

USS Robert A Owens 2025 Reunion

The plans have been finalized, except for a couple small things, for our reunion in Norfolk, VA, October 6 thru 10, 2025. The schedule is as follows:

Monday, October 6—Check in, after 4PM, at the Wyndham Downtown Garden Hotel, 700 Monticello Avenue.

Tuesday, October 7—Board the Victory Rover for a 2-hour cruise in the harbor around the fleet. A box lunch will be provided during the cruise. After we disembark the Rover, we'll have a riding tour of the Arts District. Arrive back at the hotel around 3:30. Dinner will be on your own.

Wednesday, October 8—We'll take a bus to the Military Aviation Museum and spend an hour and a half there, then back to the hotel for lunch on our own. At 1, we'll board the bus to the Naval Base for a private tour on the base coach. We'll arrive back at the hotel around 3:30. Dinner will be on our own.

Thursday, October 9—We'll have our morning business meeting and a free day. Ladies will have the option to attend the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. With the evening banquet at the hotel. We're working on getting a speaker from the Douglas MacArthur Museum for the banquet.

Friday, October 10—Check out by 11AM.

We've done our best to keep prices to a minimum. The prices for everything has been based upon 30 attendees. Since the pandemic, the cost for transportation has skyrocketed. The cost for one coach, for one day, is \$1,500. Because of that, the officers have elected to pay \$2,000, from the general fund, to cover two-thirds of the cost for the transportation. The remaining third has been built into the cost for the activities of the day. They felt covering a lot of the cost for the transportation could help increase attendance.

The room rate for this reunion is the same it was for the 2023 reunion in Mobile--\$119 per night. We have a block of 15 rooms made up of 2 double beds, or 1 king size, it's your choice. You'll need to make your reservations by following the link on the reservation form, or if you don't have a computer, call the sales manager, Melodie Crawford, at 757-627-5555. Parking is complimentary. It's typically \$15. The hospitality suite is included free of charge, but we did have to buy a temporary banquet license from ABC, so we could have alcohol in the room. Our only obligation to the hotel is to spend \$1,000 on food at the hotel. Unfortunately, our daily meals won't apply, but our banquet meals do, as well as any food, or beverages, we would order for the business meeting. We've decided to go with the individual meals for the banquet, at \$50 each. It's too far out to choose the menu items.

I left the ladies visiting the Botanical Gardens kind of vague. I reached out to them, but they are in their Christmas Experience season and are very busy. I probably won't be able to get any information until sometime next year. They have a group rate, but I don't know how many constitute a group. The typical cost to tour the gardens is \$20. Depending upon how many ladies want to attend, I'm hoping they'll be able to carpool.

The items we've chosen for the itinerary are not the only things to do in Norfolk. There are many other things to do. I'll be gathering information from the various locations to include in the packets we'll be giving to the attendees. They have a maritime science museum where they have a naval museum and the battleship Wisconsin. The only reason I chose the Aviation Museum, over the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, is because we toured the USS Alabama

when we had our reunion in Mobile. One of the other locations to consider visiting is the General of the Army Douglas MacArthur Museum. There is no cost to tour either museum, however there is a cost to tour the Nauticus/Battleship Wisconsin exhibit, if you choose the naval option. If you're looking for something to do in your free time, please consider visiting the Naval, or MacArthur Museums.

We're working with the folks at the MacArthur Museum to find us a speaker for our banquet. I requested a speaker with naval or destroyer experience, but being a museum geared toward the General of the Army, I don't know if they'll be able to find anyone with that type of experience. We'll see as it gets closer to the event. That's all I have for now. As things come up, or change, I'll keep you abreast of them in the future Ping's. Follow the link to make your room reservations and if you have any problems, questions, or concerns, I'm going to recommend you either reach out to me, or Melodie Crawford at the hotel. Her contact information is on the reservation page. My email address is billmiller15644@gmail.com

Because we're all getting older, we don't know how many more reunions we'll be having. Hopefully you'll decide to attend this reunion, since Norfolk was the homeport for the Owens while most of us were aboard. I look forward to seeing everyone.