory book for those who ordered one. There was no decision or announcement made on the date and venue for next year's reunion, other than it

still should occur. Hotel rates and availability have become uncertain following the pandemic, and Ray Casey will be researching available venues in the coming months. When that decision is ultimately made, details on venue, dates, hotel, etc., will be posted on the Telfair website and shared with Telfair roster members with valid email addresses.

The Telfair attendees met informally several times during the week. As before, everyone agreed with the group approach, while encouraging individual get-togethers when possible. Everyone should 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. As mentioned in last year's report, our advancing years and health issues could mean that "next year" might be the last year for some to attend. So let's not waste that opportunity.

Group pictures of Telfair 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.

Jim Rosenow