

Silver Spur Reunion 2022  
24-28 May, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
After Action Report

The Holiday Inn Airport Hotel hosted our reunion in Colorado Springs, our second since we resumed reunions after the COVID nonsense and since we decided to meet every year. We were well along in planning with another hotel when it was suddenly sold and most of its staff were fired. This substitute hotel tried hard, but its service was not ideal. Kitchen problems kept the bar and restaurant closed except for breakfast. Most of the problems stemmed from new and inexperienced staff, and there were rarely enough workers for a particular job. All were pleasant and tried their best, but they were doing double duty and were harried. The hotel management shared that they are experiencing hiring problems, like almost all businesses. Thankfully, we had arranged a portable bar for our two in-house events.

We enjoyed a private hospitality room the entire time. There were no mask restrictions anywhere we went.

Most arrivals came into town Wednesday, 25 May. About 40 attendees were expected, but only 17 appeared, and not all could stay for everything. At least one couple contracted COVID just before arrival and had to cancel. No former commanders were able to attend, for various important reasons.

Our first gathering, a welcome reception, occurred Wednesday evening and gave all arrivals a chance to renew friendships and make new ones. On Thursday morning, Chuck Oualline conducted a Memorial Ceremony for our fallen and missing comrades. A Missing Man Table was set up, and Chuck first gave an explanation of the meaning of all items on the table. Bill McCalister led all in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Chuck read the names and dates of passing, if known, of the five men we have lost since the last reunion, or of whose passing we were not aware during the last reunion. Joe Galloway's passing on 18 August 2021 was also mentioned. Joe was a good friend of A Troop and spoke at several of our reunions. Next came the actual Memorial Ceremony, when the names of our KIAs were read during a DVD presentation, professionally produced by John Pepper. Our fallen include one whose remains may have been returned from Cambodia, but who has not been identified (Gregory Antunano). We included the four KIAs suffered by the present-day Silver Spurs during a tour in Iraq. The ceremony concluded with the playing of Taps with the troop at Present Arms.

Thursday evening, we rode by bus to the Flying W Ranch, a sort of dude ranch/amusement park. It features a huge indoor dining area and lots of interesting activities for children and adults. We enjoyed a barbecue dinner, and afterwards a musical show by a live western band.

Friday featured the highlight activity: a trip up to the summit of Pike's Peak on a cog train, and back. A bus took us to and from the train station. Many had not done this in years and some never had. Some of us found the altitude a little more taxing than

when we were younger, but it was very enjoyable. We even saw marmots living at that altitude.

Bill McCalister conducted our business meeting on Saturday morning, quite informally, with most discussion about where and how often to schedule future reunions. San Antonio and Branson were mentioned, and we all agreed we should continue annual reunions. Location decisions will be made later. Because of sparse attendance we did not hold any elections. Clayton Marsh, although traveling abroad and not present, has volunteered to continue the task of forwarding mass e-mails to our members. John Pepper remains our president. Vice President Tom Hennessy continues in that office and did not protest too much. Roger "Bear" Young remains our volunteer Webmaster, of course, since he could not be present this year to defend himself. Roger's website is invaluable in attracting troopers to our reunions, and in keeping track of losses and keeping all of us informed. Bill McCalister has agreed to remain the Reunion Chairman and Chuck Oualline agreed to assist him. Bill is also our Treasurer.

We met again on Saturday evening for cocktails at the hotel. The Missing Man Table again greeted Spurs as they entered. Bill McCalister welcomed all and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. Chuck Oualline again gave an explanation of the Missing Man Table, and we toasted our fallen and missing. Then dinner was served.

Bill McCalister should be commended for all his very hard work as the Reunion Committee Chairman, while also acting as the unit's Treasurer and paying the bills. Planning was especially difficult this year because of the late change in hotels. Roger Young, our Webmaster, spends countless hours on his outstanding website to update all the reunion information and to keep us informed, and we appreciate him.

Most of us departed on Sunday, 29 May. We had renewed old friendships and forged some new ones. I said this in previous after action reports: It is sad to think that all of us might not be around for the next reunion in 2023. I pray it is not so. But reality and age tell me that it is likely. Each time we meet could be our last. So, don't blow off the next reunion. Don't put off attendance until the one after that. Be there. For each other. And for loads of fun, just like old times.

Chuck Oualline  
2022/2023 Assistant Reunion Chairman