



THE SCOOP SHEET

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

Issue 26

www.firstmaw.homestead.com

Winter 2007/8



Do you recognize Santa? Take a guess then look at page 10

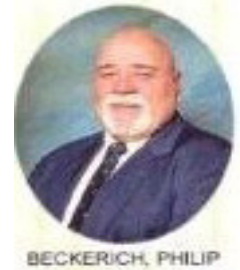
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

To: ALMARFIRSTMAWASSOCIATION
From: Association President
Subj: Presidents Message



Marines I hope all is well and all member, family members and friends had a great New Year. We're about 19 months from our next reunion. I am fairly certain it will be over the Columbus day weekend as was the 1997 reunion. The Holiday will give everyone an additional days traveling time. The Reunion will still run Thursday through Sunday with Thursday being the check in day. I intend to have the hospitality room open longer this will entail two things, more costs for consumable liquids and either paying a reunion service or relying upon volunteers. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few persons and their family members we have been short on volunteers and I feel it is unfair for someone to give up their reunion time working. As I have said before this is my last stint as your President and I thank you and will continue to thank you for your support. I am not sure at this time when I will be venturing to Beaufort for an on the ground recon and subsequent contract signings etc.; I will keep you posted. If anyone ever has an article they would like published in the Scoop please send it to me via email or snail mail and I will forward it to Al Frater our Scoop editor. After over eight years as your President I certainly would accept suggestions for activities in Beaufort. Anyone who has a suggestion for a guest speaker please let me know. There must be several First MAW Marine retirees in the Beaufort area. Lastly I want to once again thank Frank "PACO" Arce for assisting in the wreath laying at THE WALL on Veteran's day. Until next we communicate.

*Yours in Patriotism
Phil Beckerich III
Association President*

yw37@optonline.net

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

DUES RENEWALS

So far this year, the dues renewal rate continues to be **very** good! You guys are doing a great job! Please keep it up, and a **Thank You** goes out to all of you.. Later this year, the reminders will go out for the Life Members who are on the installment plan (a good deal!). But if this means YOU, you can help by sending in your installment payment ahead of time to save us some work.

FMAW SEABAG

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 Wayne Cook at wayco@comcast.net and please cc Phil Beckerich at yw37@optonline.net and Al Frater at teanal@verizon.net. **THE SCOOP CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE WEB SITE WWW.FIRSTMAW.HOMESTEAD.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..

EDITORS NOTES

Please email me any articles or noteworthy events about our members and Association (electronic pictures accepted). All articles and pictures become property of the association and cannot be returned.

Al Frater teanal@verizon.net

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I have not received any emails or comments regarding this idea please email me at yw37@optonline.net Hence I am repeating last issues food for thought. One of the options for the future of this Association is to become a special chapter of the Marine Corps Aviation Association. This will permit the Association to exist as the membership continues to diminish with time. The choice seems that we either open up membership or become a chapter of a larger organization.

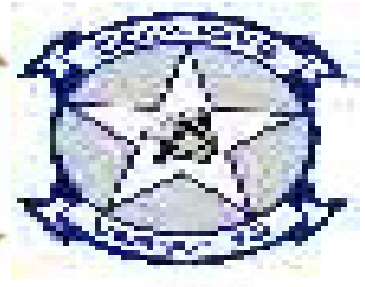
MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Marine Outfits are Honored Given Navy Unit Commendations

Marine Air Groups 12 and 36 have been awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for their meritorious service in Vietnam. MAG-12 was cited for rendering "consistent, devastating, accurate air support through such operations as *Starlite*, *Harvest Moon*, *Double Eagle*, *Utah*, *Texas* and *Iowa*." MAG-12 operated from Chu Lai May 7, 1965, to April 15, 1966. Personnel attached to and serving with the following units of MAG-12 in the period covered are eligible to wear the ribbon: H&MS-12, MABS-12, Marine Attack Squadrons 211, 214, 223, 224, 225, and 311. MAG-36 was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for its service in operations against VC forces from September 4, 1965, to August 24, 1966. The citation stated in part: The Group.....earned a reputation for all-weather capability, providing effective close air support

REUNION

2009 reunion scheduled for Beaufort SC



Vietnam Files

Vietnam - The Helicopter War

If one had to hang only one characteristic on the Vietnam war to describe it in the Marine Corps experience, it would have to be named a "helicopter war." Marine aviation deployed seven medium transport helicopter squadrons and three heavy squadrons out of a total of 12 mediums and six heavies before the war was over.

In addition, gunship versions of the **UH-1E** (the famed "Huey") were introduced and deployed in the VMO squadrons. In 1969, the AH-1G Sea Cobra arrived and operated first in the HML units which had come into being during the war to handle the increased number of UH-1Es.

Transport Helicopters

With regard to the transport helos, the UH-34 was the prime vehicle in the 1st MAW at the start of the war and through most of the following year. In midsummer 1965, a detachment of CH-37s was deployed to give a heavy-lift capability to the wing. The obsolescent CH-37 was a valuable addition and stayed in Vietnam until early 1967 when the first echelon of CH-53s arrived. The CH-46 made its first appearance when HMM-164, landed at Marble Mountain from *USS Valley Forge* in March 1966.

There were several technical problems that had an impact on helo employment in Vietnam. First, the high temperature and high humidity reduced payload second, the sandy and dusty landing zones created engine maintenance problems; and, third, installation of additional armor to protect their vital parts became a requirement in all helos as enemy AA effectiveness increased. Another need was the mounting of door guns and at least one gunner (the crew chief manned a second gun) in the transport helos, further adding to the weight of the machine and reducing its payload.

By the end of 1965, the transport helos were lifting an average of 40,000 passengers and over 2,000 tons of cargo per month, mainly out of the two principal bases at Ky Ha and Marble Mountain. By 1968, this had steadily increased to better than 50,000 passengers and over 6,000 tons per month, the increase in capability coming largely from the introduction of the CH-46. In the first half of 1970, even though the phase-down of Marine forces had already begun, they were lifting more than 70,000 passengers and 5,000 tons in a single month, thanks to the increasing numbers of CH-53s in the wing.

Evacuation of Casualties

One of the most hazardous missions was the evacuation of casualties at night or in bad weather. Most of these types of medevacs were requested by troops in close contact with the enemy and there were no aids to help the pilot in finding the zone and landing in it. Flare aircraft were often used to illuminate the zone for night pickups, and gunships or jets provided fire suppression. It is interesting to compare the Vietnam figures on medevacs with those in the Korean War. Where the latter were measured in the low thousands, including the fixed-wing evacs, in 1968, a peak year in Vietnam, the helos evacuated 67,000 casualties during 42,000-plus sorties. On these evacs, a very large number of the helos received battle damage and crew casualties, with a high percentage of the crews earning the Purple Heart. The double-barreled conclusion adds up to the fact that the helo was one great innovation, and it required lots of staunch pilots to realize its full potential.

Vietnam Files

Supporting the III MAF ground operations, the 1st MAW flew 63,000 fighter/attack sorties in direct support, and 10,000 more in support of other ground units in country. In addition, there were 11,000 1st MAW strike sorties over North Vietnam. Total ordnance expended by the fighter/attack sorties for the year included 134,000 tons of bombs, 166,000 rockets and 2,100,000 rounds of 20 mm ammunition. 1st MAW helicopters flew a total of 490,000 sorties and lifted a total of 732,000 troops, besides performing evacuation, re-supply and a host of other support missions for units in and out of combat.

At the start of Vietnam, there were only 12 light helos in each VMO squadron of the 1st MAW. Two additional VMOs were soon authorized and, in 1968, a further reorganization established three VMOs and three HMLs. The VMO complement was set at 18 OV-10As and 12 light helos, and the HML complement at 24 light helos. By the latter part of 1968, two of each type of squadron were in the 1st MAW, giving the wing a total of 72 light helicopters, including gunships.

In a war of the complexity reached in Vietnam, an appreciation of the part played by Marine Aviation is achieved through a year-by-year summation of operational statistics. It is important to keep in mind that few movements of troops of III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) were by ground vehicle. It was truly a helicopter war. All the other elements of the air-ground team were present and fully functional, but the vehicle that characterizes the war for most Marines is unquestionably the helicopter.

For each of the regimental or battalion-size operations, the troops were put in initial position by escorted helolift. Also, fire suppression fighters and attack aircraft kept the landing zone sanitized as much as possible during the landings, and aided in preparation of the landing zone. In addition, close air support aircraft were either on station overhead or were on call when requested. Once the unit landed, of course, casualty evacuation and re-supply were both a part of the operation plan. When the operation was concluded, the helos and their friends were again on hand to extract them.

III MAF

In 20 months, III MAF had grown from the initial brigade landing at Danang to a two division, reinforced wing air-ground team, totaling almost 60,000 Marines. During this first 18 months of the war, operations or operation "code names" familiar to many Marines include the following: Starlite, Piranha, Blue Marlin, Hiep Due, Thach Tru, Golden Fleece, Harvest Moon, Double Eagle, New York, Texas, Indiana, and Ky Lam. 1st MAW sorties during the 18 to 20- month period through December 1966, totaled the following: 61,457 fixed-wing fighter/attack sorties, with 79 percent in direct support of III MAF, 15 percent against targets in North Vietnam, and the balance of six percent in support of South Vietnamese units; 436,267 helicopter sorties, with 88 percent in support of III MAF, seven percent for South Vietnamese units and five percent for Korean Marine battalions.

At the end of 1967, III MAF had reached a strength of 81,115. This was an increase for the year of 10,737. The statistics for the year were astounding. In 1967, III MAF conducted over 110 major operations of battalion size or larger. There were 356,000 small unit operations. These two types of operations resulted in 17,876 enemy killed during the year.

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PX News

The First Marine Aircraft Wing Association – Vietnam Service PX is online so you don't have to wait until the next reunion to get any of the items we sell. We have some new items that I hope everyone will look at and buy. Listed are some of the new items and some of the other items for your review. This is just a sample of what is on the website: http://1stmaw.wamarinesmc.us/mawpx/index.php?main_page=index

New Items:

Challenge coin \$7



FMAW Logo Hat \$18



Hat Doober \$5



Vitnam Necklace \$11



18" or 24"

POW Necklace \$11



18" or 24"

Vietnam Ribbon \$3.50



Vietnam Vet \$3.50



Vietnam Pin \$3.50



Flag Set \$3.50



Marine Corps Pin



Semper Fi Pin \$3.50



Marble Mountain \$3.50



Da Nang Pin \$3.50



Natural Death hats \$18



1st MAWAVNS Pin \$3.50



SM Combat Aircrew Pin \$4



Crew Chief Pins \$3.50



Pilot Pin \$7



Navy Flight Off \$7



U.S.M.C. Pin \$3.50



VMFA 323 HISTORY PROJECT

Our squadron's history is now on display with 2 F4 Phantoms and 2 FA18 Hornets. Some are in need of parts and repairs. I have outlined below where the aircraft are located and some needed parts: So dig through that old foot locker in the garage and let us know what you have to donate.

The USS Alabama Park Museum just got the Hornet (Bu #162417, nose #407) which flew off the USS Coral Sea on 15 May 1986 and was part of the air strikes on Libya. The plan is to restore the Hornet with VMFA-323 markings. If you were in 323 during this period and can provide pictures that would be great. So pilots check you log books and let us know if you flew that bird and who the plane captain was. This can be a really big media event.

Parts needed (they don't have to work, just look good): After Burner cans., Manuals for early "A" models, Forward port nose gear door, Pretty much everything in the cockpit from the HUD display, rudder pedals and the top of the ejection seat and most of the instruments, Centerline fuel tank and pylon, Rails to mount HARMS, Intake covers (these would be great if 323 emblem are on them but they can add them if needed).

The forward section of an F4 Phantom (Bu #148423, nose #8) is at the Pacific Coast Air Museum in Santa Rosa, Ca. The plan is to trailer mount the section complete with display boards and pictures and take it to different air shows including the one at MCAS Miramar in the future. A lot of corrosion control has been done and Don Ricci has done an outstanding job so far. I will go there once a month and do the sheet metal work (I am the old tin bender). So if any of you tin benders have any sheet metal tools, such as bucking bars, blind rivet guns (hand or air), boxes of rivet (blind and solid), fasteners, screws, panels, switches, instruments, knee boards, or any other Phantom items let us know what you have. Manuals are needed also. And for sure we need the complete slide down cockpit step assembly. The Phantom is dedicated to Maj. John Dunn and CWO3 John Frederick. This Phantom flew with the squadron at Chu Lai.

There is a F4 Phantom aboard the USS Intrepid Space and Air Museum in New York City with VMFA-323 markings. It is seen briefly in the movie, "National Treasure". The phantom is in need of a new paint job and the Burner cans. We want to get as many involved with this Phantom so they don't put some other squadron's marking on her especially Navy. Also if there are any that live in the area that can assist (especially old tin benders) with this project let us know and we will put you in contact with them. They plan on rededicating the Intrepid on Veterans Day of 2008 and the Phantom will be included so hopefully we can have as many Snakes there for the event. Think of names to be put on the canopy rails from the Vietnam area. The Intrepid was featured on the History channel being moved so the dock could be rebuilt and the Intrepid was put in dry dock.

An FA18 Hornet is on display in front of the Palm Springs Air Museum in Palm Springs, Ca. The Hornet is dedicated to Lt Col John Spahr and Capt Kelly Hinz. If you are ever in the area, stop by and see these fine birds and tell the museum staff you were in 323. It was dedicated on Memorial Day 2006 and the museum staff did an outstanding job all around.

A good source for the Phantom and Hornet parts is number one. I am willing to drive down to China Lake, MCAS Miramar, NAAS El Centro, MCAS Yuma, NAS Lemoore and other places if need be.

Many of you went on a cruise or two with 323. Could you scan it and put on a CD and send to me and I will put them on DVD. I have 3 cruise books done already. And if you haven't sent me squadron pictures and movie, please do and I can add them to the 323 History DVD set I have produced. It is great to watch those old memories on a big screen TV. My home address is below.

The F8 Crusader Death Rattlers receive a news letter each month from Don Griffith. He keeps us informed when another old member is found, sick buddies, reunions, old sea stories and much more. I look forward to reading it each month. So I was thinking maybe a person from each aircraft period might take up pen in hand (computer) and do the same. It would be a big help to Bob Milburn and Me. I think who ever does do a news letter will enjoy doing it as much as Don Griffith does. Let me know if you are interested and we can work out the details. Take care and keep the flying high.

Thomas C. "TC" Crouson, the old tin bender
3543 E. Barron Rd
Acampo, Ca 95220
209-369-6793

PICTURES FROM THE PROJECT



We would like to thank Al Kotrla for sending us a copy of this story

First Marine Aircraft Wing



Santa is our President Phil Beckerich Played Santa during the Gooney Bird Detachment of the MCL's Toys for Tots campaign



Phil Beckerich and Frank Paco Arce at the Wall on the Marine Corps Birthday



Phil Beckerich and Frank Paco Arce at the Wall on the Marine Corps Birthday delivering a wreath



The Iwo Jima Memorial on the Marine Corps Birthday 2007

Vietnam Photos



Navy Nurses. Lieutenant Commander Dorothy Ryan checks the medical chart of Marine Corporal Roy Hadaway of Calera, Alabama aboard the hospital ship USS Repose off South Vietnam. Miss Ryan, from Bronx, New York is one of 29 nurses aboard the hospital ship selected from 500 volunteers of the Navy Nurse Corps., 04/22/1966



Dong Ha, Vietnam. Operation Hastings - Marines of Company H, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment take to the water as they move to join up with other elements of their battalion. 07/1966



Vietnam. Marine Corps flame thrower tank



Marine Squadron HMM261 in 1965
Picture credit from Popasmoke



REUNION GROUP PICTURE

**First Marine Aircraft Wing Association –
Vietnam Service
PO Box 2124
Woodstock, GA 30188**

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.