

# USS RANKIN NEWS

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## AKA-103

1945-1947

1952-1968

## LKA-103

1969-1971

## GOLD E

1960-1961

### WAL-MART REUNION

Our reunion this year is in a first-class downtown hotel, at the center of tons of exciting waterfront activities. Many of us appreciate that sort of atmosphere, and really enjoy the experience during our yearly reunion getaways. It's one of the things that make the Rankin reunions so memorable.

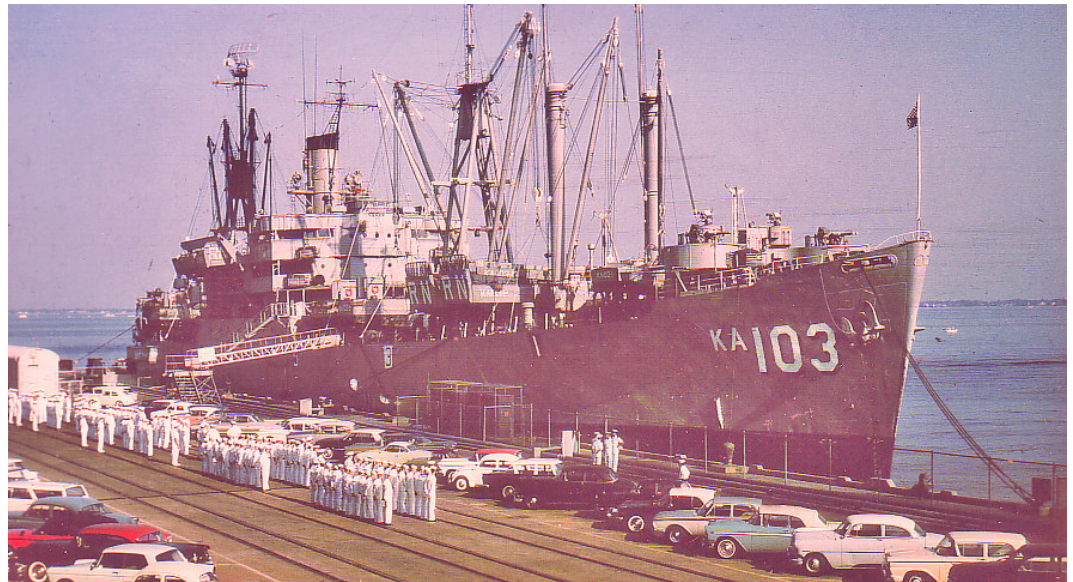
But others would just as soon experience the reunion while staying in a less-fancy, less-expensive place, traveling to the main hotel each day to enjoy the reunion events. We're working on a way for a limited number of people to stay at an economy hotel while still enjoying our other events. To do it right will take some planning, and we need to know who's interested. If you'd like to know more, call Skip Sander at (412) 367-1376.

## USS RANKIN REUNION

September 17-20,  
2009

NORFOLK, VA

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS



## NORFOLK!

Who doesn't remember the sights, sounds and smells of mustering on the pier in Norfolk when the ship was in port? And who doesn't remember the feelings of anticipation as the Rankin headed home to NORVA after months in the Med or Caribbean?

Many of us feel that same anticipation as our second reunion in Norfolk approaches. It's been five long years since we gathered at the Rankin's post-WWII home port. We're looking forward to an even larger gathering than last time. True, some of our shipmates have passed away since then. But others want to bring their children and grandchildren to experience the place that we all called home. Still others, who didn't know of our Association back then, will want to take this opportunity to relive part of their Navy past.

The city has changed a *lot* since you and I were sailors there. It's bigger, brighter, cleaner, and a lot more friendly to those who visit. East Main Street is gone, replaced by exciting modern stores and other downtown amenities.

There *are* still places to get tattoos, and some of them even cater to senior citizens. There's also a free electric tram system that covers all of downtown, with frequent stops at our hotel, the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside. All in all, it's a wonderful place for a reunion.

This year we'll have lots of time to enjoy each other's companionship, and to see the many former shipmates who still live in the Tidewater region.

We'll also have tours to Virginia Beach, now one of Virginia's largest cities, and to Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, the major operating station for the Atlantic Fleet's amphibious forces, and the world's largest base of its kind. Our group will be privileged to see a simulated amphibious landing at Little Creek's famous Expeditionary Warfare Demonstrator, a gymnasium-sized simulator of modern amphibious landings.

On Saturday we'll have an optional bus tour to Colonial Williamsburg, the region's top non-Navy attraction. One of the Rankin's former officers is a VIP there, so we expect to have a very nice trip. See you in Norfolk!

## 2009 Reunion Information

The USS Rankin Association's sixth annual reunion will be held at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel from September 17-20, 2009. The Sheraton Waterside is located at 777 Waterside Drive, directly on Norfolk's exciting waterfront. Norfolk International airport is only 15 minutes away. The hotel is connected by a covered walkway to Waterside Festival Marketplace Mall, which offers a wide variety of shops, kiosks, and an international food bazaar with six sit down restaurants. Within four blocks you will find the MacArthur Center five star shopping complex, and the MacArthur Memorial, honoring the late General. The Sheraton features 456 spacious and richly appointed guest rooms and top-notch meeting, banquet, and hospitality space. Each room is equipped with all of the amenities that you would expect from a first class hotel. Everything is first class, and you are sure to enjoy your stay here! This is the finest reunion hotel we've stayed in since the Crystal Gateway Marriott in 2006.

**Your Choice:** You may select one of the three options shown below, or create your own limited agenda. You may fax, phone or mail your registration. Fax or phone reservations require the use of American Express, MasterCard or VISA.

**Payment Schedule:** Initial deposit is due on or before **August 17, 2009**. Final payment is due before **August 28, 2009**.

**Cancellations:** For cancellations received on or before September 11, 2009 there is a \$50.00 cancellation fee plus the cost of any activities that have already been paid for, or for which guaranteed numbers have been provided to the vendor. **There will be no refunds for any reason after September 11, 2009.** Trip cancellation insurance is available from many insurance agents, and it may be in your best interest to purchase it.

**Minimum Room Requirements:** We are committed to pay for a certain number of rooms and a certain amount of food and drink; please participate in all of the food and beverage functions, and stay in the host hotel.

**Special Plan for Local Residents:** To insure that everyone who really wants to visit old shipmates has the opportunity, Thursday has been declared an "Open Day." Beginning at noon on Thursday the hospitality room will be complimentary to all shipmates and guests. Complimentary coffee, soft drinks, and snacks will be available in the hospitality room. State law prohibits private alcoholic beverages in the hospitality room, but you may purchase food and beverages from the hotel and bring them back to the room. Beginning on Friday morning, access to the hospitality room and other reunion activities will be limited to guests who are registered for other reunion activities. Anyone wanting to participate in activities beginning on Friday will need to register and pay for those activities at the registration desk.

### Option A

#### Arrive on Thursday, depart on Sunday

*Includes the following activities and services for each person who selects this option.*

Three nights Lodging (Thur, Fri, Sat); Three breakfasts (Fri, Sat, Sun); full use of Hospitality Room stocked with soft drinks, coffee, and snacks; Friday night dinner; Saturday night Banquet; 2009 City Tag; 2009 Reunion Memory Book, Sunday Memorial Service Program; roster of attendees; all applicable taxes and gratuities (but we will "pass the hat" for tour guides & drivers); bartender and set-up fees; registration fee; the full time services of a ML&RS, Inc. manager.

**Cost of this option is \$876.00 per couple; \$629.00 per single. A \$100.00 per person deposit must accompany your reservation.**

### Option B

#### Arrive on Friday, depart on Sunday

*Includes the following activities and services for each person who selects this option.*

Two Nights Lodging (Fri, Sat); Two breakfasts (Sat, Sun); full use of Hospitality Room stocked with soft drinks, coffee, and snacks; Friday night dinner; Saturday night Banquet; 2009 City Tag; 2009 Reunion Memory Book, Sunday Memorial Service Program; roster of attendees; All applicable taxes and gratuities (but we will "pass the hat" for tour guides & drivers); bartender and set-up fees; Registration fee; the full time services of a ML&RS, Inc. manager. **Cost of this option is \$689.00 per couple; \$450.00 per single. A \$100.00 per person deposit must accompany your reservation.**

### Option C

#### Arrive on Saturday, depart on Sunday

*Includes the following activities and services for each person who selects this option.*

Saturday Night Lodging; Saturday Night Banquet; Sunday breakfast; full use of Hospitality Room stocked with soft drinks, coffee, and snacks); 2009 City tag; 2009 Reunion Memory Book, Sunday Memorial Service Program; roster of attendees; All applicable taxes, gratuities (but we will "pass the hat" for tour guides & drivers); bartender and set-up fees; Registration fee; the full time services of a ML&RS, Inc manager. **Cost of this option is \$329.00 per couple; \$264.00 per single. A \$100.00 per person deposit must accompany your reservation.**

## 2009 Reunion Itinerary

### Thursday September 17, 2009

**12:00 Noon: Registration Begins and the Hospitality Room Opens.** Shipmates who live in the Norfolk area and those not able to attend our other functions are encouraged to visit with us this afternoon and evening. We have no other activities planned for today, so we'll have lots of time to talk, eat, drink, and explore the NEW Norfolk.

### Friday September 18, 2009

**7:30 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast** will be in the hotel restaurant buffet with coupons provided. Eat at your leisure during this hour, keeping in mind that the buses load for Little Creek Amphibious Base at 8:45 AM. *The cost of breakfast is included in Option A only*

**8:45 AM: Load buses for 9:00 departure** of the Optional trip to Little Creek Amphibious Base. You were part of the Navy's Amphibious Force; Little Creek is the Navy's Amphibious Warfare Training Center, so it is only natural that you should visit there. It'll be like old homecoming week, don't miss it! The base is home to at least six LSD's, 3 PC's, and 4 SEAL Teams. At this printing, we are not sure about getting on board an active duty ship, but we're working on it. The riding tour of the base will acquaint you with the history and mission of the base. You will be able to see an electronic amphibious assault demonstration which is a fascinating display of combined air, sea, and ground forces. Lunch (included in the tour price) will be in one of the clubs on the base. Following lunch you'll do a riding tour of Virginia Beach, learning the history of its light houses, etc. Also, you'll have time to browse the boardwalk where you can explore the souvenir and gift shops. You'll return to the Sheraton around 3:00 PM. The tour price is based on a minimum of 30 persons. If less than 30 sign up, it may be necessary to adjust the cost to cover the difference. *The cost of this tour is not included in either of the options—you must register for it separately. See the Adjustment Opportunities box on Page 4 and "Add Friday's tour."*

**10:00 AM: Hospitality Room opens and Registration resumes.**

**6:00 PM: Social Hour.** Enjoy your favorite beverage from the cash bar while you prepare for your talent show. **7:00 PM** is chow call for a delicious Southern-style dinner buffet. After eating, get ready for some self entertainment. A couple of years ago each couple or single was asked to bring a gift (valued around \$25.00) representative of your hometown or state. At that reunion you did one version of the "Yankee Swap" which seemed to go over pretty well. This year we'll do something similar, so **please everyone (couple or single) bring a gift.** Before the gift swap would be a good time for an open mike to share any stories that you have hidden away in your memory banks. Also, if you can pick & grin, sing and/or dance (or even think you can), tell a joke, do magic tricks, juggle, operate a yo-yo, this would be a good time to display your talent. If we have no performers, we'll have to be content with the gift exchange. *Cost of dinner is included in Options A and B only.*

### Saturday September 19, 2009

**7:30 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast** will be in the hotel restaurant buffet with coupons provided. Eat at your leisure during this hour, keeping in mind the buses for Williamsburg will load at 8:45 AM. *The cost of breakfast is included in Options A and B.*

**8:45 AM: Load buses for 9:00 departure of the Optional trip to Colonial Williamsburg.** Once you arrive in Williamsburg, you will step back in time to the 18th century. While strolling through the restored area of this colonial capital, your historic interpreter will guide you through the past and events that helped shape America's history. Shop and browse in Merchants Square. Historic Colonial Williamsburg covers 301 acres and includes 88 original 18th century structures. Hundreds of houses, shops, and public outbuildings are reconstructed on their original foundations. Many are open to the public. Walk in the footprints of great Americans like Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. This is where patriotism flourished and is still alive today. Have lunch on your own at one of the Colonial Taverns along Merchants Square. From there you're off to Jamestown Settlement – truly an historic place. Established in 1607, Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in the New World. The introductory film, "1607: A Nation Takes Root" you will discover the factors that led to the colonization of the New World; get acquainted with the Powhatan Indians, and watch history come alive in the recreated Powhatan Village. For those so inclined, there is a gift shop. There is a minimum of 35 persons per bus for the tour to go. If we have fewer than 35 per bus, the cost will be adjusted to cover the difference. You'll return to the hotel around 3:00 PM. *The cost of the Williamsburg trip is not included in either of the Options. If you wish to go, you must register separately. See the Adjustment Opportunities box on Page 4 and "Add Saturday's Tour."*

**10:00 AM: Hospitality room** opens with fresh coffee and cold drinks. Snacks will be served in the afternoon.

**3:30 – 4:30 PM: Business Meeting** in the hospitality room.

**6:30 PM: Pre-dinner Cocktail hour and photo session.** Individual and couples photos will be taken for inclusion in the 2009 Reunion Memory Book. Six to eight weeks after the reunion, the Memory Book will be sent to everyone who registers for Option A, B, or C; and to anyone ordering the Memory Book in the "Individualized Option." Be sure to have your photo taken!

**8:00 PM: The USS Rankin Association Banquet.** Enjoy your last night in a more formal setting. Coat and tie are recommended for the gentlemen and corresponding dress for the ladies. If you can still wear a complete and correct uniform, please do so. There will be open seating, so you can sit where you like, with whom you like. *The cost of the banquet is included in all Options. If you cannot participate in the banquet, you may opt-out. See the Adjustment Opportunities box on Page 4 and "Deduct Saturday's Banquet".*

### Sunday September 20, 2009

**8:00 AM: Breakfast** will be a private buffet. The memorial service honoring deceased shipmates will be held after breakfast. *The cost of breakfast is included in Options A, B, and C.*



## LITTLE CREEK!

On July 16, 1942, a Navy truck drove off the scenic Ocean View-Virginia Beach highway, stopping in a waterlogged bean field of the Whitehurst farm. For days thereafter, trucks loaded with lumber and equipment rolled into the area in almost continuous succession.

The reason for this mass assault in a bean field 12 miles northeast of Norfolk was that early in World War II Navy planners saw the need to land large numbers of American troops on foreign shores in the face of enemy gunfire. That such operations would be difficult was also evident. New methods and techniques in landing troops would have to be developed. Lots of training would be needed before enough men were proficient in the complicated art of the amphibious assault, which would enable U.S. troops to drive to the heart of the enemy.

During the early phases of the war, the base was literally a combination of farmland and swamps. Four bases were constructed on this area—Camp Bradford, Camp Shelton, U.S. Naval Frontier Base, and Amphibious Training Base.

Camps Bradford and Shelton were named for the former owners

of the land. At first Camp Bradford was a training base for Navy Seabees, but in 1943 it was changed into a training center for the crews of LSTs (landing ship tank).

Camp Shelton was an armed guard training center for Bluejackets serving on merchant ships as gun crews. At the end of WWII it served as a separation center.

The Frontier Base was the forwarding center for gator personnel and equipment destined for the European Theater. The Amphibious Training Base (also known as "Little Creek") was the center for all types of amphibious training and the training of ship's crews for LSM (landing ship medium), LCI (landing craft infantry), and LCU (landing craft utility); LCM (landing craft mechanized), and LCVP (landing craft vehicle, personnel) boat crews were also trained at Little Creek.

The early days were hard ones. Techniques of training had to be developed from scratch. Facilities for the upkeep of equipment as well as living facilities for personnel were primitive. The newcomers found few buildings and practically no roads or utilities. Just bean vines. The men assigned found it difficult to get their white uniforms clean because there was so much foreign matter in the water; there was no such luxury as hot water so the men had to do their best with cold water and soap powder. After various improvisations along came temporary buildings that were later to give the site some resemblance to a naval base.

The men worked long hours in blistering heat in the summer and the penetrating wet cold of winter. They worked in mud and sand. After long hours of training many of them took on extra duties on their own, which slowly brought much improved living conditions.

In a commendably few months the trained men who were to land fighting forces from Africa to Nor-

mandy were ready for sea. During World War II over 200,000 Naval personnel and 160,000 Army and Marine Corps personnel trained at Little Creek.

The four bases were partially inactivated at the end of hostilities of World War II. Shortly thereafter, however, the bases at Little Creek, because of their central location on the Atlantic coast, excellent and varied beach conditions, proximity to the naval facilities of Norfolk, berthing facilities for amphibious ships through the size of LSTs, and other advantages, were consolidated into the present installation and renamed the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek with a commissioning date of August 10, 1945. The base has grown over the years, developing into a strategic expeditionary oriented command. It continues to evolve to meet the needs of the Global War on Terrorism and is the fastest growing base in Hampton Roads. Its mission is to provide outstanding customer service support to the more than 14,400 personnel of the 132 resident commands located on the base.

### USS RANKIN NEWS

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