

# The 2006 National Convention and Business Meeting

The Korean War Veterans Association held its annual convention October 8-11, in the "Alamo" city, San Antonio, Texas, the eighth largest city in the United States. Approximately 300 people attended at least some part of the convention.

Although the "Official Business" portion of the convention did not begin until the morning of October 10th, people began arriving as early as October 7th, particularly those who were involved in the planning, organizing, and managing of the registration, hospitality setup and the myriad of activities. These activities involved the complex operation of welcoming, informing, feeding, entertaining, and otherwise handling several hundred people from all parts of the country. Special thanks go to Bill MacSwain, Chris Yanacos and Steve Szekely for this phase of the activity. They all volunteered as the need arose.

Sunday and Monday were the primary arrival days. Attendees were given information about the activities available to them, including barge rides on the world-famous Riverwalk, and the tour (six blocks from the hotel) of the historic Alamo.

On Monday morning we were successful in holding a "Press Conference" for the local San



Antonio media. Three of the top four TV stations joined us in the Hospitality Suite, where they interviewed several of our members over a period of at least an hour. We were affected, obviously, in that the day before, the North Korean nuclear bomb tests were announced. So, the stations felt

their viewers would be interested in the reaction of our members. Consequently, we got good coverage in the evening news.

On Monday afternoon, several workshops were held for KWVA Staff, Department and Chapter Executives. Jake Feaster, Assistant Secretary, and Jim

Doppelhammer, Technical Advisor, conducted the first one, which focused on the KWVA Membership/Chapter/Department Databases and Website. The next one, led by Bill MacSwain and Jake Feaster, concerned the new KWVA Standard Procedure Manual.



The unidentified people in the photos above and to the left are indicative of the camaraderie prevalent at the 2006 National Convention.



## Opening Ceremonies and Memorial Service

On Tuesday morning, October 10th at 9 a.m., the convention officially opened. Preliminaries included the Call to Order by President Dechert, with greetings and announcements. Grady Thomas presided over the Presentation of the Colors by the Marine Color Guard. Our own in-house preacher and National Chaplain, Leonard Stegman, led us in prayer. He also delivered a rousing memorial address, reminding us of the sacrifices of our brothers and sisters.

Director MacSwain led the explanation and consecration of the Table of the Missing, honoring our POW/MIAs. Rev. Stedman then read the names of the ever-increasing number our KWVA comrades from each state who passed on this last year.

## Board of Directors Meeting

At 10 a.m., the Board meeting commenced. It was open to all national members. There was significant general attendance. All members of the Board of Directors (formerly Executive Council) were present. A number of guests were introduced, and minutes of past meetings were accepted, along with the agenda.

In general, the meeting consisted of reports of the various committees, with "Action Items" comprising for the most part issues requiring Board of Directors' approval of such issues as the 2007 Budget, changes in operations, the new Directors' Standard Procedure Manual, the location for next year's convention, and others. The November/December issue of *The Graybeards* will include a detailed summary of the meeting. In addition, there will be a verbatim record available, as recorded by Federal Recorders.

The Board Meeting recessed to allow for the general meeting, and continued the next day after the conclusion of the General Meeting.<sup>a</sup>

Concurrent with the Directors Meeting, the ladies attending the convention enjoyed a "Funcion de las Senoras"—a strictly women's affair, led by Mrs. Dechert.

The evening allowed free time for all participants to dine at the wide variety of establishments along the Riverwalk, or to enjoy the very special evening barge rides.

## General Membership Meeting

After an announced delay, the General Meeting convened on Wednesday, October 11th, shortly after 1000 a.m. It was open only to authenticated national members and guests. The required quorum of 75 was exceeded, as over 100

**General Mike Hagee, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps. and Bill Hutton.**

voting members were in attendance.

We were the beneficiaries of two guest speakers. First, Col. Robert Patrick provided a special presentation about the Veterans History Project, part of the Library of Congress. The new theme advanced about the Korean War was to change from "The Forgotten War" to "The Forgotten Victory," a theme we can all salute. Then, Ainslee Ferdie, President of the Miami-Dade Chapter, spoke of the efforts of various Jewish veterans organizations, including the first veterans organization ever formed.

The general membership reviewed the recommendations of the board, and approved those items requiring General Membership approval, such as the location of the 2007 convention and the 2007 budget. A summary of the General Membership meeting will appear in the November/December *The Graybeards*, backed up by an available verbatim transcript by Federal Court Recorders.

## Annual Reunion Banquet

The highlight of the convention has to be the closing night. All attendees will agree that this year's was an outstanding and very moving evening.

The main speaker was General

Mike Hagee, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps. General Hagee was terrific in both his presentation and in answering questions. He spoke of the great service of the Korean veterans, particularly commenting on the men involved in the Chosin Reservoir battle. He counted that action as one of the three greatest in Marine Corps History.

After dinner speakers included the President of the Korean-American Patriotic Association, Mr. Kim, Bong Keon. The founder of the Alamo Chapter of KWVA and Korean Army Veteran Won, Pae Pak spoke also. Mr. Won was also responsible for arranging for the transportation and covering the expenses for the performers of the Traditional Korean Dance Troupe who provided a stirring evening's entertainment.

The evening was memorable, and a fitting culmination of a wonderful affair.

Many special thanks to National Director and convention manager Lee Dauster, along with First Vice President Byron Dickerson. In addition to Mac Swain, Yanacos and Szelkey, there were many unsung heroes. Thank you all!

We look forward to next year in Reno.

*Bill Hutton  
KWVA Secretary*

