

**USS MULLINIX DD944 ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT'S**

“STATE OF THE REUNION REPORT”

REUNION 2012

SAN ANTONIO, TX

Remember the Alamo! The 36 shipmates and their 37 family members and friends who attended our 2012 annual reunion from 11 to 15 April sure will! And not only the Alamo, but the River Walk, Texas hill country, blooming blue bonnets and sea stories as well. The weather was good, the food was great and the camaraderie priceless!

Wednesday noon we started setting up the Hospitality Room and had things in full swing by 1500 when the Registration desk "officially" opened. Many thanks to the early arrivals who pitched in (as they always do...good shipmates) and helped open boxes, sort and fold shirts and get everything set up including the ship's store. A special "thank-you" to Mike and Mary Simmons for making the "wine run" as they picked up our "spirits" for the ice breaker Wine and Cheese Social that evening. Thanks also to our host hotel, the Holiday Inn Airport for providing the complimentary Cheese and Cracker tray as a way of saying "Thanks for coming to our hotel...Welcome!"

Thursday morning 43 of us boarded the motor coach and left the hotel at 0900 headed to the Texas hill country for a fun filled day. Along the way we took turns amusing each other on the "1MC" with facts and anecdotes while also enjoying the scenery. We made a quick stop at the visitors center so the driver could pick up a narrative CD and then commenced our windshield tour of the LBJ Ranch along the Pedernales River half way between Johnson City and Fredericksburg, TX where our 36th president, Lyndon Baines Johnson was born, lived, died, and was buried. We made several stops along the tour for "Kodak moments" and also took a tour of his "Texas White House". Did you know that LBJ flew home to his Texas ranch 74 times during his 5 years in office, living and working for 490 days (about 1/4 of his presidency) at the Texas White House? I guess he didn't care much for Washington, DC either! He also had 3 TVs set side by side so he could simultaneously watch the news on all 3 major networks just to keep his finger on the Nation's pulse.

Around noon we hopped back on the motor coach for the short trip on to Fredericksburg, TX for lunch and an afternoon visiting the National Museum of the Pacific War. Fredericksburg is the birth place and hometown of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and the museum actually began as the Nimitz Museum in the old Nimitz Family Hotel at the other end of the block. Also situated along both sides of Main St in the same block as the Nimitz Museum are several wonderful restaurants featuring primarily German cuisine and "Bier Gartens". Many of us "set the unrep detail" and prepared to take on stores! This old squid found a plate of German potatoes with 4 German sausages much to his liking before continuing with an afternoon strolling through the museum. Others found quaint shops, boutiques and antiques more to their taste after lunch. There is a good variety along Main St and easy to find something for everyone! Along about

1530 we all boarded the coach and napped our way back to San Antone. Thursday evening was dedicated to hanging out in the hospitality room, greeting the Thursday arrivals, finishing off last night's wine and making plans for Friday.

Friday began like Thursday, boarding the coach to leave at 0900, but today 43 of us headed to downtown San Antonio for a city "overview"! Our first stop was at *Mission Conception*, one of a chain of 5 Spanish missions built along the San Antonio River in the early 1700's. It is the one of the five that has been preserved rather than restored or destroyed (the chapel still has an active congregation) and provided a good feel for what the Alamo was like before the battle for which it is remembered. Stop #2 was at the Alamo for a self paced, self guided tour and then at our leisure, a 2 block stroll to the *Buckhorn Museum* that also houses the *Texas Rangers Museum* and the *Buckhorn Saloon*. Lunch!!! Mid-afternoon we walked half a block from the museum to a flight of steps down to the famous San Antonio *River Walk* where we enjoyed a narrated 45 minute cruise in a couple of charter boats. After the boat ride we took a quick 2 block stroll ("forced march"?) along the *River Walk* to another flight of stairs back up to street level at *La Villita* village to catch our motor coach back to the hotel for some vitamins before dinner.

Friday evening featured a theme meal, our *Fiesta Friday Night* with an *Across the Border Buffet* followed by the always popular Friday Night Auction. Once again, our "Dynamic Duo" of Mike Tomes and Deb Kik, our Awesome Auctioneers , plied the crowd and got us all to "reach deep" to the tune of \$860! Many thanks to all those who donated all the wonderful auction items as well as those who bid so generously! The money raised more than paid for the Saturday Shuttle.

Saturday began with the annual Association Business Meeting at 0830 with 31 members present and was short and sweet. The only real piece of business conducted was approval to send a donation of \$250 to assist with the relocation of the former USS Edson DD946 to Bay City, MI for display as a museum ship. Formal announcement was also made that the Executive Board had chosen Columbus, Georgia as the site for Reunion 2014. Following the business meeting, several folks took advantage of our chartered shuttle bus that made hourly round trips from 1000-1700 to explore downtown San Antonio. At least one foursome hit the links, others went shopping and some just hung out and enjoyed leisure time at the hotel. Many dressed early for dinner and cycled through the annual photo shoot before/during happy hour. Our annual banquet with a *Sunset Buffet* started at 1900 and what a buffet it was! All of the food this year was delicious, well presented and more than plentiful. And the wait staff was outstanding. We truly were treated extra special all weekend long! After dinner, raffle winners were chosen and the 3 "Early Bird" Free Hotel Room Nights were awarded to Dale Schultz, Garth Pochocki and Tony Durrett. A few minutes later, Tony and Joyce Durrett also won the 50/50 Raffle and very kindly donated \$100 of their winnings back to the Association. Many thanks to those who bought all the losing tickets!

Sunday morning was low key as many had early flights out, a few had items to pack up (memorabilia and ship's store) and a few of us hung around for another day and started making plans for some fun things to do together. Hugs were exchanged, promises to keep in touch were made and the #1 comment overheard was, "see you next year in Washington, DC"!

Your president,
Bob Houghton