

## FUTURE SILVER SPUR REUNIONS

Our attendance has been going down the last few years, understandably. We are not getting younger, and some are leaving the troop. This has caused your Reunion Committee to do some research and make some decisions.

The first decision is to have reunions every year instead of every two years. This gives all of us more chances to attend.

Our main problem is that we cannot negotiate good deals without larger attendance, which continues to trend downward. This also impacts the choice of cities in which to have reunions. As you know, we have met in various cities. Different cities obviously offer different deals and different activities.

We think we have found a good solution. We have negotiated with the leadership of another Vietnam unit, which has successful reunions every September in Branson, Missouri. Their numbers have also decreased, but not as drastically as ours. Last week they had 105 at their final event, which included wives, girlfriends, and other family members. Chuck Oualline has attended the 119th Aviation Company reunions for years and attests to their good intentions, good people, and fun events. They have willingly agreed to include us in their reunions, and they welcome the additional numbers. They have contracts for annual September reunions in the Radisson Hotel through 2025, and the deals they make are remarkable. For example, the room rate for last month's reunion was \$105 per night, which included all taxes and two morning breakfasts. Reservations may be obtained for days prior to and after the reunion. The 119th will continue to run things and we will simply use their registration form and attend. We likely will have one separate meeting and conduct our memorial service with Waldo's outstanding video.

Here is what they do: The hospitality room is open each morning (with coffee) at 0800 until 2200 or later each night. We may bring our own food and drink but there is no need. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons and evenings, a bar is in the room, offering free beer, wine, and soft drinks. Only mixed drinks must be purchased (except Thursday night) and prices are still reasonable. The final banquet is on Thursday night, when ALL drinks are free.

There is a ladies' luncheon on Wednesday morning.

Registration and food fees are as reasonable as ours. The 119<sup>th</sup> finances all this with a raffle after the banquet, with 50-60 raffles prizes. Most are donated items. The grand prize every year is a Huey tail rotor, and the runner-up prize is a tail rotor chain bracelet. We don't know where they obtain these, but they do. Chuck has won something every year, with 50 or less \$1 tickets. They also sell challenge coins, unit shirts, patches, pins, and other items, and have willing volunteers to do all this. The 119<sup>th</sup> is very healthy financially.

We have met in Branson many times, and our members are familiar with the city and its many attractions. The 119<sup>th</sup> does not schedule any unit excursions to shows, but instead allows attendees to schedule and attend shows on their own. We likewise are familiar with the Radisson and its veteran-friendly staff. Since the pandemic, the hotel has remodeled, is fully staffed, and has greatly improved its services and its food.

Therefore, our next reunion will be with the 119<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company in the Branson Radisson Hotel on 12, 13, & 14 September 2023. Registration and reservation information will be provided as the time approaches.

We hope all of you will understand, embrace this solution, and attend future reunions. We know you will like our 119<sup>th</sup> comrades. Something had to be done in order to avoid very costly reunions. Of course, you can always replace your Reunion Committee.

Bill McCalister  
Chuck Oualline  
Silver Spur Reunion Committee