

# The Ugly Angel

## Memorial Foundation Newsletter

7-3, June 2002



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### **President's Message from Rusty Sachs**

In 1997 Bob Skinder got the idea that our nation's future would be well served by a monument to the 33 Ugly Angels whose lives ended in Vietnam. He thought perhaps a plaque near the '34-on-a-Peg outside the main gate at MCAF New River might be an appropriate site. At the same time, Bob Case brought up the idea of painting the H-34 at the US Naval Aviation Museum at NAS Pensacola.

These two ideas intrigued Tom Hewes; it never hurts one's cause to have a retired colonel on your side – and we formed the Ugly Angel Memorial Foundation to give us a tax-exempt platform for our efforts. He convinced the US Naval Aviation Museum to let us restore its H-34 on display (a South Pole veteran bearing a shocking dusty pink paint job that Case described as “something from Mary Kay's closet”) in the colors of HMM-362. This was historically fitting, as 362 had been the first USMC helo squadron to fly combat missions in Vietnam, the last to leave, and always revered as a prestige unit.

We worked with Jim Bob Moriarty to restore his bird, salvaged from a barn in Vermont, to flying status. That bouncy green grasshopper also bore the Ugly Angel on its tailcone, and sported YL 42 proudly on the clamshells. Unfortunately, Jim Bob has since broken the aircraft irreparably, and donated it to another organization for cannibalization.

In 1998, Skinder's original idea was implemented with a handsome Wall of Honor manufactured by former sergeant (now permanent second lieutenant, USMCR) Lew Barnes. We then started trying to convince the Marine Corps to erect a monument to our dead on USMC land someplace, and were we disappointed! Maybe it's the difference between combat Marines and chairwarmers; maybe it's a new-age concern on not making waves; for some reason we were stone-walled. One base commander referred the question to a subordinate, and that request ended up lost on a desk. Another base commander agreed to see what the Department of the Navy had to say about the possibility, and that paperwork disappeared in the bowels of the Pentagon. Yet another didn't think it was appropriate. Eventually, an officer at Quantico offered a spot out in the hinterlands of the Crossroads of the Corps. Better than nothing, I suppose, but not what we had hoped for.

At this point, Tom did a little back-channel communication, and Leif Hendrickson came on the scene. General Hendrickson, now the Commanding General of Marine Corps Education Command and Marine Corps University, then held the post of CG, MCB Quantico. He felt more than the diplomatic disappointment that we'd harbored as the rejections poured in; he was outraged. Here was a contingent of retired and former Marines wishing to commemorate the honor of their lost brothers, rebuffed by a bunch of career-focused dudes in the rear with the gear. He assigned a team of officers to select prestigious sites on the base, including one location adjacent to the Base Chapel. He cleared the way for us to install the first monument to Vietnam losses from a particular unit on any US military base anywhere. And the rumor is that he stepped on a lot of toes to do it. Sometimes it takes a combat veteran to understand the importance of something so basic as a salute to those who have gone before.

General Hendrickson has agreed to be our Guest of Honor at the Ugly Angel Dinner in Pensacola, and we look forward to the opportunity to express his role in remembering our 33 Ugly Angel brothers who have never grown old.  
Semper fidelis.

### **Editorial – Bob Skinder**

Being as we are all somewhere in the 50 to 80 year age bracket we do know that things change. Here's an example. I now live in a pretty small South Carolina hamlet. Before coming here 6 years ago I worked in DC for a few years. Up there I had, on several occasions, visited THE WALL. On every visit I was astounded at the emotions that arose within me; suddenly, as I approached the walkway there would be the sensation of a huge bubble rising from my center, finally bursting out of me like a silent but giant sob. I certainly could understand this the first time but it happened again on each of, I would guess, a dozen visits. I would point out that at this time I had never imagined anything like a Pop A Smoke or an Ugly Angel Memorial Foundation. I also was aware of only how the few guys who died on my two tours, the Ugliers in 66-67 and Scarface 69-70, met their ends and when I visited I sort of just grouped them all together.

This year there was a change. Now most of us have a far greater understanding of how and where everyone died and I had printed out a list of where everyone's name would appear on THE WALL. On Memorial Day I had the opportunity to visit The Moving Wall in another small South Carolina town. Perhaps it was the mystery disappearing, or perhaps it was the much smaller size but the deep sense of grief had been replaced with the feeling that I was going to visit some long lost friends or brothers. Instead of it being within or about me, the focus was changed as I went from panel to panel, found my pal, most of whom I never knew in real life, made the mental connection of how they had passed and said hello.

Obviously my feelings can't be the same as yours but I have to believe that this history project that we have all worked on has been of immense value. I am committed more than ever to keep it moving. One immediate intention is to prepare a sheet for all attendees of the reunion to summarize our casualties, what happened and on which line and panel their name appears. Perhaps we can all do something at THE WALL at Pensacola to have a group visit. I assume we will be having another ceremony there like we did in 98.

### **Taps**

*From letter dated 4/20/02 to Pop A Smoke HQ:*

Mrs. Janice Wilkison has informed us of the passing of her husband, Billy, (Ugly Angel; class of 68-69) of Amarillo, TX from a heart attack last September, 2001 while on a family outing in their motor home.

She will be welcomed as a continuing member of Popasmoke as per her request.

May Billy Rest in Peace.

### **Sick Call**

Almost immediately after publication of the last newsletter I got a call from Larry Turner who reported, among many other lesser facts, that the lovely Miss Kitty Aldworth had fallen and seriously injured herself. (Let us hope that she was not reading the newsletter at the time of the accident) Several days later I got a note from her saying that "yes, indeed, Larry was telling the

truth” and she had just gotten home from the hospital. On behalf of all the Archie’s and Uglies, Miss Kitty, we wish you a most speedy recovery.

### **Miracles**

This will probably get me a Pulitzer but more importantly it is good news. Chatting electronically with Roger Cook about his upcoming BIG PUMP replacement I was astounded to hear that it wouldn’t be necessary. In his own electronic words “You got it correct...don't need a transplant...my heart ain't ruined...I am doing real well...take medication though...bp today was 119/68...not bad for an old fart....remember that’s today...tomorrow?...Well...no guaranties at this age. Doing good...do 2 miles every other day...and these hills ain't flat ( I live in the Texas hill country ) just waiting around for the pns reunion, go ahead & try for the Pulitzer...who knows ...maybe it'll fly ( check with Creamer )

### **Reunion News**

Finally the news you’ve all been waiting for,

*And the menu* is Dinner choices: Chicken cordon blue, Grouper Tropicano or Prime Rib(king cut), Chef's choice starch, vegetable, salad and desert. Bread & butter, iced tea/coffee.

*And the time and location:* 6-10 pm, Friday evening, (cash bar from 6-9) The New World Landing with our own Janice Sheehan as hostess and Organinzer Supremo.

*And the cost* is a mere piddling \$27 per plate, which also includes the service charge, and a few bucks for some other squadron expenses like the tent on the beach.

Checks to be made payable to "Lew Barnes - UA Dinner" and forwarded to

Lew Barnes  
20298 NW Keller Rd  
North Plains, Or. 97133-6133

As noted above, we have already lined up General Hendrickson as the guest of honor. After the dinner, instead of screwing mecillessly with the pilots, we will be honoring those who went first, the incredible Archie’s Angels who landed at Soc Trang, April 15, 1962, the first Marine Corps tactical unit to deploy to Vietnam.

As you may have noted last month, I started an unofficial headcount. We need to start making that an official headcount. Remember first of all you do need to be a CURRENT member of the USMC/Vietnam Helicopter Association. If you need more information or need to join the Association and you have computer access, please go to <http://www.popasmoke.com> . Everything you need is right there.

If you don’t have access to a computer send a check for membership (\$35.00 a year)with your pertinent information to: **POPASMOKE, 414 Tala Drive, Concord, NC 28027-1746**

### **Reunion Headcount** (unofficial but looking good)

Len Alteno and Marine guest	Allan & Susan Cain	Gene and Marcia Camp
Bob & Ginny Case	Roger Cook	Calvin & Wanda Cormier
Sherard Dukes	Ron "Sand Dollar" Fix	Ron & Anna Gall
Jean & Suzanne Gonnevillle	Curt Gray	Oramel & Sharon Hall
Tom & Joanne Hewes	Bruce & Elaine Hansen	Bill Howarth

Daniel Houglum	Ron Ice	Bobby & Lynda Johns + 3 pax
Tom Kane	Pete King	Jerry & Turmi Kottkamp
Don & Brenda Lockwood	Ken & Raeanne Logue	Dave Luhrsen
Frank and Holly Matucheski	Romy Myszka	Sid Orr
Jim & Betsy Paetznick	Dave and Mrs. Shoopman	Bob & Madilyn Skinder
Larry and Judy Turner	Wally and Becky Walradth	Tim Wilson
	Filmore and Debby York	

## *The HMM 362 History Newsletter*

The reason that I was so willing to take over the regular newsletter when Tom ordered me to was because the two operations were fairly similar. He normally published his big ones in the winter and summer while I put out the big history ones in the spring and fall. I also sent out something to the e-mail customers about once a month, which matches Tom's pre-reunion schedule pretty well. Some of you might have felt that the History Project was going to disappear but it isn't. I just got caught up with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary project and got pulled away from the questions, digests and newsletters. From now on I will hope to blend the two together, combining current news with past events like *The Saturday Evening Post*.

I am hoping that the reunion will be a watershed of information regarding the history of the Angels. I certainly intend to be there and I hope to talk to every attendee. Jot down what you might want to tell someone who is trying to write it all down. Remember what Tom said about a tale is part of a story and the stories are the parts of the history. We are not like 265 with three authors or Scarface with two so we need to do it collectively. I have had several calls from a guy named Brokaw but I want to get a little more information before I call him back. You have that information.

### **Archie's Angels**

My headcount for the Archie's Angels who we are in contact with includes the following. If you are in touch with any others, please let me know and get them signed up with Pop A Smoke ASAP.

CT Christensen, LJ Altano, W Brelet, T Bush, C Cates, A Clapp, D. Clasen, L Cokely, W Combs, J Donnelly, J Eke, J Losey, A Kerst, E Kuleski, E Langeley, DJ Leighton, C McRaney, W Munter, T Murley, T Owens, Jim Perryman, T Pieszanski, D Pirnie, E Rose, H Rothweiler, C, Ryan, J Scanlan, L Sehnal, D Sharr, L Shirley, J Shelton, WA Smith, E Spiars, C Tubbs, D Vacca, F Walters, JC Williams, C Wimmmler, C Wood. We are also in touch with the families or widows of Bob Cramer, Gerry Dooley, Nick Kapetan, Plinn Mc Cann and Frank Quadrini.

I urge all of you to get to this reunion. We know some of you but we want to meet all of you.

### **Stolen Story**

*The following has been borrowed and heavily edited from a Newsletter called Red Clay, a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Issue No. 41, Spring 1998. I only have these pages so am unsure of the actual author. I do thank him for writing it.*

*The location of this action was the Co Roc Massif (located at XD741316, 15 km southwest of Khe Sanh Combat Base) For about two weeks in January 1968 an Army Special Projects Unit had been*

*operating there. They had found tons of rice and bunkers for thousands of troops but had yet to see any NVA. The story opens as follows:*

SFC Robert Baker was on SFC Cavanaugh's left; SFC Minnicks was on his right. The scene of what happened next is branded upon Cavanaugh's memory:

"We had maybe ten yards between us as we re walking up there, and to this day, I can still hear 'CLICK CLICK,' which is Bob and Skip taking their weapons off 'SAFE' and putting them on 'FULL AUTOMATIC.' I can hear that to this day. So we're going up there. As soon as we got to the hill, this guy jumped up out of a hole to shoot me, and when he did that, Bob was no more than three to four feet away from me, and the NVA swung his weapon away from me, and hit Bob."

SFC Baker took three very serious shots to his gut. Doc Secor went right to Baker and miraculously—considering the wounds—kept him alive. SFC James W. Moore, at the FOB-3, heard Maj Quamo request the evacuation aircraft. "We were supposed to have our standard mission complement: 3 slick Hueys and 2 Cobras, but they had pulled that off. So we had to ask the Marines,. When Maj 'Bulldog' Smith asked Col Lownds, Col Lownds said, 'I can't do that without permission from III MAF, even if I wanted to. When Maj Quamo heard 'there will be no air extraction with the Marine helicopters at Khe Sanh—' he lost his temper and he became very profane; he came up on the Marine command frequency and called some people a series of very bad names. Now some Marine pilot—a very large guy, named Upshaw in those H-34s—heard this, and he went up and got in his H-34."

SFC Moore continues, "By now the weather was absolutely horrendous! A decision was made to try to get the whole team out, so we attempted to launch with 2 or 4 gunships and a number of transport helicopters—I forget how many., We didn't even make it to the end of the runway; we almost ran into one another. It was just an impossible weather situation to control that number of aircraft. *So* we all got back down on the ground—fortunately without a midair collision, and there was a debriefing. The Army people were screaming at us that we had to get this wounded guy out of there. This extremely gutsy guy named Charlie Upshaw, a Marine Major, and his co-pilot, Captain Brad Jealous said they would take an H-34 and go out and hoist this guy out if we would send one gunship (from VMO 3) to give him a little cover. Charlie led the flight over the treetops, up and down, in and out over the treetops. On at least one point I saw a guy run out of a hut, stand there in front of the hut, and open up on us with a machinegun. All I did was give him 'the finger' as I went by—because if we turned around to go after the guy, we'd loose the H-34. We got to the zone, a depression, and Charlie found the team. He lowered his hoist and hovered motionless over this cliff situation—had to have been for 15 minutes—in this absolutely steady hover. They got the kid up in the plane. We made it back to Khe SanII and all changed our underwear." [Note: the wounded man, SFC Robert Nelson Baker, died of wounds 21 Feb '68].

SFC Moore recalls the Marine command at KSCB was extremely angry with the Marine pilots for the Co Roc rescue. [Note: Marine helicopters, unlike Army helicopters, are almost as rare as hen's teeth in combat, and this asset is very tightly controlled]. "But we told the Colonel----because we record everything that happens on the radio; we put it on tape: 'I don't know what you're going to do with the men, court-martial them or whatever, but we're going to put them in for a DFC for flying in those conditions and rescuing a man under those circumstances.'"

*Ed. I deliberately left the names of the crew members out of this story because there were more mentioned than normally would have made up a crew. If those who were involved would identify themselves, I will publish it in the next issue.*

### **New UH-34 Project**

In the next issue of the Pop A Smoke newsletter you will read an interview with Alan Weis about their project of rebuilding the combat UH-34 that I mentioned in last months newsletter. When I first began communicating with Alan I had some serious doubts about the feasibility of their project. However, their have been some major thresholds crossed, most notably the donation of Jim Moriarty's YL 42. Our own Larry Turner also contributed mightily with spare parts. If you take the time to read the interview, I think you also will be convinced that they will pull this off.

According to Alan, the arrival of all the spares and new equipment is of enormous importance but they still need money. Not many of us can contribute the 100K-150K that they need but it

might be worth \$10 or \$25 or more if you can see the benefit to having another 34 flying the air show and education circuit. They are also more than happy to provide work for anyone who really wants to work on this bird. Think of it as YL 37 or 42 in the Northeast and even if they weren't quite as dashing as us, 361 was a fine squadron having started as a ShuFly squadron (Ross's Ridge Runners) and being next to us for awhile at Ky Ha (Tweed's Tigers.)

You can learn a lot about this project at <http://www.34restoration.org> or call 631-734-5216 to volunteer. Mail checks to

Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veteran's Association, Inc  
P.O. Box 429  
Cutchogue, New York 11935-0429

### **By the Way**

Anyone interested in financing or painting a genuine Vietnam era 68 Chevy Step-side Longbed pickup, feel free to contact the editor.

### **Reunion Finery**

I have a few more inches of space to fill so will remind you about Frenchy and Johnny's Fabulous Marine Apparel Shoppe called Ultra-Marine, Inc. who manufacture these really neat items that you might want.

The Ugly or Archie's Angel shirts are pine green golf types with the Angel logo. Sizes are S-XXXL and the price is \$30.00 apiece.

The caps are the same color and are \$16.95 each. You can get both the shirt or cap with either the Angel head or the H-34. If you were an Archie's Angel just let them know and they will take care of you.

Their gunners belt buckle is a classic and although I have never seen the one for pilots I am sure it's just as fine. I would never walk into a classroom, a boardroom or a barroom without mine. I believe the buckles are \$30.00 but worth twice that.

Shipping is \$3.95 for any one item and \$1.50 for each subsequent item. Frenchy and Johnny can be reached at 850-957-9069 or e-mail them at [comprisetv3@aol.com](mailto:comprisetv3@aol.com) and tell them what you want or ask them about prices for custom items. Do it now because between now and October will be their busiest times. I just ordered ours this week.

Talk to you in about a month!!

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