



THE SCOOP SHEET

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

Issue 32

www.firstmaw.homestead.com

Summer 2009



The WALL at Night

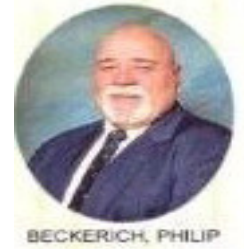


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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

To: ALMARFIRSTMAWASSOCIATION
From: Association President
Subj: Presidents Message



Marines, family and friends of the First Marine Aircraft Wing Association: I'd like to start this letter to thank everyone who has reserved a room for our upcoming reunion. As of two days ago there were 31 rooms left. Please make your room reservations. I want to thank Bob Milburn for getting us a reunion speaker. Please see Bob's blurb detailing the specifics about our guest speaker. As of this writing I have not received any nominations for Association Officers for the next two years. To date I have received three scholarship letters and one of the applicants is not eligible because the parent or grand parent is not a member of our association. Something to ponder: We should consider opening up the scholarships to nieces and nephews besides the current children and grand children who are eligible. We need to have more applications and we can certainly give away more scholarships that way. I am looking forward to the reunion.

The bus company in Beaufort is very expensive. If anyone knows a company within fifty miles of Beaufort that has three school buses to rent for Friday and Saturday 9 & 10 October please let me know. The coaches that are available through "Spirit of Old Beaufort" are exceptionally high. About twice the amount we paid in DC in '07. We don't need expensive coaches to go to PI and MCAS, they're only a few miles from the Quality Inn (Inn at Town Center). As of now there are no changes to the itinerary. Please send in your applications so I can get accurate numbers ASAP for the carriage tour, shirts, Banquet and farewell brunch. I want to mention the passing of my old Squadron mate and member MSgt Joseph C. Russo USMC (RET). Please include in your prayers our Chaplain Ed Aki and "Doc" Steve Jackson. I am hoping that they will both be well enough to attend the reunion.

I just learned today 14 July '09 that our Vice President John Krankus passed away this morning. On behalf of our Association I wish to extend our most sincere condolences to his wife MaryEllen and the Krankus family

I hope everyone has a great summer. This may be the last Scoop until after the reunion. If possible I will try to get another one out by mid September.

Semper Fidelis PHIL
Phil Beckerich
Association President.

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.

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

COLT DONATION

In the interests of patriotism and in recognition of our Vietnam service, the Colt's Firearms Manufacturing Company has once again donated a firearm to us. If you will remember, Colt donated a M1911A1 which we raffled off at reunions, with all proceeds going to our Scholarship Fund. This time they have donated a Match Grade HBAR to us, for the same purpose. Many thanks to LtGen Keys (USMC-Ret) of Colts for the donation and to our good friends and loyal Members, Bob "Raggie" Sebetka of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Robert Milburn who once again did the legwork for the acquisition of this splendid gift.



The Shufly Security Detachment: They kept us safe while we slept by David H. Hugel

The arrival in April, 1963 of a 47 man Marine Recon Platoon to provide security for the Marine airbase in Da Nang, was a big relief for the resident helicopter squadron crewmen and MABS -16 sub-unit Marines who had, until then shared responsibility for nighttime base security since Marines first arrived in Vietnam the year before. According to U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1954-1964 published by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps: "One Marine General later observed that with the arrival of the infantry unit, 'the air-ground team was in being in Vietnam.'" That quote was attributed to Marine helicopter pioneer Gen. Keith McCutcheon, who would serve as the Marine Corps's Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation.

The Security Detachment's basic mission was to provide security for the Marines' living compound and aircraft at the nearby airfield, but they were often called upon to provide security for Marines and their aircraft in the field. To bolster base security, coils of barbed wire surrounded the perimeter of the barracks compound. Of particular concern was the side of the compound facing the main road with a small clusters of houses offering laundry services and selling beer and soda just beyond the road, known as "Dog Patch." Intelligence reports indicated that while catering to Marines by day this area was often infiltrated by the V.C. after dark. To foil attacks on the base, Marines had set up defensive positions behind sandbags, concrete barriers and other protective landscape features inside the wire. Sandbags were also piled high behind each barracks entrance to prevent any V.C. lurking in the area from tossing grenades into them.

Neil Grissom, one of the Marines assigned to the Security Detachment in 1963 recalls, that the platoon was made up mostly of riflemen, with a small group of demolition experts and a couple radiomen. Grissom, who was a Lance Corporal at the time continued his recollection of the platoon's responsibilities for base security, "Two squads from the platoon were required to be on duty at all times to provide security for the Da Nang Airbase. During hours of darkness, fire teams were assigned to patrol the perimeter of the living compound and the hanger area of the airfield. A Marine from the platoon was also assigned along with several ARVN soldiers to guard the back gate of the airbase at night, which was used by vehicle traffic. The platoon was informed that if the Da Nang airbase had to be evacuated, it would be our duty to hold the base until all major assets could be redeployed to other locations."

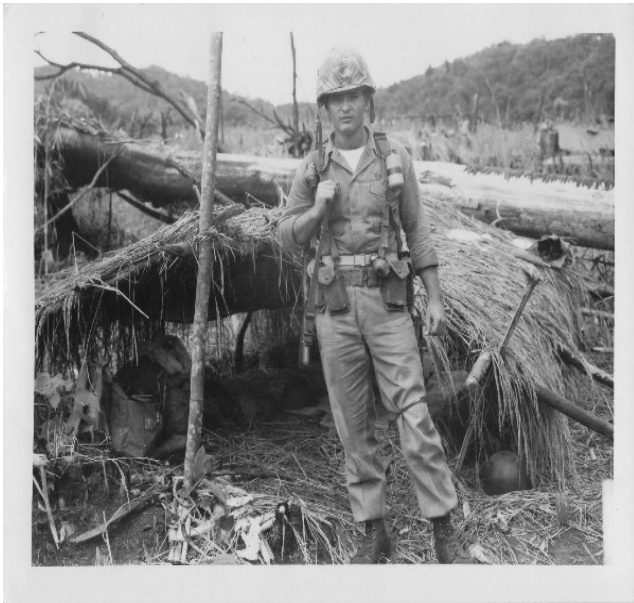
Marine combat correspondent LCpl Dick Dawson wrote an article on the Security Detachment that appeared in the Sept. 20 1963 edition of the 3rd Marine Division's TRIAD newspaper giving some insight into the kind of missions they were often called upon to perform in the field. "They are rapidly flown to the site of any downed Marine chopper to protect the lives of the mechanics and crew who must fix it. If the aircraft can't be repaired, they have the demolition experts needed to blast the aircraft past possible use by the Viet Cong." Dawson's article went on to give an example of a daring rescue executed by two members of the platoon. Because a rescue chopper found it impossible to land, two Marines from the Security Detachment were lowered by cable and winch to the crash site of a light observation aircraft. The Marines, Sgt James Edwards and Cpl. Curtis Carter, set up a hasty defense while a Navy corpsman pulled the injured U. S. Air Force pilot and his Vietnamese observer from the wreckage, administered first aid, and hoisted them to the hovering rescue helicopter.

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On occasion, members of the platoon were required to spend several days at outposts helping Vietnamese troops clear fields of fire using explosives. LCpl John Gariano recalled one such mission that had to be aborted to avoid a pending V.C. attack. As Gariano recalled the incident, five of them went in to a special forces base camp about 30 miles or so from Da Nang to clear a fire zone next to the camp, by taking down some trees with C-4 explosives. As their Lieutenant was briefing the men about what needed to be done, Gariano noticed smoke about 5 or 8 clicks out, but didn't appreciate its significance until he ask the lieutenant what it meant. That's when he learned that it was the VC's way of communicating with one another prior to an attack. With the smoke already three quarters around them, the Marines decided it was time to re-board their helicopter before a V.C. attack could be launched against them.

The official history of Marine Corps activities in Vietnam during those early years likewise recognized the contributions made by the Security Detachment in describing another of its many missions in the field. "On 11 October (1963), another Marine helicopter was hit by Viet Cong fire while resupplying ARVN units in the area. In this incident the UH- 34D was struck twice in the engine and once in the wheel strut while in a landing zone about two miles from the point where the crashes had occurred. After assessing the damage, a maintenance team from Da Nang determined that the helicopter would require a new engine. Marines from the security platoon were utilized to provide security until 13 October when an additional 120 ARVN troops were helilifted into the area and established a perimeter around the aircraft. Other helicopters then delivered the new engine and a maintenance crew to the landing zone. After the engines were exchanged, a crew returned the UH-34D to Da Nang."

Many of those stationed at the Da Nang airbase during that period may not have fully appreciated the variety of missions those Recon Marines in our midst performed, but we slept better knowing they were there when we needed them. As for the Marines who served in the Security Detachment, LCpl Grissom undoubtedly spoke for many when he said: "Marines from our platoon viewed Da Nang as good duty as it gave them a chance to apply their training to actual combat zone conditions."



LCpl John Gariano in field to provide security for landing zone clearing project



LCpl Richard Purtell stands guard to protect Marine mechanics making repairs to a helicopter, grounded while on a mission.



Downed helicopter at ARVN outpost prior to being destroyed by Marine demolition experts.



Security Detachment radio operator coordinates support activities at landing



Shufly Security Detachment member LCpl Neil Grissom



Pfc Vernon Rohloff one of the Security Detachment's radioman on a mission in the field Shufly Security



unknown Security Detachment member guarding a helicopter down in the field for major engine repairs



**What's So Special About the Marine Corps?
Sent in by Al Kotra**

Ask a Marine what's so special about the Marines and the answer would be "esprit de corps", an unhelpful French phrase that means exactly what it looks like - the spirit of the Corps...but what is that spirit? and where does it come from?

The Marine Corps is the only branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that recruits people specifically to Fight. The Army emphasizes personal development (an Army of One), the Navy promises fun (let the journey begin), the Air Force offers security (its a great way of life).

Missing from all the advertisements is the hard fact that a soldier's life is to suffer and perhaps to die for his people and take lives at the risk of his/her own.

Even the thematic music of the services reflects this evasion. The Army's Caisson Song describes a pleasant country outing. Over hill and dale, lacking only a picnic basket. Anchors Aweigh...the Navy's celebration of the joys of sailing could have been penned by Jimmy Buffet. The Air Force song is a lyric poem of blue skies and engine thrust. All is joyful, and invigorating, and safe. There are no land mines in the dales nor snipers behind the hills, no submarines or cruise missiles threaten the ocean jaunt, no bandits are lurking in the wild blue yonder.

The Marines' Hymn, by contrast, is all combat. "We fight our Country's battles," "First to fight for right and freedom," "We have fought in every clime and place where we could take a gun," "In many a strife we have fought for life and never lost our nerve."

The choice is made clear. You may join the Army to go to adventure training, or join the Navy to go to Bangkok, or join the Air Force to go to computer school.

You join the Marine Corps to go to War! But the mere act of signing the enlistment contract confers no status in the Corps. The Army recruit is told from his first minute in uniform that "you're in the Army now, soldier". The Navy and Air Force enlistees are sailors or airmen as soon as they get off the bus at the training center. The new arrival at Marine Corps boot camp is called a recruit, or worse, (a lot worse), but never a MARINE. Not yet, maybe never. He or she must earn the right to claim the title of UNITED STATES MARINE, and failure returns you to civilian life without hesitation or ceremony.

Recruit Platoon 2210 at San Diego, California trained from October through December of 1968. In Viet Nam the Marines were taking two hundred casualties a week and the major rainy season and Operation Meade River had not even begun yet Drill Instructors had no qualms about winnowing out almost a quarter of their 112 recruits, graduating 81. Note that this was post-enlistment attrition. Every one of those 31 who were dropped had been passed by the recruiters as fit for service. But they failed the test of Boot Camp! Not necessarily for physical reasons.

At least two were outstanding high school athletes for whom the calisthenics and running were child's play. The cause of their failure was not in the biceps nor the legs, but in the spirit. They had lacked the will to endure the mental and emotional strain so they would not be Marines. Heavy commitments and high casualties notwithstanding, the Corps reserves the right to pick and choose.

History classes in boot camp? Stop a soldier on the street and ask him to name a battle of World War One. Pick a sailor at random and ask for a description of the epic fight of the Bon Homme Richard. Ask an airman who Major Thomas McGuire was and what is named after him. I am not carping and there is no sheer in this criticism. All of the services have glorious traditions but no one teaches the young soldier, sailor or airman what his uniform means and why he should be proud of it.

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But...ask a Marine about World War One and you will hear of the wheat field at Belleau Wood and the courage of the Fourth Marine Brigade comprised of the Fifth and Sixth Marines. Faced with an enemy of superior numbers entrenched in tangled forest undergrowth the Marines received an order to attack that even the charitable cannot call ill-advised. It was insane. Artillery support was absent and air support hadn't been invented yet. Even so the Brigade charged German machine guns with only bayonets, grenades, and an indomitable fighting spirit. A bandy-legged little barrel of a Gunnery Sergeant, Daniel J. Daly, rallied his company with a shout, "Come on you sons a bitches, do you want to live forever?" He took out three machine guns himself.

French liaison-officers hardened though they were by four years of trench bound slaughter were shocked as the Marines charged across the open wheat field under a blazing sun directly into the teeth of enemy fire. Their action was so anachronistic on the twentieth-century field of battle that they might as well have been swinging cutlasses. But the enemy was only human. The Boche could not stand up to the onslaught.

So the Marines took Belleau Wood. The Germans, those that survived, thereafter referred to the Marines as "Tuefel Hunden" (Devil Dogs) and the French in tribute renamed the woods "Bois de la Brigade de Marine" (Woods of the Brigade of Marines).

Every Marine knows this story and dozens more. We are taught them in boot camp as a regular part of the curriculum. Every Marine will always be taught them! You can learn to don a gas mask anytime, even on the plane in route to the war zone, but before you can wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor and claim the title United States Marine you must first know about the Marines who made that emblem and title meaningful. So long as you can march and shoot and revere the legacy of the Corps you can take your place in line.

And that line is as unified in spirit as in purpose. A soldier wears branch of service insignia on his collar, metal shoulder pins and cloth sleeve patches to identify his unit. Sailors wear a rating badge that identifies what they do for the Navy. Marines wear only the Eagle, Globe and Anchor together with personal ribbons and their CHERISHED marksmanship badges. They know why the uniforms are the colors they are and what each color means. There is nothing on a Marine's uniform to indicate what he or she does nor what unit the Marine belongs to. You cannot tell by looking at a Marine whether you are seeing a truck driver, a computer programmer or a machine gunner or a cook or a baker. The Marine is amorphous, even anonymous, by conscious design. The Marine is a Marine.

Every Marine is a rifleman first and foremost, a Marine first, last and Always! You may serve a four-year enlistment or even a twenty plus year career without seeing action but if the word is given you'll charge across that Wheatfield! Whether a Marine has been schooled in automated supply or automotive mechanics or aviation electronics or whatever is immaterial.

Those things are secondary -- the Corps does them because it must. The modern battle requires the technical appliances and since the enemy has them so do we. But no Marine boasts mastery of them. Our pride is in our marksmanship, our discipline, and our membership in a fraternity of courage and sacrifice. "For the honor of the fallen, for the glory of the dead", Edgar Guest wrote of Belleau Wood. "The living line of courage kept the faith and moved ahead."

They are all gone now, those Marines who made a French farmer's little Wheatfield into one of the most enduring of Marine Corps legends. Many of them did not survive the day and eight long decades have claimed the rest. But their actions are immortal. The Corps remembers them and honors what they did and so they live forever. Dan Daly's shouted challenge takes on its true meaning - if you lie in the trenches you may survive for now, but someday you may die and no one will care. If you charge the guns you may die in the next two minutes, but you will be one of the immortals.

All Marines die in either the red flash of battle or the white cold of the nursing home. In the vigor of youth or the infirmity of age all will eventually die but the Marine Corps lives on. Every Marine who ever lived is living still, in the Marines who claim the title today.

Guest Speaker

JAMES H. WARNER



James Warner is an attorney who is retired from the legal office of the National Rifle Association. He served in the White House as a Domestic Policy Advisor to President Ronald Reagan during his second term, concentrating on economic and health policy issues. While in the White House he initiated the repeal of the national fifty five mile per hour speed limit. He received the 1990 H.L. Mencken Award for an editorial defending the First Amendment. He successfully represented, in the United States Supreme Court, one of the Appellants in the cases challenging the Brady Law. He wrote *amicus curiae* briefs in two successful Supreme Court cases. He is the author of several law review articles. He received a B.A., (With Distinction), with a dual major in Economics and Philosophy, from the University of Michigan, in 1976. He received a J.D. degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1978.

He was designated a Naval Flight Officer, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps in 1966. He was sent to VMFA-251, at MCAS Beaufort, for training in the F-4B Phantom. He volunteered for duty in Viet-Nam and was sent there in 1967. He was assigned to VMFA-323 and flew more than 100 missions before being shot down, just North of the Demilitarized Zone, on Friday, October 13. He spent the next five and one half years as a prisoner of war (p.o.w.). His decorations include the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", two Bronze Stars with Combat "V", two Purple Hearts, nine Air Medals, including two single mission Air Medals, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", and the Prisoner of War Medal.



SCHOLARSHIP

The First MAW Association will award five scholarships of \$500 each during Reunion '09. To qualify for a scholarship, applicants must meet the following qualifications:

Be a FIRSTMAW ASSN. regular member in good standing (i.e., dues are up to date), their spouse, dependent, or direct descendent. Further, the member must have a minimum of one-year membership as of June 1, 2009.

-OR

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

-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.

Applicant must be presently enrolled 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 Veterans Memorial Means to Me.**
- 2. What all Americans can do to solve the energy crisis**
- 3. How I plan to use my education to aide society**
- 4. Why I support our Marines who are in harms way**

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

The essay must be typed. Do not include applicants name on the essay. Attach a separate sheet of paper containing applicant's name, member's name and membership number, address, and phone number. A letter from a counselor or other school official verifying that applicant is currently enrolled. The letter must be on school letterhead.

A copy of student transcripts

The essay must be postmarked no later than June 15, 2009.

Mail the essay to:

First MAW Association – Vietnam Service
111 Sedgwick Avenue
Apt 2M
Yonkers, NY 10705-2653

PX News

Here are some of the items we have at your First MAWVNS PX. Help support your association.
http://1stmaw.wamarinesmc.us/mawpx/index.php?main_page=index

Challenge Coin \$7



FMAW Logo hat: \$18



Hat Doober:



Vietnam Necklace: \$11



POW Necklace: \$11



Vietnam Ribbon: \$3.50 '64-'75



Vietnam Vet: \$3.50



Vietnam Pin: \$3.50



Flag set: \$3.50



Marine Corps Pin: \$3.50



Semper Fi Pin: \$3.50



Marble Mountain: \$3.50



Danang Pin: \$3.50



Natural Death Hats \$18



1stMAWVNS pin:\$3.50



Sm Combat Aircrew Pin: \$4



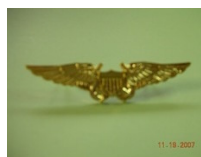
Crew Chief Pin: \$3.50



Pilot Pin: \$7



Navy Flight Off: \$7



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



Combat Action Rb:



MCorps: \$3.50



First MAW: \$18.00



FMF Corpsman:



REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE FIRST MARINE AIR-CRAFT
WING ASSOCIATION (VIETNAM SERVICE)
2009 REUNION OCTOBER 8-11 2009

NAME _____

NICKNAME/CALL SIGN _____

YEAR/UNIT(i.e. 67-68 VMFA-323) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

(For Confirmation of Receipt)

NAME OF GUESTS _____

BUFFET/BANQUET MEAL SELECTION BEEF ___ CHICKEN ___ FISH ___

SHIRT SIZE(S) S ___ M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL ___ XXXL ___

PLEASE LIST ANY SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST REUNION? YES ___ NO ___ NOT SURE ___ DON'T CARE ___

REGISTRATION FEES INCLUDES : HOSPITALITY ROOM, EMBROIDERED POLO SHIRT, CHINA BEACH NIGHT & PICKIN', AND BANQUET

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING ___ X \$140.00 = _____

REUNION SHIRT _____ X \$ 25.00 = _____

SUNDAY BRUNCH/FAREWELL _____ X \$ 20.00 = _____

OPTIONAL CARRIAGE TOUR OF BEAUFORT SC FOR THE LADIES DURING OUR NATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10 2009 ON OR ABOUT 09:30-10:00 _____ X \$15.00 = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED \$ _____

PAYMENT IS DUE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 31 2009(THIS IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO HAVE THE SHIRTS EMBROIDERED AND NAME TAGS PRINTED etc.)

PLEASE SEND PAYMENTS TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:
(CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING ASSOCIATION

**FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING ASSOCIATION
C/O TREASURER, JERRY SERGEANT
5282 OUSTERHOUT DRIVE
STERLING, MI 48659**

Reunion Itinerary:
Subject to change before the Reunion.

Thursday 8 Oct '09:

Registration 1200-1800
Hospitality Room will open @ 1800 -2400 (dependent on help to stock the room volunteers to manage the room) It is possible to open earlier with help. Please remember we do not have a service to assist in providing coverage and stocking of the hospitality room. The Hospitality room must be shut down by 2400 per South Carolina law.

Friday 9 Oct '09:

0800-0815 departure for MCRD Parris Island to view Recruit Graduation @ 0900
Departure for MCAS Beaufort for Static Display
Afternoon PX visit lunch on your own
1400 Return to Quality INN (formally the Inn at Town Center).
1800 Hospitality Room reopens for "China Beach night."
2400 Hospitality Room closes.

Saturday 10 Oct '09:

0900-1200 National Business Meeting Elections.
Ladies Carriage tour (pending final Arrangements)
1200-1630 free time.
1645-1700 departure for the Lyceum for our Banquet.
(Happy Hour 1730-1830)
1800 Colors and our Banquet begins.
The first bus back to the Hotel will be On or about 1030-1045.
2400 Banquet ends and the last buses Depart for the hotel.

Sunday 11 Oct '09 10:30-1200 Farewell brunch at the
Lyceum.



REUNION 2009 SITE

**First Marine Aircraft Wing Association –
Vietnam Service
567 Rivercrest Drive
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.