



JUNE 2017

USS WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION

## **The 2017 USS West Virginia Reunion is in Branson, Missouri—September 21-23**

**HOTEL:** **Radisson Hotel Branson**, 120 South Wildwood Dr., Branson MO 65616 will host the reunion this year. We have a block of rooms available at the group rate of **\$99.95/night + tax** for single or double occupancy, September 21- 23, 2017 (Thursday – Saturday). A limited number of rooms are available the day before and the day after the reunion.

This full service hotel offers a free breakfast buffet, Bistro Restaurant, a sports bar lounge, refrigerators in every room, free Wifi, free parking, a heated indoor/outdoor pool and is conveniently located near all major attractions.

### **AGENDA**

**THURSDAY 9/21.** Pizza party reception. All are welcome!

**FRIDAY 9/22.** Private military ceremony honoring all shipmates prior to boarding the **SHOWBOAT – BRANSON BELLE**. This noontime 2.5 hour cruise on beautiful Table Top Lake features a three course lunch and musical variety show. Fully wheelchair accessible. Come and enjoy America's most entertaining dinner cruise!

**SATURDAY 9/23.** Tour the Veterans' Memorial Museum in Branson, minutes from our hotel, offering a tribute to the brave men and women who defended our liberties during the 20th century. The museum is filled with a fascinating collection of war time exhibits. The museum collection consists of 10 great halls of memorabilia covering the wars and conflicts from WWI to present day.

Saturday afternoon we will hold our traditional memorial service honoring those USS West Virginia shipmates who have passed on during the past year. This service will be followed by the social hour – open, hosted bar – prior to the evening banquet.

**HOSPITALITY ROOM:** As always, the hospitality room will be open throughout the reunion as a place to gather with your friends for snacks, beverages and socializing.

**SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION NOTE:** If you plan on flying into the Springfield Airport car rentals are available. Branson is less than an hour drive from the airport. If you have special transportation needs for getting to and from the airport please contact Stan or Marlene Neely @ 573-230-4551 or email: stan126@embarqmail.com to discuss what arrangements we can provide for you.

## Celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Midway

Celebrations are underway across the United States to commemorate the Battle of Midway which was fought June 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 1942. From History.com:

Six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States defeated Japan in one of the most decisive naval battles of World War II. Thanks in part to major advances in code breaking, the United States was able to preempt and counter Japan's planned ambush of its few remaining aircraft carriers, inflicting permanent damage on the Japanese Navy. An important turning point in the Pacific campaign, the victory allowed the United States and its allies to move into an offensive position.

This fleet engagement between U.S. and Japanese navies in the north-central Pacific Ocean resulted from Japan's desire to sink the American aircraft carriers that had escaped destruction at Pearl Harbor. Admiral Yamamoto, Japanese fleet commander, chose to invade a target relatively close to Pearl Harbor to draw out the American fleet, calculating that when the United States began its counterattack, the Japanese would be prepared to crush them. Instead, an American intelligence breakthrough—the solving of the Japanese fleet codes—enabled Pacific Fleet commander Admiral Nimitz to understand the exact Japanese plans. Nimitz placed available U.S. carriers in position to surprise the Japanese moving up for their preparatory air strikes on Midway Island itself.

American combat forces took over where intelligence efforts left off. Scouts found the Japanese early in the morning of June 4. Although initial strikes by Midway-based planes were not successful, American carrier-based planes turned the tide. Torpedo bombers became separated from the American dive-bombers and were slaughtered (36 of 42 shot down), but they diverted Japanese defenses just in time for the dive-bombers to arrive; some of them had become lost, and now by luck they found the Japanese. The Japanese carriers were caught while refueling and rearming their planes, making them especially vulnerable. The Americans sank four fleet carriers—the entire strength of the task force—*Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Soryu*, and *Hiryu*, with 322 aircraft and over five thousand sailors. The Japanese also lost the heavy cruiser *Mikuma*. American losses included 147 aircraft and more than three hundred seamen.

Analysts often point to Japanese aircraft losses at Midway as eliminating the power of the Imperial Navy's air arm, but in fact about two-thirds of air crews survived. More devastating was the loss of trained mechanics and aircraft ground crews who went down with the ships. Some historians see Midway as the turning point in the Pacific theater of the war, after which Americans rode straight to Tokyo; others view it as a cusp in the war, after which initiative hung in the balance, to swing toward the Allies in the Guadalcanal campaign. Either way, Midway ranks as a truly decisive battle.

# 2017 Reunion Activity Registration Form

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and the total amount. Send that amount payable to **USS West Virginia Association** in the form of a **check or money order** (no credit cards or phone reservations) to: USS West Virginia Association, c/o Mike Mullins, 21397 Springwell Drive, Ashburn, VA 20148. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **August 15, 2017**.

DATE	PRICE (\$/PP)	QUANTITY	TOTAL (\$)
<b>9/21/2017 Thursday</b> Welcome Aboard! Pizza Party in the Hospitality Room at 6:00PM	\$ FREE		
<b>9/22/2017 Friday</b> SHOWBOAT – BRANSON BELLE with Lunch Included Hospitality Room open on return	\$ 50.00 pp		
<b>9/23/2017 Saturday</b> Veterans' Memorial Museum in Branson Hospitality Room open on return	\$13.00 pp		
<b>9/23/2017 Saturday</b> Banquet Dinner at 6:00PM Hospitality Room open following the banquet	\$25.00 pp	Please mark dinner selections on attached sheet	
Registration	\$25.00 pp		
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For hotel reservations at the Radisson Hotel Branson , call (417) 335-5767 . The special group rate is \$99.95 per night. In order to obtain your special group rate, guests need to ask for the USS WEST VIRGINIA REUNION RATE

**ATTENDEES** (For name tags)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS ABOARD 19 \_\_\_\_ to 19 \_\_\_\_

GUEST NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_—Please list guest names on back of this page—

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME & PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**INDEMNITY CLAUSE** (Must be signed regardless of payment method)

I, the undersigned, hereby assume liability for and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless the USS West Virginia Association and the Radisson Hotel Branson, its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates, and their officers, agents, subcontractors, and employees, from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, damages, losses, including all costs, fees, and expenses incidental there to caused by or arising out of the gross negligence or willful misconduct on my behalf and which are in any way related to the services or goods contemplated by this agreement.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

