



# After Action Report of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Convention

## **Executive Summary:**

The Washington DC Chapter hosted a historic 73<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Association in Arlington, Virginia at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel on August 7-10<sup>th</sup> 2019. The Convention focus was honoring the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the two largest WWII combat jumps by the Division into Normandy and Holland. This convention honored the sacrifice of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division WWII paratroopers on August 7<sup>th</sup> by hosting a National Park Service approved “82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Remembrance Ceremony” at the National World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. The Commanding General of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was the guest speaker along with the presentations of several wreaths (\$1,125.00 in wreaths) representing WWII units of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, and performances by the Division Brass Quintet and Airborne chorus (sound system and generator was set-up and operated by *OHM Productions* for \$3,000.00 and *Allied Party Rentals* provided 300 folding chairs for \$812.50).

In Arlington National Cemetery that same afternoon, with permission applied for and granted for the presentation of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the CG Mingus and Association President Rezabek. A subsequent wreath was placed at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Marker in Section 7A near the Memorial Amphitheater.

On August 8<sup>th</sup> at the Stafford Regional Airport the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division would jump into convention. While the troopers were flying up to Virginia the association members traveled an hour south on 5 *DC Trails and Transportation* buses with police motorcade escort through 3 jurisdictions with 19 Motor Officers assisting from the Virginia State Police, Arlington County Police and Prince William County Police. The law enforcement escort request was made for our large group of busses and the safety of Association members and the public. Association members present and paratroopers jumping in were greeted by the USO, Veteran Fishing Adventures, Mission BBQ lunch (3,765.39 actual cost for 350 lunches), Honor Brewing Company, WWII Swing Dancers and Association Sales set-up on the drop zone (4 porta johns were rented and delivered as invoiced for \$500.00).

August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> would be two days for self-guided tours in our Nation’s capital and banquet dinners hosted at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel. A *DC Trails and Transportation* bus (\$1,000.00 per day) was used as a circulating bus dropping members off at a predetermined drop-off and pick-up locations around the National Mall. The final evening banquet - our guest speaker was the Honorable Dick Cheney. The former Vice President and former Secretary of Defense agreed to be our guest speaker for the Airborne Banquet at no cost to the Association and confirmed his attendance several months before our August convention.

On August 9<sup>th</sup> the Memorial Dinner was held at a cost of \$40 per meal for 400 guests, plus A/V equipment bars, etc. On August 10<sup>th</sup> the Association Banquet was held at a cost of \$40 per meal for 400 guests, plus A/V equipment bars, etc. We are attaching the Hotel invoice for the breakdown of all charges, but the total cost for the meals was \$32,326.75. Recommendation for future Conventions is to insure we have a sample of the meals that we will be served in order to check the quality and quantity of the meals provided.

## **Early Planning items:**

In September of 2018, early in the convention planning the DC Chapter decided that defining art work was needed in representing the historic nature of this convention. The DC Chapter agreed to the

commissioned art design by purchasing a modified art package contract for \$478.00 as invoiced through *Squadron Posters LLC*. *Squadron Art Posters LLC* legally agreed on our Association's limited usage for the Association's *Paraglide* online magazine, convention advertisement material, and the 73<sup>rd</sup> Convention cover art work front cover presentation for the 2019 convention booklet. In addition, this art work was printed in canvas poster format and were purchased in 16x20 and 20x30 formats and used auction items and giveaways (Airborne Banquet speaker, the Honorable Dick Cheney) and others during and after the 2019 convention. The 2019 Convention art work was unveiled below in the pre-convention meeting at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel in March of 2019:



**Convention Coins, Patches, Pins and T-shirts:**

In 1990, art work representing DC national monuments was designed by WWII Veteran and Washington DC Chapter Member Trooper Dick Owens and was depicted on the 1990 cover art for the 44<sup>th</sup> convention booklet. Dick's art work was modified and used for the 2019 convention coins (300), lapel pins (1,000), patches (100), and T-shirts (110) as invoiced:



**Early Planning Items as a Chapter:**

The WDC Chapter accepted this role as host of the 73<sup>rd</sup> convention by chapter vote at a regular chapter meeting in the late summer of 2018. During that meeting it was decided that the Chapter Leadership would be installed as the Convention Committee leadership and items that would be proposed for

convention would be brought forward for a chapter vote. The convention schedule was advised and agreed on by the National Leadership in coordination with the Division (parachute jump).

Long time chapter member and current chapter Treasurer Ken Younger took on a key role as becoming the 2019 Convention Treasurer and Convention registration manager. Secretary Steven Daugherty and Chairman Michael Lonetto assumed roles for planning of significant events that included; the WWII Remembrance Ceremony, Arlington National Cemetery, HMX-1 WWII/wounded warrior visit, Stafford Regional Airport Drop Zone and Hospitality Suite management.

The Chapter decided to host convention registration through the newly designed Washington DC chapter website managed and designed by Kimberly Holmes. Later the chapter would vote to contract with Kimberly Holmes to manage the construction and layout of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual convention booklet. Chapter funds were used to contract and purchase 500 booklets for 1,952.25 as invoiced by PIP Printing. A record number of adds were sold for the 73<sup>rd</sup> convention booklet as indicated by Kimberly Holmes.

The 2019 Convention booklet had historic letters from our National leadership, such as the U.S. Vice President, Michael R. Pence; The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph F. Dunford and many pages of honor and remembrance.

The first convention registration via the chapter website was on 09/21/2018.

#### **Transportation:**

With bus transportation needed for the August convention, the DC Chapter made initial plans on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 with Manager Mr. Philip Oliver at *DC Tours and Transportation* located in Maryland for the initial work up and estimate of bus transportation needed for convention. By midsummer email communication stopped, it was later learned that Mr. Oliver quit the *DC Tours* company and there was no record of our communications or previous request for bus services.

We quickly contacted and moved our transportation request to *DC Trails Tours and Charters*, a veteran owned bus company located in Virginia as USMC Veteran and owner Mr. Bill Torres would give us great service and charge us 50% less the normal cost because of our veteran organization status. The total 4 days of bus transportation for convention was less than \$6,500.00 as invoiced. Tips for bus operators/drivers are traditionally \$100.00 for a full day of driving, and \$50.00 per half day of driving.

Bus transportation was a major expense during the 2019 convention.

In addition, the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel provide shuttle transportation to-and-from the Washington Regan National Airport. Some Association members also used the shuttle service to transport their groups to local establishments for a small tip or donation to the shuttle driver.

#### **The Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel:**

The 2019 Convention host hotel agreed on a \$119.00 rate for King or Queen room per night with a \$5.00 dollar a day parking fee for any member parking a vehicle in the hotel garage. The total number of membership rooms averaged 210 per night. The active duty component room reservation numbers at the Sheraton remained low even when the hotel dropped 25 rooms to an active duty rate of \$79.00 per night a few weeks before the start of the convention. The total number of active rooms reserved were 30.

The number of complimentary rooms provided by the Sheraton hotel 5 contractual, and 5 per night as per 1 complimentary room night per 40 room nights registered (as per contract).

The hotel provided all requested hospitality suites for the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR (15<sup>th</sup> floor, Pentagon 1 & 2), the Active Duty Division Artillery. All hospitality suites were located on the 15 and 16<sup>th</sup> floors. The hospitality rooms were stocked every night with soda, beer and water and snacks. Honor Brewing Company hosted kegged beer and serviced members in the Association hospitality suite for 5 nights and served 23 ½ kegs of beer and provided the cups. Honor provided 500 convention cozies along with hats and T-shirts with their logo on the front and the 2019 convention logo on the back of the shirt.

Number of meals at the Memorial Dinner 400 and cost per meal \$40.

Number of meals at the Airborne Heritage Dinner 400 and cost per meal \$40.

In addition, the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR and General Via All ABN Signal Chapter had banquet dinners at the hotel on the evening of August 7, 2019. Approximately 140 dinners for the 504<sup>th</sup> banquet and 40 dinners for the Signal Chapter dinner were served. The Sheraton Hotel applied these two dinners to the overall “food and beverage minimum” calculations as contracted by the association.

The Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel management and staff were friendly and helpful from the beginning to the conclusion of the 2019 convention. The hotel let our association place a WWII jeep in the lobby foyer, along with assisting in hanging a huge 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division flag patch and T-10 parachute in the hotel lobby. Later during convention, a 75mm pack howitzer was added to the registration foyer area.

The Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel provided all the Association requested space/rooms for Convention Registration (hotel grand foyer), Association Sales (cavalier room), storage (1<sup>st</sup> floor office), meeting and dining locations (various).

#### **In Conclusion:**

The Washington DC Chapter did not formally bid on hosting convention, but was asked to host this convention as the Association requested and “needed a historic location for the 73<sup>rd</sup> convention”. The planning of the internal convention hotel items to include regimental meeting venues and banquet services was directly managed by the Association National leadership, Executive Director William Bauer.

Early in convention planning, both National and the Washington DC chapter agreed to split the costs of hosting as many WWII association veterans wanted to attend the 2019 convention - free of charge to them. That cost would be shared equally between National and the DC Chapter. National and the DC Chapter also agreed to split National Sales and chapter sales to be split 50/50%. Our intent to host the 2019 Convention was to make it historic, knowing that we may only break even or even lose money in this endeavor.

The Washington DC Chapter made a \$1,000 joint donation from the proceeds of convention to the Association’s Educational fund. In the end, the DC Chapter and the Association were still able to have a 50/50 split of \$6,200, for a total of \$3,100 each entity.

We had 12 WWII Association veterans attend the 2019 convention and most of them said they enjoyed themselves. Former 82D Airborne Association President Mel Green said it was “the best convention he has even attended in his 47 years of attending conventions.” - Airborne All The Way!





indicated in the convention SOP in Article XI, page 21, a convention After-Action Report is to be submitted by the Host Chapter with in 120v days.