** **

**EOCR CLASS 22 HOTEL 69**

**50 YEAR REUNION**

**AFTER ACTION REVIEW**

**Event Reviewed:** Wreath Laying

**Reviewed By:** Kit Kitson

**Date:** 18 October 2019

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

One of the takeaways from our 45th reunion and to be part of our 50th reunion would be **a** wreath laying ceremony. (Appendices #1 and #2) This would allow OCS graduates to continue honoring our deceased bothers in arms. Initially two wreath ceremonies were under consideration**,** one on Friday evening October 4th at the Three Servicemen Memorial on the National Mall. The other to be held on Saturday October 5th at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. (Appendix #3 ) In fact our class applied for and was granted a confirmed time slot on the morning of October 5th. It was later decided to have one wreath laying at the Three Servicemen Memorial, but on Saturday October 5th**.**  Due to several factors; time restraints, logistics and restrictions it was decided not to have the second wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**.**

**Honor Guard:**

The planning team agreed to include an Honor Guard to provide a formal wreath laying ceremony presentation. This formal ceremony would be observed not only by reunion attendees but also by visitors at the National Mall area. The request for Honor Guard volunteers was fulfilled (a contingent of six) within 24 hours. The Honor Guard uniform for wreath laying was: White military polo shirt with U.S. Army Crest / Veteran logo, black beret with honor guard pin and rank insignia, black or navy dress trousers and black shoes. The polo shirt, beret, honor guard pin and rank insignia wereprovided at no costs to the volunteers. As a precaution for below normal weather temperatures white long sleeved tee shirts would be worn under the polo shirt. (Appendix #4) - A detailed update to Honor Guard procedures was emailed on September 24 2019.(Appendix (#5)

**Procurement of the Wreath:**

In January 2019 Jim Wilson contacted Palace Florists in Rockville, MD. to initiate the procurement of the wreath. His discussion concentrated on the design, verbiage, custom banner, costs and delivery. (Appendix #6). An updated information sheet was sent to the team on 26 June 2019 (Appendix #7) Due to the passing of several classmates, the insert placed in the wreath had to be updated numerous times. (Appendix #8) The final update was submitted to Palace Florists a week prior to the actual ceremony. The florists laminated the insert from the copy submitted to them. (Appendix #8)

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On September 26, 2019 a final revision was completed and delivery was made at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Appendix #9) Kiosk on October 5, 2019.

**Bell Tolling:**

The sounding of the bell tolling after the reading of the names would be included in the wreath laying ceremony. (Appendix #10 ) The bell tolling was played from an app on a Samsung Galaxy S10.

**Permit 19-1451 / Area 5:**

“Obstacle in the Path” email from Jim Wilson August 13, 2019 stated the NPS (National Park Service) required a public gathering permit (Appendix #11) to conduct a wreath laying ceremony. The four page application was submitted and eventually approved. Public Gathering Permit 19-1451(Appendix #12)was issued September 11, 2019 along with five pages of conditions and a map of Area 5. (Appendix 13). The ceremony could not take place at the Three Servicemen Statue area. It had to take place in a designated area identified as Area 5 so not to distract other park visitors. The permit allotted 20 minutes (starting at 10:00 am and ending at 10:20 am) to conduct the wreath ceremony in Area 5. Upon reviewing the map of Area 5, the placement of the wreath after the ceremony would be at the Apex of the Wall. This location was closer than the Three Servicemen Statue area. The change of location added two more restrictions: (1) only five individuals could escort the wreath to the Wall and (2) no staging of group photographs along the Wall.

**Arrival at National Mall:**

Honor Guard /Wreath Bearers travelled from the Sheraton Hotel via chartered bus along with all other reunion attendees. They arrived at the appropriate time to retrieve the wreath at the designated Vietnam Veteran Memorial Kiosk. Without the assistance /directions from NSP ranger (nor was a NSP ranger in sight) two wreath bearers and the entire reunion group proceeded to navigate an unmarked path to Area 5. This unmarked path was several hundred yards from our drop off point. The site selected in Area 5 to conduct the wreath ceremony was east of the Viet Nam Wall.

**Wreath Ceremony/Honor Guard Procedures:**

Upon gathering in Area 5 a moment of silent was observed followedby the Honor Guard, readings of a poem, (Appendix #14 )the names of our deceased brothers in arms, and ending with the sound of the bell tolling. After staging several group photographs with the Hotel banner, the

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Honor Guard proceeded to escort the wreath to be placed at the Apex of the Wall.

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

The emotions experienced by all observing the wreath ceremony, the reading of the names and the placement of the wreath at the Apex.

The presence of the Honor Guard

The design and details of the wreath to include the inserted names of our deceased

**What Could be Improved and How – Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

**Lessons Learned**

Advance preparation by navigating / surveying Area 5

Locate and utilize NSP ranger

Confirm ceremony documents are updated and correct

**Recommendations**

Visit the event venue in advance to get the lay of land

Arrive sufficient time in advance prior to the event to address any unforeseen issues

Utilize venue personnel for guidance and assistance

Verify documents/information to be presented at the venue are current

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

1. [Email - Honoring Our Deceased - 12 Nov 18](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/honoring_our_deceased_-_12_nov_18.docx)
2. [Email - Honoring Our Deceased - RPO - 15 Nov 18](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/honoring_our_deceased_-_rpo_-_15_nov_18.docx)
3. [Information Sheet - Wreath Laying - Arlington and Viet Nam Memorial](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/information_sheet_-_wreath_layings_-_both_sites.docx)
4. [Photo - Honor Guard And Wreath For Deceased - 5 Oct 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/honor_guard_and_wreath_for_deceased_-_5_oct_19.jpg)
5. [Updated Honor Guard Details - 24 Sep 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/updated_honor_guard_details_-_24_sep_19.docx)
6. [Information Sheet - Wreath Laying - Arlington and Viet Nam Memorial](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/information_sheet_-_wreath_layings_-_both_sites.docx)
7. [Information - 26 Jun 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/information_-_26_jun_19.docx)
8. [Wreath Insert - Black Font](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/wreath_insert_-_black.docx)

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1. [Wreath - Final Invoice From Palace Florists](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/final_invoice_-_palace_florists.png)
2. [Conference Calls - Minutes - 9 Jul 19](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/minutes_-_9_jul_19.docx)
3. [Wreath Laying - Public Gathering Permit Document](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/nps_public_gathering_permit.docx)
4. [Approved Permit W19-1451 For Area 5](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/permit_w19-1451_for_area_5_-_page_2.pdf)
5. [Map of Area 5](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/map_of_area_5_-_wreath_laying.png)
6. [Reading At Wreath Laying Ceremony](http://www.engineers1969hotel22class.org/uploads/5/6/7/4/56741349/poem_for_deceased_-_class_website.docx)