

THE UGLY ANGEL

Memorial Foundation Newsletter



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President's Message

Come October 10th, 11th and 12th, we'll have the opportunity to get together again. Gerald Hail owns not one, not two, but THREE H-34s, and it sounds as if all three will be flying during our Okie II reunion, offering everybody a chance to smell a hot bird once more.

Mark Stanton has assembled a terrific deal at the Embassy Suites, with a sardine-or-seagull dinner for all Ugliers present, and we're expecting about 200.

The aspect of this reunion I find most appealing is that it will be for Ugly Angels and their guests only. We won't have to wait in line behind strangers from other squadrons, or folks we had nothing in common with. Ugliers rule!

It's probably also a fitting time for a progress report on the UA Scholarship Endowment, and to let the board of directors know what we think of the directions and goals of the organization.

See you there!

OKIE II Update from Mark Stanton

Okie II is approaching and HMM 362 Marines, Archie's and Ugliers, should make reservations at the Embassy Suite Hotel before good choices run out. Prime locations are the first to go, so reserve now to get your choice. Suites (2 rooms sleeping 4 with kitchen facilities) are \$89 per night. Contact Ms. Angela Holden, Sales Manager, at 918-622-4000. If you have any questions at all please call Mark Stanton (day)800-694-0400 or (evening) 631-462-6142.

We have tentatively scheduled a buffet dinner for Friday evening at 6 P.M. for the Ugly Angels. Dinner will be in the Main Ballroom at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Tulsa. The Ballroom will hold a maximum of 350 people and we can expand into an adjoining room if needed. Dinner will be buffet style with 3 main courses (chicken, beef and pasta or chicken, beef, fish), choice of vegetables and rice/potatoes with 3 salad choices. Soft drinks will be included and an open pay for your own hard drinks) bar. The dinner should be approx. \$22 per head. I am working out the details with the Embassy people.

Editor's Note: The latest word that I have is that there is a strong possibility that, if everything goes right, we might be getting briefed on the current state of the Corps as well as Marine Aviation by two of our own offspring officers, Major Steve Luhsen, son of Dave and Lieutenant Nick Turner, son of Larry. I remember when Majors were old men!!

Combat Aircrew Insignia

K.D. Logue sent along the following. Apparently someone had a very strange idea.

"The tradition of the Combat Aircrew Insignia goes back to WW II when the Marine Corps awarded it to aircrew members who participated in aerial combat and did not rate other aircrew insignia. The Marine Corps has continued in the use of this insignia during the Vietnam Conflict.

"It can be awarded to any enlisted Marine of any military occupational specialty who qualifies for assignment to a combat aircrew and performs such aircrew duties in combat, such as helicopter door gunner.

"The Combat Aircrew Insignia is distinct from other Marine Aviation Insignia because it is the sole insignia that can only be earned in a combat environment. It has proved to be a prestigious distinguishing device. The insignia is awarded only to those individuals who have satisfactorily participated in combat during aerial flight.

"Combat stars represent an engagement of an enemy aircraft, an engagement of an enemy vessel, or participation in offensive or defensive operations against enemy fortified positions. A maximum of three stars may be awarded for display on the Combat Aircrew Insignia.

"Combat Action Reports in excess of three stars are credited on the individual's Service Record only.

"A strong tradition is associated with the Combat Aircrew Insignia. Therefore, it does not appear to be a practical course of action to arbitrarily change the style and color of the insignia."

Semper Fi,
LtCol H. Blaha

Lt. Col. Aldworth

***Editor's note:** I have had no official word on the Colonels condition other than word from Larry Turner who said they are both at home but are very tired. You can drop them a line at IPelican Watch Way, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926.*

From Fast Eddy Creamer

Since you mentioned Lt.Col. Jim Aldworth, you might want to file this one in the back of your mind. Although, I'm not certain you will want to publish it. Check with Muddy Waters and see what he thinks.

While operating in the Rung Sat Special Zone off of the Happy Valley (Forge), down river from Saigon in the Spring of 1966, we had a Lt. by the name of "Mush" Mellon. "Mush" was unlucky enough to have made three non-recoverable water landing in an H-34. This sort-of record, may still stand today although I don't think that is what "Mush" would want to be in the record book for.

Regardless, after the incident report had been submitted to Group, Col. William Gentry Johnson (who later became a MGen.), sent a rather critical message to our Skipper. As you and I know, one doesn't actually pick to have an engine failure in an H-34; and, certainly not one over salt water. Regardless, the Group C.O. did send the message.

The Skipper sent one back with only these words, "John 8, 7". No other words were on the message.

To save you a little time, the reference was, "Let he who hath not sinned caste the first stone." I've always considered this the definition of "cojones".

So then Muddy sez

I see nothing wrong with the story as written. I remember the incident well, Colonel Aldworth was a man of great words besides being an outstanding CO. Still remember the time he and LtCol Zicknick-VMO-6 CO- kept MGEN Carl from sending us into a dark valley 85 miles SW of MCAS Chu Lai at night to reinforce a Special Forces camp that was surrounded by NVA and had been for a month. They never attacked the camp but were waiting for us, those of us who survived the approach into the dark valley using the Chu Lai Tacan as a navigational aide until we had to start the decent in the dark. MGEN Carl was not going. He and his UN-1E were going to stay at MCAF Ky HA.

For your additional info, Mike "Mush" Melin went on to retire from United Airlines as a Captain. Believe he was the only USMC Aviator to log three landing in the water in the H-34. We were able to recover only one of the three helos, the one that went in near by Subic Bay. Semper Fi Bill H20s

Death to Turbines

By Cdr Bob Buerger, USN (Ret), Commanding Officer, VT.30 (AD Skyraider training squadron)

We gotta get rid of these turbines, they are ruining aviation. We need to go back to big round engines.

(MCAA Editor's note: Turbines are as round as you can get. What the hell are you talking about?)

(Author's note: Go away! They know what I mean.)

Anybody can start a turbine, you just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START" and then remember to move it back to "ON" after a while. My PC is harder to start. Cranking a round engine requires skill, finesse and style. On some planes, the pilots aren't even allowed to do it. Turbines start by whining for a while, then give a small lady-like poot and start whining louder. Round engines give a satisfying rattle-rattle, click-click, BANG, more rattles, another BANG, a big macho fart or two, more clicks, a lot of smoke and finally a serious, low-pitched roar. We like that. It's a guy thing.

When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and you can concentrate on the flight ahead. Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan: useful, but hardly exciting. Turbines don't break often enough, leading to aircrew boredom, complacency and inattention. A round engine at speed looks and sounds like its going to blow at any minute. This helps concentrate the mind. Turbines don't have enough control levers to keep the pilot's attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights. Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman lanterns. Round engined planes smell like God intended flying machines to smell.

I think I hear the nurse coming down the hall! I gotta go!

"Piece originally run in the Winter 2002 "The Yellow Sheet" magazine and is reprinted with the permission of the Marine Corps Aviation Association."

Job Opportunities

As many of you know, we have a new website and it promises to take up a fair amount of my time. While I greatly enjoy writing and publishing the newsletters, both the regular one and the history one, one part of the job troubles me. I need some help keeping up the 3 main lists. These are the membership list, the snail mail list and the e-mail list. If there is someone out there who is really computer savvy (MS Excel), incredibly detail oriented with some free time to spare, have I got a deal for you.

Related tasks would be monitoring Pop A Smoke for new members and, if you wanted, after getting up to speed, maybe taking over some of the publishing or mailing duties. Think about it. It would really be helpful.

MIA

The above is related to the fact that many people have fallen of our e-mail list or have moved and not notified me. I remember having it beat into me that we don't leave Marines behind. I am not sure where e-mail fits into this but **YOU NEED TO TELL ME WHEN YOU HAVE MOVED.**

Found

The following folks have recently appeared. The most impressive thing about the newsletter when I first signed on was the recognition by Tom of everyone who got in touch with us. For awhile, like when *Helicopter Heroes* first showed up, we were getting so many new members that this was not possible. Now that things have slowed down, I will try to keep you all posted on the newbies. The two most recent that I know of are Steve Hunter, who was a mech, I think in the class of 67-68 and Dick Moser. He was the pilot when Rich Houghton grabbed that redioman out of the mud hole.

New Web Site

If you have been checking in we are adding pages pretty regularly now. Brad got the 67-68 cruise book added last week and I have converted several of the History Special Editions over into html. The plan is to first convert the material that presently exists into html which is what it takes to make a document readable on your web browser. I have been doing this sort of stuff for almost 10 years now but the program we have to use now is just different enough from what I have been used to, to give me fits. I think we are well up on the learning curve now. Next we will try to manufacture lists of who we all are. That will primarily be your name and e-mail if you have one. Please drop me a note or give me a call if you do not want your name published or if you don't want your e-mail address given out. If you don't have e-mail but really would like phone calls at 3 am let me know and I will add it.

The next phase will be to start illustrating as many stories as we can with photos. We have 66-67 and 67-67 yearbooks on line. I don't know for sure if there is a complete Archie's Angel cruise book but if there is and someone wants to loan it to me, we can scan it in. There are also big groups of people who are not in cruise books. Does anyone have a lot of 65-66 or 68-69 identifiable photos or slides? If you do, please e-mail me. I do have a box of 65 slides from Bob Nickens.

New UH-34 Found

Curtis King, down in Texas has recently discovered a new friend with a new toy. He got e-mail from just retired S/Sgt Dave Vargas, an H-46 Super Mech who volunteered to do some work at the Chino Air Museum where they have assigned him to clean up YL 75. Bill has yet to get back with some real bureau numbers but this one is painted as 154895. That might have been made up

for a quick paint job. If anyone wants to get in touch with Dave. Let me know and I will give you an e-mail address.

How you say it still means a lot.

Usually within 3 or 4 minutes of sending out the latest newsletter I discover something really stupid that I said, said wrong or forgot to say. I'm not alone in this. Friday night, my Sweetie was flying from Portland, Maine to South Carolina with a switch in Philadelphia. You might have noticed that there was pretty heavy weather that night and the airlines were really backed up. She had already called a few times to let me know about schedule changes. At one point, when I really could sense some irritation in her voice, I could hear the following announcement regarding the a/c she was waiting on, "Flight XXXX is within range. We'll let you know the minute it hits the ground." I guess she and I were relieved when they finally gave up and told folks they would resume traveling the following morning.

Speaking of me saying stupid things; announcing the last issue, I mentioned Memorial Day and how the Uglys need to remember their buddies. What I failed to do was mention the loving spouses, children and siblings whom our brothers left behind. Please accept my apologies.

News from Iowa

Few of you realize that I only write what Larry Turner tells me to, at least about Iowa. Not only does he know a lot but he is also a very senior H-34 pilot with about 6,000 hours in them and a total of something like 17,000 in helicopters. For those of you who don't know, it was Larry flying YL 42 at the 98 Reunion in Pensacola. Anyway, Larry calls me up now and then to tell me things that I need to know and one thing he did mention is that his above named Marine son, Nick is in helo school now and is also gonna get married pretty soon, like July 4th or 5th to Miss Kim Wilson, not to be confused with our own Miss Tim Wilson who I think is photographed in sort of a compromising position in the 68 cruise book.

Speaking of Officers, leadership, etc.

It appears that the senior management of the UAMF have been moonlighting again giving leadership lessons to the new guys at the Basic School. Hopefully in the next issue one of them will tell us what the new guys get for their \$29 .95.

Books of Interest

A while back I mentioned some books that I thought a few of you might enjoy and since some of you were kind enough to comment, I shall do it again. The first two are books that I happen to be reading now. The first one was recommended by one of my favorite ground-pounder generals, Anthony Zinni and that led to the second one. The third is a full-length book review that was daytime-work-related. The first two happen to be about Democrat congressmen.

From Vietnam to 9/11 by John Murtha with John Plashal. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003. About \$30.00

Murtha enlisted in the 50's, served as a DI at Parris Island and then was selected for OCS. Just as he graduated, the Korean War ended, or at least the fighting did. He went back to Johnstown, PA where he ran the local rifle company until Vietnam came along. As a major he volunteered and went over as an intel officer. Upon his return he ran for congress and eventually won and I believe he is still there. Because of his military experience he wound up on various committees, most notably the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee and was also selected for numerous on-site inspections and election observing missions starting with Lebanon, then

Afghanistan followed by the Philippines and Panama which is where I was when I found the next book. In short this book is a pretty good recap of where our military operations have taken us since Vietnam told by a Marine. The most important point is that it paints a continuous picture of the past 25 years. One observation that he makes is how the Afghani freedom fighters are the ones who actually brought down the Soviet Union. They were being annihilated by the Soviet gunships until another congressman, Charlie Wilson got involved. This sort of stuck in my head and as luck would have it, right there on the New Book Shelf was:

Charlie Wilson's War : the Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History by George Crile. NY, NY, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003. \$26.00

This really is an incredible story that apparently is true or at least reasonably so. As mentioned above, the Afghanis were doing okay on the ground but everytime they ambushed a Russian convoy, the hinds came screaming out of the sky, killing not only the mujahideen but every nearby village, civilian and cow. The book describes how poor old innocent Charlie and a very strange cast of renegade CIA guys, conservative Texas Belly Dancers and a full brace of politicians get them the Stingers that they need to do the job. Even, if perhaps it is not 100% true, you gotta love it unless Mr. Television has really got you good. A great vacation read. Trust me!

This next one is not so exciting but for some of you, it might be just the ticket.

U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft: an Illustrated Design History by Norman Freeman. Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2002. \$85.00 non member, \$68.00 member.

In the winter of 66-67, a Marine corporal helicopter mechanic was flying missions off of the U.S.S. Iwo Jima and Valley Forge in support of combat troops in Vietnam. If you told him that someday he would be writing a review of a book about those kinds of ships, he would have thought you peculiar. In fact that corporal never even considered those LPHs and LPDs as amphibious anythings. Amphibious was a part of Marine Corps history long since past. Back when Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal were famous battles; not the names of some of the ships that he was flying from.

In retrospect, however, those battles were only two of many amphibious landings which led to our winning World War II. This book is actually about how America and Britain developed the ships, tactics, and techniques for fighting a whole new kind of war which involved transporting enormous numbers of men and equipment across the seas and then got them ashore to fight without benefit of ports or piers.

Those who know anything at all about the Marine Corps know that it is the amphibious service, the seaborne infantry. Most think that this capability grew from the Marine's early days when they were posted aboard the larger naval vessels as guards and riflemen. There is no doubt that they made numerous landings with the ships company for various military reasons but generally these were small actions. In contrast, the type of landings and the vessels described in this book were designed for very large operations, most of which were on Pacific Islands when there was no other way to get there.

Rather than having evolved through Marine Corps doctrine, we learn that modern amphibious warfare was more a result of the British and their need for ships early in the 1940s. In the First World War, they had made a few attempts such as Gallipoli with mixed results. When France fell, Churchill was determined to put British troops onto the Continent. Their shipbuilding capacity was so drawn that orders were placed with American companies. From there it was a short step for the naval architects and then the Marines to see the solution for our upcoming involvement in the Pacific.

Those solutions, according to U.S. Amphibious Ships and Craft were far more complex than many thought. In fact, it is no understatement to say that any interested reader will learn a great deal about a relatively unknown segment of military history. One thing learned is the enormous range of ships and craft associated with amphibious operations. Any war movie aficionado is familiar with a few of the mike boats always shown but there were numerous other types. Here we find enormous transport ships for both troops and tanks all the way down to miniature tanks and their own transporters as well as those specializing in command and control as well as fire support. Everyone knows that the Marines used tanks but there are also numerous other vehicles, some even used in Vietnam that qualified as amphibious. I don't recall seeing helicopters referred to as amphibious here but they are often compared to specific sized vehicles based on mission and troop capacity.

Those readers familiar with the Marine Corps are as familiar with the term "vertical envelopment" as they are with the motto "Semper Fidelis." Most would believe that the concept of flying helicopters from ships over or around an enemy evolved with the development of the helicopter. The author explains it quite differently. He states that once the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan in 1945 war was forever changed. It was immediately assumed that these bombs would henceforth and forever be a part of every commander's arsenal. Small boats massed in great numbers beyond the surf would make extremely vulnerable targets for such a weapon. Transport helicopters flying off of troop transports offered enormous flexibility regarding timing, concentration and landing areas and thus was born a whole new concept; fortunately never used for the originally intended purpose.

My overall impression of this book is that it is truly outstanding as both a treatise on the history of amphibious warfare as practiced in the past century by U.S. forces and as a reference for a large number of lesser-known naval vessels. The book is copiously illustrated with photographs, drawings and charts. The final chapters depicting the foreseeable future will be of great interest to many readers. Because the book is a history of the designs, not of the wars, what you will not find are references to various commanders of these vessels or the units deployed from them. Although it is obviously a necessity, I was a little worn down trying to keep track of all of the LP..s, LV..s, LC..s, etc. that are a part of this story but I survived, if not mastered, them.

This book belongs in any library with a naval history or architecture collection or one with patrons with such an interest. Also, any library where you can smell the salt air would be a likely prospect.

Things you need to buy

Murphy's Laws of Combat by Marion Sturkey

A book from the author of Bonnie-Sue and Warrior Culture of the U.S. Marines.

The new Murphy's Laws of Combat is a 241 page walk on the humorous side of military life. Hundreds and hundreds of spirited, up-beat, and "politically impossible" combat laws, axioms, rules, and principles for American Warriors. Plus, profit from Murphy's rules of sex and seduction, Murphy's beer-drinking guide, Murphy's principles of stupidity, and much more. Also, historic military quotations, battle legacy, and somber reflections on combat from America's warrior elite. This is the book for warriors, or warrior wannabes, who enjoy a good laugh - usually at themselves.

Call 864-443-5081, or send \$19.00 (\$15.00 for the book, plus \$4.00 for Priority Mail shipping) to: Heritage Press, 204 Jefferson St., P.O. Box 333, Plum Branch, SC 29845.

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We're custom so..we do requests...Eagle Globe & Anchor on BVD's if so inclined!

Frenchy also offers a complete line of Ugly Angel and Archie's Angel apparel suitable for any reunion, tee shirts, golf shirts and the pilot and gunner belt buckles are gorgeous and service is quick. Tell him you read about him in the newsletter

As soon as you are sure you are going to be in Oklahoma, let Mark or I know. I expect that we will be passing the same kind of info that we did for the PNS Reunion, last October.

Please, Please, Please..... if you have access to a computer, start using our website and drop me a note via e-mail so I can change you over to e-mail notification. **Thanks!!**

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