

USS Belknap Association



DLG-26 1964 - 1975

Honoring all shipmates, all years, all crews



CG-26 1975 - 1995

USS Belknap Association Newsletter

March 2026

Letter from the President

Tom Lewis (FC2, aboard 1985-1989)

Greetings, Shipmates!

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. The past 5 months since the Nashville reunion have shown me that aging pretty much sucks! I personally have dealt with a few medical issues and came out on the other side in a better place. I say this to remind you all to listen to your body and address things quickly. We want you all at the reunions!

The Nashville reunion was a resounding success; everyone I spoke to during and after thanked me and our leadership for putting together a memorable event with lots to do. The success of these events is attributable to the active participation of every member. Both tours were well attended, and we left plenty of time for visiting in the hospitality suite. Boy that was fun, the atmosphere was electric (pretty loud as well). I reference this because going forward while I'm involved I will try to emulate the structure in the same manner. Not too many tours to take away from us just being together. Besides contract busing pricing has gone through the roof following COVID.

As you all know we made the final decision on Charleston as the 2026 reunion location. This will be the third reunion to this wonderful area of our nation (2004 & 2016). It was a little tough nailing this one down, but our VP Jimmy Hines did a great job working through the negotiations with some really good pricing. Unfortunately, we could not get all of our customary deliverables. For example, we are usually able to have beer, wine, mixed drinks (alcohol), soft drinks and water, along with a variety of snack items. Most venues we approach are not allowing this at all. They would prefer to provide this as part of the package - for a fee of course, which I understand. We did find two sites that were willing to allow us to have everything but hard alcohol. The only

one that met our room pricing request was the Hiton Garden Inn Airport. They did agree to allow mixed drinks, but they will need to mixed in members' rooms and carried to the Hospitality suite. I found much the same when booking Nashville, so this appears to be the new norm.

We have scheduled two tours, one for Thursday afternoon and evening and one for Friday morning and afternoon. Both tours include a meal. Thursday we will begin with a Charleston bus tour, followed by a dinner cruise. Then on Friday we will have a tour to Patriots Point where two ships are preserved, the USS Yorktown and the USS Laffey, along with numerous aircraft. There is also the Medal of Honor Museum. We will enjoy lunch on the Yorktown. Following the Patriots Point tour, we will ferry to Fort Sumter. If you are not aware of the significance of these visits, there is plenty to read on the web.

Wednesday and Saturday there will be plenty of time in the morning and early afternoon to catch a Uber or Taxi to downtown Charleston to experience more of what this beautiful city has to offer.

The last event of the reunion is the Banquet, which will be led off by our Memorial Service for those we've lost in the past year. I have always found this to be a very moving and somber time to remember our past and to honor those that have given much to our Association. If you haven't joined please give it a try. I wish I had become involved earlier.

You can contact me at any time!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tom'.

USS Belknap Association History

Our Association was started in 2002 by shipmates Jim Farrow, the late Dick Lemon, and the late Al Sniff. The first reunion was held in Norfolk, Virginia that year, and Jim Farrow was elected as the first Association President.

Since then, reunions have been held annually except in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. 2026 will be our 24th reunion. Early on, it was decided to hold every 5th reunion in our homeport of Norfolk/Hampton Roads. Our next homeport reunion will be in 2027, next year.

Past Reunions

2002 Norfolk, VA
 2003 Pensacola, FL
 2004 Charleston, SC
 2005 San Antonio, TX
 2006 Nashville, TN
 2007 Norfolk, VA
 2008 Mobile, AL
 2009 St. Louis, MO
 2010 Tampa, FL
 2011 St. Louis, MO
 2012 Virginia Beach, VA
 2013 Tampa, FL
 2014 Portland, ME
 2015 Branson, MO
 2016 Charleston, SC
 2017 Virginia Beach, VA
 2018 Las Vegas, NV
 2019 Mobile, AL
 2020 Canceled (COVID-19)
 2021 Kissimmee, FL
 2022 Norfolk, VA
 2023 N. Myrtle Beach, SC
 2024 Lynchburg, VA
 2025 Nashville,, TN
 2026 *Charleston, SC*

Association Past Presidents

Oct 2002 – Oct 2005	Jim Farrow
Oct 2005 – Oct 2006	Dick Tremain
Oct 2006 – Oct 2007	Dick Lemon ^d
Oct 2007 – Oct 2011	Chuck Taylor
Oct 2011 – Oct 2013	Skip McCarroll
Oct 2013 – Oct 2016	Mike Abbott
Oct 2016 – Oct 2017	Jim Farrow
Oct 2017 – Oct 2019	Mike Reeves
Oct 2019 – Oct 2023	Bill Staley ^d

Due to COVID-19, no elections were held in 2020 or 2021; officers volunteered to stay in their positions until 2022.

^d Indicates deceased.

2026 Belknap Association Officers

President	Tom Lewis
Vice President	Jimmy D. Hines
Secretary	Bob Gilhooly
Treasurer	Mike Umbriaco
Auxiliary President	Sandy Stoma
Storekeeper	Louis Apuzzo
Assistant Storekeeper	Todd Wright
Newsletter & Publications	Mike Reeves
Historian	Tom Lewis
Chaplain	Collin Fuller
Webmaster	Bob Gilhooly
Publicity & Membership	Ted Hetherington





2026 USS Belknap Reunion PLAN OF THE DAY



- **Wednesday October 14**
 - 1200 - Check-in begins, hospitality suite open
 - 2400 - Hospitality suite closes
- **Thursday October 15**
 - 0700 – 0900 Breakfast in Hospitality Suite
 - 0800 - Hospitality suite opens, check-in continues
 - 1400 – 2100 Charleston Bus Tour and Dinner Cruise.
 - 2400 – Hospitality suite closes
- **Friday October 16**
 - 0700 – 0900 Breakfast in Hospitality Suite
 - 0800 - Hospitality suite opens, check-in continues
 - 0900 -1600 - POV (buddy up) to Patriots Point/Fort Sumter Tour – Lunch provided
 - 1630 – Dinner at Large
 - 2400 - Hospitality Suite closes
- **Saturday October 17**
 - 0700 – 0900 Breakfast in Hospitality Suite
 - 0800 – Hospitality suite opens
 - 1515 – 1600 Executive Board Meeting
 - 1600 – Hospitality suite closes
 - 1610 - 1700 Association Business Meeting
 - 1800 – Memorial Service
 - 1830 – 2000 (approx.) Banquet
 - 2000 - 2400 Hospitality suite open
- **Sunday October 18**
 - 0600 - Hospitality suite opens for retrieval of Association property
 - 1100 – Checkout deadline, clear hospitality suite

Restriction on Alcoholic Beverages: It has become difficult to find reunion venues that will allow us to provide our own alcoholic refreshments in the Hospitality Suite. This year, we were unable to get approval to serve hard liquor. Beer and wine are OK, but hard liquor and mixed drinks, if desired, must be prepared in your hotel room and carried to the Hospitality Suite. We regret the inconvenience.



Jimmy D. Hines

Vice President

Ahoy, Shipmates and Fellow Association Members.

I trust we all survived “Snowpocalypse 2026.” I was tired of the cold and snow, and I’m glad for the arrival of the longer, warmer days of Spring and the opportunity to get outside and enjoy them!

Like many of us, I’m watching current world events with mixed emotions.

I pray for and worry about the sailors, soldiers and airmen who are in harm’s way, and I pray for the leadership of our men and women in uniform.

I also feel for the families at home, not knowing the status of the service member; proud of what they are doing and representing, yet at the same time dreading the possibility that a black sedan might pull up to their house to deliver bad news. Let’s keep them all in our thoughts and prayers.

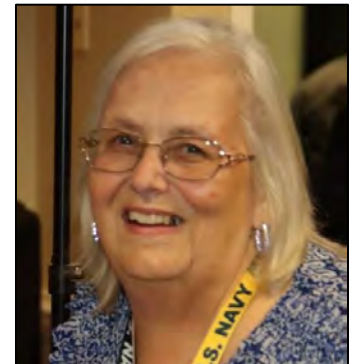
At the same time, I feel a bit of envy that they are doing what my generation was not afforded the chance to do in the mid-80s when we had the enemy in our sights so often.

On a more positive note, I’m looking forward to our upcoming reunion in Charleston. Tom and I have been working on this for quite a while, and I think we’ve put together some exciting options for everyone. There is much to see and do in Charleston, and I think you will have an enjoyable time, whether joining planned excursions, adventuring around town on your own, or just enjoying fellowship and catching up with old friends. I’m sure we’ll have a good time together and I hope you’ll be able to join us!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jimmy".

Sandy Stoma
Auxiliary President

Spouse of BM1
Ted Stoma, 1972-75



Dear Belknap Spouses, Families, and Friends,

Hello to all of you! We were thrilled to see you in Nashville. We had a great time and stayed quite busy, but we still had time to go out on our own. I would like to thank everyone who helped make the reunion a success. We even cleaned everything up in record time. Teamwork is amazing. Thank you everyone.

The Auxiliary board held our first Zoom meeting in February. Tom Lewis joined us to go over plans for this year’s reunion in Charleston, SC, which should be another special time with lots of activities. We have several new Auxiliary members with great ideas such as setting up games; Coretta suggested Belknap Trivia. We’ll be working on that as well as other games. I would especially like to thank the team for their support: Betsy, Helen, Debbie, Dena, Amy, Dan, and Coretta.

Every evening at the reunion, we’ll update the dry erase board for the next day’s activities. Because things may change, please read the board frequently so you don’t miss anything, and take a picture with your phone for reference.

All earnings from our 50-50 raffle and gift raffles go toward Association operating and reunion costs. Please consider contributing a gift basket or other items for the raffles.

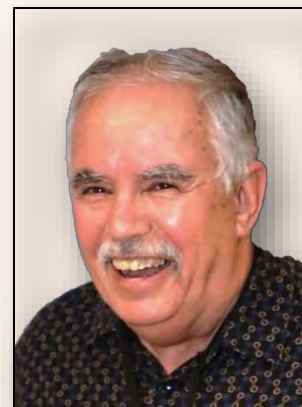
Plan to join us in Charleston in October to see old friends and make new ones!

Sandy

Wow! It's already spring 2026 and the Charleston reunion is just around the corner in time now!! We are all soooo blessed to have a particular band of old salts who still have a passion to gather every Fall – it's kind of like having a family reunion every year.

As your treasurer, I can tell you guys that we are in great shape venturing into the next few years. This year we may discuss and then vote on giving Norfolk area Navy JROTC programs scholarships as we did about ten years ago. Or maybe we could reduce some of the tour or banquet costs instead. These are things that we can kick around at the reunion.

In the meantime, you can use the registration forms or links included in this newsletter to register yourself and your families and guests to join us in Charleston in October. I Look forward to seeing y'all again!



Mike Umbriaco
Treasurer



Bob Gilhooly
Secretary

Shipmates, if you are not getting the newsletter and reunion updates via email we probably don't have a good email address for you. Please go to <https://ussbelknap.org/home/roster-update-view/profile-update/> and enter your current information. We want to keep you informed, and likewise – keep us informed!

While on the website, check out all the great information there, including newsletters, information on past reunions, the Ship's Store, and more.

A prayer from Chaplain Gus:

We hold up our country and leaders as our military is engaged in actions overseas that are intended to protect us from longtime threats and a sponsor of international terrorism. We pray for divine protection for our military, the safety of our citizens, and those who are in harm's way.

We pray for our Belknap family and friends, and remember our beloved shipmates who have been ill or have died in the recent months. We lift up their families and loved ones, asking God for comfort and Love over their lives. We put our Belknap leaders before our God for direction this spring, and we give thanks for His divine guidance going forward.

Thanking our God and savior Jesus Christ for all His mercy and grace, Amen.

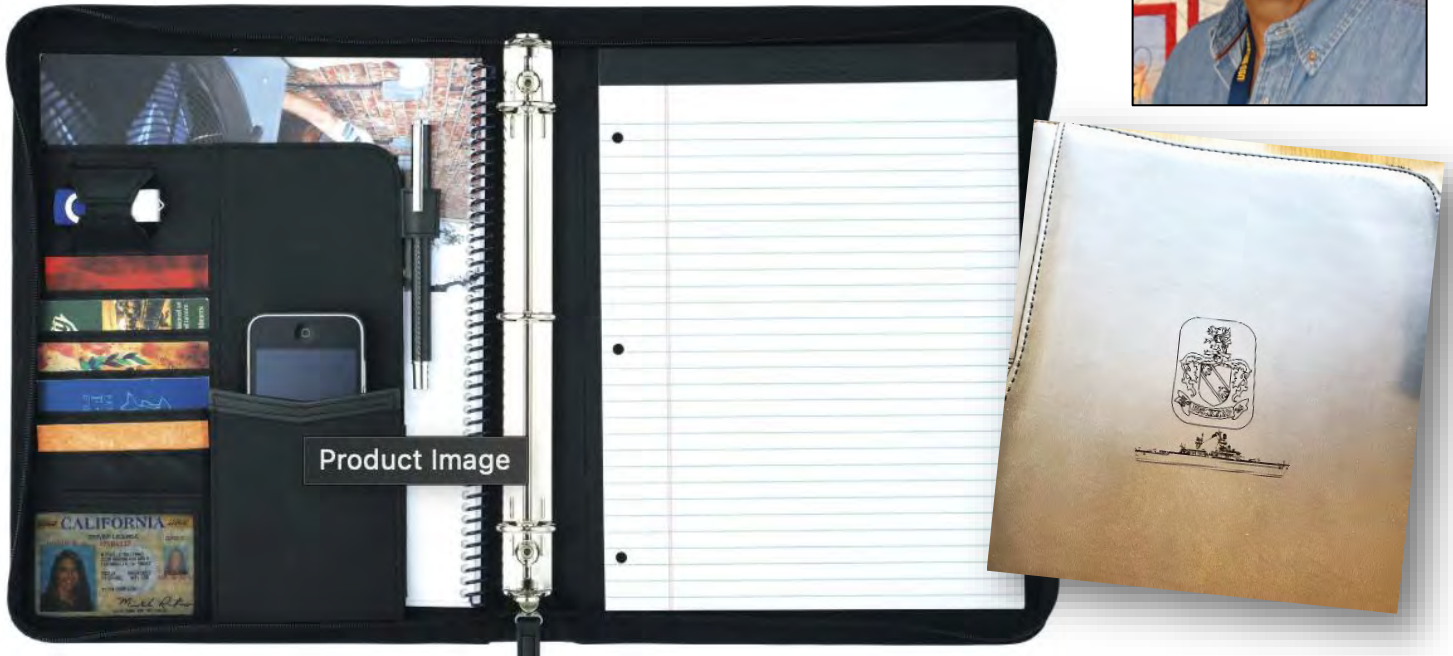
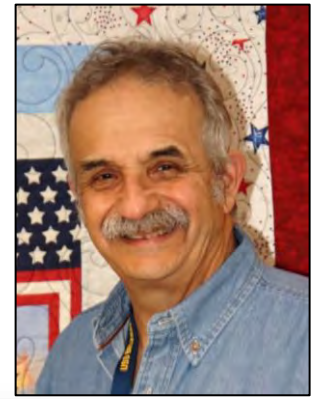


Collin Fuller
Chaplain

We're pleased to add two new high-end items to our store offerings, both with the USS Belknap logo!

Keep your essentials organized in this convenient **Pedova™ UltraHyde Portfolio** that unzips to reveal a panel with holders for your ID and business cards, cell phone, USB thumb-drive, pen, notepad, and a loose-leaf binder.

Ship's Store Louis Apuzzo



This 10 oz leakproof **Stainless Steel Hip Flask** is perfect for men or women, and a great gift item. Complete with funnel and never-lose cap.

The binder is \$75 and the flask is \$50, or you may get both for \$115.00. Shipping is included.



You may also pre-order a 2026 Reunion tee shirt with the reunion logo for \$18.00.



All shirts will be Carolina Blue.

We have many more items in our online store at <https://ussbelknap.org/ships-store-main/>.

To order, please send an email to ljappuzzo@snet.net with your name, address and phone number, indicating how many of each item (and size if applicable). I will contact you for payment, or you may pay at the reunion. For online payment the Ship's store uses PayPal, or you can send a check to Louis Apuzzo, 492 Harold Av NE , Atlanta GA 30307.

From the Archives

In 2004, shipmates at the 3rd USS Belknap Reunion in Charleston, SC signed the margin of a ship photo that was embellished with a Belknap crest and reunion patch. The signed picture was framed and hung in the hotel that hosted the reunion, where it remained until the hotel was slated to be razed.

Learning that the hotel would be torn down, our late shipmate Eddie Kozlowski rode his motorcycle from his home in Tampa, FL to Charleston to retrieve the picture. He brought the picture to the Association at a reunion in St. Louis, and it is now in our archives. A Commissary Specialist on the first Vietnam Cruise, Koszowski was a master baker whose treats were savored by the crew, and later by shipmates at our reunions. He died in 2015.

Shipmate Bob Gilhooly ran across these pictures in his memorabilia. He says he doesn't recall how he came to have them, but we're grateful to him for sharing them for this newsletter.



Shown here with the picture hanging in the hotel are the late Captain Dick Shafer (left) and Past Association President Dick Tremain.

Among the many signatures on the picture are those of Bill O'leary, who relieved Dick Shafer and was Belknap's second XO, and Ross Hatch, who took command when the ship was recommissioned after the collision. Signatures also include five Belknap Association Past Presidents.

We are saddened that many of our shipmates who signed the picture have since passed away.

