

2012 Reunion Report

The first reunion of the 1/83rd Artillery was held in Savannah, GA at the Savannah Hilton DeSoto Hotel, from October 7th thru 10th. The attendees included thirty-five Veterans of the 1/83rd, family members and friends.

The attendees represented people from 20 states. I believe it shows that the members of the 1/83rd are willing to travel. It was the largest group of 1/83rd Veterans ever assembled since Vietnam. I believe we can grow that number for future gatherings.

For a list of the all the attendees, see the 83rd website at...

http://home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/Reunions/2012_Reunion/Reunion_2012_Attendees_Final.htm

The Reunion agenda was:

Date	Start Time	End Time	Description
Sunday 10/07/12	Noon	10:00 p.m.	Hospitality Suite
	7:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.	Meet and Greet (with lite refreshments) (Open to all)
Monday 10/08/12	8:00 a.m.	10:00 p.m.	Hospitality Suite
	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Roundtable Meeting (Open to all)
	10:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break (with Bagels and Danish)
	10:30 a.m.	Noon	Roundtable Meeting cont.
	Noon	1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break (on your own)
	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	Roundtable Meeting cont.
	2:00 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	Coffee Break
	2:30 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	Roundtable Meeting cont.
Tuesday 10/09/12	8:00 a.m.	10:00 p.m.	Hospitality Suite
	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Open Topic Meeting (Open to all)
	10:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break (with Bagels and Danish)
	10:30 a.m.	Noon	Recruiting/Finding New Members Meeting (Open to all)
	Noon	1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break (on your own)
	1:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Future Reunion Meeting (Open to all)
	3:00 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	Open
	5:30 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	Cocktails (Cash Bar)
	6:00 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	Dinner - Opening Ceremonies
	6:30 p.m.	9:00 p.m.	Dinner
Wednesday 10/10/12	8:00 a.m.	Noon	Hospitality Suite

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The agenda was very informal, none of the meetings were mandatory but they were all very well attended. Guests were invited to attend all meetings. Time was available for reconnecting and meeting all those that attended. Open time was also available for exploring Savannah.

Registration and the distribution of welcome information packets were available on Sunday between 1–4 p.m. Sunday evening was the official Meet and Greet. Beverages and lite refreshments were available. The evening was relaxing with good conversation and companionship and gave everyone their first chance to get acquainted or in some cases re-acquainted.

Monday was set aside for a roundtable discussion for those interested in participating. At this gathering, we had the opportunity for everyone who wanted to, to talk about their experiences before, during and after Vietnam. It was also a chance to tell the group about special memories that they had about their time in Vietnam. This meeting was very positive and the family members who attended said that they found it very enlightening, interesting and helpful.

There were coffee breaks with refreshments available at the morning breaks on Monday and Tuesday and a beverage break Monday afternoon.

Tuesday morning we had a meeting to discuss ways in which everyone can help to find more of our 1/83rd men. I mentioned that our email list currently stands at 228 but there are many more we have yet to find. All were asked to try tracking down at least one former member of the Battalion.

Tuesday afternoon we met to discuss future reunions. The welcome packet contained a questionnaire that was to be returned by Tuesday morning's meeting with individual thoughts and suggestions. We then discussed the results of the questionnaire Tuesday afternoon. I explained to everyone the costs involved in this reunion and things to be aware of as we go forward. We also discussed how often to meet and where to meet next. I have since sent out a reunion survey to the entire email group to give everyone a chance to vote on these same two questions with a response date of November 1. The results are as follows:

The majority suggested that every other year would be good to meet. During the discussion it was decided that visiting Washington DC as a group should be our goal for 2016. DC and surrounding areas are expensive and it was thought going in 2016 would allow everyone time to prepare. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Viet Nam Education Center in DC will take place this Veterans Day with a completion goal for the end of 2014. Visiting the Wall and the Education Center would be a rewarding trip0

We received suggestions for 35 different locations the following are the top vote getters:

Branson, MO in 2014 with 24 votes, Washington, DC in 2016 with 18 votes. Everyone agreed that the early fall was the best time to get together. We can revisit these questions as time goes on but for now, Branson will be the location of our next reunion in 2014. We have several attendees that have offered to do research on Branson and get back to me.

The following are the other locations (with vote count) that we can decide on as we go forward:

Lawton/Ft.Sill, 11, San Antonio 9, Philadelphia, Las Vegas, San Francisco each with 5 votes, Williamsburg, New Orleans, San Diego each with 4 votes. The remaining suggested cities had only one or two votes: Kansas City, Milwaukee, Boston, Denver, Memphis, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Nashville, Savannah, Jacksonville, Boulder, Charleston, Charlotte, Gettysburg, Springfield IL, Vicksburg MS, Seattle, Maui, Long Island, Phoenix, Albuquerque, St.Louis, and lastly Vietnam.

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Tuesday evening started with cocktails at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m. Dinner was a Southern style buffet with a variety of meal choices and everyone seemed to enjoy it. A cash bar was available for the entire event.

Tables were set for 10 people and the conversations were lively with many stories, big and small, being told. We had many good laughs. Pictures were taken and have been added to the website.

The “*Missing Man Table & Honors Ceremony*” was conducted to honor and remember those of the 1/83rd who never made it home from Vietnam. We read the names of those men. The ceremony also was to remember those of our Battalion who have passed away since Vietnam.

We were very fortunate to have Major General (Ret.) Nick Perkins as our guest speaker. General Perkins, a former Artillery officer, updated us on the modern day Army and Artillery. He also graciously thanked all of us not only for our Vietnam service but also for our service to our country. His speech was enjoyed by all.

The Hospitality room was available until noon on Wednesday, but most attendees were checking out and heading home on Wednesday.

I believe that one of the things holding some of you back from attending a reunion is that you think that if your old buddies will not be there, you will not enjoy yourself, etc. I think that this reunion proved that this isn't the case. We all served with the 1/83rd at some time or another and we have that as common ground.

We had guys from all Batteries and all different years that the 1/83rd was in Vietnam. I spoke to everyone and all told me what a nice time they had. It was amazing to see how easily everyone of our group just fell into conversation.

I hope after reading this you will take some time and seriously consider attending our next reunion. It was a worthwhile, rewarding, therapeutic and enjoyable trip.

Thank you.