



# THE SCOOP SHEET

Issue 47

*Information For And About Members Of The First  
Marine Aircraft Wing Association – Vietnam Service*  
[www.1stmaw.com](http://www.1stmaw.com)

Spring 2014



YN 19 departs the National Museum of Marine Corps following its donation to the museum by Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association. The helicopter is headed for the museum's storage and restoration area where it will be stored until it goes on display in 2016 as the next stage of the museum's expansion effort.



Home in DaNang



VNFA323 and VMFA115 in DANang

## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>PAGE 2</b>	<b>Presidents Letter</b>
<b>PAGE 3</b>	<b>Membership Notes</b>
<b>PAGE 4-6</b>	<b>Shufly Marines</b>
<b>PAGE 7-8</b>	<b>Reunion Photos</b>
<b>PAGE 9</b>	<b>Service Numbers</b>

**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ...**



Semper Fi Marines .

After an abnormal winter in the east We made it to another year .I've been working by phone on Reunion 2015 before making a trip to Pensacola, Florida. Seems we have a very small window for a reasonable priced spring reunion in the springtime and very little chance of a beach hotel . Hope to make a trip to Florida. in the next few months and have good news for you in the next Scoop. Thanks to Frenchy Aka Norm LaFontaine for his help in contacting Lt. Col. David Glassman aka G Man, an expert in Pensacola Vet Reunions. Be assured that Paco is on the job and our next reunion will be just as good if not better than New Orleans. Al Frater and I will be attending the next National Marine Corps Council meeting at The Pentagon this month with a special invite to attend the evening parade at The Marine Barracks 8th & I .

Always proud to attend and remember that we will be Marines for life ! As is our tradition w will be laying our Association wreath at The Wall on Memorial Day. I'll try to make it, but I know that Bill Fitzgerald will be there for us as always. Anyone else that will be at The Wall that day is also invited to honor our hero's. This November will be the 30th Anniversary of The Three Soldiers at The Wall. Anyone interested in meeting in DC for an informal USMC birthday celebration, please contact us ASAP as I might still be able to get a block of rooms at The Doubletree in Crystal City. Also still requesting pictures from our New Orleans reunion and your days in the Nam and your stories for our Scoop or post on our Facebook page. Anyone still interested in a CD of the formal pictures from New Orleans please contact us . Help our scholarship fund with a contribution. As always I want to thank Al for his great work on our Scoop and to Dave Hugel, our historian for all his great stories . The delay in this Scoop was due to my hope of having definite news of the Pensacola reunion, but will have better news in our next Scoop .

SEMPER FIDELIS !

Frank Paco Arce  
Association President



## MEMBERSHIP NOTES

### DUES RENEWALS

Please send in your yearly dues of \$25.00. Send them to:

First Marine Aircraft Wing Association—Vietnam Service  
c/o Jerry Sergeant—Membership  
5282 Ousterhout Drive  
Sterling MI 48659

Any questions contact Jerry Sergeant [jleesarge@hotmail.com](mailto:jleesarge@hotmail.com) Subject should say First maw.

### 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](mailto:wayco@comcast.net) and please cc Frank Arce at [frankpaco69@aol.com](mailto:frankpaco69@aol.com) and Al Frater at [teanal@optonline.net](mailto:teanal@optonline.net). THE SCOOP CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE WEB SITE **WWW.1stMAW.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..

### LOCATOR LIST

There is now an updated locator list. Anyone that sees someone they want to contact, then they need to email Wayne Cook at [wayco@comcast.net](mailto:wayco@comcast.net) or call him at 425-457-6931 and he will send the information to that person to contact them.

### PX

We have removed the PX page from this issue due to some price changes and that we were getting very few inquiries. However if you want to order any 1st MAW stuff please call Wayne Cook 425-457-6931 or email him at **[wayco@comcast.net](mailto:wayco@comcast.net)**

### NEW WEB PAGE URL

Our WEB page is now accessed at **WWW.1stmaw.com**. This will make it easier to remember and it will be continually worked on to make it better.

### 1st MAW NOW ON FACEBOOK

We are now moving to the modern age and have a Group on FACEBOOK. If you are a FACEBOOK user please join our Group. at “**First Marine Air wing Association - Vietnam Service**”. If you are not a FACEBOOK member, join FACEBOOK and our Group. Information and photos will continue to be posted on our group. Please post any pictures or comments on our group.

**Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association Donates Restored UH-34D  
helicopter to National Museum of the Marine Corps  
By David H. Hugel**

What began as a dream to honor fellow Marine helicopter pilots and crewman from HMM-361 became a reality last November when a group of Vietnam veterans donated a restored UH-34D helicopter to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, where it will become a permanent exhibit depicting the important role that helicopter played during the Vietnam War.

The inspiration for the helicopter restoration effort was Mike Weiss, a crew chief with HMM-361 at Marble Mountain in 1969, seeing a restored UH-34D flying over Pensacola Beach at the 1998 Pop-A-Smoke reunion. Knowing that his squadron had flown 34's during its first deployment to Vietnam in 1963, Weiss rounded up a few squadron mates to form Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association with the goal of buying and restoring a UH-34 to honor squadron members killed during the Vietnam War.

The helicopter selected by the Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association for restoration was a UH-34D, Bureau Number 150570, which rolled off Sikorsky's assembly line in October 1963 and saw extensive combat service in Vietnam, including three tours with HMM-361. The colorful story of the aircraft's selection, restoration and numerous public appearances was featured in an article by the author that appeared in the August 2013 issue of Leatherneck magazine.

In a nutshell, during the five-year restoration effort during which volunteers logged more than 40,000 hours of painstaking work, the helicopter once condemned to an aircraft bone yard was restored to become a flying symbol of a beloved workhorse of the Vietnam War. Even with the donation of sweat equity and numerous critical parts, the restoration cost more \$350, 000. Following its restoration, the helicopter spent eight years making appearance at a variety of air shows and Marine Corps commemorative events.

On November 8, 2013, more than 50 years after first entering Marine Corps service, Bureau Number 150570 proudly adorned with the markings of HMM-361 and designated YN 19, flew into a clearing adjacent to the National Museum of the Marine Corps to begin a new chapter in its service to our country. During a brief ceremony Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association president Al Weiss turned the venerable aircraft over to Lin Ezell, museum Director where it is destined for display.

According to the museum's aviation curator, Ben Kristy, the helicopter is in excellent condition and will need little preservation work; however, it is not scheduled to be placed on public display until 2016 as part of the first phase of planned museum expansion efforts.



On November 15, 2008 YN 19 participated in the dedication of a bridge in Sag Harbor, New York honoring Navy Cross recipient LCpl Jordon C. Haerter.



Restored UH-34D YN 19 in flight at a 2006 Air Show at Jones Beach, Long Island New York.



Restored YN 19 arrives at National Museum of Marine Corps on November 8, 2013 for ceremony donating it the museum



Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association president Al Weiss and Director of the National Museum of the Marine Corps Lin Ezell, at November 8, 2013 ceremony turning over the restored UH-34 D helicopter to the museum where it will go on display in 2016.

## Remembering Da Nang in 1963 By David H. Hugel

I arrived at the Da Nang airbase in April 1963, just one year after the first Marines deployed to Vietnam as Task Element 79.3.5, code named SHUFLY. Trained as an aerial photographer, I was assigned to the base photo lab where our primary responsibility was processing and printing aerial recon film for intelligence analysis and mission planning.

The American public and many Marines knew little about Vietnam at the time and less about the small contingent of Marines serving there. SHUFLY consisted of a small headquarters staff, a helicopter squadron that rotated ever 3-4 months, and a subunit of MABS -16, that provided all the vital services needed to keep the base running.

I have written in previous articles about Marine helicopter missions in support of ARVN forces fighting Viet Cong insurgents, and the airbase where we lived and worked, but little about the city of Da Nang, where we pulled liberty, or nearby Marble Mountain and China Beach where we relaxed weekends.

Marines didn't have to travel far from the barracks compound to get our laundry done and have a cold beer or soda before the EM Club opened at 1800 weekdays. It was a short stroll out the back gate, across the two lane highway and railroad tracks that paralleled the barbed wire fence on that side of the base to Dog Patch where such services were readily available. By day, the Vietnamese merchants were friendly and gladly catered to our needs, but the area was "Off Limits" after dark. The reason we were told was that these same merchants welcomed the business of the VC, who often infiltrated Dog Patch from the nearby mountains at night.

Marines seeking more excitement than the nightly movie and base clubs offered could venture into downtown Da Nang for liberty beginning after 1630 weekdays. Sergeants and below had a 2200 curfew, while staff NCOs and officers had to return by midnight. Liberty commenced at 0800 Sundays and Holidays. For security reasons, only military personnel on official business were allowed in town between mid-night and 0500.

Our transportation into Da Nang wasn't elegant, but it was free. Two government vehicles were available for the half-hour ride into town, a battered old OD green school bus with heavy wire mesh window screens to deflect grenades tossed our way, and a standard Marine 6X truck. Our drop off point was the Grand Hotel, a quaint holdover from the French era, in the waterfront district conveniently located just a short walk, or pedicab (better known to us a "cyclo") ride from a number of local bars and shops. The MAAG (Army's Military Assistance Advisory Group) mess, which welcomed Marines and catered to enlisted men of all ranks, was also located on the waterfront several blocks up the street. While, the civilian bars sold local brands of beer like "Tiger", "33," and unrecognizable brands of liquor that often left a burning sensation in your mouth, the MAAG Mess offered a broad selection of familiar American beers at bargain basement prices, and unlike the Marine EM Club, brand name whiskey for 20 cents a shot, as I recall. It and also had a limited menu snack bar.

Anyone who has ever visited Da Nang - the city known to the French as Tourane (and still referred to as such on the old French military maps we used) - would instantly recall the distinctly European appearance of Vietnam's second largest city. Many of the streets radiating out from the waterfront district were lined with once stately, but now somewhat shabby, colonial era mansions, often surrounded by high cement walls, topped with sharp pieces of glass and metal to deter intruders. If Da Nang's scenery was memorable, the city's rich blend of exotic smells and sounds defied description, but were unforgettable, especially along the waterfront at low tide. As we waited for the liberty bus, we often heard what sounded like very large rats scurrying unseen in the darkness across the narrow beach between the stone bulkhead and the waterline.

During weekend trips to Da Nang we shopped for clothing, shoes and gifts for ourselves, families, and girls back home. The origin and quality of some of the jewelry, clothing and other goods was questionable, but the prices were reasonable. I always joked with my buddies that the rough out boots I bought were made of tanned rat skin, but we enjoyed scoping out the often-exotic items on sale and bargaining with the merchants.

## Page 7

Although a city of several thousand people in 1963, Da Nang was a small town, consisting primarily of mostly one or two story buildings. Located in a tropical climate, there was no need for glass windows. Windows and doors were usually wide open except for the bars GIs frequented which had decorative metal mesh screening to deflect hand grenades from being tossed into them. I remember one merchant's shop also served as his garage. A small car had been pulled into the shop and could be locked inside for the night by pulling down a retractable metal grate. The waterfront was a busy place during the day. Residents came to shop at local markets often camping on the sidewalk, where they cooked and ate meals as they traded produce and wears and fishermen unloaded their catch from the river or nearby South China Sea.

A couple of weekends a month we would head for China Beach on the South China Sea.

I don't recall how far the beach was from the airbase, but if we were fortunate we could catch a jeep ride, if not we rented bikes. In either case, there were no bridges linking Da Nang with the road to the beach in those days. All travelers, civilians and GIs alike, had to take a ferry across the river to continue their journey to the beach. Ferry service across the river, provided by either a pontoon ferry or WWII era landing craft with a front landing ramp, was pretty efficient, but always crowded with bikes, motor vehicles and passengers.

On the way to the beach we often passed farmers toiling under the hot sun in their rice fields. They tilled the fields with ancient plows pulled by water buffalo just as their ancestors had done for hundreds of years. Fields were irrigated with devices made of bamboo farmers used to lift water from an irrigation ditch to the field being cultivated; a sight that reminded me of drawings I had seen in a textbook from my high school history class of ancient Egyptians irrigating their fields.

China Beach was an expansive stretch of sandy beach with few permanent structures, but dotted with a few open tents erected by local entrepreneurs where GIs were welcomed to get out of the sun for few minutes to enjoy a cold soda, beer and snacks sold by young girls. We could also buy small packages of locally grown roasted peanuts sold by boys who roamed the beach. In reality, having grown up on the east coast, China Beach was disappointing. There was little surf and the tepid water was a far cry from the pounding surf and brisk temperatures of the Atlantic Ocean. Nonetheless, it provided relief from the hot humid temperatures weather we faced everyday. On occasion, if we had a jeep we would venture over to Marble Mountain to shop for statues and jewelry crafted by local artisans or make the steep climb for an unparalleled view of the valley below. We enjoyed a day at the beach, but never wanted to be late for chow as our cooks regularly charcoal grilled steaks on Sunday evenings.

I know first hand that much has changed in Da Nang over the past 50 years, but my memories of the area as it was during my 1963 tour remain vivid. In a future article I'll talk about what Da Nang and China Beach looked like when I returned Vietnam in 2011.



Dog Patch as seen through the barbed wire fence that ran along the Marine compound at the Da Nang airbase. The two-lane road was the primary highway from north to south on Vietnam's east coast. A narrow gauge rail line ran parallel to the road between it and Dog Patch.



SHUFLY Marines wait for a ride to downtown Da Nang for liberty on the battered old school bus.



The Grand Hotel, drop off point for the SHU-FLY liberty bus, where Marines could have a beer, something to eat or head for one of Da Nang's other entertainment attractions.



Some of Da Nang's popular bars, just a few blocks from the Grand Hotel. Note the fancy grillwork over windows and doors to deflect VC grenade attacks



Street scene of Da Nang's market area. Note the scarcity of motor vehicle traffic



Local residents take a break for a bite to eat on the street





**Now you know where new helicopters come from my son."**



## REUNION 2013

**First Marine Aircraft Wing Association –  
Vietnam Service  
524 Sagamore Ave  
Teaneck, NJ 07666**

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.