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# THE SCOOP SHEET

**Information For And About Members Of The First Marine Aircraft Wing Association – Vietnam Service**

Issue 54

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Summer 2019



REUNION 2019 June 13-16 2019

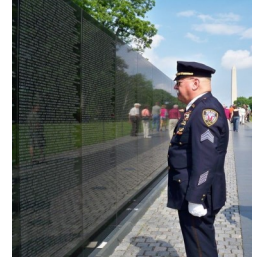
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VMFA 314 in DANang 1968

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President	Frank Arce
Vice President	Bill Walden
Secretary	Al Frater
Treasurer	Jerry Sergeant



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ...**

I hope that 2019 has brought us all Peace, Health and Love .We are about 75 and a wake up before Reunion 2019 on June 13-16, 2019 at The Embassy Suites in Crystal City , Va. with free breakfast and Managers welcome open bar greeting from 1700-1900 everyday and we will have a bar tab for our members for house beer and wine only, all other drinks cash.

Our 31st Anniversary Reunion, we have been granted a tour of The Pentagon on Friday June 14 th, 2019 but with certain request. First, they can only escort 50 at a time breaking us up into at least 2 groups. First group at 1000 and second at 1100. Also we must give them a list of all adults 18 + in Our group that will be doing the tour, with full name, date of birth and social security # for Security Purpose. I personally don't have a problem providing them with my info .

I'm working on our Memorial Service at The Pentagon and also lunch but not sure of the availability. There is a church about 1 mile away as our second choice with many lunch spots available in immediate area.

We will be viewing The Headquarters Marine Corps at 8th and I, Evening Parade at 2000 . Our business meeting will be on Saturday at 1000-1200 where I will step down as your President. I pray that I have served you well. On Saturday evening our Banquet will be at 1800-2200 at The Doubletree Hotel at The Jefferson Room, 3 blocks away and there will be shuttle service for us . Our Keynote Speaker will be our Vice President William Bill Walden. We will again have a Memorial picture table for our deceased members!

On Sunday June 16 , Fathers Day, for those that still remain, we will gather at The Wall at 1200 for a memorial service and wreath ceremony that we haven't done since 1993 . The sons and daughters in touch, an organization of Children of Viet Nam Vets on The Wall also are there and have invited us to join them with the Gold Star Mothers .

**SEMPER FIDELIS MARINES AND FAMILY !**

Frank Arce

## **MEMBERSHIP NOTES**

### **DUES RENEWALS** **Membership Renewals**

#### **Membership Renewals**

Just a reminder to annual members, your dues are now due every January. Please help our association save postage and mail expense by sending in your \$25.00 renewal dues now.

Mail in your check payable to: 1<sup>st</sup> MAW Vietnam Service, c/o Jerry Sergeant, 603 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave W. Lot A-10, Bradenton, FL 34207

Any additional questions regarding membership may also be directed to the above address or emailed to: [jleesarge@hotmail.com](mailto:jleesarge@hotmail.com)

Jerry Sergeant  
Treasury and acting Membership Chairman

### **ELECTRONIC SCOOP**

The Electronic Scoop list is growing. Any other members who desires to receive their "Scoop" electronically in order to reduce mailing and publishing costs please contact Al Frater at [teanal@optonline.net](mailto:teanal@optonline.net) and please cc Frank Arce at [frankpaco69@aol.com](mailto:frankpaco69@aol.com). Those members who have requested an electronic SCOOP will be removed from the mailing list as requested.

### **VOLUNTEER NEEDED - UPDATE**

Volunteers are always welcomed for Veterans day at the wall. For those who live near Quantico VA and the National Museum of the Marine Corps The Heritage Foundation is seeking tour Guides for the Museum. Training will be provided. Contact the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation at 703-640-7965..

### **PX**

Check out our PX page If anyone wants something let us know. Contact Al Frater at [teanal@optonline.net](mailto:teanal@optonline.net) for 201-906-1197 for information.

### **1st MAW NOW ON FACEBOOK**

We are now moving to the modern age and have a Group on FACEBOOK. If you are a FACEBOOK user please join our Group. at "**First Marine Air wing Association - Vietnam Service**". If you are not a FACEBOOK member, join FACEBOOK and our Group. Information and photos will continue to be posted on our group. Please post any pictures or comments on our group.

## Reunion 2019

Reunion 2019 is signed and delivered . Our 31st Anniversary !

Embassy Suites Crystal City June 13-16, 2019 Fathers Day Weekend . \$149.00 single and double \$159.00 Triple and Quad . The price is good from June 10-19, 2019 Free shuttle service from Reagan International Airport and also to different places in Crystal City! Free breakfast and managers welcome open bar at the lobby bar from 1700-1900 .

Our banquet will be held at The Double Tree, three blocks away, being our hotel only has room for 100 for our banquet so we will be shuttled from both hotels for the banquet . We will be working on a possible tour of The Pentagon with possible lunch with our Commandant and or Sgt. Major and possibly have them Order 50 yard line seats for us for the evening parade at 8th & I, Friday evening at 1700 ( We will be there ) and maybe even join us for our banquet, Saturday evening at 1800 !

Our Museum will always be open for us in case The Pentagon doesn't work out! Our hotel registration code is FMA call 1-800-560-7782,We booked 40 rooms but more available with timely notice. The weeks before were about \$20-50 more per night and after we deal with the summer crowds .God willing, My dream is to have all our members attend with their entire family and celebrate our day together! as Marines , only we can make It happen !

Registration Forms is on Page 7





## AMMO Dump Explosion

**Da Nang, South Vietnam, May, 1969:** A huge ball of smoke and flames rises above Da Nang Air Base after a wind-swept grass fire ignited hundreds of tons of bombs at an ammunition dump. Two people were killed and 14 wounded in the series of explosions that continued for 14 hours after the initial blast. Overall damage to the base was light, however, and operations were not disrupted.



**Rocket Explosion about 3:30 AM VMGR-152 - 1969 Taken from on top of Our Bunker with My 35 MM Patri Racer Camera , still have it .**



**Ammo Dump Explosion DaNang April 27 1969**

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the  
PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces in the Republic of Vietnam from 11 May 1965 to 15 September 1967. Throughout this period, the First Marine Aircraft Wing, operating in I and II Corps tactical zones of the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, and adjacent waters, sought out and destroyed determined enemy forces and provided combat air support to ground forces of the Free World and the Republic of Vietnam. Participating in 195 major operations, and thousands of other attacks, the Wing continuously and aggressively carried the battle to the elusive enemy in bitterly contested actions. Operations such as DOUBLE EAGLE, HARVEST MOON, STARLITE, HASTINGS, PRAIRIE, UNION, HICKORY, COCHISE, and SWIFT, reflect the high degree of superior airmanship, valor, devotion to duty and professionalism exhibited by personnel of the Wing. Although heavily committed to increased combat operations, the Wing developed and successfully employed new weapons, tactics, and procedures against the hard-core communist forces with gratifying results. Through the aggressive actions of the Wing, military and political victories were denied the insurgent communist forces, thereby providing a more stable atmosphere for the legally constituted Government of the Republic of Vietnam. The establishment, and logistical support of many separate airfields throughout the I Corps tactical zone and the vital air supply support provided the III Marine Amphibious Force and its allied ground forces, was a tribute to the resourcefulness and determination of the Wing. This dependable support was provided under the most trying and difficult combat conditions. Flying in fair weather and foul, against a fanatical, well-armed enemy, the uncommon courage and intrepidity of the Marine pilots and supporting Wing personnel, acting in a concerted team effort, contributed to another glorious chapter in an already illustrious history. The valor, devotion to duty, aggressive spirit, professionalism, and ingenuity of the entire First Marine Aircraft Wing in battle against a well trained, dangerous, and determined enemy, reflected the highest degree of heroism and exemplary performance, and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON





# REUNION PICTURES

1993



2011





2013





## Scholarship Requirements and Details

The First Marine Aircraft Wing Association, Vietnam Service will award up to five scholarships of \$500 each during Reunion 2019.

**To qualify for a scholarship, applicants must meet the following qualifications:**

Be a First Marine Aircraft Wing Association, Vietnam Service member in good standing (i.e., dues are paid up to date), their spouse, dependent or direct descendent. Further, the member must have a minimum of one -year membership as of June 1, 2019.

**-OR**

Be a spouse, dependent, or direct descendent of a deceased member of the First MAW Assn. VN Service

**-OR**

Be a spouse, dependent, or direct descendent of a Marine or member of another military service, who lost his/her life while serving in Vietnam with the First Marine Aircraft Wing.

**-AND**

Applicant must be currently **enrolled and attending**, in an accredited college, university, or trade school and be in good academic standing.

**Applicant will be required to submit an essay of 300-350 words. The applicant can choose one of the following topics:**

1. What the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial means to me.
2. What all Americans can do to solve the energy crisis.
3. How I plan to use my education to aid society.
4. Why I support our Marines in harm's way.

**To compete for a scholarship, applicants must submit their essay in accordance with the following instructions:**

1. The essay must be typed. **Do not include applicant's name on the essay page.** Attach a coverpage with the applicants name, address, phone number and email address. The cover page must also include the name of the First MAW Assn. VN Service member and membership number, along with the applicant's relationship to the member (spouse, son, daughter, grandchild etc.).
2. Verification from a counselor or other school official confirming that the applicant is enrolled. This letter needs to be on school letterhead.
3. A copy of the student transcripts

**The essay and required documents must be post marked no later than May 1, 2019.**

**Mail To:**

First Marine Aircraft Wing Association-VN Service  
c/o Phil Beckerich III  
67 Blue Grouse Drive  
Cannon City, CO 81212-9462

# PX

We now have available Auto window stickers. Anyone interested in purchasing them you can either contact me at 201-907-1197 or email me at [teanal@optonline.net](mailto:teanal@optonline.net) or send a check to

Al Frater  
524 Sagamore Ave  
Teaneck NJ 07666

For all other items contact Frank Arce



Two for \$5.00  
Contact Al Frater



\$10.00



All Covers atr \$15.00 they come in Black, Blue, and Green



## Bill Max's Truck



My truck and I from the Armistice day parade last year. It is a fully restored 1967 Kaiser Jeep M-715. I don't think we had any at DaNang then but it is the right year so when we had it done I had it badged for J-1

## Cobra pilot recalls attack helicopter missions over Vietnam

A smile crossed the lips of many a Marine in Vietnam who heard the code word “Scarface.” They knew hovering overhead was a Cobra attack helicopter ready to strike at the enemy. “Everything we did was in support of the ground troops,” recalled Pat Owen of East Pennsboro Township, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel. “There was never a boring day.” By his count, the Minnesota native flew more than 1,000 missions during his almost 12 months in Southeast Asia from Dec. 7, 1969 until Thanksgiving 1970.

Back then, helicopter pilots received a flight medal for every 20 missions flown. “I have 53,” Owen said. Not one was a typical mission. Most flights were during the day and involved providing air cover to transport helicopters bringing in men and supplies. Other times he had orders to seek out and destroy enemy units on the ground.

“We did our share of night flying usually in emergencies,” said Owen, adding how that meant escorting helicopters, evacuating the wounded or delivering direct fire support to soldiers in jeopardy. He recalled a mission where a stranded Marine recon team was pinned down and surrounded by North Vietnamese forces. “They were desperate for ground fire. We put it down within 20 to 30 feet of their position. We stopped the attack and got the kids out without injury.”

The Cobra had flight controls at both seats in the cockpit. The man upfront was the primary gunner and had control over a turret mounted just below the forward fuselage. The main weapons were a multi-barreled mini-gun and a grenade launcher. “The guy in the back shot the rockets,” said Owen, who was a first lieutenant in Vietnam. “It was the luck of the draw where you sat. Sometimes you go out flying in the front, but fly in the back seat in the afternoon. We were interchangeable the whole time.”

One day in March 1970, Owen was in Cobra escorting a CH-46 Sea Knight that was trying to insert a recon team on a ridgeline that was partially concealed by cloud cover. Recon teams were often deployed in hostile territory on the fringes of major combat areas to report on the movement of enemy ground units. Owen remembers using the clouds to sneak into the airspace over the landing zone. Suddenly the Cobra lost power while in a hover and fell into a tangle of tree trunks devastated from a previous bombardment. The helicopter tipped over leaving Owen and his co-pilot stranded with only their service revolvers as protection. “I suppose they were meant to be security blankets,” Owen said of the handguns. “They were kind of worthless.” The Cobra came equipped with a breakout knife – a heavy piece of metal with a blade along one edge. This was used to shatter the thick plexiglass of the cockpit canopy. Once outside, the flight crew was vulnerable.

“In Vietnam, there were no front lines,” Owen said. “The recon teams moved around to find out where the bad guys were. When you up in the mountains, you could only guess where they are.” There were a few unsettling moments before a tap on the shoulder scared the wits out of Owen. He turned around and saw that it was the same Marine recon team he was assigned to fly escort into the ridgeline.



“It was a very pleasant surprise,” Owen recalled. “Recon Marines were masters at sneaking around until they wanted to be seen and that’s exactly what they did. They wanted to make sure the area was secure. They were in their environment. We were not used to it.” Team members guided the pilots to a suitable location where they were lifted off the mountain by helicopter. An attempt was made to salvage the damaged Cobra but it had to be dropped and destroyed just short of the runway.

Marine helicopter pilots never developed an attachment to a particular aircraft. There were no Memphis Belles in Vietnam. “You might be flying a different one every day,” Owen recalled. “If you got the same one two or three days straight, it was just the luck of the draw.”

But the pilots had a healthy respect for the design of this first-generation attack helicopter. The fuselage was narrow – only 36 inches wide – making it a difficult target for an enemy to spot head-on from the ground. There was armor plating around both pilot seats and such vital components as the transmission. As a Cobra pilot, Owen was called on to fly virtually every day often on multiple missions from the Marble Mountain Marine Air Facility near Da Nang. What little down time he had was spent at the beach swimming, at a local night club or taking in a movie or the occasional USO show. On the ground, he served as the intelligence officer of his unit.

“I got to do what I was trained to do – fly my tail off every day,” he said. “We were not down slogging in the mud like the poor guys in the field. We came back to comfortable surroundings every day.” Nor did he suffer the lingering effects of combat duty. Owen stayed in the Marine Corps until 1986. To him, the service branch was like an extended family of fellow veterans whom he could confide in if he needed support. Other survivors of Vietnam were not as fortunate and were abused and neglected by the American public upon their return.

Owen moved through the ranks and was among the first Marines qualified to pilot the Harrier jump jet. Upon retirement, he operated a ranch and farm in Montana before moving to Pennsylvania where his wife was from. He is now a financial adviser for the Morgan Stanley investment firm in Harrisburg. Married 27 years, Owen is the father of three adult children and has one grandchild.





Reunion 2017 San Diego

**First Marine Aircraft Wing Association –  
Vietnam Service  
603 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave W. Lot A-10,  
Bradenton, FL 34207**

We are a fraternal organization of Marines and others who were attached to or supported First MAW units serving in the Vietnam War. The organization was founded in 1986 and incorporated as a not-for-profit entity in New York State in 1988. Our purpose is to reunite members of the First MAW either through scheduled reunions or by means of our newsletter, web site, or other various functions. The organization strives to disseminate information about our history as well as about legislation, entitlements, and welfare involving First MAW members.