

Happy 228th Marines!!!

President's Message from newly anointed Lew Barnes

Fellow Angels,

It is an understatement to suggest that the Oki II reunion was a success. From all the conversations I was privy to it was a resounding success. Mark Stanton, the reunion coordinator, did an absolutely fantastic job. There was a great time had by all. For those of you who have the inclination you may want to express to Gerald and Lillie directly your thanks for the time and money they have put into this endeavor. (YL 37 Group Foundation, 14157 E.580 Rd., Inola, OK 74036 or e-mail at YL37@aol.com).

On a more serious note during the reunion the board of directors had the opportunity to meet for several hours for the first time. A number of issues were discussed covering such topics as the physical state of our memorial (which is need of maintenance) to what is to become of our organization in the future. Thought provoking questions were introduced such as are we going to continue down the road as we function today until our organization simply fades into the sunset or is there an opportunity to extend the life of our organization into perpetuity as is the case with our beloved Corps. Other than the social benefits of what we have developed what do we want to leave as a legacy? We are exploring these questions in an effort to establish a platform which will bring clarity to our mission. In that we are all in this together, I would encourage you to consider the possibilities that exist and make them known to one of the board members.

(See the end of the news letter. Their names do not belong on page 1 of anything short of *The Police Gazette*)

Look forward to seeing all of you in a couple of months in Reno.

Semper Fidelis,

Lew Barnes

Okie II Reunion-Flyover-Mardi Gras

Friday

I have to begin with the confession that I was pumped up for this trip, but still never imagined it would be so neat. My day began when buddy Brad and I arrived at the hotel and found the rest of the metal shop and wannabe tin-benders waiting to take us out to lunch. Somehow we wound up at a Minnesota Barbecue place in Tulsa but that was just fine. We had a good time and they got me back just in time to really meet all of the board of directors face to face for the first time and also to see how Sergeant Barnes was gonna handle this "motley crew."

Immediately after the meeting it was old time in the lounge where everyone was re-meeting one another. I guess that went on for a bit till it was announced that 'chow is served' in the main dining room. Well I tell you, it was packed and it was fun and the food was delicious. I guess my high point was meeting Gerald Hail for the first time after so many years of hearing about him. I had heard for years what kind of a man he was and the intense loyalty he generated from guys like ET and Gary but it was still something to meet him. I will go into no more details. He wouldn't approve and everyone who met him knows what I mean and if you ain't met him yet, you need to.

Dinner was grand. Heaps of food and delicious!! I had done a little finagling and let some guys stay in my room who really didn't deserve such a privilege but who did keep the beer flowing pretty much non-stop.

After dinner there was sort of a combination show, award night and auction. It was the dangdest thing you ever saw and out of the ashes, a true hero arose. Tim Wilson wound up getting into the most awful, most embarrassing situation a human Marine could get into. The man was trapped; surrounded on every side but, at the end he emerged unscathed and unbowed. Tim Wilson is the Man!!

Saturday

...started with a huge breakfast at the Embassy Suites but then people started sobering up and heading out to Gerald and Lilly's place for a late morning muster. There was a lot of milling around and gawking at the three gorgeous UH-34s parked on the ramp. I guess I was not the only person who thought they had passed into another time zone or wharp or something. There was so much to see and so many old and new friends to see. Sometimes it makes you wanna tremble..... as they used to say.

After a considerable amount of lollygagging we wound our way into the hangar admiring the hundreds of artifacts the YL 37 group had collected plus the work that had gone into the hangar. You'da thought Ole General Walt was coming by for one of those morale building inspections where everyone stood at parade rest, ignoring the fact that he was 3 or so hours late-again.

In awhile the festivities and formalities began. In general there were 200-250 folks at these long tables that filled the hangar. Up front was sort of a podium-stage arrangements where the heavies all sort of looked like they'd be just as happy elsewhere. It gets a bit blurry but various old stalwarts like ET, Mark Stanton and Ben Cascio kept introducing various speakers who prayed, praised and proclaimed.

Although this was definitely a day for old Marines we had our youngsters. First there was our color guard of Broken Arrow Marines; they were so sharp. Then there were the two sons of class of 65 HACs, Phil (Larry) Turner and Dave Luhrsen, Lieutenant Nick and Major Steve respectively. Steve gave a brief on the Corps today while Nick gave an overview of what today's flight student goes through.

Gerald got lots of proclamations and a flight suit but still never did say too much. His wife, Lilly made a very nice speech which really showed the brotherhood that existed between all of the YL 37 group whether they were our guys, neighbors or employees. Pretty much near the end of it all Lilly brought in a fellow named Charlie Chibitty, Sole Surviving WWII Comanche Code Talker. If you weren't there you probably never know that the Army had a Comanche counterpart to our Navaho code talkers who landed at Normandy Beach. He was a grand fellow who very happy to be with some more old warriors. He had some very funny stories to tell that would have been seen as very plausible to any of us. All of this was followed by as good a barbecue dinner as was ever had outside of South Carolina.

After lunch they lit off the three 34s and, of course, they didn't all leap into life at the same moment. They burped and belched, people yelled, ripped open clamshell doors, yelled some more and after awhile it really looked and sounded as if 3 old war birds were getting it together. From here on out, you really would have had to of been there but it was awesome. Since some pilots had put on a few pounds or there parts weren't as limber as they were in the 60's the YL 37 folks had provided what can be best described as the very opposite of those stupid pilot egress systems that the jet guys used. Our UH-34 Pilot Access Sytem was somewhat more cumbersome than thise jet-thingies as its major components consisted of a very large fork lift, a palate, a chair and 3 or 4 young guys charged with force feeding some of these aviators through the sliding cockpit windows on the left hand side---but it worked and I think everyone who ever had worn the wings got to fly Left Seat. Keep in mind that all of this was being filmed by National Geographic who still intend to publish the story, probably in the March issue.

Two of the 34's were not configured, insurance wise, to carry pax but they stayed busy with re-acclimating the pilots. YL 37 on the other hand was taking a full load on each trip. A few images have really stayed with me. One is of Archie Clapp in the left seat looking kind of amazed as Gerald took off backwards in YL 75, designated as such because it was the bird that Archie flew into Vietnam 41 years ago beginning Marine involvement in the Vietnam War. Something Archie had never experienced before was that his wife was in YL37 right behind him and Gerald in the chase bird.

Another vision, I guess I'll never forget is seeing Willie Sproule at about 75 flying as crew chief while the younger, (at about 72), former XO and owner operator of the UAMF, Tom Hewes flew left seat. Who ever could have imagined that happening even a few years ago.

Brad Ryti, who is building our web site told me afterwards that it was just amazing seeing all of these old men climbing into the helos and 15 minutes later jumping out as love struck boys, practically.

After all of that flying the rest was just anti-climax. How can you ever thank anyone enough for going to all of that trouble and expense just for us and only for us. I don't believe you can. I just hope they feel it for as long as they live.

For the last few years, when someone asks me how I am I always reply, "Better than I deserve." My new response is, "far better than I deserve."

Thank you all, Gerald, Lilly and everyone of the YL 37 Group!!!!

Not all is Glad Tidings - 3 RTBs

Fate has dealt us some tough blows. Since our last issue we have lost three important members of our family.

Joanne Hewes, beloved wife and companion to Tom succumbed on September 17th to Carcinoid Syndrome which she battled for twenty-six months. We all owe her a tremendous debt in that no husband alone could do as much for an outfit as she encouraged him to do for us, his second family.

Colonel Paul Moreau died, a brave and true Marine to the last on Friday 15 August 2003. He was one of the original Archie's Angels and a captain at that time. Paul had had spinal surgery several weeks before his death and that he never really recovered from the general anesthesia. He ultimately died of complications from pneumonia. His decision to undergo surgery was to relieve the pain he was suffering as a result of an auto accident some months earlier.

Lt. Col Dick Cline, CO of HMM-362 in fall of 1967. According to his daughter in law he had been diagnosed with cancer and had surgery which unfortunately was not successful. He passed away June 3. The Skipper was one of the Ugly's most inspiring leaders but he had a rich history that few of us knew about; he was Joe Foss's wingman in WWII.

Note: We have received extensive tributes to both these pilots. Too extensive to include in these pages, so we will try and get Memorial pages on line asap to give folks the space to honor one another properly.

Lost and Found

Bob Bush had been a regular recipient of mail but disappeared for awhile. Now he's found at gswbush@aol.com still in Youngstown OH but now chief of Police, apparently a candidate for city Mayor—found by Mark Stanton. Bob was also the crew chief on Ben's last flight, the one in the movie

As if one Chief of Police wasn't enough, here comes **Bob Wunderlich**, Chief of Police, Deerfield, NH. He can be reached at chiefrhw@metrocast.net

Once was lost--**Newt Wakeman**- flight surgeon. Now an orthopedic surgeon in Springfield MO. Can be reached at irshwlfhd5@aol.com found by Dick Moser.

Bill Wiedower at wcbball@cs.com who served in 68-69 also checked in.

Glad to have found any and all of you. We really do need to start a massive recruiting effort.

Speaking of recruiting, do you all know we have a new Personnel Officer? John Burns who was a pilot in the 67-68 time frame has taken on the job of straightening up our mailing lists and other things that

I have screwed up. All additions, deletions, PCS, pay gripes etc. should be sent to John at UAPers@cox.net

Communications of Note

Rich Houghton writes in response to Dick Moser's diary in the last issue that he recognized the Captains 19 September 66 entry and hadn't realized after all those years that they had ridden together on the wild side twice in less than a week. Referring to Dick's comment about whacking the blades, Rich went on to say that after taking the body to Delta Med and returned to the SAR pad at Chu Lai. When they shut the "Teri E" down they discovered a "real mess." Two main blades which happened to be opposite each other had bent spars. The two other blades, also opposite each other, had a few torn up pockets each. Obviously, the opposing damage balanced out because we never suspected a thing a thing and good old "Teri E" had just flown on as smooth as ever.

Rich does disagree with Dick's comments referring to the other birds in the flights as Hueys. "No Way" sez Houghton. They were 361's 34s. "I can never forget the tiger backs or the "Tarbush" call sign."

Steve Hucal wrote about the loss of Corporal Thomas Boyd III and YL8 when they blew an engine departing the Repose.

I was the crew chief on YL 8 when it went into the drink. Doc Jones was also on board and yes Cpl Boyd was my gunner. He had his bullet bouncer over his mae west and could not get it opened nor I. After YL 8, I was assigned to YL 9, I think) and got it all shot up at Khe Sahn and it never flew again once we got it back aboard ship. One more thing that I forgot about YL 8, the plane was red lined to go back to the states for a complete overhaul but because it was still in good shape (right!) it was extended and the damn engine blew a piston or a valve let loose and screwed up the engine. Either way, there was a load pop and than the hissing of air as we auto-ed into Davy Jones's locker. That was not a good day for me to say the least. One good thing though, the three medevacs were all head wounds/stretchers and would have drowned if we lost that plane before we landed on the Repose.... Doc Jones was with me when YL 8 went into the drink. When the plane was rolling underwater, he told me that I kept pushing on his head with my foot when we were on the outside of the plane trying to get to the surface.

Steve also reported that after being with the Illinois State Police he has been an investigator for Caterpillar for several years. Drop him a line at Hucal_Steve_J@cat.com

Found and Lost

The following seem to have fallen off of our lists. Can you help and let us know where they are?

Jent Petersen	Larry Fraser	Lynn Harliss	Ted Jones
Noel Logan	Rick Sarmiento	Richard St. Pierre	Joe Waters

Book Review from Archie Clapp

A new book has been released entitled FLYBOYS. The author is James Bradley, who wrote the best seller: FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS, which was the life story of the men who raised the famous flag on Iwo Jima in 1945. Bradley's father was one of them.

This book concerns the aviators who were shot down at Chichi Jima, a heavily defended island north of Iwo, and subsequently executed by the Japanese defenders of the island. While he was writing this book, Bradley got my phone number (from where I don't know) and called me about a half dozen times to clarify some points. The reason he looked me up is one of the captives was a squadron mate of mine and he was just a few planes ahead of me in our attack dive and I saw him get a wing shot-off and witnessed his successful bail-out. As a result of our telecons I'm mentioned a few times in the book. A major part of the book is about the first President Bush because Chichi Jima is where he got shot-down.. Indeed, Bush and Bradley made a trip together to Iwo Jima to prepare a documentary on the subject. If you're at all interested in this matter, you can go to Bradley's home page: www.jamesbradley.com. There you'll find a schedule of his appearances to promote the book and the documentary. Because of the Bush angle and because Bradley already has a best seller to his credit, this will likely be a best seller too.

Semper Fi! Arch

Promotion

ANNAPOLIS – Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. today announced the appointment of (HMM-362's own) David H. Hugel as the next administrator of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA).

“David Hugel is uniquely qualified to lead our aggressive effort take customer service at the MVA to the next level,” said Governor Ehrlich. “His experience in licensing and safety issues on the national level with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators will be invaluable to the citizens of Maryland. David's background combined with his focus on the needs of the customer make him the right person to assume leadership of a state agency that literally touches us all.

Along with Dave's 4 years in the Corps, he shares something else that keeps showing up, a law degree and a Masters in Criminal Justice. I guess head of the MVA must be something like being the Chief of Police!! Congratulations, Dave

Web Pages

They're still coming along. Have a little patience and we will get some more material up. Brad and I have just had a variety of personal issues pop up. We have plenty of material and ideas. We just need a little time—“Trust me.”

I think one thing that you will soon see is that the website will take over a lot of the functions previously associated with this newsletter. In many cases you will probably get an-e-mail telling you to log on to get the latest scoop.

Reunion

The reunion is still scheduled for July 8th through 11 at the Reno Hilton in Guess Where, Nevada. There have been some changes but our own Tom Hewes is the Pop A Smoke VP now so they are bound to be improvements. One thing that is always the same is that you have to be a member of Pop A Smoke to attend. If you are not a member, now is the time to sign up as membership goes from November 10 to November 9 of the following year. To re-up just head over to <http://WWW.POPASMOKE.COM> and do it.

Mailing Services

Since Tom started the newsletter, one of the most painful jobs has been to get it printed, then folded and stuffed and stamped. The internet helped a lot but it still took about as long to do the manual labor as it did to write the darn thing. Well, we have now been saved as Mark Stanton has volunteered to take the mission. I and my 3 dogs most graciously thank Mark and whoever is taking it over.

Next issue

The regular schedule has been two issues a year as well as two issues of the History Newsletter each year that doesn't have a reunion and 6 issues leading up to the reunion in those years that do. This got a little flummoxed this year when we had 2 reunions in a row. We oughta be back in print about February, 04. You all have great holidays and see you then.

Final Thoughts

Over the last several months, we have lost some of our best people. In several of those cases we were caught short, not having too much information at hand on a given individual and that has always made me feel bad. If you were a member of this squadron, you deserve recognition and a chance to set the record straight

On the wild assumption that all of us are going are going to RTB at a not too convenient moment, please consider jotting down a few words or pages that you might like to share with your buddies about your life, family and service. It would make my, or the next editor's job a lot easier and your obit might be a lot more complete.

Not to be mercenary, but when you are putting some words together, you might also think of pointing some of your excess cash in the direction of the Association. I think there are several programs coming up that could always use a little funding help. If you are interested in some sort of memorial gift, drop Dave Luhrsen a line. His e-mail is listed in the Board of Directors following directly.

Board of Directors

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Bob Skinder	The Press	rskinder@att.net
Mark Stanton	NCOIC Parties	mstanton@optonline.net

Closing thoughts

Thanks to everyone involved in that wonderful time in Oklahoma; the Hails, the YL 37 Foundation, the neighbors, the mechs, the pilots, the young Marines, the old Marines, all the visitors and the friends. It was so great to meet and re-meet so many of you. Stay in touch!!

Clothing thoughts

Frenchy has a few of the Inola, OKIE II shirts left; only \$12.00 + \$3.. for postage.

Only Large and XL left. They really are nice. Write Frenchy and Johnnie at COMPRISETV3@aol.com

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