

USS TELFAIR -- AAFA 2025 REUNION REPORT

The 2025 reunion of the American Amphibious Force Association ("AAFA") was held in Portland, Maine on September 14-18. AAFA is a long standing reunion group originally made up of mostly LST sailors, but also has invited APA, AKA and other Gator sailors to join their ranks, as well. A few Telfair shipmates have attended in the past, but this year we had a total of seven shipmates along with spouses and guests -- a very good turnout given the number of other ships represented. There were approximately 100 individuals in attendance, making for a good reunion group. Telfair attendees included Lee Vincent (Betty Sue), Jonathon Tustin (Caroline Hughes), Bill Bunger (Barbara), Frank Hilberer (Lisa Granado) Henry Garcia, Brian Miller and Jim Rosenow (Susie).

Overall, it was a great get-together and was very similar to other joint ship reunions held in the past. The first day (Sunday) was basically for registration and visiting in the hospitality room.

Second day (Monday) started with a full breakfast buffet (available every day) and then on to a full list of tours. They included the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, ME and a river cruise past the Bath Iron Works where several Navy destroyers are currently being manufactured. While not allowed inside, the Bath Iron Works was very impressive to see from our tour boat. Tours ended with a trip to Freeport Village to visit the home site of L.L. Bean and its many stores and outlets located there (shopping for the ladies). In the evening, AAFA hosted a free beer, wine, cheese and cracker reception in the hospitality room.

Third day (Tuesday) was an open day for attendees to visit some of the Portland sites, including local light houses, small gauge train ride, etc. Being on the coast meant there were many scenic spots to visit. That evening AAFA hosted a pizza party in the hospitality room. Following that, there was an auction of items donated by AAFA members to help fund the organization and to provide donations for worthy veteran organizations. It was pretty amazing to see the kinds of items offered, as well as some of the prices they went for -- all for a worthy cause.

Fourth day (Wednesday) was again a open day for those who wanted to sightsee more. Many took the opportunity to sample as many lobster rolls as possible during the reunion, which were a special culinary delight found at the many seafood restaurants found in the Portland area. That evening also was the formal reunion banquet buffet featuring prime rib and baked stuffed Haddock, along with various other items. The guest speaker was a retired Navy captain with a service history as an intelligence officer.

AAFA always selects the next year reunion venue by democratic vote. Based on a show of hands by dues paying members, it was decided that Savannah, Georgia will be the site of the 2026 reunion. More on that will be made available in the coming months.

AAFA is a great organization and highly recommend that you check out their website at <http://www.gatornavy.com/>. Dues are only \$20 a year to be a voting member, and those members also receive various AAFA newsletters throughout the year.

Hope to see more Telfair shipmates in Savannah in 2026!