** **

**EOCR CLASS 22 HOTEL 60**

**50 YEAR REUNION**

**AFTER ACTION REVIEW**

**Event Reviewed:** Tours and Activities

**Reviewed By:** Jeff Ellis

**Date:** 19 October 2019

**Give A Summary of Your Area of Consideration:**

With the venue for the reunion decided, it was natural to start thinking of ways to assist our attendees to enjoy the unique sites of our Nation’s Capital City. There were long discussions about the events to be included in our time together; even the length of the reunion itself. (Appendix #1)

The planning team considered whether to hold the reunion on or about the dates of our graduation. (Appendix #2) It was ultimately decided that it would be better to delay the reunion until after peak summer vacation times and the hot weather typical of summer in D.C. (Appendices # 3 and #4) It was then determined that the reunion should be essentially a three-day affair; a day for arrival, one for sight-seeing, and one for events to commemorate our OCS and military experience. (Appendix #5

Given those parameters, we considered those sites in D.C. that were the most popular for visitors but also related to our military experience. We initially identified potential targets as Ft. Belvoir, the White House, the Pentagon, the Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), the Vietnam War Memorial, and the new US National Army Museum. We acknowledged that attendees might also want to visit various museums and other sites in and around D.C. We then factored in our desire to keep costs reasonable in light of transportation needs associated with touring.

It was ultimately determined that the Army Museum would not be open in time for our reunion (Appendices #6 and #7). We felt that Ft. Belvoir really didn’t offer much to tour because all the old OCS regimental area had been demolished. That left the White House, the Pentagon, the Capitol, the VN War Memorial, and ANC as options to offer for the one day touring would be available, and we needed to organize our related reunion activities around those options. Determining a schedule for the entire reunion time together was dictated by the desire to have a culminating banquet at the end of our last day together. That served as our starting point. We then prioritized a desire to hold a special wreath-laying ceremony to honor those from our class who are now deceased. The Vietnam War Memorial area and the Tomb of the Unknowns at ANC were both considered desirable.

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Ultimately, it was decided that the VN War Memorial area was the more appropriate venue for a ceremony to honor our deceased class members and that ANC would be left for individual sight-seeing since it required no special coordination other than transportation on our part. The White House, Capitol, and Pentagon tours were another matter. (Appendix #8) Each required special planning and coordination due to security requirements and availability. From experience, we knew that Members of Congress could and did assist with special tours. Hence, Sen. Jerry Moran’s (R-KS) office was contacted to help us coordinate available tours because personal contacts already existed there. That office, with particular help from Jeanette Featherall of the Senator’s staff, guided us through the process to obtaining White House tour passes and offered other members of the Senator’s staff to provide personal tours through the Capitol. Ms. Featherall also directed us to the Pentagon Public Tour website so that we could directly arrange those tours which she could not control. (Appendix #9)

We had initiated contact with the Senator’s office nearly a year and a half in advance of the reunion and gathered information on the personal data needed for background checks that would be required to gain admittance to the White House and the Pentagon (Appendices #10 and #11 respectively). No background checks were required for the Capitol tour. (Appendix #12) We learned that White House and Pentagon tours could be requested 90 days in advance of the desired date, so we set our timeline (Appendix #13) to assure we had the required personal information for those requesting a tour was ready to submit on the first date available to request a tour. We wanted to assure we could secure the desired date and time for the tour.

Our reunion itinerary was then taking form: arrival on Thursday, tour day Friday, special class events Saturday, departure Sunday. Thus, we had only one day for which we could request tours, Friday, October 4. We had learned from Ms. Featherall that White House tours could only be offered in the morning but that Capitol tours were available in both the morning and the afternoon. Pentagon tours were available Friday from noon to 1600 hrs at two-hour intervals. The timing of the tours was therefore limited and attendee preferences would need to be solicited.

We constructed a survey (Appendix #14 ) indicating the time constraints for each tour and asked attendees to state their preferences, if any, for tours to attend, noting that the Pentagon tour would need to be relegated to an afternoon time slot to allow people to participate in both White House and Pentagon tours on the one date available. The Capitol tour could be offered as an option to either since it could be made available in either the morning or afternoon.

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From the survey results (Appendix #15)), we provided to attendees a listing of the necessary personal information required to obtain the security clearance for the White House and the Pentagon respectively. We sent the data requirements to those indicating a desire for those particular tours so that the information could be gathered and prepared for submission at the earliest date for the requested tours. (Appendix #16)

Ms. Featherall submitted our request for the number of White House tour slots we required on the first date possible 90 days in advance of the October 4 date desired. The White House then sent a notice to us requesting the required personal information that needed to be submitted within 10 days of that notice. We had notified those wanting the White House tour that they had to submit the required information timely, and each attendee sent their information in individually they could maintain security of their personal information. The necessary Pentagon information, however, had to be submitted on the Pentagon tour request website as a group. (Appendix #17) Consequently, that information had to be sent to me and I, in turn, collated the information and entered it on the webpage. The Capitol tours required only a listing of those interested and personal identification to gain admittance. (Appendices #18 and #19)

The long wait then began as we awaited news that everyone had been granted clearance for their requested tour. Ultimately, all desiring the Pentagon tour were granted clearances about two weeks before the tour (Appendix #20 ) and all those desiring the White House tour were granted clearances about a week before the tour (Appendix #21).

The task then began to arrange transportation for each tour group. Group size dictated a large bus for both the White House and the Pentagon tours while Uber or taxis were adequate for the Capitol tour groups. There was a major coordination issue regarding transportation following the large White House tour as the first in the morning. Some from that tour were scheduled to return to the hotel following the tour. Others were to go to the Capitol or the Pentagon for afternoon tours. The OIC of transportation was able to efficiently arrange for the large bus to return some White House tourists to the hotel while those scheduled for an afternoon Pentagon tour stayed in the city for lunch and were later picked up by the large bus with other Pentagon tourists leaving from the hotel already on board to head to the Pentagon. Those headed to the afternoon Capitol tour obtained Uber or taxi rides independently. (Appendices #22, #23, and #24)

Attendees were also provided maps and 2019 Visitors Guides by the Arlington, VA Convention and Visitors Bureau. That allowed them to take independent advantage of periods of free time if they had not opted to take any of the planned tours. Additionally, it was decided to not

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plan any tour activity for Saturday afternoon after the ceremonies at the VN War Memorial and before the culminating banquet in the belief that attendees would want to either pursue sight-seeing on their own or prepare for the evening’s events.

**What Went Well – What Were the Successes?**

All tours were successfully completed and all who desired a planned tour were able to participate.

Many took advantage of touring on their own enjoying the many sites D.C. offers.

The complicated transportation requirements needed to support the tours worked flawlessly (but for the first bus in the morning destined for the White House leaving without the OIC of Transportation on board due to the wrong-headed initiative of one or our classmates). Several transportation audibles were successfully called during the day to assist everyone to get to the place they needed to be on time.

The tours were meaningful, and everyone seemed to enjoy the planned activities.

**What Could Be Improved and How ?**

The Pentagon tour was conducted by Pentagon personnel in a very structured manner pursuant to a prescribed script. Unfortunately, the tour did not include a viewing of the portion of the Pentagon displaying Army memorabilia focusing instead on the other branches of service even though our tour group was identified as an Army-related reunion group. One wonders if the Army wing could have been prioritized had we known in advance more about how the tour would be conducted.

**Lessons Learned:**

Remain flexible and agile in the execution of a carefully thought out plan. Things change.

Plan well in advance and nurture contacts with those from whom we are asking for services.

Senior citizens don’t always follow the planned itinerary and often go their own way.

**Recommendations:**

I believe it would have been desirable to have been able to identify the itinerary for the entire reunion time together at an earlier stage of the planning process so that we could have more clearly articulated the planned reunion activities as we began promoting the reunion to our classmates. I felt that might have improved our attendance because potential attendees would have had a better idea of how the reunion would be conducted and the opportunities it would offer.

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A few attendees cancelled their own choices of tours or transportation and didn’t go on a tour and/or didn’t use the scheduled transportation. This created a “Missing in Action” issue because they didn’t notify anyone. All email traffic and the opening Overview session should stress communicating any deviations in itineraries. That also entails contacting the Tours OIC or the designated Emergency Contact.

**A P P E N D I C E S**

1. [SITREP #2 - Tours - 13 Jan 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/sitrep_2_-_tours.docx)
2. [Initial Activities Survey - 7 May 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/activities_survey_-_revised_-_7_may_19.docx)
3. [Final Survey For Reunion](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/email_-_final_survey_for_reunion.docx)
4. [Reunion Survey Responses - Excel](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/ocs_22_hotel_69_responses_for_reunion_-_final.xlsx)
5. [Email Announcing Date And Location](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/e_mail_-_announcing_date_and_location.docx)
6. [Tour Request - National Museum Of The United States Army](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/army_museum_tour_-_21_may_18.docx)
7. [Tour Request Denied - National Museum Of The United States Army](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/tour_request_denied_-_national_museum_of_the_united_states_army.docx)
8. [Email - Tours - Jeff Ellis - 5 Aug 18](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/tours_-_jeff_ellis.docx)
9. [Tours - SEN Jerry Moran's Office - 4 Apr 18](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/sen_jerry_morans_office_-_tours.docx)
10. [Tour Requirements - SEN Jerry Moran's Office](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/tour_requiremens_-_sen_morans_office.docx)
11. [Email For Security Information - 14 Jun 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/email_for_security_information_-_14_jun_19.docx)
12. [Capitol Tour Information - 15 Aug 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/capitol_tour_information_-_15_aug_19.docx)
13. ​[Reunion Time Line](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/reunion_timeline.xlsx)
14. [Initial Activities Survey - 7 May 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/activities_survey_-_revised_-_7_may_19.docx)
15. [Activities Survey Responses For Transportation - Excel](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/activities_survey_responses_for_transportation_-_with_cancellations.xlsx)
16. [Email For Security Information - 14 Jun 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/email_for_security_information_-_14_jun_19.docx)
17. [Pentagon Tour - Security Information - Privacy - Excel](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/pentagon_tour_security_responses_-_privacy.xlsx)
18. [Capitol Tour Information - 15 Aug 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/capitol_tour_information_-_15_aug_19.docx)
19. [Capitol Tour Attendees With City And State](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/capitol_tour_attendees_with_city_and_state.xlsx)
20. [White House Approved Guest List](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/white_house_tour_list.png)
21. [Pentagon Tour Approved List](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/pentagon_tour_-_approved_list.jpg)
22. [Friday (4 Oct 19) Itinerary](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/friday_itinerary_-_4_october_2019.docx)
23. [Transportation By Location - Page 1](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/transportation_by_location_-_page_1.jpg)
24. [Transportation By Location - Page 2](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/transportation_by_location_-_page_2.jpg)
25. [Transportation Matrix For 4 Oct 19 - Excel](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/transportation_matrix_for_4_oct_19.xlsx)