

SMOKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER FIRST ANNUAL FALL FROLIC

By Kelly Bowling

The Smoky Mountain Chapter of the NCVA held its first Fall Frolic in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee on Friday and Saturday, 8 and 9 October. The event was graciously hosted by Amelia Reguera Sweeney (aka the Singing Lieutenant). Headquarters for the Frolic was the James Manor Hotel and the Saturday evening casual dining was at Tony Roma's. The event was a rousing success with lots of camaraderie, sea stories, and renewing old acquaintances. Also, several prizes and awards were handed out. The Chapter's earlier gatherings had previously been Spring Flings, but because the NCVA annual gathering was switched from Fall to Spring, it became necessary to change the schedule from Spring Fling to Fall Frolic. This was done without missing a beat!

Sixty two folks attended the event and ten states were represented. The great state of North Carolina was well represented by sixteen attendees. Ron and Joann McMillan came all the way from Trout Lake, Michigan to enjoy the festivities. The other states represented were Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Ohio, Florida, South Carolina and West Virginia.

Preceding the dining, Amelia Sweeney sang the National Anthem prior to Dave Fiehtner and Kelly Bowling conducting the Two-Bell Ceremony. After the always moving Two-Bell Ceremony, Dave delivered the invocation and then Amelia sang "Proud To Be An American" - Wow! What a magnificent voice and such a great delivery.

After the informal meal, the group returned to the James Manor for the awards and prizes phase of the final day of the Frolic. Amelia received a certificate for being the hostess of the Frolic and she also donated eight passes to Dollywood along with four of her own CDs. These passes and CDs were won by drawing names from a hat. Two other prizes won by the draw were a container of Tennessee's Finest and a very large country ham from Shelbyville, Kentucky.

Two very significant awards were presented by Captain Don East USN(Ret) to a very surprised Jim Wright. As Senior Officer Present (SOP), Captain East presented a replica of the Air Medal to Jim for his many missions that were vividly described by him at various CPO Clubs and Spring Flings. And, to Jim's great surprise, Captain East also presented the Sea Service Ribbon to him, again based on Jim's personal descriptions of his sea duty. An issue was raised by someone in the audience when this reliable person questioned the validity of the Sea Service Ribbon because the list of duty stations did not contain a single one that was prefixed by USS. However, the instigator who questioned the validity of this presentation was overruled and the award ceremony continued. After being neglected for all these years, JHomer finally had his Air Medal and Sea Service Ribbon! It, obviously, was one of Jim's proudest moments.

The awarding of the Ole Jake award was saved for the last event of the evening and, to his surprise, Don C. East won for his truisms, veracity, semantic obfuscation, modesty and for not telling sea stories lacking in substance. This all occurred over a two day period, no mean feat.

After the awards and prizes ceremonies phase of the Frolic, a brief discussion was held about the 2011 Fall Frolic being hosted by John and Kathy DiMartino in Anniston, Alabama. More details about the 2011 Frolic can be found on the Smoky Mountain NCVA website <http://smokymountainncva.com/3052.html>



Photo by Sue Fiehtner
Kelly Bowling(Presenter)
Amelia Reguera Sweeney
Dave Fiehtner Looking on



Kelly Bowling, Jim Wright
Don East and Dave Fiehtner