

# 2011 Reunion Recap and 2012 Reunion News

- by *Diana Nemetz*

Our San Diego Reunion was hosted at the Crowne Plaza on Hotel Circle. The location was perfect with easy access to all the popular venues and yet away from the congestion of downtown. The staff made the entire event a smooth and comfortable experience for our attendees.

A minor medical emergency came up for one of our guests and the hotel ensured that his wife was transported to and from the hospital via the hotel shuttle at no expense. The staff was caring and compassionate and should be recognized for that service.

The Board and a handful of early arrivals took an excursion to the Gaslamp Quarter for dinner at Chianti's. Chianti's accommodated our group of twenty people easily, even allowing for separate checks - most of the restaurants did not offer 'off the menu' ordering for groups of our size. The food was sublime; one guest remarked that her veal was the most delicious she had had outside of Italy. Our server was a lovely gal from Russia who did not write down anyone's order, yet delivered all the meals perfectly to the correct people.

Early arrivals to the reunion took advantage of the NAS Coronado Trolley tour prior to the Welcome Reception.

The reunion officially opened with our Welcome Reception where MHS was given a complete Rosie-the-Riveter toolbox, donated by Patrick & Freda McMillin. Freda's uncle was a Marauder man who was lost in WWII in one of the worst missions for B-26 Marauders. Many young lives were sacrificed that day. A sampling of letters between mothers wondering about their son's fate are included elsewhere in the newsletter.

That toolbox has been passed along to the Yankee Air Museum where it will be on display in the permanent Rosie-the-Riveter exhibit for the public to see and enjoy. Yankee Air Museum has pledged to share B-26 specific artifacts they receive with us in return.

Our second day opened with an amazing presentation on the Battle of Midway by our own VP, Marshall Magruder. In his in-depth study of this battle, Marshall concluded that the actions of our four B-26 Marauders that day caused Admiral Yamamoto to make the fateful decisions that cost the Japanese the battle. Other interesting discoveries included proof that not a single B-17 bomb that day hit its target, and that the Japanese turned starboard for evasive actions to avoid the high-level Allied bombings.

Appropriately, we went from Marshall's presentation to the USS Midway itself where we spent a marvelous day touring the ship and watching the sailboats from the America Cup trials slicing through the waters of the bay. During our departure from the USS Midway, local artists

were setting up an exhibit of unusual sculptures, crafted from sea-wrack and flotsam, providing local culture while we awaited our shuttles.

Later, we were enjoying a relaxed dinner at the Crowne Plaza and were entertained by a local Barbershop Quartet before retiring to our rooms or camaraderie in the Hospitality Suite.

On Friday an excursion to Sea World commenced for most of our attendees while the others took advantage of the plethora of museums, parks and shops available to them. The Hospitality Suite was a popular place for our guests to gather with videos of Marauder interviews done in Dearborn and from the 2009 New Orleans reunion to entertain them along with artifact exhibits to view.

Saturday's closing banquet was a hit with a superb presentation from Les Tenney, a Baatan Death March survivor. His account of those experiences brought both a tear to the eye and a smile to the lip as he brought the past to life.

Our Hospitality Suite was spacious, often filled with laughter and comfortable conversation as we gathered before or after reunion activities.

The San Diego's reunions success can be attributed to the excellent site negotiating by our Executive Director, Phil Gutt, and the priceless local knowledge and support of the Reunion Chair, Capt. John Wells of the 22<sup>nd</sup> BG / 18<sup>th</sup> Recon / 408<sup>th</sup> SQ. Thanks to them both for bringing another Reunion to a successful conclusion.

Historic Savannah, Georgia will be the host city for our 2012 Reunion. Steeped in history reaching back to the 1700's the city's genteel charm is guaranteed to delight. From Antebellum homes to Civil War Forts, the architecture of Savannah is rich and varied. Savannah is Georgia's first city nestled in Georgia's low country, the stunning landscape of waterways and ancient oaks draped in Spanish moss will provide a relaxing backdrop for our gathering.

The Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum will be one of our tours, with excursions to the open-air City Market, a Civil War Museum and sampling of the delicious Southern cuisine Savannah is known for are being planned. Savannah is a "Green City", giving our attendees the added advantage of free transportation in downtown and the Historic District areas.

Watch your mailbox for the reunion promo and registration form coming soon! Hope to see you in Savannah!



# Snapshots of the San Diego Reunion



Flight Deck of the USS Midway.



MHS Directors, Brian Gibbons and Phil Blair



Carolyn Guertin, next to artwork from the Washed Ashore Collection.



Dick & Betty Dennison and Don Knudson



Patrick McMillin presents MHS with the Rosie Toolbox



Warren Willard's 'Harmony Partners Quartet'



*Above:* Elaine Waidelich of the Rosie Association with the Rosie Toolbox and detailed view of the tool box.



*Above:* Retired UAF Col Joe Craver welcomes us to San Diego at our Welcome Reception



John Ringo



*Left:* VP Marshall Magruder, remembering his service on the USS Midway. *Middle:* John Wells, Reunion Chair *Right:* Les Temey, Baatan Death March survivor and Director Don Blair with his wife, Irene.