

2017 USS WASHTENAW COUNTY (LST-1166) VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION RECAP



The 2017 LST-1166 reunion has come to a close, but not without many fond memories of the event. The reunion officially kicked off in San Antonio, Texas on September 20, 2017. Veterans and their wives arrived at various times, gathering in the hotel hospitality room to get reacquainted with each other. Hosts, Mike and Kathy Shaw, were there to welcome everyone and to make sure that everyone received their tickets for the complimentary buffet breakfast.



During the four-day event, guests were free to venture out into the streets of San Antonio, which has a rich history for visitors. There were outings to the Alamo, the historical missions and cathedrals, the VFW Post, the Veterans Memorial Plaza and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as well as the many shops and restaurants along the Riverwalk. Many hopped the on and off bus to tour the sites, while others rode the water taxis or boats. Those who were up to walking found their way to these sites by foot, as the Wyndam Hotel was conveniently located to most of these attractions. There were trips to the Mercado, the Rivercenter Mall and of course, there was Texas BBQ. Several groups tried the food at Augies BBQ restaurant, which was recommended by our host, Kathy Shaw. In the evening, many gathered back at the hotel to share their sea stories and watch the Navy slide-show. The hospitality room was well-stocked with refreshments for all to enjoy.

Thursday evening was the official meet-n-greet pizza and wings party. David Vicknair welcomed the group, introducing the first time attendees: Chris and Theresa Nintzel; Jim and Polly Wolff; and Lester and Juanita Mack. He also welcomed back those who had not made a recent reunion: Harold and Darlene Durr; Butch and Patsy Jewell; and Reyes and Connie Vega. Chris Nintzel brought articles about the Washtenaw, MSS2 to share and Butch Jewell shared his pictures of the LST-1166. Greg Pierceall brought the ships logs for all to view. Later that evening Mike Shaw played a slide show of the ships pictures that have been gathered over the years.

Saturday evening was the dinner dance at the hotel. Attendees were treated to a real "western" style evening with table decorations of cowboy hats, vests, mustaches and sheriff

badges. Nick Motto took many pictures of guests posed with the decor, as well as the official group of the veterans and the wives. The silent auction kicked off with bidding on items donated by the attendees. At 7pm, the cadets presented the colors, followed by the reading of the "Missing Man Poem" by Gary Williamson.

The guest speaker, Captain Clarence Franklin, Jr., Commanding Officer, Navy Information Operations Command, Texas gave an informational talk about today's Navy. With his 30 plus years of service, he had great insight as to the past, present and future of the USN. He took questions from the audience regarding the Navy's advances in technology, training, staffing and the current conditions of our forces. The buffet dinner was next, as attendees continued to bid on their favorite items. Dessert followed with a choice of Peach cobbler ala mode or a specialty apple pie. The DJ kept the music light during the dinner hour for all to enjoy. Dancing began after dinner, while the bidding continued at the auction tables. Around 9pm the auction was closed for bidding. Members collected their prized possessions and made their donations to the treasurer, Jim Hopkins. The silent auction raised \$820, which will pay for the DJ and help offset the additional costs of the reunion. On behalf of the Association, we wish to give our many thanks for the generous donations and bids by our membership!



After the banquet ended, some gathered in the hospitality room for their final goodbyes, while others headed to their rooms to pack for their departure. While, Sunday, September 24th was the official end of the reunion, the event will linger in the memories we will take home with us! Hope to see y'all next year!

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