



**Announcing**  
**USS Firedrake Reunion 2017**  
**Rapid City, SD**

**Here's the Registration Form and Agenda**  
**It's now time to Register**

*Hi Firedrake Shipmate!*

*Rapid City, South Dakota is the site for your Firedrake Reunion 2017! We will be meeting at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center in Rapid City. <http://rapidcity.bwramkota.com> October 1-5, 2017.*

**Whether you are one of the many Shipmates who regularly attend our great Firedrake Reunions to renew old acquaintances, or have never attended before, NOW is the time to make the 2017 Reunion a part of your schedule and plan now to join in the fun and fellowship with your shipmates and their spouses and/or children. Just print out, fill in and mail in the attached Registration Form with your deposit.**

We will be staying at the **Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center in Rapid City.** <http://rapidcity.bwramkota.com> We have obtained at special group room rate of \$109.05 (1-4 Adults) plus tax, per night. This rate includes 2 daily private breakfast buffets with our group for each room that is reserved during the contracted dates.

**You must make your own room reservations by calling the Ramkota hotel directly, at 605-343-8550, and ask to reserve under the "USS Firedrake" to obtain our reduced group rate. It is very important that you identify yourself as part of our group.** Normal check in should be for arrival on Sunday October 1st and departure on Thursday morning October 5th for a total of 4 nights. A credit card must be used to guarantee reservations. Please call and make your reservations now.

Should you want to do more sightseeing you may have the room for a great rate of only \$82.99 per night (1-4 Adults) without breakfast for up to three days prior and/or three days after our reunion.

**The deadline for making your room reservation at our special reduced rate is midnight September 1st, 2017. That is when any uncommitted rooms in our reserved block will be released. After that date rooms will be available at our rate only subject to availability. Please call the hotel and make your reservations as soon as possible.** At the time you make your reservations the hotel will require a valid credit card but you will not be billed until you settle up your account upon departure. Cancellations must be made by September 29th or you will be charged one night room and tax.

Guest check-in time 4:00 pm and check-out time is 12:00 noon. Earlier check in will take place based on rooms being available earlier in the day. All guests arriving before 4:00pm will be accommodated as rooms become available. Bags may be stored prior to check-in or after check-out.

Rapid City Regional Airport is currently serviced by the following airlines: Continental Airlines, Delta Airlines, United Airlines and American Airlines. Connections can be made from anywhere. If you are driving the hotel has ample free parking.

## **AGENDA for 2015 USS Firedrake Reunion in San Diego, CA**

### **Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Arrival at Best Western Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center** – If you are arriving by plane our hotel, **the Ramkota, offers complimentary airport shuttle service to and from the airport.** When you arrive at the airport, **proceed to the Shuttle service desk** and let them know that you need to go to the Best Western Ramkota. The shuttle desk will call the Ramkota to see if the hotel has a driver available to pick up; if not, they will get you onto a shuttle and bring you to the hotel and the hotel will pick up the shuttle service tab.

When departing, let the Hotel Front Desk know the day prior that you will need the shuttle to the airport so they can coordinate shuttle runs.

### **Reunion Agenda**

**Our Hospitality Room with beverages and snacks will be open starting at Noon Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup> for Reunion check in and socialization.** Bring your memorabilia to the Hospitality Room to share and enjoy!

**6:30 – 8:30 PM - Hosted Welcome reception** in the **Sylvan Room** for everyone to enjoy and get together. Reception will include hors-de oeuvres with a beer and wine bar at the Ramkota, followed by more time in the hospitality room or dinner on your own if you are still hungry. Hospitality Room will be open until???

### **Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup> - Mount Rushmore National Monument, Crazy Horse Memorial, Custer State Park and Fort Hays Dinner Show**

**6:30 – 8:15** Breakfast buffet in the Sylvan Room I in the hotel

8:30 AM - Depart for a narrated Tour. Tour today includes a trip via Hill City to **Crazy Horse memorial**, an awe-inspiring carving of an entire mountain in the shape of Chief Crazy Horse on his horse. This memorial honors the living heritage of the North American Indians with the Indian Museum, Native American Education and Cultural Center, collections and more.

From Crazy Horse, we will depart for **Mount Rushmore National Memorial** via **Custer State Park**, one of the largest state parks in the country that offers a tremendous amount of wildlife including buffalo, antelope, begging burros, prairie dogs and more. From there we will go to **Mount Rushmore** to view one of our national treasures. We will have **lunch at Carver's Café at Mount Rushmore**. Enjoy an entrée, a side and a beverage from a broad menu. After lunch, we will visit the exhibits, photos or stroll down the trail at the base of Mount Rushmore carvings. We will return to the Ramkota about 4 PM.

**5:15 PM** depart the Ramkota and travel to **Fort Hays** for a chuckwagon supper and western music and comedy show. Estimated return to the Ramkota 8:30. – Hospitality Room open until???

## **Tuesday October 3<sup>rd</sup> - Ellsworth AFB South Dakota Air & Space Museum, Badlands National Park and Wall Drug**

**6:30 – 8:15** Breakfast buffet in the Sylvan Room I in the hotel.

**8:30 AM** – Depart for Ellsworth Air Force Base to tour the **South Dakota Air & Space Museum**, continue our travels to **Wall Drug**, the world's largest drug store, where you will have time to wander this unique shopping emporium filled with many fun activities and displays. Trust us this is a neat place to visit.

We will have a group lunch at Wall Drug. For lunch enjoy an entrée with soda or coffee and a dessert of a plain donut or frosted donut. Enjoy All American Favorites such as American buffalo stew, New England pot roast, fresh farm-raised trout & sumptuous herb-roasted chicken. Full-flavored soups and Teddy's bison chili, all made from the freshest ingredients, paninis made w/a delicious mix of meats, veggies, seasonings and cheese all melted together on fresh ciabatta rolls, gourmet salads and appetizing pastas and so much more.

We will then proceed to **Badlands National Park** where rains, wind and frost have carved steep canyons, sharp ridges, gullies and pinnacles providing a glimpse into the relentless pace of geological change. This is a truly amazing National Park. Estimated return to the Ramkota 3:30 PM. Hospitality Room open until 5 as we depart for dinner.

**5:15 PM** depart the Ramkota to downtown Rapid City for **Murphy's Pub and Grill** for an unforgettable dinner prepared by Chef Itterman. We will have a menu of choices to choose from that will be sent out to those who register to pre-select their choices. After dinner, we will take a short drive around downtown Rapid City to view Main Street Square, the City of Presidents, etc. Estimated return to the Ramkota 8 PM. Hospitality Room open until???

## **Wednesday October 4<sup>th</sup>**

**6:30 – 8:15** Breakfast buffet in the Sylvan Room I in the hotel.

**8:30 AM** – Travel via beautiful **Spearfish Canyon** with roadside view of Bridal Veil Falls, then continue to the town of Lead. Take a short break at **Sanford Lab Homestead Visitor Center** where you can view the exhibit hall with historic photos, videos, science and mining artifacts, and a 3-D model of the underground from the surface down to the 8,000-foot level. From the deck, view the 3,000 foot deep Open Cut.

Continue on to the Wild West that Never Stops, the city of **Deadwood** with 3 hours' free time for and included lunch, gaming and touring. We will enjoy dining at **Diamond Lil's** where you can be surrounded by Kevin Costner's movie memorabilia. . Select from a choice of: Seasoned Chicken Breast, Fantail Shrimp, Breaded Cod, or Teriyaki Pork Loin all items served with a salad, French fries, bread, dessert with coffee, iced tea or soda.

Load for return at 2:30 PM with estimated arrival back at the Ramkota 3:30 PM. Hospitality room will be open until shortly before we gather for our meeting and Reunion Banquet.

**5:00 PM** All hands Firedrake Reunion Business Meeting in the Sylvan Room II where we will plan our next reunion.

**6:00 PM** Cocktails - two hour cash bar in the Sylvan Room.

**7:00 PM –FIREDRAKE REUNION BANQUET** at the Ramkota in the Sylvan Room.

### **Thursday October 5th**

**6:30 – 8:30** Breakfast buffet in the Sylvan Room I in the hotel.

**Departure** – Hospitality room open 8-11 AM for time to say our good-byes to shipmates and friends until we meet again in 2019. Check out time is 12 noon.

This information is also available on our Web Site [www.USSFiredrake.com](http://www.USSFiredrake.com)

**If you have questions or want help to find a shipmate please contact me!**

**Dick Tracy**

**Reunion Coordinator**

**USS Firedrake AE-14**

**610-207-2016**

[USSFiredrake@gmail.com](mailto:USSFiredrake@gmail.com)