

## Smoky Mountain Chapter 2016 Fall Frolic

BY Kelly Bowling

The Smoky Mountain Chapter of the NCVA met for the 18<sup>th</sup> reunion and the 7<sup>th</sup> Fall Frolic on Thursday September 1<sup>st</sup> through Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Comfort Suites in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee near Nashville. The Frolic was graciously hosted by Dave Fiehtner and Nancy Moore. Only one tour was scheduled and it was a tour of Nashville with a familiarization visit to the Sheraton Music City Hotel, host hotel of the 2017 NCVA reunion.

Twenty five attendees from six states were present and eight of the twenty five were from the great state of North Carolina. Tennessee was represented by six attendees, Alabama with five while Kentucky, West Virginia and Georgia brought up the rear with two each from their states.

After dining at the Olive Garden, the diners returned to the hospitality room, where, as always, the real entertainment and surprises awaited the group. After playing of the National Anthem, the Two Bell Ceremony was conducted by President Pete Moore, Vice President John Odell, and co-host and master of ceremonies Dave Fiehtner. Pete Moore also resigned as president of the Chapter and Joe Bearrentine (host of the 2017 NCVA reunion in Nashville) was appointed, by unanimous consent of the attendees, as new president of the Chapter .

President Joe the 4<sup>th</sup> (fourth president of the Chapter) and MC Dave Fiehtner led discussions concerning progress and plans for the 2017 reunion in Nashville. Registration forms, POD, tours information, etc. are now posted at <https://usncva.org>. Once all discussions were concluded, the awards and drawings portions of the Frolic commenced, again with MC Dave controlling the actions!

A fiery adult beverage donated by Pete Moore, and a Trump baseball cap was won by Susanne Richter, which she immediately gave to Carlton since he had no cap. (Ref next para) Adult refreshments were won by draw by John Peltier, Floyd Jones (2 each), Bob Proctor and Hank Kershner. The family doubled up with Jo Kershner winning the 50-50 draw.

Prior to the home grown products tastings, it was determined, by unbiased judges, that Bobby Freeman proved himself deserving of the Ole Jake Award because of his truthfulness about high altitudes and embellished air stories of events that occurred while he served with VQ-2. He will be hard-pressed to top the stories at future Fall Frolics! He also discovered on Friday night that one Carlton Cox, with whom he served at Cheltenham, MD in 1965, was seated across the table from him in the hospitality room. The recognition was because of a baseball cap that Carlton was wearing which he gave to Bobby. This will be covered in detail, with a photo of the former shipmates, in an article written by Bobby.

The tasting of home-grown products is done in the wine tasting procedure. A couple of additional steps have been added to the Fall Frolic version. To wit, the procedure of smell, taste, grimace, and shudder will be used. Sometimes a nautical term will be dropped by the taster! Gracious volunteers were Susanne Richter, Bobby Freeman and Bob Fransen, all new to the Frolic routine. Bob won, hands down, with new comments, grimaces and shuddering! For his demonstrated talents for judging he was



awarded a valid Moonshiner's Hat.

Everything is on track for the Chapter's hosting of the NCVA National Reunion in May 2017, with new president Joe the Fourth at the helm. Thanks to all the good folks who have volunteered to help. And, thanks to Carlton Cox for his photos of the Frolic that may be seen in the photo album on our website at <http://www.smokymountainncva.com>. Because of the large number of West Virginia natives and transplants in the crowd, the thought of holding the 2017 Fall Frolic in "Almost Heaven" was entertained.

### **The Hat**

**BY Bobby L. Freeman, CTTCS (NAC), USN Retired**

The scene is the Smoky Mountain Chapter's Fall Frolic planning committee's gathering on September 1-3 in Mt Juliet, Tennessee to finalize details for the national NCVA convention of 2017 in Nashville.

At a small gathering after dinner on Friday in the hospitality room in the Comfort Suites, the conversation involved the usual 'true stories' of long and honorable Naval service relived by those present, to include: John Odell, Kelly Bowling, Ed Purcell, Dave Fiehtner, Joe Bearrentine and Jim Lindley.

The late arrival of one Carlton Cox, wearing "The Hat", prompted another round of greetings and glad-handing, relating of shared duty stations, and more 'true stories'. "The Hat" drew questions from the author because of the depiction of VQ-2 emblem, with the script "Naval Security Group". The author offered to buy "The Hat" due to extensive service in VQ-2.

Further conversation drew out salient facts of duty in Cheltenham, MD, Carlton's skills with computers, nine years of naval service, subsequent retirement as a fireman Lieutenant in Braintree Fire Department near Boston, and post-retirement move to his wife's hometown of Matheney, WV. He further stated he had found "The Hat" on eBay and ordered it a cost of \$12. The author offered him \$20 for the hat! The offer was again refused until informed there was no such unit, but it would be a huge hit at the upcoming VQ Association reunion in Grapevine, Texas in late September 2016. When the author related his eight years of duty with VQ-2, Carlton gave the author "The Hat"!

As all of this unfolded, the author is turning over the salient facts in his feeble mind about who Carlton might be:

- Carlton has been married to the same lady for 51 years, year of marriage 1965;
- His bride was from West Virginia;
- He has a notable Boston accent;
- They were married while he was stationed at Cheltenham, Maryland.



All of which is starting to sound very familiar to the author because:

1-The author was stationed at Cheltenham in 1965;

2-Was married in 1965;

3-Played softball with a guy from Boston, who married a cute little girl from West Virginia who worked for the FBI and everyone called him Carl. But, he had thick wavy brown hair just like the author, but mine has gone silver.

So, after considering all of the above, the author related a story of a young bride sitting in his living room in 1965 reading an article concerning the proper male performance in the perfect marital union, and suddenly proclaiming in a loud voice "Carl, you're doing it all wrong!" The author's wife fell off the couch laughing! Thinking the author was psychic, recognition suddenly dawned on Carlton's face and tears, hugs, and laughter ensued! And that my friends, is a 51-year reunion!

Footnote: the author's lovely bride of 46 years, Patsy Miller Freeman, passed away on October 22, 2011. We were married on August 14, 1965 and this past August would have been our 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary.

(Photo taken at the Hermitage in Nashville, Carlton on left, Bobby on right, was taken by Susanne Richter).