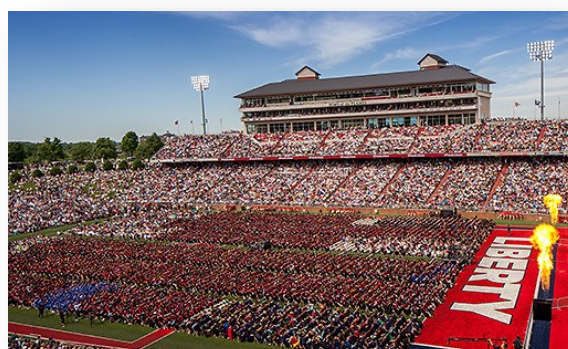


**Plan now to attend the
2020 USS Belknap Reunion - Lynchburg, Virginia
14 - 18 October, 2020**

Nestled within sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lynchburg is a modern city with a rich history. The city is named for John Lynch, who at age 17 started a ferry service across the James River in 1757.

Over time, Lynchburg became an important industrial center. Early on, it was served by the James River and Kanawha Canal and later it became the junction point for major railways. Today, Lynchburg is a vibrant and growing city. In addition to remaining a base for numerous industries, Lynchburg is home to three universities and two colleges, plus Sweet Briar College just 13 miles to the north.



Commencement at Liberty University

Our Historic Lynchburg Tour will include a driving tour of Liberty University, which has grown to a resident student body of over 15,000 since it was founded in 1971.

Seeking a respite from public scrutiny away from his famous home *Monticello* near Charlottesville, Thomas Jefferson built a second home on his 4800-acre plantation called *Poplar Forest* on the west side of Lynchburg.



Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest



Historic Sandusky

A visit to *Poplar Forest* will be a highlight of our Historic Lynchburg Tour on Friday.

During the War Between The States, Lynchburg was a Confederate transportation hub that the Union sought to control. During the aborted *Battle of Lynchburg*, two future US presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and William McKinley, were on the staff of Union General David Hunter who was sent by General Ulysses S. Grant with a force to capture the city. The Union Staff was headquartered at *Sandusky*, a national historic landmark that is on the Historic Lynchburg Tour. A clever ruse by Confederate General Jubal Early convinced the Union officers that Lynchburg was more heavily defended than they believed, resulting in the Union withdrawing without an attack aside from some minor skirmishes. As a result, Lynchburg was one of few southern cities left largely unscathed by the war.

When Union Forces finally defeated the Confederacy in April, 1865, General Robert E. Lee formally surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac at Appomattox Courthouse, a village 20 miles east of Lynchburg.



Lee surrenders to Grant in the home of Wilmer McLean, April 9, 1865



Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia

Our tour on Thursday afternoon, October 15th will be a visit to *Appomattox Courthouse National Historic Park*. We hope to be hosted by one of their excellent first-person interpreters.

20 miles west of Lynchburg is the town of Bedford, at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the early 1940's most young men in Bedford joined the Virginia National Guard: Company A of the 116th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. Few believed they would be activated for war and embroiled in history's largest invasion. But on D-Day, June 6,



Peaks of Otter viewed from D-Day Memorial

1944, Company A was among the first waves to go ashore in Normandy. In all, 19 young men from Bedford died in the invasion, including three sets of brothers. To the community, the loss was devastating. It was the highest per-capita loss of any town in America. With that legacy, it is fitting that the *National D-Day Memorial* was built at Bedford, sharing

with visitors the mountain views the Bedford Boys knew so well. Our Saturday tour will be a visit to the memorial and will include lunch at Liberty Station, the former Norfolk and Western railroad station where the Bedford Boys boarded the train to go to war.

How to get here: Lynchburg is served by US 29 between Washington, DC and Greensboro, NC, and US 460 between Norfolk and Roanoke. The Lynchburg Regional Airport has 8 jet flights daily, 4 in each direction, connecting with most destinations via Charlotte, NC. The Roanoke airport is 60 miles to the west and the Charlottesville, VA airport is 75 miles north. Dulles International Airport is 167 miles north.

And don't overlook AMTRAK. Lynchburg is served by four trains daily, two northbound and two southbound: the Northeast Regional between Boston, MA and Roanoke VA; and the Crescent between New Orleans and New York City. It's great to take the train, with spacious seats, no airport security hassles, and the convenience of leaving your seat as you desire while underway.

We have some excellent tour guides lined up, and maybe a few special surprises for our shipmates and guests. **Don't miss it!** Questions? Contact Mike Reeves at 434-944-1376, reevescm@comcast.net.