

2010 SOUTHWIND REUNION

BALTIMORE MARYLAND (28 Sept. 2010)

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide information, insight and recommendations regarding this and future **SOUTHWIND** reunions. It includes commentary on the events involved, lessons learned and general thoughts, perceptions and guidance for consideration by future organizers and local committees. It also concludes the obligations, duties and responsibilities of the Baltimore 2010 Reunion Committee.

MEMBER MEETING MINUTES:

USCGS SOUTHWIND ASSOCIATION MEETING 9/25/2010

Saturday morning – – Hilton Hotel (BWI) Ballroom

Election of new Southwind Association officers and other business matters.

Welcome and introductions by Ed Clancy (chairman)

Committee reports:

- *Ship's store* (Ed Clancy) – will continue to have items on our website. Checking into new items.
- *Treasurer's report* (Jake Rowell) – money in account for the reunion. We should have some left after bills are paid.
- *Website* (Jim Tidwell) – current plan is best price for our needs. Site is large enough to handle our current needs. Had 24,569 hits in the last 3 years. Southwind280.com So far only 3 of our members don't have/use computers; information sent to them by mail.

- *Membership* (Jim Tidwell) – paid memberships continue to increase. '08 – 65 '09 – 73 '10 – 97
- *Reunion* (Bob Yuhas) – Thanked members of the committee. File and report of lessons learned will be on website. Shirts: Have two (2) shirts available @ \$40/ea (incl. shipping) (1) Men–XXL–Bright Red & (1) Woman–LG–Bright Red. Contact Bob @ r.yuhas@MYACTV.NET for info.

Reunion guests: Marco Volante – WWII member

Flag Officers: (Association Members) RADM. Knapp , RADM. Peschel

New Business: Top choices for next reunion site (*These were selected by show of hands from several cities nominated. Local participation is a question.*)

San Antonio Seattle Jacksonville *Cruise* – could be easy planning

(Later it was suggested to have the next reunion in Baltimore, at the same hotel, again due to the ease of rail/air transportation and the local light rail to Baltimore Inner City.)

Will vote for location via our website. Watch for email regarding this.

Anyone interested in a trip to New Zealand next year, contact Bob Yuhas at r.yuhas@myactv.net Let him know the time of year you might be available. If there is enough interest, he will take further action.

Association officers

Ed Clancy – Chairman and ship's store (will continue)

Jake Rowell – Treasurer (will continue)

Jim Tidwell – Webmaster (will continue with assistance from his son Scott)

Dues will be January – December of each year. Keep dues current.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/COMMENTS

GUEST SPEAKER: (Rick Gupman)

1) Biggest risk factor is military transfers and geography. With a two year lead time, you have to figure there is about a 50% chance that any military member is going to get transferred, so you need a back up plan. If the speaker is selected because of their assignment (e.g., Chief of Ice Ops or CO of a breaker), you just have to ask them to pass the request along to their relief. If they are selected because of their personal background, you are probably going to have to identify an alternate yourself.

2) Minor issue was getting an ethics clearance regarding acceptance of the free meals, etc., with CG Legal. It wasn't a problem, but did require some lead time and preparatory action for the speaker to avoid any confusion at the banquet.

3) The availability/use of audio visual aids is always going to be a potential problem. In this case, the speaker had no interest in using them until a couple of weeks before the event when a particularly interesting briefing package became available. Hard copy printouts worked just fine, but the situation might have been different with a different speaker.

4) If you have a married couple, it is always good to confirm both their first and last names. I am finding more and more often that women are not changing theirs for professional continuity reasons.

5) I provided the speaker with the link to the website and I think she was subsequently included on at least some of the "All Attendees" e-mails. This was a big help answering many of the questions I might otherwise have had to field. It would have probably been a good idea to have specifically provided a list of all the retired Flag Officers and the former Southwind COs, but she did a pretty good job picking that up from the program and addressees on the e-mails. We probably should have said "Trops or Service Dress is appropriate attire" up front, but the photos on the website of the previous banquet took care of that. There is always the risk that someone is going to equate "banquet" with Dinner Dress/Black Tie, I supposed.

That is about it and I had to stretch to come up with those as it really all went pretty smoothly for me. That does not mean I would volunteer to do it again especially with the challenge of long distance arrangements. Seattle, with the icebreaker support center there, should be doable for someone. But I think it is really going to be hard to come up with a relevant speaker or topic in either of the other two potential locations.

REUNION FINANCES (Jake Rowell)

Cost of all events, including the YARD Lunch, Cruise, and Hotel charges (including refreshments for the hospitality room) was \$13,918. We collected \$13,703 from registrations and \$285 from the “honor bar” in the hospitality room. The “Association” made a profit of approximately \$70 for the Reunion. (Overall, the association is in good shape with enough to pay for the website and a little extra.)

Jake Rowell

HOSPITALITY: (Earl & Anita Herweck)

Three things:

1. Hotel putting refrigerated case in hospitality room for beverages was greatly appreciated. Made it easier to keep a large quantity of beverages cold, and eliminated constant restocking. (positive)
2. Hotel needed to have the hospitality room vacuumed daily. (small negative)
3. Suggestions of what to have in hospitality room at next reunion; would be helpful since some items barely touched this year. (planning)

All in all, things could not have been better. The various committees did an excellent job. The reunion and activities went smoothly and it seems that there were only minor, easily taken care of glitches. The hotel really came through for our group and going there again could be a good idea as transportation to and from the location is excellent. Only one minor thing is the cost of eating at the hotel; it is a little expensive for some of our members. FANTASTIC JOB BY ALL !!!!!

Earl and Anita Herweck

HOTEL AND HOTEL EVENTS (Karen Yuhas)

1. After initial committee meeting in early March 2009 I contacted several hotels in the BWI area, toured and met with sales managers to receive proposals. Gave the committee short proposals on sites recommended, the Hilton Baltimore BWI which had

the lowest cost for rooms; large lobby area; large ballrooms and hospitality suite available.

2. In negotiating the contract I asked for the following to be complimentary: Hospitality Suite/Room for Welcome Reception/Room for Assoc. Meeting/Ballroom for Banquet/Ballroom for Farewell Breakfast. The hotel agreed to all complimentary rooms saving the cost of \$500.00 per day Hospitality charges/\$1,500.00 per event ballroom charges/\$1,000.00 charge for Welcome Reception.
3. For our room block I requested 55 rooms for the main days of the reunion and 5 rooms for day prior to reunion. The hotel worked with me to add more rooms prior to the reunion as many attendees arrived 1-2 days early. The rate of \$119.00 per night was lower than other hotels in the same area, the regular rate for the rooms in our block normally are \$199.00 per night. A total of 175 nights were reserved in our block, we used 162 nights.
4. After the committee decision to book the Hilton Baltimore BWI I signed the contract on April 1st, 2010 insuring prime space for the reunion. Another benefit of early signing was that pets were permitted at the time of signing this changed before arrival allowing several attendees to be able to have pets in their rooms.
5. Menus were provided based on the base amount I requested to this were added a 22% service charge and 6% sales tax. Note that in the contact, there may be an increase of a certain percentage (our contract was 3%) to be added in case of vendor increases to the hotel. There also was a minimum amount of food & beverage amounts in the contract (\$7,200.00 was guaranteed to the hotel whether we had that number of attendees) and does not include service charges or taxes. For future reunions when negotiating with the hotel our base costs on events were \$14.00 Welcome Reception/\$9.00 Assoc. Meeting/\$45.00 Banquet/\$12.00 Farwell Breakfast.
6. Hospitality Suite was complimentary with the restriction that we purchase all beverages at cost from the hotel and that only snack items (i.e. chips, etc) could be served. The contract listed NO hot food or cooking in the room.
7. Welcome Reception was well attended-food quantity was not a problem-everyone likes that it was hot food. Since this is a mix and mingle event, it could change to dessert and coffee event. Or in the case of returning to Baltimore and the Hilton, a Pig Roast/Barbeque/Crab Feast is possible.
8. The Assoc. Meeting with breakfast paid by the association went well again food was plentiful. There was a microphone this year which incurred an AV charge that is covered later.
9. Banquet was held in the Ballroom with 10 tables of 10; raised podium and microphone which allowed all tables to see and hear. Again there was an AV charge. Keep in mind there is a long script for this event which has the serving staff rushing during certain times then waited extended period for speakers. The Hilton staff did an excellent job of staying on point with lights and serving the toast to the departed.
10. Farewell Breakfast had slightly more than half those paying for the event attending. This is one event that might be considered dropping. Many attendees need to leave early to catch planes and in the case of this location trains. A better choice might be to have the hotel hold an area in the restaurant for those wishing to eat and say good-by.

11. AV charges will be incurred for any and all audio visual items needed during the reunion. I was able to negotiate the \$135.00 microphone charge per event to cover both the assoc. meeting and the banquet thereby only paying \$135.00 plus the 22% service charge and 6% sales tax for a total of approx. \$175.00. Be aware that power point could cost upwards of \$400.00 + service charge and tax for each use. We were able to bring our own TV and DVD player for the hospitality suite saving many \$\$\$\$.

When you contact and negotiate with the hotels don't be afraid to ask for complimentary room use; lowest possible room rates; more items on menus; colors of table clothes and napkins; cash bars with complimentary bartenders and cashiers because if you don't ask you won't receive the most for the association.

When looking for hotels try to select one that has free shuttle to/from airports, etc. Also free parking. It would be helpful to have a hotel that includes breakfast; however, most hotels that can handle large events are hotels that do not include free breakfast. Room rate blocks will tend to be lower in hotels that expect to gain income from meals eaten in their restaurants.

There were many small items to handle during the reunion and the hotel was wonderful to work with always happy that I was early and checking each contract and banquet event order for accuracy. By not opening events before the contract time and ensuring that we finished by contract time the hotel staff gave us additional items.

If there are any questions or area I may be of help with contact me @ 301-824-7629

KAREN YUHAS

GENERAL COMMITTEE COMMENTS (Bob Yuhas)

1. Attached as separate files are: Banquet Agendas, Bio's for RADM KNAPP, Capt. DOLBER, Capt. GETMAN, Marco Volante, Silver Star Award for GM Jerry Goff, history of Southwind etc.
2. Registration Forms are important. Attached as a separate file is the one used for the Baltimore Reunion. The Organizing committee and the Treasurer need to know in advance who is coming to what event, and need to have money in hand to pay down-payments. The forms are also used to make the registration and check-in process simple.
3. Registration Folders: Provide information for all scheduled events and hours of operation of a "Hospitality Room" if provided. Make sure to include name tags (provided this time by Earl and Anita) and a "treat" (provided this time by Kathleen Grant).
4. Local transportation: Is always a question. Steve and Linda did a SUPER job of organizing things this year – to the extent that the transportation folders they provided are now being used by the Hotel! They even ran the routes for the YARD tour and Inner Harbor Cruise to determine travel times to assure events went as scheduled.

They also investigated the availability of Light Rail transportation to the Inner Harbor and provided information, along with parking costs at the Inner Harbor for those who elected to use private transportation. They also organized “ride sharing” for transportation to the Yard and the Inner Harbor. We were lucky that the hotel was able to provide (free) van transport to the Light Rail (approx. 2 miles) to facilitate transportation to downtown Baltimore. The hotel also provided (free) transport to and from the airport and AMTRACK, and to local restaurants.

5. Local cash expense account is needed to cover the misc. costs involved. Simple things like envelopes, name tags, printing and stocking the hospitality room add up quickly.
6. Hotel liaison is of primary importance. Visit the hotel and develop a working relationship. We got a lot of extra “stuff” this time, including a complementary room for the hospitality room, a stand-up drink cooler in the hospitality room, meeting room to fill the registration packages, etc. This saved expenses for the Reunion.
7. The CG Yard lunch and tour, and the Inner Harbor lunch cruise were simply a matter of making a few phone calls and setting menus.
8. Next Reunion: Several members have expressed a desire to have a more “informal” agenda for the next Reunion. The Hotel we used this time was very happy with us, and offered to provide a “Pig Roast/ Bar-B-Q”, or even a “crab-feast” in the picnic area if we want to come back. I’m a “traditionalist” and would like to include one “formal” event, with an active duty CG, but that’s up to the Association Membership, and should be voted.

ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN (Ed Clancy)

This year’s reunion’s events ran like clockwork. The hotel accommodations were excellent, all scheduled functions held there were flawless, and everyone had a great time. Although Betty and I did not go on either the Baltimore Harbor cruise or the USCG Yard tour, everyone I spoke to about the two activities indicated what an outstanding time they had. All in all, the 2010 Baltimore Reunion Planning Committee took responsibility for a thankless task; expertly planned for all activities, including possible contingencies; and completed their mission in a commendable manner. Thank you and well done to each of you for all your efforts and hard work.

What worked, what needs to change:

Continuously proof-read printed Plan of the Day and Banquet Agenda brochures prior to handing out (I missed the Farewell Breakfast that I had listed from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.)

Discuss whether we want a formal or informal get together during the next and future reunions

Discuss using Guest Speakers for future reunions

Before I give my opinion on Baltimore or any other city as the selection of the next reunion city I would like to see the minutes of last Saturday's meeting that Earl Herweck wrote down. Weren't there more choices indicated besides Jacksonville, Seattle, and San Antonio?

I don't think Jacksonville would be a good choice for two reasons. First, Jacksonville (and for that matter any city in Florida) is not a good choice for a reunion location because the time of the year we have our reunion (September / October) coincides with Florida's hurricane season (June through December every year). After living here for seven years I can attest to the fact that no one knows what the weather has in store for the entire state. Most of the time it is beautiful weather in Florida, but are we willing to gamble everything on the roll of dice that a hurricane won't strike during our reunion two years from now? Second, I can't do the reunion by myself. No one else lives even remotely close to me, I'm still working, and although I plan to stop working this coming January I have no idea what the economy has in store for our country. Too many unknowns, not enough help, and I can't and won't ramrod the forthcoming reunion by myself.

I agree with the idea that we should look into an informal - vice formal - setting for future reunions, and if so I think we should consider possibly doing away with guest speakers from outside the Southwind crews circle. I would have much rather preferred our guest speaker had been Captain Dolber, Admiral Knapp, or any member from any of Southwind's crews who served on board from 1966 through 1974 and knows what he is talking about. I can relate to them; I cannot relate to someone from the new Coast Guard who has no clue about how we lived, how we worked, how we played, and the hardships, joys, and terror we experienced as a crew many years ago. If we decide to continue with the guest speaker concept I think the key factor in selecting the individual should relate to our mission statement posted on the USCGC Southwind Association Members' webpage: **"To remember the USCGC Southwind (WAGB-280), and our fellow shipmates and shared experiences from nearly a half a century ago."** I think this says it all.

I recommend we post the USCGC Southwind 9/25/10 Meeting Minutes for all to see, and using the information gathered from the minutes, develop a list of several cities for a potential reunion location, send the list to all members (not just those who attended the recent reunion), and ask if they are located near one of the potential cities and if they would be willing to assist in some manner. I also recommend we develop a comprehensive questionnaire to send to all members in an attempt to not only increase attendance at future reunions, but also to increase our membership, especially from the crews that served after the initial crew served. We have the talent, the time, and the drive to develop something worthwhile to use as a tool to not only select the best city for the next reunion, but also increase membership.

Ed

WEBMASTER'S AFTER ACTION REPORT (Jim Tidwell)

From the standpoint of the Southwind webmaster, everything went well with the exception of a single point of confusion and uncertainty. All reunion related information was sent to everyone in a timely manner (normally within one (1) hour) once the information was received. As room reservation updates were received from the hotel, the names were added to the reunion events file and also highlighted in red on the "Shipmates" page on our Southwind website. The reunion events file contained the names of everyone who had reserved a room and paid for their events. When the events and menus were finalized with the hotel and cruise line, this information was added to the "Reunion News" page on our website and an "All Hands" email was sent to everyone. All emails sent and received were saved in various folders in the event of any future discrepancy. The only situation that caused any confusion occurred as the events payment deadline approached in the last few weeks prior to the reunion. The registration form used by everyone to indicate which events they were attending is a good form and should be kept. However it didn't go far enough and this was the cause of the confusion. As the deadline approached, there were many shipmates who had reserved their room and had paid for some but not all of the events. The committee didn't know if this was an oversight or the individual did not plan to attend the unpaid events. This prompted many emails and phone calls in an effort to determine if the shipmate had simply forgot to pay for the event(s) or did not plan to attend them. The committee didn't want anyone left out of an event(s) because they had forgotten to pay for it. To avoid this confusion at future reunions, the registration should be amended to include a means for each attendee to indicate whether or not they plan to attend all reunion events. This will be completed prior to the next reunion. This will eliminate the need for the last minute emails and phone calls.

(Whenever the local committee has something that needs to be sent to "All Hands", they can forward the information to the SOUTHWIND website e-mail address and I will send it.)

Jim Tidwell

MC (Bob Getman)

I think the reunion was terrific--seamless from check in to departure.

-Only complaint I heard was the party next door during the banquet. Those sitting near the bulkhead had trouble hearing.

-Airport hotel was an excellent idea. Occupancy is usually low on weekends which made it very comfortable for us. Since a lot of folks will be flying next time. It eliminates the cost of car rentals.

-Wives, like Karen and Linda had very significant roles and next reunion planning group should do likewise.

- At a major event for homeless veterans that I once ran, I wore a name tag that just said 'FLEXIBILITY'. That was Major factor in the success of this Reunion. You planners stayed flexible. Steve and Linda's transportation arrangements were good examples of the need to stay flexible

AGENDAS (Larry Grant)

I did a rewrite of the Association Saturday morning meeting agenda.

I used the agenda from the first meeting. Larry Odom and Ed Clancy did a superb job, so there was very little that needed to be changed. Just a few updates.

So, the lesson learned is to again reuse the agenda from the second reunion and update it for the next reunion. One thing that I would suggest to be added would be a short section/reminder on the remaining reunion activities after the Association meeting.