

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

2018 Reunion Update

Mark your calendars. The next, and best ever, USS Soley Reunion will be held 1-5 November 2018, in historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia – just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.

Our host hotel will be the Sheridan Suites-Old Town Alexandria. It's an all-suite hotel. Each 2-room suite has a separate sleeping area with either a king bed or 2 double beds, and a 32" TV. The living area has a wet-bar, microwave, small refrigerator, coffee maker, 32"TV, and a sofa-bed.

Our group room rate per night will be \$159 & change. I know that's more than we are used to paying, but as I mentioned at our last business meeting, lodging in the DC area is more expensive than other areas where we have held reunions. With that in mind, the Reunion Committee has decided to help defray the cost of your stay by refunding \$25 of your room cost for each night of your stay. So, for example, if you book a room for 5 nights you will be refunded a total of \$125. I am working with the hotel to determine the best way to make this happen. The money will come from the Association Treasury which has ample funds to help out.

The group room rate includes a complimentary breakfast buffet for each guest each morning and complimentary garage parking (normally \$20 a day). There is free wi-fi throughout the hotel, and free shuttle service to and from Ronald Reagan National Airport, (which is only 2 miles from the hotel). The complimentary hotel shuttle is also available to take guests to the nearest metro station 6 blocks away. The group rate is good up to 3 days before and after the reunion

We will be within walking distance of Old Town's historic waterfront, restaurants, entertainment, and shopping on King Street. It's about a 6-block walk or you can take the hotel shuttle which runs every afternoon and evening. There is also a free King Street trolley. A Harris Teeter grocery store is right across the street from the hotel as well as numerous small eateries.

Old Town is full of history. It was a bustling sea port in the 1700's and 1800's. George Washington and other founders were frequent visitors and some even had townhomes there. Mount Vernon is just a few miles to the south. Old Town's colonial architecture has been preserved and cobblestone streets remain. There are numerous historic buildings and museums to visit on your own. There are also many, many restaurants to choose from. It's a fun place just to walk around, including the waterfront area.

I am working with a tour company that is owned by a retired US Naval Officer and specializes in providing tours for military groups. All of the tour guides are veterans and love working with groups like ours. I'm working on finalizing some great tours. Here is a brief description of what tours we might be taking. Final details will follow after the tour company and I discuss pricing and sign a contract.

Tour #1: A short motor coach ride into downtown DC to visit the Vietnam Memorial, the Korean Memorial, The Lincoln Memorial, the WWII Memorial, and a tour of the US Capitol.

Tour #2: A tour of Arlington National Cemetery, including the Kennedy gravesites, and the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. We will lunch at the Ft. Myer Officers Club (adjacent to the cemetery) and a tour of the Horse and Caisson Unit located on Ft. Myer. This is the famous Army Old Guard Unit that you see in all the official ceremonies and military funerals. We will get up close and personal with the horses and learn their history and how they are trained. Our guides will be several of the soldiers responsible for the training and care of the horses. I used to work at Ft. Myer in a civilian capacity as a Human Resources Specialist with the Dept. of Army. The Old Guard was one of my serviced activities so I had the opportunity to visit the Horse and Caisson Unit as part of my every day activities. It's a special group and is quite impressive.

Tour #3: A motor coach trip the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. (a 1-hour trip). We will take a guided tour of the Academy, have lunch at the Officers Club, and hold our memorial service at one of the Academy chapels.

Registration letters will be e-mailed or snail-mailed, depending on your preference, next Spring. As we discussed in the business meeting at the last reunion, this might be our last reunion, so you don't want to miss it. Remember, family members and friends are welcome, so spread the word!