

USS SAM HOUSTON VETERANS' ASSN.

2026 REUNION-DETAILS PACKET



CALL TO THE 8th BIENNIAL REUNION Little Rock, Ark.

22–24 Oct 2026 (Thurs.–Sat.)
Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential
707 Interstate 30 Little Rock, AR 72202

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

**Because of a generous grant from an anonymous donor,
those who register for the Group Tour on Friday
will participate**

WITHOUT CHARGE!

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I am pleased to issue this “**2026 Reunion-Details Packet**” (RDP) of the USS Sam Houston Veterans’ Assn. (SHVA). All veterans of the boat, members of Special Forces who were assigned, Associate Members, and their guests are invited to attend this reunion arranged for 22–24 October in Little Rock, Ark. The reunion begins with an optional “On-Your-Own” tour of portion of the downtown area on Thurs., 22 October and ends after our Banquet and Auction late on Sat. evening, 24 October. A different and optional second group tour is scheduled for Fri., 23 October that will involve some interesting and diverse venues and our Memorial Service. Expect fair temperatures and a near-zero probability of weather-related, travel disruptions nationwide.

The host hotel is the ***Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential***: www.choicehotels.com/arkansas/little-rock/comfort-inn-hotels/ar115. It is located near the heart of downtown Little Rock and provides complementary, 24-7 airport-shuttle service for the local Bill & Hillary Clinton National Airport (LIT). Hotel parking is free. The contracted guest room cost is available from 19–27 October for those who wish to arrive early and/or stay later. The hotel is pet friendly; so, bring your beloved furry companion if necessary. As usual, the Reunion Committee has arranged for a Hospitality Space during the reunion. The hotel has a restaurant and bar; visit the hotel’s website for the menus. A popular restaurant that is within a few minutes’ walk is another culinary and booze option.

If you have relatives/friends in or near Little Rock or they will travel there otherwise, this reunion could serve as a mini family reunion or friendly get-together. Non-SHVA members can take advantage of our guest room cost and participate in our Hospitality Space where photos, scrapbooks, and other memorabilia will help them develop a deeper appreciation of your military service. Sea stories that involve you will let them know what your Navy life was **really** like! These guests may also participate in our group activities. If your guest is included on your Reunion-Registration Form (RRF); i.e., staying in the same guest room, they will be registered for the reunion. If non-SHVA members are not included in a guest room reservation of a member or are not staying at the Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential, they must complete a RRF. Non-SHVA attendees are subject to the Registration Fee and, if not staying at the host hotel, they are also subject to an additional Hotel-User Assessment Fee.

If knowing who registers for the reunion is important to you, contact me (Howard Dobson) as specified in this RDP. I’ll send you a list of current registrants, or you can ask about specific members. Moreover, you can attempt to persuade a member to attend if he/she has not registered instead of your deciding not to attend the reunion. Regardless, plan to attend the reunion and make new friends within the USS Sam Houston family.

This RDP describes the activities of the reunion and includes the registration form (RRF) that you must complete and mail with your payment to register. The designated individual of the Reunion Committee (Howard Dobson) must **receive your completed RRF and payment no later than 14 Sep 2026**. You must complete one form for each *guest room reservation* made with the hotel. Include all individuals who will be associated with a guest room reservation. If you will not be staying at the host hotel, you must complete one form that includes everyone in your group.

This reunion is à la carte; i.e., you decide which day(s) you attend and which group activities on those days you and/or your guest(s) will participate in.

Brad Lawrence [IC2(SS), Gold, 1972-1973] will be taking professional portraits before our Banquet on Sat. evening, 24 October and candid shots elsewhere. Those portraits will be included in the 2026 Reunion-Memory Book in addition to some pictures taken and submitted by attendees.

ATTENDEES WITH SIGNIFICANT MOBILITY CONCERNS:

- **If you are contemplating attending this reunion, you should immediately reserve an Accessible Room as the quantity is limited. If you determine later that you cannot attend, you can cancel the reservation without being charged if you notify the hotel before 4:00 pm CT on the day of your scheduled arrival.**
- **If you are contemplating attending the reunion and you require or might require a coach with a chair lift, please inform me immediately via phone or email so that I might have adequate time to reserve a coach with a chair lift. The contact information is on p.2 of the RRF (corresponding to pp. 17 & 18 of this packet).**

IMPORTANT PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Registration for the reunion and reservation for a hotel guest room are independent processes. You must make your guest room reservation by contacting the host hotel as described herein. If you will stay at the host hotel, reserve your guest room before completing the included RRF. The form requests that you include your Reservation Confirmation ID.

GENERAL:

Completed RRFs must be received by the deadline of 14 Sep 2026. *This Cutoff Date occurs one week before the Cutoff Date of 21 September imposed by the hotel for guest room reservations.* The earlier deadline is necessary so that I can comply with requirements imposed by all venues involved. The coach company and some tour venues might require “final counts” well in advance of the reunion. Tour venues might also require that admissions fees be paid in advance. Moreover, I need time to complete some tasks that I cannot do until I process all registrations.

If you plan to attend the reunion but cannot meet the registration deadline, call me as soon as practicable before 14 Sep 2026 so that I can account for your attendance at events of your choice. If you contact me after the deadline, I'll be able to inform you if coach seating is available and which venues, if any, can accommodate you. In all cases, you will have access to our Hospitality Space.

The Cutoff Date for REUNION REGISTRATION is Monday, 14 Sep 2026. Send your completed RRF with full payment by check/money order payable to “USS Sam Houston” to the designated member of the Reunion Committee (Howard Dobson) mentioned on the RRF. This individual must receive your completed form and payment by 14 September for guaranteed participation in the group venues chosen. Allow 5 days for delivery through regular mail (USPS First-Class Mail). Reunion registrations and payments received after the Registration-Cutoff Date might be returned based upon available vacancies and willingness of the hotel, tour operator, and venues to include you after their cutoff dates have passed.

- Full refunds for cancellations of REUNION REGISTRATIONS will be made if cancelled on or before 14 September 2026. Afterward, refunds cannot be guaranteed for REUNION REGISTRATIONS. I'll try to refund you if I am able to have entities refund advance payments made on your behalf for the coach and chosen venues. This could result in a partial refund.
- The **Registration Fee** applies to each person included on an RRF. This fee is \$30 for each person.
- The **Hotel-User Assessment Fee** applies ONLY to those who will NOT stay at the host hotel for whatever reason. This fee is \$20 for each person and is **in addition to** the Registration Fee of \$30 required for each person.

The **Registration Fee** applies to each attendee. It covers the costs of snacks, fruits, candies, nonalcoholic beverages for the Hospitality Space, event insurance, meal for coach driver(s), Banquet guest(s), nametags, and numerous other incidentals.

The **Hotel-User Assessment Fee** applies to each attendee who will not be staying at the host hotel and is a fee in addition to the Registration Fee. This fee covers costs related to our meeting room setups and cleanups, ice and water stations, bartender's fee, etc. that the hotel provides during the reunion. The reason that this fee does not apply to those who stay at the host hotel is that a portion of their guest room cost covers these hotel-provided items/services. This fee also discourages a desire to choose public lodging other than the host hotel.

THE HOST HOTEL: Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential; Little Rock, Ark.



Main Dining Area



Lobby

- **Reunion registrants must make their guest room reservations by either of the following means:**
 - Call the hotel at **501-687-7700**. Mention that your reservation is for the **USS Sam Houston Reunion**.
 - Book at the URL (website): <https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/CH30U7>.
- **Do NOT use any other method such as the Choice Hotel National-Reservation System or any 3rd-party booking website. If you do NOT book your guest room by either of the two approved methods, you will not be entitled to any special arrangements and perks arranged for our reunion.**
- **The Cutoff Date for making GUEST ROOM RESERVATIONS is 21 Sep 2026.**
- Below is the contracted guest room cost. The base price is subject to taxes and fees that total 14.625% at the time of issuing this RDP. (Taxes can change as they are government-controlled.)

CONTRACTED GUEST ROOMS	BASE PRICE	OUT-OF-POCKET COST	Applicable Period
Standard Double Queen or Single King	\$110.00/night	\$126.09/night	18–28 October

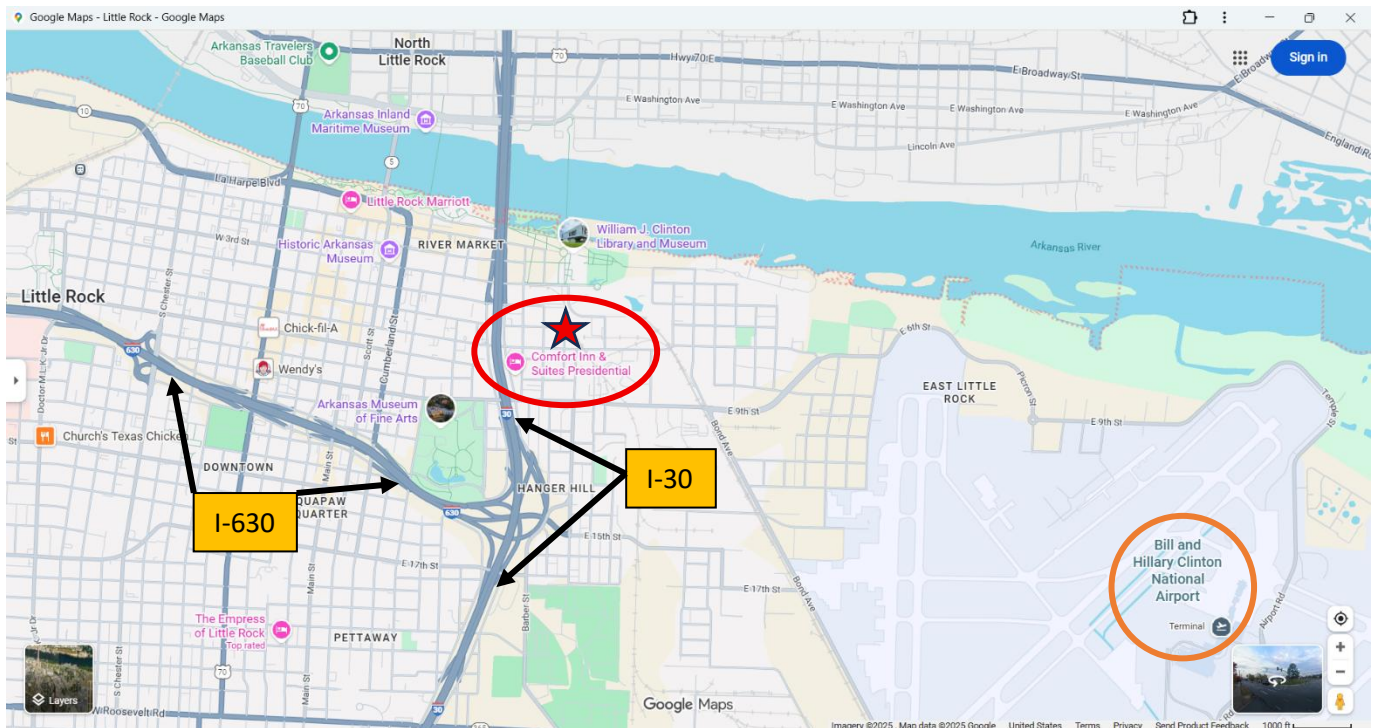
- Your guest room reservation includes a hot breakfast buffet for each person registered in a guest room.
- The hotel has a limited number of suites. The cost of these rooms is not established under the contract.
- The hotel provides complimentary, airport-shuttle service: 7:00 am–11:00 pm.; 18–28 October.
- The hotel provides downtown-shuttle service: 7:00 am–11:00 pm.; 18–28 October.
- Parking at the hotel is free and can accommodate dead parking for 2 motor homes.
- Each guest room reservation incurs a \$100.00 Incidental Hold at check-in applied to your guaranteed method of payment (credit/debit card). The hold minus any incidentals assessed is released at checkout.
- Cancellation of your guest room reservation will not result in a charge if you notify the hotel by 4:00 pm CT on your scheduled arrival date. Otherwise, you will incur a one-night, guest room cost plus taxes that will be paid through your guaranteed method of payment.
- The hotel is extending the contracted guest room cost for stays within 18–28 October. This is convenient if you want to arrive early and/or stay later.
- Bring convenient memorabilia and an item for our auction that will follow our Banquet on Saturday evening, 24 October.
- Call the hotel at 501-687-7700 if you wish to mail a package ahead of your arrival. A date for which mail pieces can begin to be accepted will be provided. Mailing a heavy/bulky item or numerous small ones for the auction might be a convenient means for getting those items to the hotel.
- Since Thurs., 22 October is the day for an optional “On-Your-Own” tour of the downtown area, you do not have to arrive on the evening before to participate since a hired coach is not involved. The hotel’s shuttle will provide scheduled, complimentary transportation to a convenient downtown drop-off/pickup location. You can also board a free streetcar for additional transportation along its limited downtown route.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

- **Walk-ins for the reunion CANNOT be accepted for group meals and tours** because of precise attendance having to be provided to the hotel, the tour operator, and tour venues in advance of the reunion as applicable.
- Most venues involve walking but probably not excessively for those who are relatively mobile; I am attentive toward minimizing walking/standing periods. Most venues are ADA-Compliant/Handicapped Accessible except for certain types of equipment (e.g., military equipment) and structures (e.g., lighthouses, antique homes, etc.). We will visit the museum submarine Razorback (former SS 394).
- The attire during all reunion activities is casual (shorts, T-shirts, etc.) except for the taking of professional portraits before the Banquet and attending the Banquet on Sat. evening, 24 October. “Business casual” or better is requested. Wear your uniform if you have it—and it fits!

Your Journey to the Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential

DRIVING



The Comfort Inn & Suites Presidential has a postal address of 707 Interstate 30 in Little Rock, but it is not on the interstate as the address might suggest. Instead, it is located on what many states designate as an “access road.” The name of this road on which the hotel is located is “I-30 Frontage Road” and is Exit 140 of I-30. This access road has been integrated with various street names that existed before the interstate. I-30 in this area of Little Rock is also combined with U.S. Route 167 and U.S. Route 65 which adds to the confusion! To avoid frustration upon arrival in the area, I recommend that you follow instructions of a GPS navigational device/app. Knowing where to exit and which lane to be in can become harrowing unless you use a GPS device or are familiar with the area.

Do not confuse this hotel with the Comfort Inn & Suites *Little Rock Airport* or the Comfort Inn & Suites *North Little Rock JFK Blvd* that are in the area. The key word that identifies our host hotel is *Presidential*.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

*If you travel by public transportation to attend the reunion **ONLY**, a rental car is not needed to participate fully in the reunion.*

➤ **Travel by Air**

The Bill & Hillary Clinton National Airport (LIT) is your destination. At the time of issuing this RDP, the following major airlines serve the airport:

◆ Alaska Airlines ◆ American Airlines ◆ Delta Air Lines ◆ JetBlue Airways ◆ Southwest Airlines

Many other airlines serve the airport but probably do not have sufficient/convenient flights.

Call the host hotel at 501-687-7700 for pickup by its complimentary, airport shuttle after you arrive and retrieve your luggage. You will receive details about the shuttle's pickup location during the call.

➤ **Travel by Train**

 **I DO NOT RECOMMEND TRAVEL BY TRAIN FOR THIS REUNION.** 
Numerous, significant inconveniences will likely be encountered.

Discussing all complications and inconveniences is too complex. But a few major issues are:

- Only one train route serves Little Rock: Amtrak's "Texas Eagle." Its endpoints are Chicago and Los Angeles. This train operates daily between Chicago and San Antonio but every other day between San Antonio and Los Angeles.
- Arrival/Departure times at Little Rock are about 3:00 am or 11:40 pm daily depending upon the direction of travel. Either time is inconvenient.
- Other trains connect to the Texas Eagle route but require one or more transfers. Some might involve traveling via dedicated motor coach. Some transfers have lengthy layovers that include early-morning hours! Moreover, you must handle your luggage during layovers and transfers.
- You might want a private room aboard the train. If so, the cost will increase drastically. Private rooms fill early—months early! You should reserve a private room no later than May 2026 for a good chance of availability.
- Refunds will be problematic and depend upon the specific fare type purchased; train fares are akin to the types of airline fares.

But if you have lots of extra time, lots of extra money, and you desire scenery more interesting than the tops of clouds or redundant highway scenery, the train might be a worthwhile option. If so, contact Amtrak, a travel agent, or me, Howard Dobson (Reunion Planner), for more information. I travel by Amtrak often.

SHOULD YOU PURCHASE TRAVEL INSURANCE?

Travel/Traveler's/Trip insurance provides coverage for trip cancellations or interruptions, lost luggage, flight/rail accidents, certain medical expenses, and numerous other incidents that might occur during travel. Some airlines and Amtrak offer this optional insurance when purchasing fares. If an airline does not offer travel insurance, search the internet for travel-insurance agencies. A good start is the website www.travelinsurance.com; you'll find numerous agencies listed. Some credit cards include travel insurance at no charge; check with your card issuer. Some cards also include insurance at no charge for rental cars. Again, check with your card issuer.

In essence, the cost of this insurance is relatively cheap when compared to its potential benefits—as is the case with most insurances. Ever been stuck at an airport? Missed connections or a cruise? Needed a hotel room because of travel problems? Required a rental car because of problems? Lost luggage? The list is long! Although travel insurance cannot prevent the incidents, it can help ease the pain. A basic travel insurance policy will probably cover incidents that might cause you to change your itinerary because of certain emergencies which could occur—even situations related to someone who is not traveling with you! These policies are worth their costs, and I recommend that you consider purchasing this insurance whenever you travel by plane, train, motor coach, or rental vehicle.

A real situation occurred a few years ago with the president of Military Reunion Network (MRN) who travels frequently and always purchases travel insurance. She needed round-trip travel between Everett, Wash. and Laughlin, Nev.

Airfare: \$373.49

Travel Insurance: \$23.49.

Her travel began with a flight from Everett, Wash. to Las Vegas, Nev. She would then travel by rental car to Laughlin. This occurred without a hitch, but this would be the case with her return trip. Her return flight was scheduled to land at Everett at 11:49 pm. The airport is 14 miles from her home; thus, arrival in the late evening would not be an issue. But during the return flight, the plane was diverted to Portland, Ore. because of fog. Portland is about 300 miles from her home! Seattle's airport would have been a better option, but it was also fogged in. Thus, the plane landed in Portland at 12:30 am. The remainder of her journey home would have to wait until the morning.

That night, she stayed at a hotel: **\$149 + tax**. The airline did not cover the cost of the hotel because the issue was weather-related. But the airline offered her a morning flight from Portland to Everett via San Francisco, Calif. with her arrival time at Everett being 2:30 pm on the next day. If she would rent a car, she could be home after a 5-hour drive. She opted for a rental car.

She filed an insurance claim for the hotel and the rental car, and the insurance reimbursed her in full. It did not refund her unused plane fare from Portland to Everett because the airline did so.

Does this real incident convince you to purchase travel insurance for any of your long-distance travels?



AN IMPORTANT COMMENT CONCERNING BOOKING AT THE HOST HOTEL

Having reunion attendees staying at one hotel is much more than a good idea based upon convenience; it can prevent the SHVA from incurring hefty financial penalties because a few reunion attendees might wish to save a few dollars on a hotel guest room. The SHVA through a contract with the host hotel has reserved a block of guest rooms for the reunion attendees. This provides the hotel a guaranteed guest room revenue and reserves meeting rooms for our events at the hotel. The block of guest rooms is established about 18 months in advance of the reunion. Failure to fill the rooms in the block can result in the SHVA having to pay for all unused guest rooms. Additionally, the SHVA will likely be required to pay for its Meeting Rooms during the reunion if the guest room block is not filled. Meeting Rooms typically cost \$400–\$600/day! **Your cost to attend this reunion does not include extra money for financial penalties related to unfilled guest rooms and/or meeting rooms.**

The only way to have your guest room reservation applied to the contracted guest room block is to book your guest room as specified in this packet. You must also mention that your reservation is for the USS Sam Houston Reunion so that it is applied to the guest room block and you receive the contracted guest room cost and other negotiated perks such as free parking, free breakfast, etc.

Hotels require firm commitments well in advance of events. They are in business to make money and do so by filling guest rooms and renting meeting rooms. They attempt to book multiple groups simultaneously by managing available guest and meeting rooms. Hoteliers can only manage hotel space through firm agreements in advance—contracts that are legally enforceable. They cannot manage space based on wishy-washy, oral promises. Groups incur severe financial penalties for cancellations and failures to fill the contracted guest room blocks. Also, attendance at group meals lower than the contracted amounts also incurs financial penalties. These and many other situations confront Military Reunion Planners solely because of the inability to ascertain accurate reunion attendance, and contracts must be signed many months in advance of the reunion. In contrast, those who arrange corporate events at hotels can provide accurate attendance in advance because attendees are being paid to attend. Hotels can usually accommodate a higher attendance than that specified in contracts if space is available, and this situation has no financial penalties.

One of the keys to a successful reunion is that all reunion registrants follow instructions that their Reunion Planners provide. This includes making hotel reservations within the block of rooms negotiated by the Reunion Planner. But at least one member of the group will probably consider **Going Rogue**. This idea is fueled by the thought, "I can probably find a nearby hotel/motel room at a lower cost." Then off to a third-party, hotel-booking website he/she goes.

Hotel Revenue Managers anticipate hotel occupancies and related revenues. Often, they focus on predictions for at least 6 months out. They then allocate to third-party, hotel-booking agencies anticipated unused guest rooms for sale at discounted costs. Revenue Managers adjust the number of allocated rooms according to fluctuating changes in the hotel's business levels.

(cont.)

AN IMPORTANT COMMENT CONCERNING BOOKING AT THE HOST HOTEL (cont.)

A few adverse factors not mentioned earlier become apparent or develop when reunion attendees make guest room reservations through third-party, hotel-booking agencies:

1. **Your guest room reservation is subject to policies of the booking agency, NOT to those of the hotel.** You pay the agency, it makes a guest room reservation in your name, and it pays the hotel for that reservation. Registrants are subject to the booking agency's policies, especially those related to cancellation and refund. A registrant might get a good discount through a booking agency but beware of the fine print! You'll probably be unaware of statements such as "no date changes are allowed" and "refunds for guest room cancellations are not provided." All disputes and concerns related to a guest room reservation are between the registrant and the booking agency, NOT between the registrant and the hotel. If you don't like the room, you could be stuck with it.
2. **Guest rooms booked through an agency cannot be associated with an event occurring at the hotel.** Even if registrants mention that their reservations are associated with specific events at the hotels, the booking agency has no means of associating the two—and you might not be told so. Even if you are told, you'll likely not realize the implications until you are in the midst of the reunion. You did not receive a Welcome Reception Pass at check-in even though you registered for it on the RRF. Then you'll wonder why you were hit with a hefty parking fee at checkout when others received free parking! You will likely be excluded from perks negotiated for reunion attendees. Another adverse situation occurs if hotel guest rooms are oversold: those who booked through agencies are the first to be relocated to other hotels for a night or two. This increases the chances of missing reunion activities in the early morning or, worse, a departing tour coach. Reunion attendees who use booking agencies are likely ineligible for perks negotiated by Reunion Planners: breakfast vouchers, welcome receptions, free/discounted parking, in-room welcome gifts, etc. What's more is that circumstances such as reunion updates and emergency information might not be relayed in a timely manner to those who use booking agencies.
3. **Guest rooms booked through booking agencies have a negative impact on the entire reunion.** Reunion Planners commit to a specific number of guest rooms for a reunion and receive concessions from the hotel based on the corresponding guest room revenue. The concessions can include complimentary meeting spaces, a Welcome Reception, free parking, and more. When reunion attendees use booking agencies, the reunion's Guest Room Block is circumvented, and the block of rooms might not be filled. In this case, the hotel has every right to reduce/eliminate concessions offered if the anticipated revenue from the group's Guest Room Block falls short. A few bad apples can ruin the entire bushel!

**For these reasons, I request that all reunion registrants
who will require public lodging during the reunion
reserve their guest rooms as prescribed in this RDP.**

I thank you in advance for your understanding of and cooperation with this important matter.

Howard Dobson
Chairman & Reunion Planner

2026 Reunion Schedule

Your First Mate/partner and other guests are encouraged to attend the reunion as activities are chosen such that they will be part of the festivities and not tagalongs. Group tours of some attractions have been chosen with their interest in mind. ***The reunion is à la carte: you attend on the days you desire with optional participation in group activities offered on those days.*** If you choose not to participate in any group activity, you may “do you own thing.” You can hang out in the Hospitality Space, enjoy meals at local restaurants, tour and shop in the area on your own, visit relatives and friends in the area, or do something else of interest.

Our Hospitality Space will be available on Wed. from 4:30–11:00 pm and 7:00 am–11:00 pm from Thurs. through Sat. Reunion check-ins will occur in this room. You will receive a Welcome Packet that includes name badges, tour tickets, banquet tickets, and other important items and supplemental information.

You must pre-register, i.e., indicate on the RRF your participation in any group event. These events comprise the group tour on Fri. and our Banquet on Sat. evening. The hotel provides a complimentary, hot breakfast buffet for all attendees registered in guest rooms. Your lunch during the group tour Fri. is also à la carte and pay at the restaurant. This will be your only cost incurred during the tour; a grant paid for the rental of the coaches, tips for the drivers, and their lunches.

The tentative reunion schedule follows. It is accurate at the time of issuing this RDP but is subject to change. The final schedule will be printed on the back of the name badges.

Complimentary, Hot Breakfast Buffet: 6:00–9:00 am Mon.–Fri. and 7:00–10:00 am Sat. & Sun.

Wed., 21 October

4:30–11 P Hospitality Space available.

Thurs., 22 October

6:00–9:00 A Complimentary, hot breakfast in the hotel’s restaurant.

7:00 A–11 P Hospitality Space available. Reunion check-in.

10:45 A–7:00 P Hotel shuttle to downtown for an “On Your Own” tour.

Lunch On your own.

Supper On your own.

Fri., 23 October

6:00–9:00 A Complimentary, hot breakfast in the hotel’s restaurant.

7:00 A–11 P Hospitality Space available. Reunion check-in.

9:00 A Board coach for Group Tour; **PRE-REGISTRATION REQ’D.**

9:15 A Coach departs.

Lunch Tour cost includes the meal at a pre-selected restaurant.

4:00 P Tour coach returns (time approx.)

Supper On your own.

Sat., 24 October

NO OFF-SITE GROUP ACTIVITIES

7:00–10:00 A Complimentary, hot breakfast in the hotel’s restaurant.

7:00 A–11 P Hospitality Space available. Reunion check-in.

9:30–11 A Board of Advisors’ Meeting
Lunch On your own.

1–3 P Veterans’ Business Meeting.
(Optional guest attendance.)

4:30–5:45 P Professional portraits.
(Location TBD.)

6:15–6:30 P Seating for the Banquet & Program.
PRE-REGISTRATION REQ’D.

8:00–9:30 P Auction follows the Banquet.

Sun., 25 October

7:00–10:00 A Complimentary, hot breakfast in the hotel’s restaurant.

10 A Hospitality Space clean up.

11 A Hotel checkout deadline if departing.

DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES AT THE HOTEL

Nonfood Activities

Hospitality Space (7:00 am–11:00 pm daily)

This is our “room to mingle” and will be available during most active hours of the reunion—even during tours for those who will not be participating. It will be set up by late afternoon on Wed., 21 October. After you arrive at the hotel, come to the Hospitality Space to pick up your Welcome Packet and socialize with others. Sodas, bottled water, fruits, snacks, and candies will be available along with displays of memorabilia, items for auction/raffle, and items for sale. We will have a machine for brewing coffee and tea in the room. Bring your memorabilia and an item for our auction. Avoid items that might be too large to fit in a mid-size suitcase. Consider mailing large/heavy items or numerous small ones to the hotel for convenience. **Call the hotel at 501-687-7700 for mailing instructions.**

The SHVA does not have a traditional Ship’s Store as do most other military-reunion groups, but Sam Houston ball caps and medallions (Challenge Coins) will be available for sale. Other boat/SHVA-related items are available directly from vendors. These vendors serve as our Ship’s Store by marketing certain items that are specific to the boat and/or the SHVA. What is unique about these vendors is that they will accept orders from individuals, have no minimum-order quantities, and will ship directly to the customer. The use of vendors eliminates the burden of transporting many such items to and from our reunions and maintaining stock elsewhere. If you are interested in a particular item, consult Howard Dobson (Reunion Planner) during the reunion.

Please do not bring your own “culinary masterpiece” for sharing in the Hospitality Space UNLESS the item is nonperishable AND does not require heating. The hotel does not permit the preparation of certain foods in the Hospitality Space. These items are usually major items served at its restaurant. Snacks, fruits, candies, and nonalcoholic beverages are permitted but must be contained in single-serve packages/containers. Please contact Howard Dobson if you wish to bring something for consumption and are unsure if it will be appropriate for the Hospitality Space.

The SHVA does not authorize the selling or serving alcoholic beverages in the Hospitality Space by any reunion attendee at its reunions. Reunion registrants may purchase alcoholic beverages from the restaurant/lounge or service bars at the hotel for consumption in the Hospitality Space or in meeting rooms during group events.

Hospitality suites that reunion registrants might establish elsewhere in the hotel are neither endorsed by the SHVA nor affiliated with it. Therefore, the SHVA, its officials, and members of the Reunion Committee accept no responsibility or liability for incidents stemming from the use or abuse of alcohol by reunion attendees participating in such hospitality suites.

Reunion Check-In (daily)

Reunion check-in is independent of hotel check-in and will occur in the Hospitality Space. You will receive your Welcome Packet that includes name badges, tickets for your pre-registered venues, and other items that have basic information about local restaurants, shops, attractions, etc. not involved with the reunion. You will also be informed of any changes to reunion activities. The schedule of reunion activities will be on the back of the name badge.

Board of Advisors' Meeting (Sat. 9:30–11 am)

This is a meeting of SHVA officials and others specifically invited. It precedes the Business Meeting of the veterans to preview topics to be presented at the Business Meeting and other matters related to the management of the SHVA. This meeting might occur on an earlier day if circumstances warrant, space is available, and all registered SHVA officials have arrived.

The time during this meeting and the subsequent Business Meeting might be an ideal time that your First Mate/partner and other guests might find time feasible for visiting local businesses/attractions.

SHVA Business Meeting (Sat. 1–3 pm)

This is a meeting for all veterans of the boat; guest attendance is optional. This meeting concerns business matters of the SHVA. It includes but is not limited to elections of members of the Board of Advisors and the selection of potential host cities for future reunions.

Professional Portraits (Sat. 4:30–5:45 pm)

Brad Lawrence, our Ship's Photographer, will be taking professional portraits of the reunion attendees. Attire should be "business casual"; you may wear your military uniform. The taking of the portraits will precede the Sat. evening Banquet. Brad will also produce a Reunion-Memory Book. The portraits will be included in the memory book along with candid shots and other noteworthy photos. He will provide you at no charge the electronic files of any pictures/graphics in the memory book for your personal use. If you do not attend the reunion but wish to purchase a memory book, you may do so. An article in the first post-reunion newsletter, a "Membership Memo," or other official document will inform you how to purchase a "2026 Reunion Memory Book."

Please make every effort to be dressed to have your portraits taken by 5:45 pm so that the subsequent Banquet can begin at its scheduled time.

Food-Related Activities

IMPORTANT:

- All group meals require pre-registration, i.e., indicated on the RRF and paid for in advance. You will NOT be able to register and pay for any group meal at the reunion.
- Your guest room reservation includes a complimentary, hot breakfast buffet for all registered guest room occupants during your stay including breakfast on Sun. morning, 25 October after the reunion.
- The price stated for our banquet buffet is the out-of-pocket cost which includes the current Sales Tax and the hotel's Service Charge: 33% total.
- If you have special dietary requirements, you must specify such in the appropriate location on the RRF (page 2). The Catering Dept. at the hotel will substitute food items suitable for the diet/dietary restrictions that you specify.
- Our contract with the hotel requires the EXCLUSION of nuts and MSG from all food served to our group.

Sat. Banquet Buffet & Auction: (Buffet: 6:30–8 pm; Auction: 8–9:30 pm)

This is our only group meal during the reunion.

<u>\$52.00 a Person</u>		
◆ Roast Beef Brisket in Au Jus	◆ Mesquite Grilled Chicken	◆ Fried Catfish & Hush Puppies
◆ Steamed Seasonal Vegetables	◆ Macaroni & Cheese	◆ Oven-Roasted Rosemary Potatoes
◆ Garden Salad	◆ Hot Rolls & Cornbread With Butter	◆ Iced Tea & Water
◆ Dessert: Monogrammed Sheet Cake		

**Attire for the banquet is “business casual” or better.
Feel free to wear your military uniform!**

The Banquet involves various activities of which the meal is one.

Our Auction follows the Banquet.

PRELIMINARY TOUR-RELATED INFORMATION

THURS., 22 OCTOBER: an “On Your Own” tour

- NO pre-registration.
- NO transportation costs.
 - The hotel will provide free shuttle transportation downtown to a drop-off/pickup location that is convenient for boarding a streetcar with a downtown route.
 - The hotel’s shuttle will operate from 10:45 am till 7:00 pm.
 - The streetcar has no fare.
- Your Reunion-Welcome Packet will have basic information about the downtown area and a brochure about the streetcar and its route.
- Contact me if you desire advance information.

FRI., 24 OCTOBER: tour coaches provide transportation

- NO COST TO YOU! AN ANONYMOUS DONOR HAS PAID ALL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH TRANSPORTATION.
- The coaches will depart at 9:15 am and return to the hotel at about 4:00 pm.
- You pay only for your lunch at a pre-selected restaurant.
- Pre-registration is required because I must make a reservation for our lunch.

IMPORTANT:

- **If a scooter is required for mobility and a chair lift is required for the tour coach, you must indicate such in the Group Tours section on p. 1 of the RRF. This information affects the number and type of coaches to be reserved.**
- **I will designate seating at the front of the coaches for those with restricted mobility.**

THURSDAY TOUR VENUES:

This is an “On Your Own” tour day. You can roam around the central downtown area that has a wide variety of shops and restaurants. The route of the free streetcar serves this area and crosses the Arkansas River to the nearby business area of North Little Rock. I’ll include in your Reunion-Welcome Packet information that will be provided by Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). If you have internet access, you can obtain such information by visiting the website of the CVB: www.littlerock.com for a wealth of information. If you do not have internet access and wish specific preliminary information, contact Howard Dobson via text at 302-545-8463 to initiate conversation. I’ll obtain what’s available related to your concern and send it to you via postal mail.

FRIDAY TOUR VENUES:

We’ll travel by grant-paid coaches to visit the venues listed below. I’ve chosen some that you should enjoy and which minimize standing and walking. I’m aware that most of us are encountering mobility issues in varying extents.

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center:

In 1957, Little Rock Central High School was the epicenter of confrontation and a catalyst for change as the fundamental test for the United States to enforce African American civil rights following Brown v. Board of Education. Learn how the sacrifice and struggle endured by the Little Rock Nine have provided opportunities and opened doors for those seeking education around the world.

Since the school is fully active, interior tours of the school no longer occur, and we will not tour the exterior of the school. Many years ago, the museum items were within the school. The museum now contains all those items. Across the street from the museum and part of it is the Magnolia/Mobil Service Station that served as a media headquarters during the 1957 desegregation crisis at the high school. Reporters used the pay phone there to call in stories to their respective newspapers.

Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum

Located at the North Little Rock Riverfront Park along the shore of the Arkansas River is home to the Razorback Museum Submarine (former SS 394) and the Hoga (former YT 146). USS Razorback was a World War II submarine that was commissioned on 03 April 1944. She is the longest serving combat, front-line submarine existing in the world today and had been commissioned by two countries for 56 years of active duty. The Razorback made her official homecoming to North Little Rock in June 2004. Since May 2005, she has been open to the public for tours and has been visited by many people throughout her years.

We’ll have our Memorial Service here with time to tour the sub and/or tugboat if desired.

ESSE Purse Museum & Store: www.essepursemuseum.com

ESSE Purse Museum tells the evolution of the 20th-century American woman through the bags she carried and their contents within a small structure. The museum has a shop that sells high-quality and highly unusual handbags, as well as handmade, eclectic jewelry and accessories.

What attracted my attention most about this museum were the displays of the contents of those purses back in the day. Most of us men on the tour will be taken back by what we see!

About a block away and across the street is a quaint ice cream shop. Time is allotted to visit it.

An Excellent Restaurant Near the Hotel

Southern Tail Brewing: www.southerntailbrewing.com

This restaurant is an excellent alternative to eating at the hotel. It has indoor and outdoor dining areas and is easily walkable for most people: 500 feet door-to-door. You will cross a 2-lane road with light traffic. Southern Tail’s craft brews are known for their rich flavors and distinctive profiles. Whether you prefer a hoppy IPA or a smooth, malty stout, the extensive menu will satisfy every beer lover's taste. It’s 2-page menu is available from it’s website by scrolling until a button labeled “Food” is displayed. Click it to display the menu. It will be included in your Reunion-Welcome Packet. If you do not have internet access and desire a copy of the menu, I can send you one by postal mail upon request.



Incidentally, the restaurant at the hotel—Presidential Pizza—has a minimal menu that is not limited to pizza. The restaurant is open from 5:00 pm–10:00 pm daily.



2026 SHVA REUNION-REGISTRATION FORM

Little Rock, Ark. 22–24 October 2026
(Thurs. morning through late Sat. evening)

(Please print legibly. Show names as you want them to appear on Reunion Name Badges.)

Member/Registrant's Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
Email: _____
Cell Phone Number(s) 1): _____ 2): _____
Years Aboard the Boat (e.g., 1969-1972): _____ Crew(s): _____
Highest Rank/Rating Aboard: _____ Assignment/Div: _____

Emergency Contact (please provide a name and phone number of a person NOT attending the reunion):

Reunion Guest 1 Name: _____
Reunion Guest 2 Name: _____
Reunion Guest 3 Name: _____
Reunion Guest 4 Name: _____

Registration Fee: \$30/person: Required for each registrant.

Number of persons being registered to participate.....Quan.: ____ X \$30/person = \$ _____

Hotel-User Assessment Fee: \$20/person: Additional fee for each registrant ONLY if that person(s) is NOT staying at the host hotel. If everyone is staying at the host hotel, no Hotel-User Assessment Fee due! (Refer to p. 3 of the RDP for information about this fee.)

Number of people being registered who are NOT staying at the host hotel.....Quan.: ____ X \$20/person = \$ _____

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE FOLLOWING GROUP ACTIVITIES IS OPTIONAL.
TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MUST SELECT AND PAY NOW FOR ALL WHO ARE BEING REGISTERED.
YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO REGISTER AND PAY FOR THESE ACTIVITIES AT THE REUNION.**

GROUP TOURS:

“On Your Own” Tour: Thurs., 22 Oct:Quan.: ____ X \$0/person = \$0

Group Tour: Fri., 23 Oct:Quan.: ____ X \$0/person = \$0

- You must pay for lunch at the restaurant on Fri.
- If you and/or your guest(s) require a coach with a chair lift, enter the number of people:

GROUP MEALS:

Banquet Buffet: Sat., 24 Oct (evening):Quan.: ____ X \$52/person = \$ _____

NOTE: If you and/or your guest(s) require a special diet (e.g., Vegan, Vegetarian, Keto, etc.), you MUST specify such in the Handicap Symbol-section on the following page.

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED (sum of the entries highlighted in yellow):

—————→ **CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE.** ←————

